

BANANA DAYS

THE RICKS of MISSION BEACH



KEN GRAY

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Cover Image: Banana farm.

Acknowledgements

This brief family history would not have been possible without the generous assistance of many family members. We started collecting images and stories first from Dorothy Rick, who had fastidiously collected many documents and images relating to the lives of the Rick family. We then drafted a story and took that to other family members who filled in the gaps and corrected our errors.

Thanks go to Dorothy for the wealth of material and insights she provided. Also, to Lyn Rick and her son Colin and daughter Leslee Collins who shared their recollections as well.

A trip to Atherton to meet Frank and Lucille Rick was also rewarding and they certainly entertained and provided wonderful memories. Several calls and emails to Eddie McEachan in NSW gave us the stories we needed on the lives of Sheena and Eddie. Many thanks to all these family members for making their history accessible to those seeking to learn more of Mission Beach's rich cultural heritage.

Being the generous history-squirrel she always is, Diane Bull also chipped in with her copy of Lachie Rick's memoir, *Mission Beach as I Remember It*, 2017, and that completed the picture.

Some images have been enhanced using *Luminar Neo*, *ChatGPT* or *Google Gemini*, and these AI tools improve damaged old photos immensely when carefully instructed and scrutinised to avoid distortion of content. Occasionally, we colourise black and white images and the colours are a raffle on AI. We use equally useful tools like *Ginger Writer* and *Claude AI* to ensure that our spelling and grammar are satisfactory, yet our wonderful editors still detect a few errors. AI is not used to generate our content.

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BANANA DAYS | THE RICKS

Bananas. Yep. That's how Mission Beach clawed its way back to life in the 1950s.

In the first 30 years of European settlement, the town was growing quite well, and farmers tried their hand at many different crops, but after a devastating double whammy - WWI shipping loss and the 1918 cyclone - almost all the early settlers abandoned the place. They gave up hope.

This is a story of Frank Rick Snr (1918 – 2000), his wife Marion McEachan (1922 – 2019) and their immediate family, focusing on their lives when they were living in Mission Beach, Queensland.

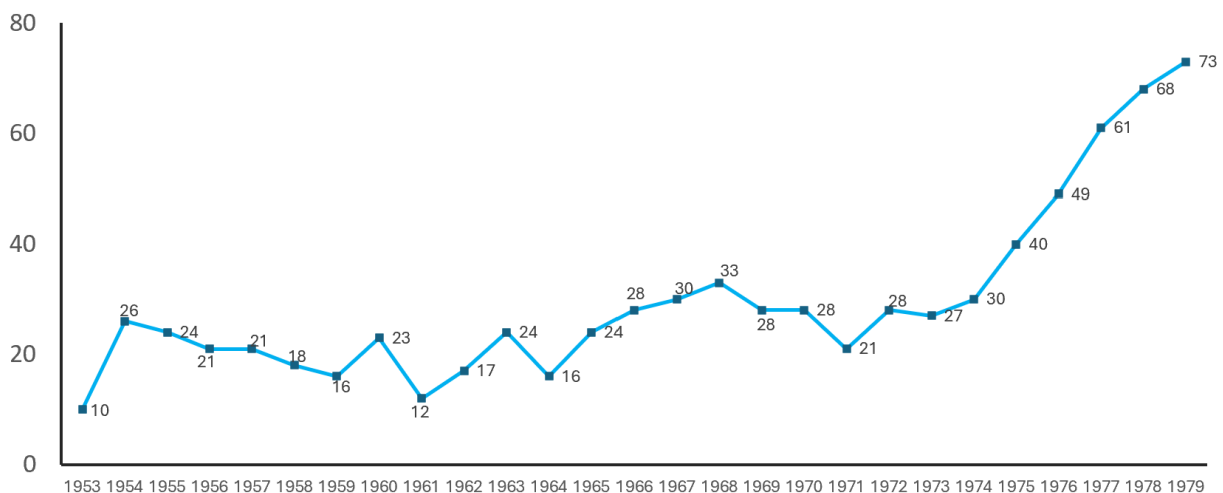
RESTARTING THE TOWN

The Rick family was one of the key families driving the 1950s renaissance. Through good times and bad, the Ricks stuck doggedly to banana farming. They made it work through sheer effort and innovation where many failed. Yet this family did not merely carve out a good living from their banana farms, they worked equally hard for vital volunteer organizations to build a thriving town for their families.

Mission Beach started at its smaller villages of today - Bingil Bay and Garners Beach in the north and Carmoo in the south. While the first settlers, the Cuttens at Bingil Bay, were never big in bananas, they did dabble in them. The Carmoo settlers were primarily banana farmers, however, as were most of those who arrived a little later to Wongaling Beach. A few farmers had pineapples supplying the Cairns cannery, but bananas were the lifeblood crop.

In the 1950s, governments provided little... Mission Beach desperately needed a school, and it wasn't until the Rick family arrived with four school-aged children that there were adequate numbers of children to make a case and lobby successfully. The community won the battle and got a one-room building and a teacher. Not much else. They even had to provide accommodation for the teacher.

Average School Student Enrolments by Year



To make the school function, the Parents and Citizens Committee (P&C) had to clear the school's land, build fences, and even empty the toilet pans. Then they raised funds and paid for books, desks, play equipment, a

radio, mowers, fans... everything really. Some families waiting to settle at Mission Beach insisted on a school before arriving, but it was a catch-22 situation. You needed numbers of students to justify a school.

Winning a school was a struggle; retaining it was even harder. Student numbers fluctuated wildly in the first 20 years, and it wasn't until 1975, when tourism growth spurted, that residents could breathe easy knowing the school would be safe. The town hung in the balance from 1953 until 1973 and residents had to work tirelessly to make it succeed. In 1970, there were 14 families with children at school and ten of them were banana farmers, while the remainder worked in the Post Office, the timber mill, or in tourism.¹

That's where resilient families like the Ricks came in, building the economy and the infrastructure the town needed. When they arrived in 1951, their land was smothered in forest that had to be cleared to start their banana farm. All the family, male and female alike, even the children, pitched in. It was backbreaking work, with no modern equipment to ease the burden. Typically, they worked in daylight hours with no lights to work in the dark, so it was a 12-hour day. In peak times later, when there were just four of them working (Lachie, Frank Jnr, Charles and Marion), they could pack three thousand cartons in a week. Then, somehow, they found time to work for the P&C and other key volunteer organizations in town.

Perhaps that's just how the 1950s were. But the Rick family story reveals truly amazing people: as if a banana farm wasn't enough, Marion Rick purchased the General Store and Post Office soon after arriving and operated the phone exchange for long hours as well.

BEFORE MISSION BEACH



Frank and Marion Rick 1939.

This was a family descended from German folk on the paternal side and Scots on the maternal, rather like the British monarchy, come to think of it. Perhaps their story deserves an equally grand title: *Bonnie Wee Marion Meets Handsome Herr Frank*.

Marion Legget Oribin McEachan was a big hit the moment she landed in Australia. *The Courier Mail* couldn't resist her. On the 23rd of January 1938 they wrote a gushing article, with a portrait photo, fascinated by her verve and boldness... and her attractive, broad Scottish accent. They reported:

¹ Judy Heath and Diane Bull, *Mission Beach State School 50th Anniversary, 1953-2004, Limited Edition*, P49, Bookmen Publishers & Erinport Pty Ltd, 2003.

Marion McEachan aged 16, arrived in Brisbane from Glasgow on the Orama this morning accompanied by nothing but her luggage, a broad smile, and a Scottish accent... she is on her way to visit two of her sisters, Mrs A Rawlings (Rowlands), of Maryborough, and Mrs C Rick of Cairns (Euramo), both of whom left Scotland for Australia when Marion was very young and remained here to be married.

Whether or not she will follow their example, Marion has not quite made up her mind. On the whole, she thinks it might be advisable to "go home fur-r-st."

Their speculation about her future was deliciously prescient. Not long after, Marion and her brother-in-law, Frank Rick, were an item!

Frank Rick was born in 1918 at Marian near Mackay, second youngest of seven in a German Australian family who'd moved to a cane farm at Euramo when Frank was just seven. He had four sisters: Clarice, Audrey, Catherine, and Dorothy, and two brothers: Robert and Carl. Frank's education, as he dryly described it, was a *half-half affair*: two years at a convent in Marian where he studied almost nothing, followed by sporadic attendance at Euramo Primary between ages ten and twelve. He'd bolt from school whenever he was asked to empty the toilet, a job assignment that apparently offended his dignity more than truancy did.

At twelve, a steel railway sleeper crushed his ankle. The wound turned gangrenous, leaving him bedridden and badly incapacitated for two years. But those two years weren't wasted. Frank taught himself to play any tune by ear on mouth organ and piano, a skill he'd later deploy at Tully dances. He also developed an amazing knowledge of native flora. By sixteen, his ankle had healed enough for cane and timber cutting, brutal work he'd do until 1950.

Marion had arrived in Australia in 1938 after doctors recommended a warmer climate for her health. She contracted TB in Scotland and was advised by a doctor to migrate and live in a warmer climate. The warmth of the tropics, along with her wicked determination, enabled her to eventually beat the debilitating disease. She was meant to help her sister Kate as a nanny. Instead, in 1939, she married Frank. He was 21; she was 17.

The newspapers never quite got over Marion. In 1949, they photographed her looking chic at the Tully Show, four children in tow. That same year, she posed as a *snake charmer*, wagging her hips naughtily for an audience of delighted friends. Here was a woman who'd crossed the world alone at sixteen, who could make a go of anything, and who never took herself too seriously.



Sheena, Marion, Frank Jnr, Charles, Lachie.

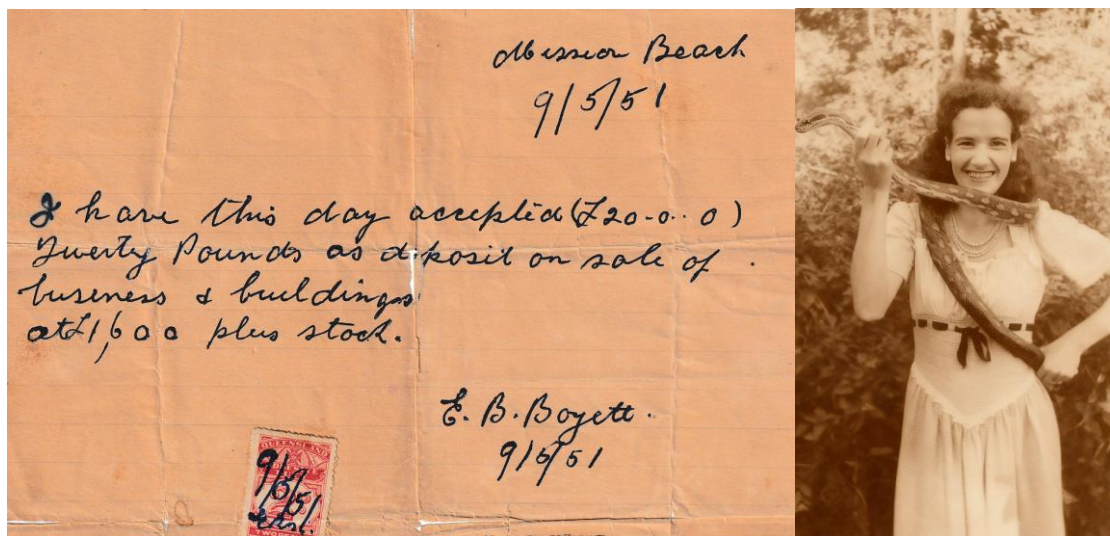


Marion at Tully Show 1949.

Marion and Frank had four children: Lachlan McEachan (Lachie, 1940), Frank Jr. (1942), Charles Edward (1944), and Sheena Marina (1946). In 1944, they moved to Tully. Then in 1951, an opportunity arose: a banana property at Mission Beach.

Marion hesitated. She'd heard stories about Mission Beach, rumours of drunken husbands, violence, roughness. She agreed to move on one condition: Frank had to promise he wouldn't become like the neighbours.

In May 1951, they bought a house with an attached Post Office, the General Store, and a Dance Hall from Ted Boyett. The house was decent enough. The post office was a small fibro-sheet affair attached to a corrugated iron shop with a counter that revealed itself when you pushed up the front and propped it with timber. The dance hall had excellent flooring. The business itself was a shambles, the shop ran at a loss, and the post office only received mail twice a week, so it did not generate much income.



Deposit for sale of business Boyett to Rick 1951.

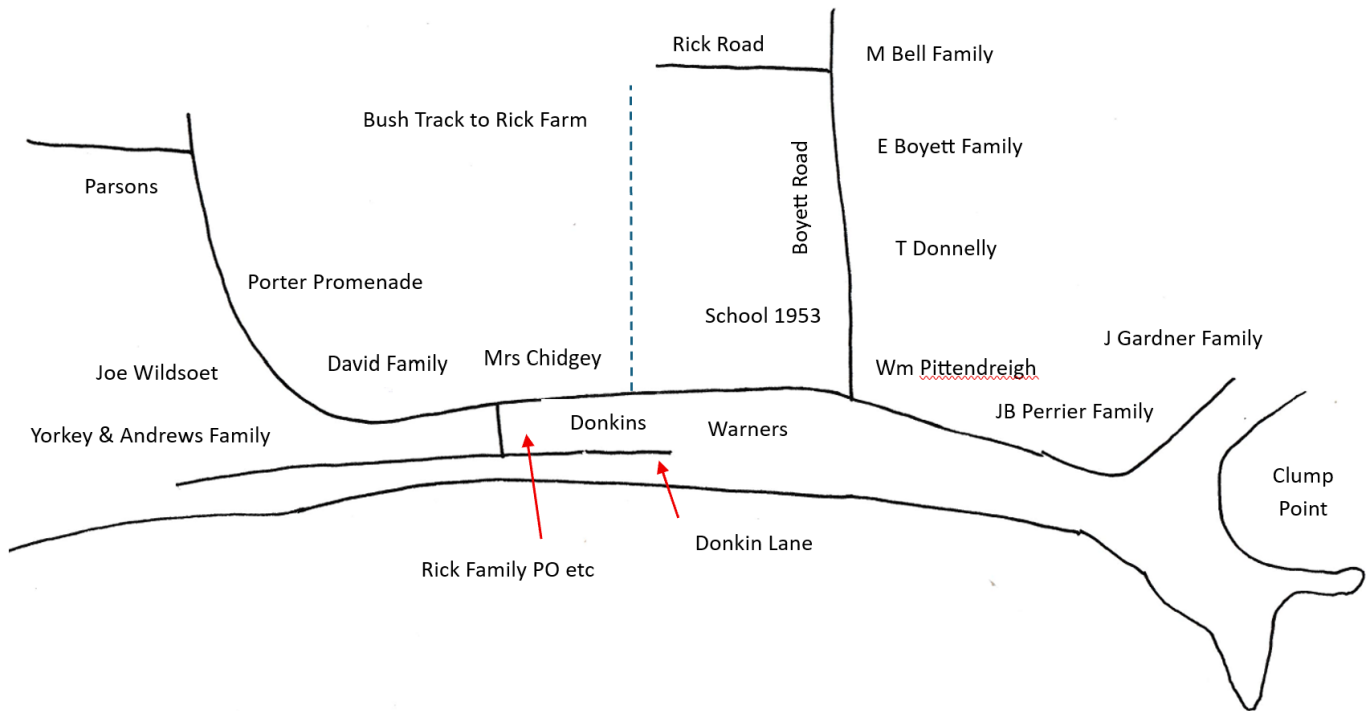
Snake Charmer, Marion Rick 1949.

Marion's pragmatic approach was to try to make it work and merely close up if it failed. At least they'd have the house. It was full-on, serious work, but the Ricks always found room for fun. That's the secret in the snake charmer photo from 1949, in Marion's broad smile when she stepped off the *Orama*, and in Frank's piano melodies at the dances.



Marion with Prince and Charlie – came with the banana farm.

They built something improbable: a Scottish-German family running a general store and dance hall at the edge of the world, where the work was hard and the laughter was easy.



Map of North Mission Beach Family locations 1951-53, as depicted by Marion Rick.

Frank Rick Jnr recalled many of these people and some such as the Boyetts, William Pittendreich, J B Perrier and Jesse Gardner were retirees. He believed that Jesse Gardner had been an Australian boxing champion.

Marion and Frank's granddaughter, Leslee Collins, shared some of her cherished memories of their lives...

Frank Snr - or 'Dearie,' as I knew him - was renowned for his rock cakes and fruit cakes, and he lovingly baked one for his first great-grandson's very first birthday. He had a gift for transforming his lush garden into a world of wonder, whisking the children away on foraging adventures that left them enchanted every time.

Frank passed away before he could meet any great-great-grandchildren, while Marion lived to see a remarkable 16 great-grandchildren and 13 great-great-grandchildren. My father, Lachie, had 17 great grandchildren of his own when he passed in 2025.

Marion's first voyage to Australia was anything but uneventful. Sixteen years old and travelling alone, she was several days into the six-week journey when a fellow struck up a conversation. Casually, he asked if she knew how to use rubbers. Marion, in all her innocence, said she certainly did - picturing, of course, the rubber galoshes worn over shoes in wet weather. As the conversation took a swift and telling turn, it didn't take long for the penny to drop. One can only imagine that even at that tender age, Marion was more than capable of putting him firmly in his place. In Glasgow, she had lived in a very rough suburb so her brothers had taught her how to box to protect herself. Over the years, Marion made several trips back to Scotland, a homeland she had once believed she'd never see again, certain the cost would always be beyond her family's means. These journeys meant so much to her that on one visit, she told her family that if she were to die in Scotland, they should bury her there. Such was the depth of her love for the place she came from.

Frank Snr was not happy about Marion returning. The journey ate up three months in travel time, meaning she was typically away for four. Rather than come out and say how much he missed her, Frank had a more theatrical approach - he would fall mysteriously 'ill' two days before her departure, his recovery hanging conveniently in the balance. He was always eager for her to return, and on one occasion, Marion received a telegram informing her she'd been booked onto a flight back. Extravagant by the standards of the day, but Marion was thrilled - she said she felt like a princess.

The full truth surfaced later, when Marion happened to bump into the bank manager in Tully and he enquired after her health. It turned out Frank had told the bank manager that Marion was gravely ill and needed to be flown home urgently - a rather creative fib to secure the loan. Marion, the family's financial manager, was left to pay it all back herself.

Bagpipes became a beloved constant in the family's life, and many a car journey with their grandmother was spent with bagpipe tapes blaring loudly and everyone happily along for the ride.

Leslee recalled the days when a telephone was a genuine novelty. Her mother's family in El Arish didn't have one, but their good friends Ruby and Harry (Hans) Nissen, who lived on the same street, did, making their home the unofficial message hub for the neighbourhood. When Lyn Lee married Lachie Rick and moved to Mission Beach, the quickest way to get word to her family was simply to ring Ruby. The family phone number at Mission Beach? *Mission Beach 4*. Hard to forget. Their friends Joe and Margaret Collins down at South Mission Beach had a phone too - *South Mission Beach 4*. Close enough that the wrong line was occasionally rung, but nobody seemed to mind too much.

A NEW LIFE

It was a bold move, buying Ted Boyett's business while they were furiously clearing land and planting bananas. For Frank and Marion Rick, 1951 marked the beginning of an adventure that would define not just their lives, but the landscape of Mission Beach itself.

Marion had her hands full, an understatement if ever there was one. Four children aged 5 to 11 years needed care. The household demanded constant attention. Bananas needed packing. And that was just the beginning.

She was running the Post Office and General Store when, in November, the phone linked to El Arish via Granadilla. Suddenly she had a phone exchange to manage as well. As if to prove she had time on her hands, Marion opened the first Commonwealth Bank agency in 1952 and established a Mobil Oil Company fuel depot, complete with a bowser located right beside the General Store. No wonder there was no time to home school her four children. The older two, Lachie and Frank Jnr, were sent to a school in Maryborough. That sharpened the need to lobby for a local school.

On'ya Marion!

Meanwhile, Frank Snr was hardly slouching around. He held the mail contract and made regular runs to El Arish, but he'd turned it into something more. Many residents couldn't get to town often, so Frank took orders for bread and meat, transforming his mail run into a lifeline for residents and campers alike. He picked up ice blocks too, precious cargo in the days before electricity.

His route included the Johnstone Boys Camp, tucked away in the forest at the south end of Narragon Beach. Built in 1927 by Johnstone Sugar Mill workers, some of them stayed there for the slack season. The last member died in the late 1980s, and the Council demolished the building. But the huge midden of broken beer bottles behind it told its own story, more than 30,000 bottles by our estimation, remaining there for years until the Council removed it in 2016 to build an extension of the Cutten Walk to the Perry Harvey Jetty.



Johnstone Boys Camp. Image from Lachie Rick.

In 1954, Frank Snr added another enterprise to the mix. He purchased a sawmill from Tim Donnelly, who had it on a banana farm nearby that later belonged to Ken Campbell. They dismantled it piece by piece and relocated it on Porter Promenade, just south of the Homestead Shopping Centre. Herb Anderson came on as partner, and together they ran it until 1958 when they sold it to Bert Wildsoet. Bert later sold it to Mick Sabadina, who moved it up to Murray Upper. The mill's specialty was banana and pineapple cases, with some crates going to the Great Northern Cannery in Cairns. Eventually, that closed.

The family had collected a few nicknames for Frank Snr over the years: Fritzzy, Boss, GrandBoss, Dearie... They'd started out living on the farm in a shed with living quarters before building a proper house near the General Store and Post Office.

By 1958, Marion finally got a bit of breathing room when she sold the Post Office and store to the Wildsoets. But anyone who knew Marion understood that 'less frantic' was a relative term. She still ran the fuel depot and was spending a lot more time on the banana farms. And she wasn't done yet, in 1977, she built holiday flats in Porter Promenade, naming them *Ceud Mile Failte*, which was *a hundred thousand welcomes* in Gaelic, honouring her Scottish heritage.

Around the same time, Frank Snr and Marion built a two-storey block home at 26 Porter Promenade directly opposite the holiday flats on the other side of the street, where the sawmill once was. The house was demolished and land sold and Roy Zahn built a home there. It was later relocated to Carmoo.

In 1962, Frank started a new chapter. He formed F Rick and Sons and left the farms in the capable hands of his sons and took work with National Parks. His first project was building the track to the foot of Wallaman Falls, demanding work that showcased his remarkable bush carpentry skills.

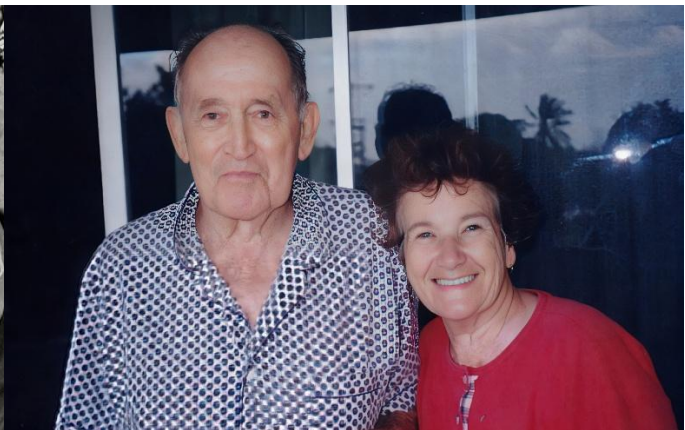
For the next dozen years, Frank's handiwork left its mark across North Queensland. He worked on teams that built tracks at Bicton Hill, Dunk Island and many other places. Several huts he designed and built still stand in those forests today, testament to his craftsmanship.

But it wasn't just his carpentry that made him legendary among his National Parks colleagues, it was his cooking. His roast dinners, chutneys, and pickles were the stuff of camp legend, second only to his sister Audrey's. His daughter Sheena remembered both his exacting standards and his remarkable green thumb:

I would say that Audrey would have been one of the few people that gave Frank a jar of chutney with confidence. I, like many of those before me, have had my offerings scrutinised for colour, consistency and taste... Frank truly had green fingers. His vegetable patch was awesome... Tomato bushes grew to shoulder height, abundant with the juiciest, sweetest tomatoes. Each winter, families and friends would come away from his house laden with beans, carrots, corn, shallots, potatoes...



Frank and Marion 1967.



Frank and Marion 1999. Images from Dorothy Rick.

Frank Snr returned to farming in 1974, working the land until 1995 when he was 77 years old, a remarkable span that spoke to both his stamina and his love for the work.

BUILDING A BANANA EMPIRE

The farming ventures of the family grew steadily over the decades. Their first farm was a 40-acre property on Rick Road, purchased from Kevin Hanrahan. It was badly run down, but that didn't deter them. In 1952, they added an 84-acre farm at Boyett Road, previously owned by the Myers family.

The third farm proved the most challenging to acquire. At 283 acres on El Arish-Mission Beach Road, purchased from John Harej, it took several years to complete the deal. The banks kept insisting the land was too swampy and unsuitable for bananas. They would eat those words spectacularly.

Shortly after buying that third farm in 1969, they grew a world record banana bunch on it: 236 pounds, 4 ounces or about 107 kilograms. The farm was paid off in five years. The Ricks also leased banana land in Boyett Road and farmed it for 15 years, steadily expanding their empire.

With three farms, the boys decided each would manage one, all trading under F Rick and Sons until 1985. After that, they farmed as separate identities. In 1976, Frank Jnr left the partnership, and Frank Snr took over the Mission Beach-El Arish Road farm. He later share-farmed with Noel and Diane Wagner.

Lyn and Lachie traded as L&L Rick and Son, operating the Rick Road farm in partnership with their son Colin. In 1993, Colin made a bold choice; at 28 years old, he left farming to become an apprentice chef, working on the farm while completing his studies. Lachie and Lyn understood. They'd just endured a brutal decade after Cyclone Winifred, and when Cyclone Joy wreaked havoc on Christmas Eve 1990, Colin's decision made perfect sense. They sold their farm in 1995.

BANANA FARMING in EARLY DAYS

Starting a banana farm in those days was a unique process. They'd clear the land without removing tree stumps, let it dry for three months, then burn it. After four to five years, most stumps had rotted away. The toughest hardwoods like black bean took longer, so they split those into fence posts. They'd clear an access road by sawing off stumps at ground level, then grow banana plants among what remained.

From the mid-sixties to mid-seventies, they harvested only five months of the year, May through September. This wasn't arbitrary. Prices peaked during those months, and the cooler weather meant fruit survived the week-long journey to southern markets in better condition. At that time, Mission Beach and El Arish formed Australia's biggest banana-producing area, though Tully later claimed that crown.

In later years, the Ricks harvested year-round but still produced most of their crop in the dry season. By then, refrigerated transport had cut the journey to just three days, a revolution that changed everything about the business.

Lachie Rick had vivid memories of the rough dirt roads. It took up to an hour to drive to Tully, 20 to 30 minutes to El Arish, and almost two hours to Innisfail. He remembered the Mission Beach-El Arish Road being cleared 66 feet back on both sides, with the phone line following along one edge. At Fenbys Gap, the road featured what people called *Silent Cops* down the middle, bollards designed to prevent drivers from cutting corners. During the wet season, cars needed chains on some roads.

Charles Rick's memory of those roads was even more striking: it took him about an hour to ride his bike to Tully, roughly the same time as going by car. That speaks volumes about road conditions.

Modern conveniences were scarce. Town water didn't arrive until 1973, electricity not until 1963. Before that, they used kerosene for lights and fridges or simply used ice. Water came from rainwater tanks or bores.

They did have a radio, though, and at night they'd gather to listen to *Dad and Dave*, *The White Coolies*, *Blue Hills*, and *Bob Dwyer*. Playing cards or tennis provided sport and entertainment too. The children had their own flattie, a punt for fishing on the reef near Mission Beach. When weather turned rough, they'd fish at Porters Creek instead. The boys hunted pigeons and scrub chooks, and bonfires on the beach during school holidays were common when campers stayed in droves.

In 2009, Marion made the *Tully Times* under less than ideal circumstances. At 87 years old, she'd had a car crash on the Bruce Highway in Tully. Fortunately, no great harm was done, though Marion took some good-natured ribbing from family and friends.

Throughout her remarkable 97-year life, Marion visited Scotland several times, usually with other family members. Her first trip back was in 1961 to see her ailing father, but tragically, he died as she was beginning her journey.

When researching Marion Rick's life, one word surfaced again and again: *feisty*.

That feistiness was evident late in her life, at a public meeting that had erupted into heated debate. The issue? Coconuts at Mission Beach.

Two camps had formed. One side argued the palms were invasive weeds, creating a monoculture that choked out native trees. The other insisted they were beautiful, tourist-friendly, and quintessentially tropical. As voices grew louder, the second view gained momentum. People began claiming the coconuts had always been there, that they were practically native.

That's when Marion moved. She rose slowly from her seat. The room fell silent.

Then she spoke, her voice cutting through the stillness with unmistakable authority. She had lived in Mission Beach since 1951, she said, and much of what was being claimed tonight was simply false. When she arrived, there wasn't a single coconut palm at Mission Beach, not one. They grew at Bingil Bay, yes, planted by the Cuttens as cultivars. But native? Always been here? Absolutely not.

You could have heard a pin drop. No one spoke. The debate was over.

That was Marion Rick, a woman who certainly was assertive; and respected... for she was known to argue strongly in service of her community and for the causes she held dear. Cross her at your peril. Ignore her at your own risk.

Frank Snr survived several life-threatening illnesses over his years: gangrene, scrub typhus, and two cancerous growths on his back. But as his daughter Sheena wrote in his eulogy, *the last one was just a little stronger than he was*.

Her words captured him perfectly:

There is so much more that could be said. Frank was many different things to those of us who knew him – a loyal friend, a proud father, a loving husband, a larrikin, a shy and thoughtful man, a hard worker, not too good with the finances, patient, impatient, charming... All of these things and others were true of him. A huge character, a good man true to himself. This was the essential Frank, and he would not be pleased if we fussed too much today.

He went with a shrug of his shoulders and a final wink.

Lachie and Lyn's house on the Rick Road farm has since been relocated to Innisfail. It was on the hilltop above Endeavour Avenue and the farm was sold to Les and Judy Blennerhassett who built a new home there alongside the rainforest and subdivided the land.



Left: Marion's 95th Birthday, with her boys Frank Jnr, Charles and Lachie, *Cassowary Coast Independent News* 27 January 2017.



Right: Lachie and Lyn Rick's house and shed 2005.

CHILDREN of MARION & FRANK

Marion and Frank had four children, Lachlan McEachan (Lachie 1940), Frank Jnr (1942), Charles Edward (1944) and Sheena Marina (1946).



Lachie, Charles, Marion and Frank Jnr 1944.



Charles, Frank, Sheena and Lachie, 1958, images from Dorothy Rick.



1947 Rick Family.

Lachlan McEachan Rick OAM (1940 - 2025) & Lyn Lee

Before the sun rose too far over Mission Beach, young Lachie and his brothers were already hard at work, their hands flying as they crafted wooden banana cases in the early light. An hour's labour before school earned them three pence per case, precious pocket money that made the early mornings worthwhile.

Education came with its challenges in those early years. Before the Mission Beach School opened its doors in 1953, Lachie and Frank Jnr travelled all the way to Maryborough for their schooling. The family experimented with correspondence courses, but Marion, already juggling multiple businesses and farm work, found herself unfamiliar with the Queensland curriculum and simply too stretched to supervise their lessons effectively.

Once the local school opened, Friday became an adventure day. Lachie and Frank would pedal their push bikes to Tully for Manual Training Classes, though occasionally they'd catch a welcome lift from Bluey David or Johnnie Iza, saving their legs for the ride home.

By 1955, fifteen-year-old Lachie had traded the classroom for the family farm, snigging timber for the sawmill. Even before leaving school, he'd begun cultivating bananas on his father's land, a venture that would shape his future. Then disaster struck. Cyclone Agnes roared through, flattening the banana crops and leaving an eerie silence where lush green plants once stood. The timing couldn't have been worse: no crop that year, and when the plants finally matured again, an oversupply flooded the market, driving prices below the cost of production. It was a tough start to his farming career.

From 1957 to 1962, Lachie kept his options open, working weekdays at the Hull Timber Ply Mill at El Arish while tending his bananas on weekends. He and brother Charles then joined forces with Peter Wheatley to rebuild his timber mill after a devastating fire.

The year 1962 marked a turning point. When Frank Rick and Sons was formed, the three Rick brothers each purchased a quarter share in the two farms, one on Rick Road, another on Boyett Road. The price: £1,500 cash each, plus a daunting £2,000 overdraft. But the brothers were not phased. Prices improved, and through sheer determination and long hours, they cleared the debt in just five years. The three boys worked the fields while Marion helped during busy periods, her experienced hands making, branding, and lining the cases.

Romance bloomed amid the sawdust at the El Arish timber mill, where Lachie and Lyn worked side by side. They'd first met years earlier during those magical Christmas holidays when Lyn's family camped on the beach.

In 1963, they married and built their dream home on the Rick Road farm using beautiful spurwood logs sourced from Ken Campbell's block. Their builder was none other than brother Frank Jnr, who was working for Bob Nisula at the time and built the house during weekends. Frank made the timber casement windows at the Nisula's factory.

Their family grew to include two children: Leslee, who would marry local boy Barry Collins, and Colin, who found love with Jenny Shepherd. Leslee and Barry went on to have five children: Patrick, Terrie, Charles, William, and Elizabeth.



Lyn Lee, Belle of the Debutante Ball, Tully 1959.



Lachie and Lyn's Wedding.

Lyn quietly reflected on her life and times at Mission Beach...

I was born in El Arish and did my primary schooling there. My mother's family settled there in 1923, coming from the Thornborough/Mt Mulligan area west of Mareeba after their mother passed away. They had relatives already living in El Arish. My father came from Nowra to cut cane in the 1930s and married my mother in 1941. I have a sister Colleen.

In the 1940s, families from El Arish and surrounds camped on the foreshore of Mission Beach for the duration of the Christmas school holidays. The sites were so popular they were booked from year to year and some farmers had shacks on the beachfront. Ted Boyett did a mail, bread and meat run for the campers, and to keep things cool, a hole was dug in the sand and lined with wet bags. We had bonfires on the beach and spent most of our days swimming and exploring. A great time was had by all of us. Ted sold his shop to the Rick family in 1951 and they continued to supply the campers.

My secondary schooling was in Herberton, but that only lasted for two terms as my father got me a job in the office of the El Arish Hull Timber Syndicate, which was a plymill and sawmill. It was there that my romance with Lachie began as he came to work there after the 1956 cyclone when banana prices were not good. We married in 1963 and I moved to Mission Beach into a house that we built, just a roof, walls, windows, no doors or petitions, and no electricity. That came later. We had two children, Leslee and Colin.

Life was pretty good on the farm, although cyclones and bad prices were sometimes depressing, but we just had to pull our socks up and get on with it. Both of us were very active in the community, serving on many volunteer organisation committees. Lachie represented the banana growers for the region, and was away a lot, so along with Colin we managed the farm... that's when I found that men don't like taking orders from women!

We sold the farm in 1995 and moved to where we are now. I packed bananas for a while but finally retired to learn how to quilt. I am happy to say that I made a quilt for each of the 17 great grandchildren and a few for family members. I've also donated some to the Nursing Home. Sadly, Lachie passed away last October, ending our 62 years of married life. However, I still have my wonderful family around me and my two dogs who are always fabulous company. Life's good.

The family's commitment to innovation led them to invite the Department of Primary Industries to establish research trials on the Rick Road farm. From the late 1960s through the 1980s, the property became a living laboratory for weed and fertilizer trials, as well as disease control testing. The results were remarkable: yellow sigatoka (leaf spot) and sooty mould were nearly eliminated, though yellow sigatoka would prove a persistent adversary, remaining problematic to this day.

In a 2017 memoir, Lachie shared his hard-won wisdom of decades farming different soil types. The red soil on the Rick Road farm presented unique challenges; it dried out faster than heavier soils, demanding constant vigilance. Without irrigation until 1976, the family relied on nature's mercy. Even after installing their first system, they could only draw water from holes fed by underground springs, limited to four precious hours of irrigation each day during dry spells. Undeterred, they experimented with sprinklers, eventually discovering that micro sprinklers delivered water far more efficiently, another small victory in the ongoing dance between farmer and land.

Lyn invited Colin to reveal a little as well and he said:

After finishing my cooking apprenticeship and passing with honours, I worked in the industry for about three months, but decided the hours were not for me. So, I got a job in the corporate world and worked at managing hotels and hospitality businesses for 25 years. After leaving that behind, I tried different things and am now very happily working at a coal mine driving graders, having qualified to do so. My sister, Leslee, left school at Grade 10, and after she had her family, went to Uni and became a teacher, which took her four years between working and raising a family. She graduated from the Darwin University and is now teaching part time.



Lyn Lee 5 years.



Colleen & Lyn Lee 1950.



Lyn Lee Australian Cub Master 1956



Colin & Leslee Rick.

A photo showing five Rick generations was provided by Leslee:



Back: Leslee Collins, her father Lachie and grandmother Marion. Front: baby Lochlan with Leslee's son Patrick Collins.

Frank Rick Jnr & Lucille Kann

Every Friday in 1955, a young boy on a bicycle tore through the streets of Tully like his life depended on it. In a way, it did. Frank Rick Jnr, after attending Rural School, had one mission: reach Mylonas Café before the lunch stampede. His cousin clung to the back of the bike as Frank pedalled furiously, because the prize was worth every ounce of effort - a steaming pie with peas and mashed potato, a thick milkshake, and the satisfaction of being first in line. All for two shillings. Those Friday races became the stuff of legend.

Few who knew that boy hurtling through Tully would have predicted he'd one day hold a world record, pioneer organic banana farming against the advice of every expert in Queensland, and build, quite literally, with his and his wife's own hands, a life that left its mark on the Cassowary Coast for generations.

Frank's early path was practical and purposeful. He trained as a carpenter, leaving Mission Beach at fifteen to serve his apprenticeship in Maryborough, where he lived from 1957 to 1962. On returning north, he worked for the Nisula family in their timber and kitchen fabrication business in Tully before the pull of the land, and family, drew him back north.

In 1962, while Frank Jnr was living with his parents, he acquired an old motorbike to get around and was asked by Howard Watson if he would build four new motel units at Bingil Bay. This was the Blue Pacific Motel startup. Frank was pleased to oblige and began the project in September, and soon after, Howard casually turned up one day and declared, *I hope you will have the units ready by Christmas*. Frank naïvely asked why... *because I have it fully booked over Christmas*, answered Howard with a laugh. Frank upped the pace, working every minute of daylight time and had the project completed on time much to Howard's delight and relief.

It was no breeze but was good money at £12/6s an hour and Howard was a great bloke to work for. Howard demolished two old houses he had purchased, and Frank Jnr had to use the recovered planks somehow. Fortunately, the main frame was made of new tea-tree timber. The walls were lined with reject ply sheets Howard got for two bob a sheet at the El Arish mill.

Howard often came to the site with his logging mate, Stan (Stick) Garner. They set up tanks at the top of Cutten Street and Howard pumped water from the creek into the tanks so he had a gravity-fed water system for the motel via a two inch poly pipe. One day, Howard asked Frank Jnr for a loan of his motorbike and took it up to the tanks and came hurtling back at breakneck speed. When asked what the great rush was, Howard laughed at his own madness and said he just wanted to see if he could beat the water back to the building site.

Frank and Lucille married in 1967 and worked alongside family on their two Mission Beach banana farms initially, with Frank's father assisting for months at a time before moving on to help Charles or Lachie. In the Rick family, labour was shared freely; when one couple needed a holiday or had something important to do, the others came to pick the crop. No one kept score.

By 1969, patient and disciplined saving had done what the bank wouldn't; the family bought their third farm outright, on Mission Beach-El Arish Road. Frank and Lucille worked on it until 1976, and during those years Frank Jnr never set down his tools. He built three homes: one for his family, one for Lachie and Lyn, and one for Charles and Dorothy.



Builder Frank Rick Champ bunch weigh-in at El Arish. Second place (by a point) at the Tully banana packing competition.

Lucille Kann's story begins in the North Burnett country west of Maryborough, in a family shaped by two world wars and a fierce will to endure.

Her maternal grandfather, Ernie Summers, enlisted during WWI while living in Gayndah. He was assigned as a Light horseman in the 42nd Battalion and sent to North Africa where he was soon struck down with meningitis. He was transferred to hospital in Capetown, then discharged and sent home on a vessel named the *Nestor*. The name stayed with him. When he returned to Queensland, he bought a cattle property at Byrnestown

and named it *Nestor*, a quiet tribute to the ship that carried him back to safety. He ran Hereford cattle there for several years.

Lucille's paternal grandfather, Martin August Kann, emigrated from Germany near the Danish border. Her father, Irvin John Kann, had his own brush with fate. He enlisted in WWII in late 1941 with the 5th Australian Motor Regiment and served in New Guinea. In January 1944, at the brutal Battle of Shaggy Ridge near Madang, a bullet tore into his hip. Another bullet hit him at the location of his heart but ricocheted, by an incredible stroke of luck, off his tobacco tin. A fraction differently and the story would have ended there. The soldier who came to his aid asked *Where are from, mate? Gayndah*, said Irvin. *Well, I'll be buggered*, said the Good Samaritan, *So am I*. That's how Irvin met Frank Tranter, who later married into the Kann family. Irvin was skin and bone, not expected to survive, but was stretchered to safety by the remarkable *Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels* across that razorback ridge.

He lived.

When Irvin returned from New Guinea, Eunice Summers, daughter of Ernie and Constance, was commissioned to help him recover from his wounds and malaria, and later, Eunice and Irvin married. They ran a shop at Byrnestown with Irvin's brother Aub (Aubrey) and had a contract to transport oranges to the railhead. But grief has a way of changing a person's compass. When they lost an infant child in 1950, they left Byrnestown behind and moved to Maryborough, where Irvin drove trains for the railways. Later, the family relocated again, this time to Mena Creek, to try something entirely new. They selected a 180-acre settlers lot, cleared it by hand, and built a successful dairy farm from scratch, raising six children among the scrub. They worked in harmony with next door neighbour George Johnson, a Changi survivor who had also won a soldiers settlement lot. After dairying, they started growing cane, then bananas.

Lucille's childhood moved with her family's fortunes. School in Maryborough, then a rented house near Paronella Park when the family shifted to Mena Creek, then home schooling when the dairy farm proved too remote for the daily commute. By Grade 6 she was back at Mena Creek school, riding to class on the milk truck and walking home. For high school, she boarded with a kind Italian family at Mundoo near Innisfail, cycling to school each day.

It was at Innisfail High in 1963 that she met Sheena Rick. Sheena had recently returned from boarding school at Herberton, nursing a broken heart after the end of a relationship she'd cared deeply about. The two young women formed an immediate bond. Both went on to Kelvin Grove College in Brisbane to train as teachers.

That same year, a school excursion to Kurrimine Beach changed the course of Lucille's life. She and Sheena were there to collect marine specimens. The specimen Lucille came away with was Sheena's brother, Frank - a confident young man with a keen sense of humour – he joked that he had to carry a stick to *beat off the Sheilas*.

Their engagement, however, cost Lucille her teaching career before it had properly started. She taught for only one term before applying for a position at Mission Beach, but because she was engaged to be married, her application was rejected in accordance with the rules of the time. Marriage, in those days, ended a woman's contract. It was blatantly unfair, and Lucille knew it. She made her peace with it in the most practical way possible: she married Frank, became a banana farmer, and loved every minute of it.



Lucille Kann

Farming the El Arish-Mission Beach Road property meant wrestling with flood plain soil, demanding careful drainage and strategic mounding just to keep the crop viable. But the land, for all its difficulty, had something the red soil of Rick Road did not. The bananas it produced were denser, heavier, and more substantial.

In 1976, that distinction was proven beyond any argument. Frank Jnr harvested a banana bunch of extraordinary size, 107kg (236lb 40z). A world record. He had it officially weighed at the El Arish scales before a Justice of the Peace, then he and Lucille loaded the giant specimen into their station wagon and drove it all the way to the Sydney Royal Easter Show after a request to do so. The journey, as one might expect, was not without drama. When a tyre blew out somewhere in Sydney, the couple had to wrestle the enormous bunch out of the car just to locate the spare wheel. It was a fittingly defiant moment; the land the bank had once called unsuitable had just produced the biggest banana bunch in the world.



Lucille and Frank – enjoying the hard yakka.

Frank Jnr and his brother Lachie's enthusiasm for bananas extended well beyond their own farms. In 1970, they established the banana section at the Innisfail Show with the help of Jack Romano of the Moonglow Motel, a contribution to the local agricultural community that would endure for years.



Frank's de-handing spoons, two versions. Sydney dramas with record banana bunch on top of the spare tyre.

Like his brother Charles, Frank Jnr was an amateur inventor. He designed the first *de-handing spoon* in the early 80s then manufactured a bunch of them and sold them at cost to demonstrate their value in the industry. Others tried to make them but could not match the functionality of Frank's models. This idea was also adopted widely.

Lucille and Frank hosted workshops, opened their farm to visitors, and welcomed American experts in organic farming, at a time when the word *organic* wasn't yet fashionable, and certainly wasn't welcomed by the authorities. When they approached the Department of Primary Industries about growing bananas organically in the wet tropics, they said it was impossible. The climate was too hostile, the fungal pressures too great. Without chemicals, they said, it couldn't be done.

Frank and Lucille were unconvinced. They suspected, with some justification, that the DPI had a conflict of interest. The department ran the chemical trials that generated much income for its research programs. Of course, it wasn't going to champion the alternatives. So, Frank and Lucille looked elsewhere: to American agricultural literature, to authors they contacted directly, and eventually to the experts themselves, several of whom later made the journey to Mena Creek to see what the Ricks had built.

After leaving the Rick banana partnership in 1976 and spending six years building in Bundaberg, Frank and Lucille had returned to the land in 1982, drawn partly by family, Lucille's father had died in a tractor accident and her family needed support, and partly by something harder to name. They grew organic bananas at Mena Creek until 2019... ending nearly four decades of patient, principled farming.

The foundation of their method was soil health. First, crushed rock was added to remineralize the ground. Then the patient cultivation of high organic content, which made their crops naturally resistant to soil-borne diseases like Panama fungus. It worked. Not just adequately, the venture was a great success.

When they finally sold up, the new owners sprayed the entire property with herbicides within days of taking possession. A lifetime's work... gone. It's the kind of ending that is so difficult to read without a flash of anger.

Frank and Lucille have four children, Coral, David, Penny, and Michelle. They've always had dogs; their first, *Buster*, a red setter cross, remains the most fondly remembered, though the latest, *Baby Girl*, certainly holds her own and entertains their Atherton neighbourhood.



Lucille and Frank's immaculate organic banana farm showing their pinto peanut ground cover.

Frank Jnr recalled a few funny times involving his father at Mission Beach when he was young. His father called him *Snowball* due to his blonde hair, and they always got on well:

Herb Anderson was Dad's mate and they often went to Tully on Friday afternoons to have a few beers. I was in Tully once when they were ready to go home and they told me to throw my bike in the back. We were almost home, going along Porters Straight and the silly buggers ran out of petrol. They had a carton of beer and were not at all upset at this situation and told me to ride home and bring the truck back with some petrol ...

I was delighted to have an opportunity to drive the truck, but it was pitch black, and I couldn't even see the dirt road. I almost felt my way home – when I hit the wild raspberry branches on the side of the road I knew I was veering off. I was only 14 years old but made it home OK and returned to find them laughing on the side of the road, well into the task of consuming their carton.

Another day, I remember Dad was feeling crook and went to the doctor and got some pills then decided he needed a drink. He took a couple of the pills and after a few beers was not sure if he had taken them or not, so swallowed another couple. I was getting impatient nagging them to go home. He had parked the truck at the bottom end of Butler Street where the gumboot is today – it was too narrow for the truck.

When Dad walked down Butler Street, he tripped and went arse over kite backwards near the taxi stand. He bounced and was not injured badly. The taxi guys helped him up slowly and told me to get the truck and they would help him get across to the back street. Frank was paralytic and loudly shouting out repeated thanks; so embarrassing!

The roads were always rough and the bumps made his head pound and he shouted out, "Slow down, slow down." I had to stay in third gear all the way home. He didn't get out of bed for a week, and Mum hid his grog in a wardrobe - they exploded one day in the heat. It was all OK with me - a good way to get experience driving.

Another memorable trip was a little later. I was 21 and had just met Lucille. We were to meet her with my sister at the El Arish railway station where they were coming from Innisfail on the daily rail motor that travelled from Cairns to Cardwell and back. There was not enough room in the front of the Holden Ute for more than three so Dad decided to ride in the back and placed a cane chair there to make himself comfortable and watch the stars.

All went well until a roo streaked across the road and I had to slam on the brakes. There was a loud bang and Dad was dumped upside down in the back of the ute... he broke no bones... nearly broke mine though with his cursing and abuse.

That motor rail was a fantastic service and I have no idea why they did not continue it; it would be handy today with the fuel supply problems.

Charles Edward Rick (1944 - 2023) & Dorothy Ruth Green

Dorothy Rick (née Green) marked her 70th birthday by writing a memoir, continuing a tradition of preserving her family's history that she maintains to this day. Early in her life, her parents offered advice that would prove prophetic: *When you get married, you must go where your husband can get work*, her mother Phyllis counselled. Her father Victor added his own wisdom with characteristic bluntness: *The further you can get away from relations, the better.*

Dorothy's first memories were of canvas walls and tent poles at Black Mountain, a far cry from the hospital in Blackall, Central Queensland, where she'd been born in 1942. Her father drove timber trucks, and the family followed the work wherever it led them across Queensland's dusty roads. This nomadic life finally ended in 1951 when her parents purchased a house in Herberton, where Dorothy spent most of her childhood and completed her schooling in 1958.

After school, Dorothy went to Cairns, with her parents soon following. The city girl she hoped to become struggled at first; she was shy, desperately homesick, and uncertain. But through reflection on her life's journey and the characters she'd encountered along the way, clarity emerged. She made herself three solemn promises about the man she would never marry: he wouldn't be a drinker, a truck driver, or a travelling sales rep.



Dorothy Green, Highland Debutante Ball Cairns 1961. Dorothy and Charles, wedding 1965.

Then came Australia Day Weekend 1961, and a church camp in Kuranda where Dorothy met Charles. Four years later, in May 1965, they wed at the Central Methodist Church on Aplin Street in Cairns. Dorothy still remembers that beautiful old red brick building with deep affection, mourning its loss when it was eventually demolished.

Starting their life together, Dorothy and Charles made their home in modest living quarters in the shed that Frank Jnr and Charles had built on the Boyett Road farm. The journey to their property was an adventure in itself: a rough dirt road winding through the scrub, crossing two creeks before reaching their land.

For Dorothy, who had never been away from home before, these early days tested her resolve. Dorothy had heard the saying *Love is blind* and she thought it must be true. She loved being married and loved their farm but there was no electricity, no water to the shed, a long-drop toilet, scrub surrounding them and swarms of March flies. They hung a mosquito net over the kitchen table to have a meal in peace. Things got a little easier in September 1965, when the power arrived. The couple soon began planting their own bananas, becoming farmers rather than just workers.

In 1970, they built a house on Endeavour Avenue, Mission Beach though the pull of the land remained strong. Four decades later, in 2013, they sold that home and returned to the farm, where Dorothy continues to live today.

Looking fondly back on their decades operating the Boyett Road farm, Dorothy reflected that while working for others might have been easier, nothing compared to the reward and satisfaction of building something that was truly theirs. The property had a rich history; Frank Rick Snr had first planted bananas there in 1953. At 84 acres, with only half cleared for banana cultivation, the farm boasted four distinct soil types that produced excellent fruit.

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of farming life, Charles and Dorothy loved their work and found it provided a good living over the years. Charles's innovative spirit led him to invent the A trailer, also known as the centreboard cutting trailer, which revolutionized their work. The clever design featured a hydraulic lift that raised the platform close to the banana bunch line, enabling smaller people, like Dorothy herself, to hang bananas easily regardless of their height. It was several years later that Charles added the hydraulics. Within a short time, the entire industry had adopted Charles and Frank Jnr's invention. Unfortunately, it was never patented. Frank recalled the time they built the first trailer:

We often discussed ideas to change the design of the banana picking trailer, and when we were building Charles and Dorothy's house, these ideas developed. It was always difficult work lifting big banana bunches up and over the

trailer sides, so the first thing we needed was a design that eliminated the sides – the centreboard design was the answer. After the house was built, we had the tools available under it, so the time was right, and we built the first model there together. Chook and I were always close and loved to horse around and do silly things together that irritated Lachie, who was far straighter and more serious about work and did not appreciate our skylarking.



Charles with his centreboard trailer showing it in its lifted position, 1995.



Charles' packing wheel invention.

The first trailer only had two wheels and the boys soon worked out that it needed four to get around the end of the rows. Charles was also among the pioneers to create the first banana packing wheel. He saw Ab Porter had made himself a small wheel to help pack his fruit. Charles thought it was a good idea and had a large wheel professionally made, and this was quickly adopted by the industry.

Another significant innovation came in late 1983 at El Arish, when Charles became the first person to rail bananas on pallets. Before pallets took off, cartons were loaded one at a time and stacked 13 high with ply separators every few rows. The reception to Charles's pallets idea was initially hostile. When he arrived at the rail head with his banana cartons stacked on pallets, other farmers flatly told him to take his pallets and load somewhere else. Charles persisted despite this dismissal, and his stubbornness paid off; within months, the entire industry had followed his lead.

In 1975, Charles started sending bananas to Sydney by road using Eric Haack's semitrailers. Charles went to Sydney with Eric on one of the first loads to see for himself how well the bananas travelled. At the time, rail transport was plagued by strikes and bridge failures in floods so road transport became a viable option.

At home, Charles and Dorothy raised two sons: Russell, born in 1966, and Wayne in 1969. As the boys grew, they became invaluable help on the farm. Yet their parents never pressured them into the family business. Instead, Charles and Dorothy encouraged both sons to explore the world first, to discover what else life might offer before deciding whether to return to farming. Years later, Dorothy would wonder, with characteristic honesty, if perhaps they'd worked the boys too hard in their youth. Neither came back to the land. Russell found his calling in hotel management, while Wayne became a motor mechanic.



Charles and Dorothy's first boat 1979.



Charles with his banana pallet invention 1983.

The family owned boats over the years and spent much time fishing and skiing together, often at Dunk Island and sometimes at Lake Tinaroo. Though Dorothy was terribly seasick at first, she eventually came to enjoy reef fishing.

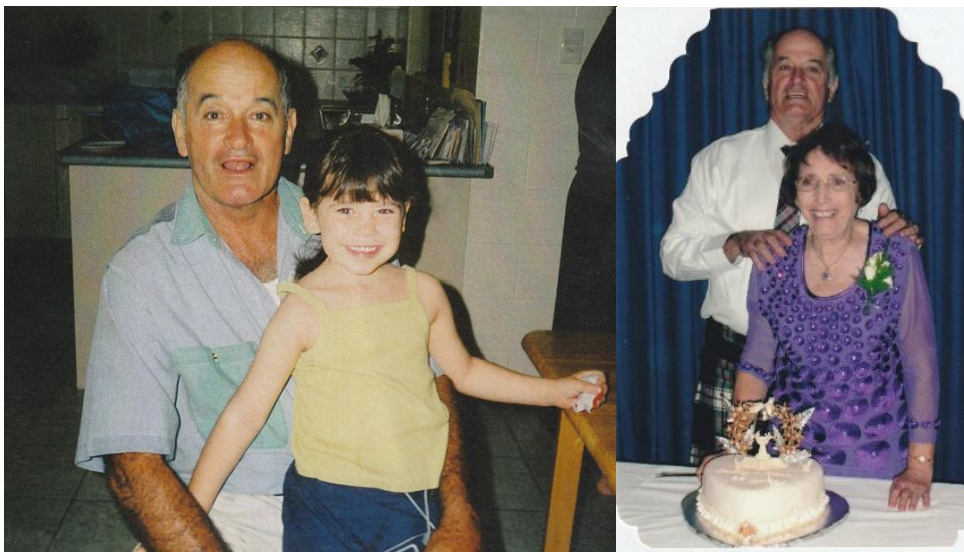
Wayne married Linda Caferra in 1994, and they had two children, Hayden and Maddison. Hayden is the only male grandchild of Frank Snr and Marion to carry on the Rick family name and was the first of the fifth generation of Ricks born in Australia. He and his wife went on to have two sons, Hugo and Micah. Russell married Michelle Saunders in 2010 on Charles and Dorothy's 45th wedding anniversary. Russell and Michelle have daughters, Charlotte and Lillian, from a previous relationship.

The family farm was leased to Dole in 2006, then to Steve Lizzio of MBL in 2016. Dorothy said that when Steve arrived it was like she and Charles had three sons. Steve got on very well with Charles and he has provided Dorothy with wonderful encouragement and support over the years since Charles passed.

At her 70th birthday party, Dorothy said in a short speech, *I will not be around for another 70 years, but if the years ahead are as good as the ones gone, I will have had a very happy life.* That says it all, Charles and Dorothy found the right match in 1965.



Dorothy Ruth Green in her favourite red sandals aged 4-5. Images from Dorothy Rick. Charles Rick 1967.



Charles and granddaughter Maddison. 45th Wedding Anniversary 2010, Charles and Dorothy.

Sheena (1946 – 2002) & Eddie Lachlan McEachan



Sheena Rick as debutante.

Sheena came to school a little later than at age six, almost seven, not through any fault of her own, but simply because there was no local school to attend. She was among the first ten students to enrol in 1953. In her younger years she was a keen highland dancer and tennis player. She was seven years old before she began her education, moving between Herberton, Tully and Innisfail as circumstance dictated.

The late start proved no obstacle. She passed her Scholarship examination on schedule, was dux of her class, and won a scholarship to Kelvin Grove College in Brisbane, where she qualified as a Home Science Teacher. She went on to teach at Ingham, Babinda and interstate before returning north to Good Counsel College in Innisfail.

Eddie McEachan, the man who would become her husband, was excited by stories told by his Australian relatives and was drawn to the idea of migrating when he was young. He was the only member of his family to leave Scotland and recalled: *I was at a very impressionable age then and by the time Aunt Marion left when I was about 14, I was sure my future was going to be in Australia.*

Eddie arrived on Christmas Day, 1967, stepping off the train at Tully station into the Queensland summer heat. Eddie had grown up in Scotland, where his father worked as a metal moulder casting aircraft engines for Rolls Royce during the war. His mother did home duties until just after Eddie went to Australia. She subsequently joined the civil service and had a successful career until she retired. Eddie's two brothers and two sisters still live in the UK.

The connection between the two families stretched back across the ocean: Eddie's mother Ellen and his Aunt Marion had long been the main conduit of news between Scotland and Australia, and Marion had sponsored many Scottish migrants on his mother's recommendation. The three McEachan sisters, Agnes, Kate and Marion, had all made the journey back to Scotland in the 1950s to visit their ageing father, though Marion received the heartbreaking news when she arrived in Glasgow... that he had died just before she boarded the boat in Brisbane.



McEachan family c1922. Standing: Kate, Lachlan, Harry and Agnes; Front: Marion snr with baby Marion, Alexander, William, Eddie, and Lachlan snr. Image from Eddie McEachan junior, son of Eddie pictured.

Eddie had left school at eighteen and completed a five-year accounting cadetship with a pipe manufacturer in Glasgow. He and his close friend John made a pact: once they turned twenty-three and were beyond the reach of the Vietnam War draft, they would emigrate, Eddie to Australia and John to Canada. However, as it turned out, they migrated together to Brisbane.

On arrival in Queensland, Eddie planned to visit his relatives in North Queensland with John, then look for work. What he hadn't planned on was Sheena.

On that Christmas Day platform at Tully, Eddie was met by Sheena, her mother, Marion, and his Aunt Kate. Both older women pressed him to come with them for Christmas lunch, an invitation he declined with rather more speed than politeness may have required, heading straight off with much delight with Sheena. It was the first time the two cousins had ever met. The family watched with much interest and had quietly assumed that Sheena might take a shine to John. Within a week, the die was cast - Sheena and Eddie had decided their futures lay together. As Eddie would later reflect, *"How lucky can you get?"*

Eddie and John visited the Australian branch of the company that they had worked for in Scotland (now known as Tubemakers). They had letters of introduction from their Scottish employer. The manager looked at opportunities available in the company and both were offered roles in Newcastle, which they quickly accepted.

Sheena and Eddie married in January 1969, two years after that prescient Tully platform meeting, and made their home first in Newcastle, then Melbourne, then Sydney. Two sons followed, Andrew, who now lives in Perth with his wife and two children, and Fraser, who lives in Canberra with his wife and two children.

When Sheena and Eddie were nearing early retirement age, they stepped back from their regular working lives in Innisfail and looked for something entirely different. They wanted to make a difference and do some meaningful work, like volunteering abroad. They found it in Niue, a tiny Pacific island north of New Zealand, close to Tonga, an independent country in free association with New Zealand and home to just two thousand people. Its residents travel on New Zealand passports but are proudly Niuean. Through Australian Volunteers Abroad, Eddie administered the island while Sheena taught. For six months, by all accounts, life was idyllic.

Sadly, it was not to last. Sheena suddenly fell ill, and they immediately returned to Australia for her treatment. Eddie lost her not long after. He took an extended break before returning to Niue, where he stayed for five more years, taking on a range of roles beyond the administration and financial management of the island, including chair of the government bank, managing the island resort, and even managing customs.

Sheena had continued studying throughout her life, earning several degrees while advancing her teaching career. When she passed away in 2002, she was remembered by those who knew her as someone whose late start in a country schoolroom had led, by remarkable turns, to a life lived with great purpose, many achievements, much love and considerable adventure.



Above: Sheena Rick on the Tennis Club roller. Image from Lachie Rick.

Below: Barry Moyle Mayor and Eddie McEachan CEO, Johnstone Shire Council.

ANCESTORS | SIBLINGS



Left: Frank Rick's parents, Kate Wilhelmina Walz and Frank Charles Rick, Wedding in Mackay, QLD, April 1904 – images from Ancestry.com.au posted by Carol Howland-Bradshaw. Right: Wilhelmine (Minnie) Lange, Frank's paternal grandmother from Germany (West Prussia).



Lachlan McEachan, Marion's father. Marion's mother Marion L O McEachan nee Oribin, left with friend.



Marion's Grandma Agnes Oribin with second husband Johann Arnold.



Aunt Agnes Rowlands nee McEachan. Aunt Kate McEachan 80th Birthday, July 1985. Uncle Harry McEachan age 65, 1992.



Uncle Alexander (Sammy) 1945. Eddie McEachan senior and Marion Rick 1961 – first trip 'home'. Lyn's parents at their 40th Wedding Anniversary

Marion came from a family of 13 children, but only eight survived: Agnes, Catherine (Kate), Lachlan (Lax), Harry, Alexander (Sanny), William (Willie), Edward (Eddie) and Marion. Her father, Lachlan, was a French polisher. Marion's eldest sister, Agnes Rowlands, lived in Maryborough, and sister Kate (Catherine) McEachan in Euramo. Kate married Carl Rick.

Brother Harry stayed in Scotland, but when he retired at 65 years old in 1992, decided to ride a bicycle to Australia and back. He journeyed through Europe, Turkey, India and Singapore and after a struggle reached Fremantle, then travelled on a train to Queensland. When he reached Maryborough, his sister, Agnes, rode her bike ten miles to meet him. He stayed in Cairns with Uncle Andrew Oribin, who had migrated with his mother (Agnes Oribin, Marion's grandmother) to Cairns in 1903. Harry returned directly to Scotland on a ship that left Sydney and was farewelled by Eddie McEachan.

Agnes remarried and lived on a farm in South Johnstone for a time, taking the family connection to the Cassowary Coast region well back.

Alexander (Sanny) served in WWII and in 1960 came to Australia to visit his son Alex who lived in Babinda. He got a job at the Babinda Sugar Mill and was crushed by a piece of steel. Dorothy can still recall the sound of the ambulance siren coming through Edmonton when she was working there and knew there was a serious accident somewhere. She learned later that her Uncle Sanny was involved, and he was lucky to survive.



Marion Rick and Phyllis Green at the wedding of Russell and Michelle, 2010. Victor and Phyllis Green with grandson Russell.



Left: Constance Summers with siblings LTR: Iris, Constance, Les, Joe (uniform), Albert, Beatrice, Edith and Roy. Right: Constance Summers (Lucille's grandmother) with Eunice (Lucille's Mum). Images from *Ancestry.com.au*.



Eunice Kann, with Frank and Lucille. Lucille's grandmother Constance with daughters: Aster Wagner, Dorothy Fairweather, Constance and Eunice Kann. Image posted on *Ancestry.com.au* by Kerry Bond 2014.



Irvin Kann WWII.

Irvin and Eunice marriage.

Eunice and Irvin Kann.

HISTORIANS

The Rick family didn't just live their history - they captured it, catalogued it, and preserved it with remarkable dedication. While other pioneering families documented their stories, few approached the task with the thoroughness and passion that has become a hallmark of the Ricks.

Marion Rick was the first to take up the pen. Her stories found their perfect custodian in her daughter-in-law Dorothy, who married Marion's son Charles and proved to be a bowerbird herself when it came to historical treasures. Among Marion's records is the text from fallen soldier Syd Harris' headstone plaque. The plaque itself has long vanished, but Marion's transcription, made with her fellow members of the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay Progress Association, ensures those words endure. She also left us a delightful memoir about her friend Rupert Fenby, one of the district's most eccentric early settlers. While Marion believed Fenby was in his late sixties when they met at Tully Hospital, he was over 75.

Excerpts from Marion's account of the famously unconventional Fenby are worth sharing:

One day my children asked me could they go and visit Mr Fenby. I said yes. Sometime later, my six-year-old daughter stamped into the house and declared "he is the rudest man I ever saw." When I enquired why, she said he had no clothes on. Rupert had a bottle with the bottom out of it hanging from a tree. Visitors were supposed to blow through this bottle to give Rupert a warning that someone was coming. He kept a pair of pants handy to pull on as in the seclusion of the bush he just went naked. On the day when the children went visiting him, it had been very windy and he thought it was just the wind blowing through the bottle and not visitors...

At certain times of the year, we get plagued with March flies. They bring lumps up on me. One day when I was growling and smacking at the flies, Rupert came along and told me they didn't bother him. He said the cassowaries followed him around and picked the flies off him. Can you visualise it? The mind boggles at the skinny old gent, stark naked, chipping his garden, and the cassowaries following him around waiting for a fly to land so they could snap it up.

Dorothy Rick had more than Marion's stories. She shared the historian's instinct. Anything relevant to district or family history found its way into her care, meticulously organized in folders. Her collection reads like a treasure trove: photographs spanning generations, eulogies, newspaper clippings, personal memoirs, family trees, all maintained in pristine condition. She devoted a folder to her own family line, the Greens from the Tablelands. In 1979, Dorothy and MBSS Teacher Aside Lil Williams compiled a photo album of the first 25 years of the school.

The historical torch passed to Lachie Rick and his wife Lyn, who recognized the value of their lived experience and systematically preserved it. Their photographs reach back to 1951, capturing images that exist nowhere else. But their contribution extended far beyond personal archiving. In 2003, for Mission Beach State School's 50th Anniversary, Lachie and Lyn joined Judy Heath and Diane Bull on the Anniversary Committee to produce a remarkable 164-page book. This school history provides a rich tapestry of oral histories from parents, students, and teachers. The voices of the Rick families resonate throughout with recollections from Lachie, Marion, Frank Jnr, Leslee Collins (née Rick), and Lyn, providing invaluable firsthand accounts. Today, the Mission Beach Historical Society regularly turns to this volume as a key reference work.

Lachie's commitment to recording history continued throughout his life. He regularly wrote about family and district stories, culminating in his 2017 self-published work: *Mission Beach as I Remember It*, Lachlan Rick OAM. This 27-page memoir offers another essential primary source, documenting not only the Rick family story but also the development of Mission Beach's banana industry, a record of the early residents, and even the names of those who kept holiday homes in the area during its formative years.

Sheena started recording history as well before she was struck down far too early in life. She obtained the original diaries of pioneer George Webb and transcribed them for all to see. It was in the genes of this family to value and record their district's history. Sheena's husband, Eddie knew that one day, Sheena would have become a prominent historian in the region had she lived longer:

After completing her master's, Sheena continued her studies and earned a BA in English Literature as she planned to write in her retirement. At the time of her death, she was doing research on Fenby (pioneer, Rupert Fenby). She had already won the Cairns Post short story competition one year. Completely shocked the Cairns writers. Nice story if you can get your hands on it.

Quite a lady. We were so lucky to spend her last six months on the idyllic island of Niue where she could write and learn a new language and new craft skills.

I can only imagine how Mission Beach Historical Society would have been so much richer and better able to write the district's history had Sheena lived a long life like her Mum.

Through three generations, the Ricks have given their community an extraordinary gift by preserving stories that might otherwise have slipped away with time, ensuring that both the everyday and the unusual and eccentric are remembered.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

When Frank Snr and Marion Rick arrived at Mission Beach with their four school-age children, they found a settlement desperately in need of almost everything - a school, decent roads, reliable electricity, places to gather. What they didn't find was any shortage of work to do.

Before the first school building stood on Mission Beach soil, the Ricks were already part of the lobbying effort, adding their voices, and crucially, their four children, to the case for education in this remote tropical corner of Queensland. When the school finally opened its doors in 1953, it was a community triumph. Ten children filed in on that first day. Four of them were Ricks.

That same pattern would repeat itself for more than seven decades: if something needed building in Mission Beach, you could bet the Ricks would be there with hammers in hand. If an organization needed leadership, a Rick would step forward. If funds needed raising, they'd already be planning the next dance.

Frank Snr – Building Infrastructure

Frank Rick understood that remote communities survive on great ingenuity and effort. When Mission Beach decided it needed tennis courts in 1954, the Johnstone Shire Council offered little more than moral support. They'd provide some fence netting and materials, but that was it. Undeterred, Frank and the other founders rolled up their sleeves. At a February 1955 Tennis Club meeting, Marion and Mr. Jack Donkin volunteered to convince Doug Campbell to loan his bulldozer. The rest they'd do themselves.

Dances were organized, and Marion agreed to supply supper. Euchre tournaments raised funds, with donated prizes including Jack Donkin's carton of cigarettes and a casket lottery ticket for the Lucky Spot winner. A darts competition followed, with Keith Dixon supplying the board. Working bees became social events. The community voted that anyone who joined the working bees would earn a two-year membership. Men joined the club for one pound, women for ten shillings.



Early tennis match: foreground Alf Daveson and Lachie Rick, background Owen Perry and Bert Wildsoet. Image from Lachie Rick.

The first dance alone raised £24/2/4, a significant sum that reflected both the community's determination and their thirst for social connection. By June 1955, so many locals had joined the working bees that free memberships were flowing. The exact opening date of the court has been lost to water damage in the handwritten minutes lovingly preserved by Diane Paul, but by July 1957 the courts still weren't quite complete. Likely they opened that September, a court built not by governments but by neighbours prepared to fend for themselves. Within the Rick family, it was Frank Snr and Sheena who loved playing tennis most.

Frank's community work extended far beyond tennis. When the Mission Beach State School needed a shelter shed, he joined Ted Boyett, Mick Bell, Jack Donkin, and Ken Campbell in a remarkable feat of recycling. They dismantled a shelter from East Innisfail State School and rebuilt it piece by piece at Mission Beach. In 1964, when the town needed a Progress Hall, Frank partnered with John Parsons on the construction. When money ran out for timber, as it inevitably did, Marion quietly acted as guarantor at the timber mill, ensuring supplies flowed uninterrupted.

The Rick family's involvement with the P&C was dynastic. Frank Snr served as President in 1956, Marion as Treasurer in 1959, daughter-in-law Lyn as Secretary for four years in the 1970s, and daughter-in-law Dorothy as Treasurer for another four years later that decade. Son Lachie took the President's chair for two years in the late 1970s. Together, they spearheaded projects that transformed the school: a teacher's residence here, an adventure playground there. They organized cabarets at the El Arish War Memorial Hall and pioneered the Banana Festivals, with the first in 1979 netting \$3,800 for the school.

Their fundraising creativity knew no bounds. Regular card evenings led by Frank Snr at the General Store became community institutions. Dances filled the Rick Dance Hall in Mission Beach, also in El Arish, and Tully. School fetes created much fun when sprawled across the space in front of the General Store, featuring wood-chopping competitions, tugs of war, banana-packing races, greasy pole games, and always – always – a dance when night fell.



Dances at the Rick Dance Hall were popular: Nita Cargnello, Vivienne Smith, Catherine Rick and Willamina Kane 1957. Image by Lachie Rick.

Marion Rick OAM - A Force of Nature

If Frank Snr was Mission Beach's builder, Marion was its connector, its advocate, and its relentless champion. Where others saw problems, Marion saw exciting new projects. Where others complained, Marion organized.

Take Christmas, for instance. Marion thought that local children deserved something special during the holidays, so she simply made it happen. She recruited, or as the family fondly remembers it, 'collared', different victims each year to don the red and white Santa suit. Every child received a gift. The tradition endured for years, powered by Marion's determination.

Marion's most dramatic interventions targeted Mission Beach's infrastructure deficits. The roads were quagmires in the wet season, virtually impassable. Rather than waste time pleading with the local Council, who'd proven chronically reluctant to spend money on Mission Beach, Marion recruited John Parsons and marched straight to Innisfail to meet with the Minister for Main Roads. The audacity worked. Major road improvements soon followed.

Marion and John were on a roll. Next came electricity. Working with the Electricity Board (CREB), they determined where power lines should run, bringing reliable electricity to a town that had long made do without it. These weren't small wins; they were fundamental transformations of daily life in Mission Beach.

Marion's sixty-plus years with the Queensland Country Women's Association began with a simple invitation from her neighbour, Marion Anderson. But Marion Rick being Marion Rick, she didn't just join. She served locally, regionally, and eventually became a Life Member of the Country Women's Association of the World. She attended the World CWA Conference in London in 1974 and the South Pacific Conference in 1996. When traveling to remote areas as District President for the area from Tully to Thursday Islands, she became a Justice of the Peace specifically to help those who had no access to such services. In 2001, the *Tully Times* reported her receiving an Attorney General of Queensland Certificate for 25 years of JP service.

Marion was significantly involved in a staggering number of important community groups in the region. When a church committee formed, Marion was elected as Treasurer. In the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay Progress Association, she held several executive positions over more than 40 years. This advocacy body had evolved from the Clump Point Progress Association, first convened on March 16, 1912, when Herb Cutten became President. The burning issues then were access roads and mail services. Through all its name changes and iterations, Marion remained committed to the organization, even as she watched it eventually abandon its strong advocacy role.

Her influence extended far beyond Mission Beach's borders. Marion formed the first Ladies Auxiliary for Innisfail's Warrina Home for the Aged and served on the home's Board of Management. She established a Senior Citizens' Association in Innisfail. When someone stood down from the Johnstone Shire Council, Marion filled in for a year or so. She ran for Council in 1988, though unsuccessfully. She volunteered for the Cancer Screening Clinic in Tully, spreading goodwill wherever she went.

Marion and Frank also quietly assisted migrant families with jobs and accommodation, sponsoring four men from the UK, three of whom became Australian citizens. And in whatever spare moments existed between running the Post Office and Store, raising a family, helping on the banana farms, transforming her community, supporting the wider region... Marion knitted beanies for Children's Hospitals.

Despite her remarkable achievements, which culminated in being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2008 *for service to the communities of Mission Beach and Innisfail through a range of women's educational and civic organisations*, Marion's feet remained firmly planted. She became an Australian citizen on January 26,

1949, yet never lost her deep bond with Scotland, maintaining her dual passport and visiting her homeland on several occasions. She often wore t-shirts blazoned with *Scotland* across the front.



Marion with Governor General Quenton Bryce at Government House 2008.

The Next Generation Steps Up

The Rick children absorbed their parents' ethos of service like tropical rain soaking into Mission Beach sand. Each carved their own path through the community's organizational landscape.

Lachie started young, astoundingly young. At just sixteen, he became Secretary of the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay Progress Association, later serving as President. He followed his mother's path so closely that when he received his own Medal of the Order of Australia in 2004 *for service to the Cardwell Shire through emergency services and school groups*, it felt like a torch being formally passed.

He spent decades with the Queensland Fire Service, when the fire trucks were kept on Rick property from 1983 to 1992, complemented by his roles as inaugural Vice President of the Mission Beach Lions Club in 1980 (serving twice as President), his thirty years with the Masonic Freemasons, and seventeen years with the FNQ Youth Assistance Fund.



Lachie (wheelchair) – Lachie Rick and Family dedication of the new fire appliance. Image from Lyn Rick.

In 2024, the Mission Beach Fire Service recognised the contributions of Lachie and Lyn Rick by dedicating a new fire appliance to them for their 58 years of service. Lachie was only 22 years old when he set out to build a fire service for the community in 1962 and in 1963 the Mission Beach Bush Brigade was formed. Both Lachie and Lyn held elected officer positions with the service over four decades. Dedications such as this are rare in the fire service.

Lachie chaired the Tully & District Hospital Health Committee and led both the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay Progress Association and the Fruit Growers Association. Aptly named for his activist mother, Lachie McEachan Rick lived up to his legendary mother's name in so many ways.

Lachie's wife **Lyn** served alongside him in the Lions and Lioness Clubs for decades as well and was the Lioness Club President in 1981. Both were Charter Members of Lions and Lionesses. Lyn also joined in with Lachie as a volunteer for the Mission Beach Fire Service and served on the P&C committee whilst the family was at school. Together, they embraced the family tradition of shared community work.



Lion's field day at Lamanna's Bingil Bay farm, 2000. LTR: Kevin Marks, Reg Kuchler, Lachie Rick, Sheila Lawler, Joy Clayfield, Greg Heath and Lyn Rick.

Charles matched his brother's dedication with his own remarkable stamina. His involvement spanned the P&C, seven years as Secretary of the Mission Beach Cricket Club (until 1987), several years leading the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay Fruit Growers Association, and twenty-six years with the Bush Fire Brigade. He and Dorothy served with the Tully Coast Guard on radio duty for some time and the Mission Beach SES. For seventeen years, he and Dorothy ran Bingo every Monday night for the Lion and Lioness Club, a surprisingly successful fundraiser that drew tourists throughout winter months. Charles was the Bingo caller.

As a charter member of the Lions Club in 1980, Charles was still going strong as President forty years later in 2020. Under his stewardship, these clubs became powerhouses of community support. In 2019 alone, they donated over \$23,000 to community causes, including \$10,000 to Tully Ambulance for their new station. They then championed Mission Beach's ambulance station, which finally opened in October 1997.

Charles approached his community work with characteristic good humour; he was the only man at the Lioness Club's *Wicked Wild Women* fundraisers, including the 2007 *Wicked Wild Wedding Day* when Mission Beach ladies paraded in vintage family wedding gowns. As the *Tully Times* reported, *Bridal gowns of every vintage and colour were taken out of mothballs and proudly paraded*. Charles took the good-natured stick these events involved with grace.



“Wicked Wild Wedding Day” Luncheon Lioness Club at Horizon Resort September 2007.

Below: Lions in their new shirts 2023.



Sharalyn Dennis and Charles Rick Parents of the Bride “Wicked Wild Wedding Day”, Lions Club event, 2007. Charles and Dorothy 2008 worked in the kitchen at Mission Besch Resort for seven years, 2004 – 2010.

Dorothy started community work even earlier than Lachie; she was rolling bandages and cotton wool balls for hospitals as a Jnr Red Cross member in 1958.

Dorothy was the Charter Treasurer of the Lioness Club in 1980 and has spent 45 years fundraising with them and, more recently, the Lions, frequently accepting executive roles. When the Lioness Club disbanded worldwide in June 2021, with Dorothy serving as President of the Mission Beach branch for the last five years, she simply continued their activities independently and worked with the Lions as well. She kept collecting stamps for the Red Cross and began crocheting colourful coat hanger covers as Mother's Day gifts for church groups, nursing homes and others. When we interviewed Dorothy in 2026, she produced her latest cache: 160 crochet-covered coat hangers, neatly packed and ready for delivery to many churches and other organisations.

A tradition Dorothy maintains with much joy is writing personalized letters from Santa for all the children at Mission Beach Childcare Centre. The magic she creates with those letters ripples through dozens of families each year.

The records show Dorothy and Charles served simultaneously as Presidents of their respective Lion Clubs in 2016, 2017, and 2019, a testament to their incredible community commitment. Together, they also supported the Surf Lifesaving Club via F Rick and Sons, donating a surf reel for the Nippers in 1995.

Lucille and **Frank Jnr** took a slightly different pathway from that of Lachie and Frank. Like most of us, they preferred to stay out of the limelight rather than being President of this and that yet did no less because of it. They were involved actively in community projects like the others and branched out into an important new development in the banana industry, organic farming.

They were on the Mission Beach P&C when their daughter Coral went to school. Frank Jnr became a steward of the Innisfail Show and served for several years in the role. Both Frank and Lucille dedicated many years to the cause of organic banana farming holding seminars on their farm and elsewhere and Lucille became President of the Queensland Organic Growers organisation and often addressed working groups. Their roles were different from those of the other Ricks, yet they contributed fully to their communities.

Sheena left the district to pursue education and career, and in that sphere, she contributed much to the State and region. Her husband, Eddie, reflected on her progress and noted that she sacrificed much when she allowed him to pursue his own career at the expense of hers:

Sheena was a very special lady. I was fortunate that she chose to follow me in my career. In the first seven years of our marriage, we lived in four different cities in three states. Each time we moved, Sheena lost her seniority in that State's education system. When we moved to Innisfail, she could not get a job immediately with the State, so she joined Good Council College and began studying again by correspondence and graduated with an education degree. Not content with that, she then completed a masters degree in education. Not bad while also raising a family with a husband who did an MBA and qualified as an accountant at the same time.

She then put her studies to good use. She became a marker for the State exams and was appointed Deputy Chair of Innisfail TAFE College. She became a member of the State Curriculum Advisory Panel which involved monthly overnight trips to Brisbane and was promoted to Deputy Principal Curriculum. When Sheena died, the Home Economics teachers in Cairns established a memorial bursary in her name in recognition of the work she did in promoting the subject in the region.

Sheena's husband **Eddie McEachan** was equally active in community affairs and shared the Rick ethos of problem-solving and community commitment and brought that to his role as Johnstone Shire Clerk (CEO). He tackled issues that had paralyzed Mission Beach for years.

The sewerage debate in Mission Beach exemplified community dysfunction. Those with failing septic systems desperately wanted a central system; those with working septic systems, unsurprisingly, did not want to pay for one. Meanwhile, the State Environmental Protection Agency was circling. If the community couldn't agree soon, the EPA would impose its own expensive solution.

Eddie understood that good process matters and that nothing would ever happen unless someone owned it; someone senior who is in one of the two Councils responsible for Mission Beach. In 1999, he appointed a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and a project leader, paired them with an eminent engineer, and then, crucially, let them work without interference while maintaining oversight. He allowed the CAC to choose the sewerage engineering team to conduct the scientific study of water quality and systems options and released results to residents so they were informed and could have a say in the future. The study was conclusive; the environment was being put at great risk by toxins in the water. Through patient, genuine consultation, a sensible and affordable solution emerged. The system was operational in 2005.

Eddie brought the same facilitative approach to the *Ulysses Link Foreshore Walk and Bike Trail*. During his tenure, the Johnstone Shire Council also won an international conservation award for its innovative Town Plan including a groundbreaking program of encouraging voluntary conservation agreements on private land. That program had a great and enduring impact on the forests at Mission Beach, and it revolutionised the approach of Town Planning for the benefit of the environment in Queensland.

His innovative leadership brought many benefits to the residents of Mission Beach and beyond.

LEGACY

In 2000, the family established the Frank Rick Memorial Fund with their own donations, then hosted a dinner for 80 friends and associates to bring the fund up to \$15,000. The Rick Family Fund followed. These trusts support disadvantaged youth in the Cassowary Coast Region with education, sporting, and cultural opportunities. In 2021, they merged to become the Frank and Marion Rick and Rick Family Fund, a perpetual investment in the kind of community building the Ricks had championed for over half a century.

In 2026, several members of the Rick family remain in Mission Beach... Lyn and Dorothy as well as Colin and Jenny, ensuring this iconic family name continues into its 75th year in the district. Overall, what the Rick family gave Mission Beach can't be easily quantified. Yes, there are the tangible things: courts, halls, roads, power lines, school buildings, ambulance stations. There are the organizations sustained through decades of volunteer hours. There are the funds raised, the migrants assisted, the children delighted by Santa visits, the hospital patients comforted by hand-knitted beanies.

But the deeper gift was the example they set. When Frank and Marion arrived with their young family, they found a place that needed almost everything. They decided to help put that right and transform this remote settlement into an attractive and vibrant community.

Marion lobbying governments in her Scottish regalia, Frank's card evening fundraisers, Dorothy's 160 coat hangers awaiting delivery, Charles leading the Lions at 79, Frank Jnr's building of the second motel, Lachie starting with the Progress Association at 16, Sheena's work on our history... this reveals people who understood that community you actively build, one dance, one fundraiser, one working bee at a time.

So many contributions to our economy and employment... we have so much to be grateful for. How fortunate Mission Beach was that Marion and Frank chose to settle here. How fortunate that they raised children who chose the same path and fought for their town. Although most of the third generation has moved on to other place, this is perhaps inevitable in our mobile age. But one hopes they carry with them their family creed: that wherever you are, you have the power to make things better.

By strange coincidence, whenever pivotal moments have arisen in the capture of the district's history, the Rick family were there... Marion and Lachie Rick were there when the Progress Association reformed in 1956 and went on to fund the project that saw Constance Mackness publish our district's first published history. Frank and Marion led the project to build our Community Hall in 1964, and that hall was the place where the Mission Beach Historical Society began its first tentative steps in 2020.

Sheena Rick it was who dusted off the old diaries of pioneer George Webb, transcribed them and made them accessible. Marion retrieved the text written on the plaque at the Syd Harris headstone and recorded it safely for us to rediscover. Lachie and Lyn helped organise the writing of the school anniversary book. The whole family today... Dorothy, Lyn, Leslee, Colin, Frank Jnr, Lucille and Eddie all responded without hesitation when we sought to record their valuable family stories. The Rick family has always been there when history beckons.

Some of the infrastructure they helped build still stands today, yet the real infrastructure the Ricks built was something less visible and more enduring; a culture of showing up, pitching in, and refusing to accept that 'remote' must mean 'without.'

Perhaps that's the legacy that matters most.