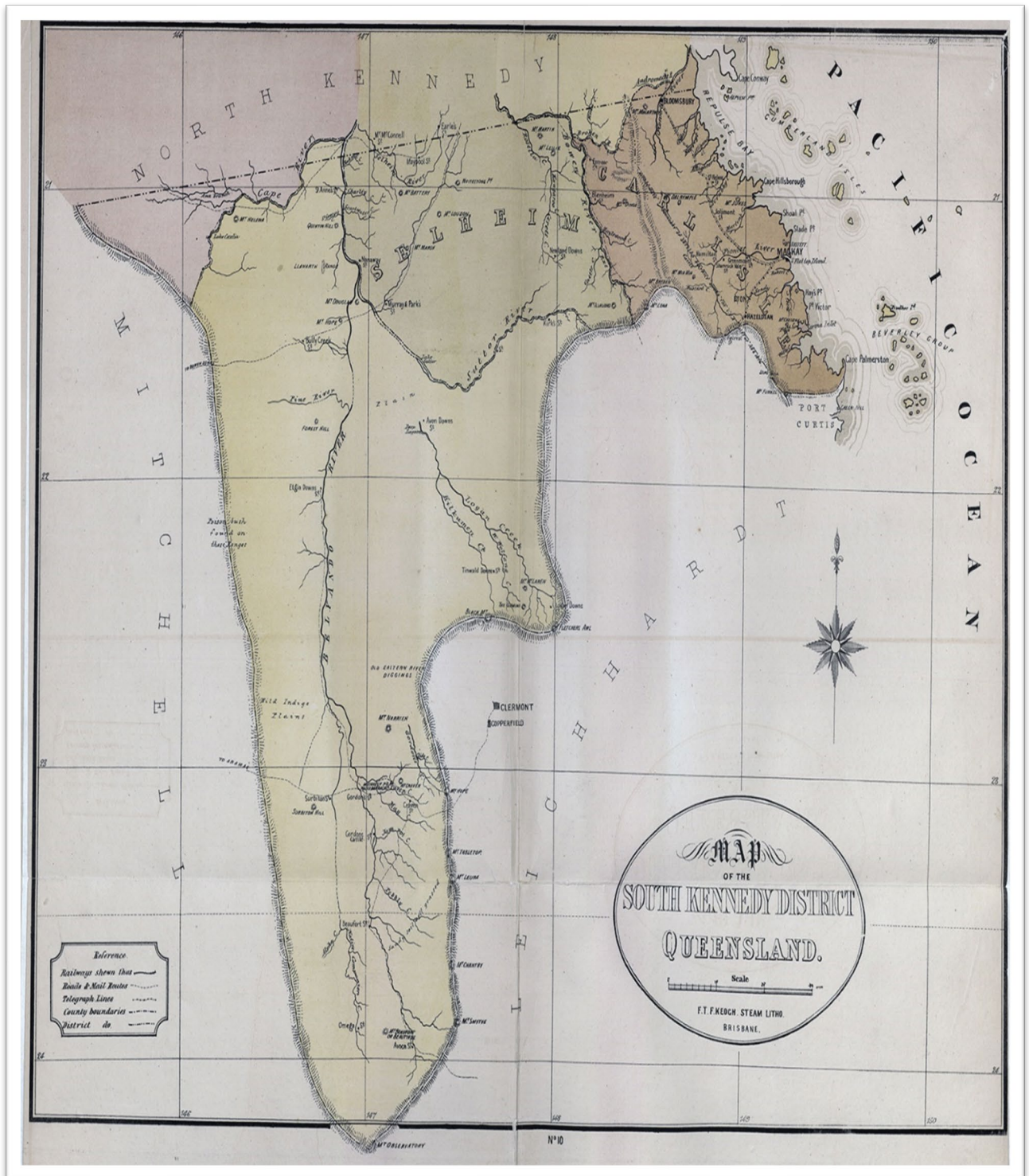


#### 4. Pastoral Beginnings in the Valley



Map 4.1: South Kennedy Land District, first opened for settlement in 1860–62. Mackay is shown on the far right.

Source: Hiscocks 1878.

### **The Pioneer Valley in the 1860s**

By the mid-1860s, the Pioneer Valley floor and close-by areas were divided into about a dozen pastoral leases. The leases were truncated regularly between the late 1860s and the 1880s as agricultural settlement and urban spaces expanded. Agricultural development, not pastoralism, became the dominant economy in the valley. The positions of the main leases related to the original 1860 land selections in the valley, plus the St Helens leases to the north. Chapter 2 used a jigsaw and a chess game as similes for the pattern of pastoral settlement, but perhaps the game of musical chairs is just as appropriate. Entrepreneurial gentry brothers and their partners (with a propensity to marry sisters) moved around. Whoever had spare cash seems to have grabbed what they could, then sat down when the music stopped. To extend the simile, sometimes they got caught out when the music stopped too quickly. Stock was also traded between properties, and given the rate at which the leases altered, the stock was actually far more valuable than the land.

It is not always easy to piece the lease agreements back together as names and sizes changed, and the registered owners are sometimes bank managers or financiers, not the actual pastoralists, or two contiguous leases were operated as one. The names and sizes of runs in government registers do not always match every-day usage of names, nor how they were described in diaries or newspapers. Before survey and mapping, the boundaries of leases were often vague and flexible. As shown in Map 4.2, which depicts land divisions in the Pioneer Valley in 1863, there were several neighbouring pastoral properties—Greenmount, Cape Palmerston, Balnagowan, Hamilton and Hopetoun, The Hollow, and Mt Spencer. The four St Helens leases were to the north and on the southern coastal fringe of the valley, Henry Bell settled at Plane Creek (now Sarina) in 1863, joined by Edmund and Richard Atherton and their families in 1865. There were also other pastoral leases not far away. For instance, William Leichhardt Mordon took up a 20,000-acre (8,094 ha) lease at Mt Funnell, south of the Pioneer Valley in 1861. The lease was then transferred four times before it was granted to the Christian family. Kelvin Grove station, near today's Koumala, was founded by Mark Christian. His lease was applied for in November 1864 and approved in July 1865. The main runs and stations are outlined in detail below, as is the legislation that controlled the formation of pastoral stations.



**Plate 4.1: Mark Christian, Kelvin Grove station.**

Source: Mackay Regional Council, Greenmount Homestead Collection.

The 1860–64 years were halcyon days when young fit men with spirits of adventure could take up large areas of land on the Queensland frontier, before government regulations and more sophisticated management, financial and marketing practices tamed the pastoral industry. Compared to the open plains over the mountains to the west, the Pioneer Valley and its coastal surrounds were a quite small area, soon filled with pastoral leases. Maps 4.2 and 4.3 provide an outline of the changes during the 1860s. Whereas Chapter 2 looked at general patterns, and Chapter 3 was confined to John Mackay's adventures, this chapter deals with other individuals and leases relevant to the valley. Chapter 5 is an attempt to depict the domestic ingenuity needed to live such an isolated lifestyle. Chapter 6 deals with First Nations Australians and their interactions with the settlers.

### **Tenders and Leases**

In the absence of detailed information on the first pastoralists, the *Lands Acts* can help us understand their motivations. We can be sure that they knew the Acts and changes in administrative policies very well. Their financial investments depended on this knowledge: they had to pay rents, stock runs, know the time periods within which this had to occur, and they took advantage of pre-emptive rights to convert the best areas into freehold land. Thirteen Imperial and New South Wales *Lands Acts* were transferred to the new Queensland colony. Land in the Pioneer Valley was all selected when it was part of the colony of Queensland, although neighbouring pastoral leases around Broadsound and Nebo dated back to New South Wales years.

By the time Queensland became a separate colony, selection of pastoral properties had been underway in the south since the 1840s. In earlier decades, the Government of New South Wales had expected squatters to be content with running sheep and cattle on Crown land for an annual rent based on the carrying capacity. Pastoralists usually played down the proportions of their often-huge leases that were suitable for grazing, and tried to convince the Government of the low carrying capacity (and therefore lower fees) because of rugged areas, poor soils, lack of water, or tick infestations etc. A system of tendering for leases had developed in New South Wales. The next phase was that pastoralists no longer paid a license to graze stock on Crown land. Tenders were called and once accepted, if the rent was paid, the tenderer was entitled to a lease, which could be sold or transferred. Tenders went to the highest bidder. Estimates of the size and boundaries of tendered-for areas were often wildly incorrect, and it could take a year before an official survey was made. The presumption was that the price of the tenders would level out, based on the value of the land for pastoralism. Huge areas were under tenders or leases. Tenders not only extended over thousands of square miles, but also allowed the land to remain unstocked and unoccupied. It was a bonanza for early run-hunters, but not for anyone following behind the first rush north.

The colony of Queensland was proclaimed in June 1859. At the beginning of 1860, Cabinet rescinded the earlier New South Wales opening of the Kennedy and Mitchell land districts, aiming to stop speculators from grabbing the land without intention of stocking it (which the tender system had encouraged). After several false starts, the Kennedy Land District was finally opened on 1 February 1861, with George Dalrymple as the first public servant, serving as Commissioner of Lands, and Police Magistrate, based in Bowen. The Government hoped that this delayed opening would regularise land acquisition. It certainly frustrated early pastoralists, explorers, and run-hunters (such as Dalrymple and his 1859 Sydney syndicate—see Chapter 2), and others wishing to settle in the Pioneer Valley. However, the delay gave the Queensland Government time to pass new *Lands Acts* in September 1860. Although this did encourage *bona fide* settlers, as is made clear in this chapter, the trade in leases continued.



When the first European expedition entered the Pioneer Valley in 1860 it was from over the mountains at the back, not along the coast. They discovered a previously hidden coastal area within the Kennedy Land District, a medium sized fertile and well-watered valley with a central river and tributaries. While their exploits were exceptional, as outlined in the previous two chapters, seen within the context of the 1850s pastoral expansion, locating and opening up the valley was part of a logical progression. When the Port Curtis and Leichhardt land districts were declared open for settlement in January 1854, these new districts were the furthest extent of the northern pastoral frontier. The Kennedy Land District to the north was wholly tropical, well-watered, and partly coastal. All these districts were determined by geographic features. Kennedy was soon divided into two sections for easier administration. The South Kennedy District abutted the Mitchell, Leichhardt, and Port Curtis districts, extending down the Belyando River, and towards the coast at Connors Range (Maps 2.7, 2.8, 2.9). The North Kennedy District ran north to a spur of the Great Dividing Range, then east to Rockingham Bay, now the site of Cardwell in 1864. On the coast, the South Kennedy District began at Cape Palmerston in the south and extended north to Cape Conway, then North Kennedy extended north to Cardwell. The inland area covered the watersheds of the Herbert, Burdekin, Belyando, Suttor and Bowen rivers. There were numerous river valleys, high ranges and more isolated peaks, plateaux, and coastal and inland plains. The Pioneer River and its tributaries were within the coastal section of the South Kennedy Land District (Map 4.1).



**Plate 4.2: Resting cattle while droving in central Queensland, in the nineteenth century.**  
Source: De Stag  1901, 71.



### **1860 *Lands Acts***

The 1860s administration of land divides into two periods, 1860–64, when the first pastoralists arrived and were arguing with the Government about the best and fairest administrative system, and 1865 to 1869 when settlement in the Leichhardt and Kennedy land districts was well advanced. By 1869, the leases in and around the Pioneer Valley had begun to be cut back for agricultural and urban settlement. The Pioneer Valley squatters were not usually the same explorers and run-hunters described in Chapter 2, who had dominated the 1850s, although there were links. The Macartneys and Athertons are the best examples. However, most of them had similar origins—connected to Victoria, the New England Tableland, and the Darling Downs—and they moved north to the edge of 1860s settlement.

Four new *Lands Acts* were enacted on 17 September 1860. In order of the introduction of the Bills to Parliament, the first was an attempt to regulate and facilitate the occupation of Crown Lands not yet open for settlement. Next came an Act to regulate the occupation of land applied for by tender but not yet granted as leases. Two more Acts were to regulate leases in long-settled areas, and to deal with the alienation of land for closer settlement. The 1860 *Lands Acts* moved away from the old decentralised system begun in the 1830s, with its time-consuming cumbersome much-abused tendering process. In the original system, all power resided with the Chief Commissioner in Sydney. The 1860 land legislation attempted to satisfy the demands of pastoralists who had opened and developed new land, while at the same time encouraging agricultural development. Queensland was looking for a staple agricultural crop—settlers experimented with cotton, coffee and sugarcane. Part of this was the necessity of encouraging closer settlement on land surrounding urban areas, which fulfilled the needs of immigrants with smaller amounts of capital. The Acts extended the time during which leases had to be stocked, from nine months to one year. Pastoralists had to provide signed declarations that they had fulfilled the stocking arrangements and faced possible prosecution for making false statements.

Under the 1860 system, after inspection, the local Commissioner for Lands had the power to grant leases to occupy land, if there was no conflict with an existing lease. The Commissioners had no enforcement powers and licence fees were paid direct to the Treasury. The idea was to speed up the process using local decision-making, but the Commissioners had no judicial powers, or direct access to the quite large amounts of money involved. Other problems were that the only existing maps, made by the first explorers, were inaccurate and often contained multiple names for the same rivers, creeks, and mountains. The Commissioners had to be good bushmen, a characteristic not usually matched with skills in administration, surveying and draftmanship. The Leichhardt District Commissioner of Lands William H. Wiseman was notorious for carrying most of the records in his head. Commissioners were often away, travelling hundreds of kilometres from their offices, and the Lands Department back-log for processing applications was extreme. It was alleged that they could also be bribed, with Dalrymple as prime suspect for being a recipient of financial rewards.

Squatting licences enabled temporary occupation of leases for a probationary period of twelve months. The licence fee, set at 10s. per square mile, had to be paid within the first 90 days. Before the next nine months expired, the lessees had to stock the runs with at least 25 head of sheep, or five head of cattle or horses per square mile. Land blocks could be between 25 and 100 square miles and were expected where possible to be rectangular, while also allowing for natural features. No run could enclose both sides of a river, thus preventing others from accessing the water. It was possible to take up multiple 25 or 100 square mile blocks and the richer graziers availed themselves of adjoining 100 square mile blocks. One, John Melton Black (later of Townsville fame) took up blocks that in total covered around 1,200 square miles. Queensland land was judged to be fit to carry 100 sheep per square mile,

but to allow for variations in carrying capacity stocking was set at a quarter of this rate. If the leases covered 100 square miles, this meant stocking with 2,500 sheep, or 500 cattle or horses, or some combination of all three. Obtaining stock and moving the animals over long distances became a difficult problem. Sometimes the sheep came from as far away as Victoria, moved overland, or by ship. There were also regulations to control contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and scab (psoroptic mange, a skin disease caused by mites). Stock could only enter Queensland at designated border crossing places and ports of entry, where they were inspected. If stocking proceeded, the lease could be applied for, but if stocking was inadequate the lease was forfeit. These conditions were quite stringent, intended to stop speculation. Contiguous runs under the one name were in practice (although not in law) counted as one for the purpose of stocking. It was practical to concentrate stock in a limited area, to be able to supervise them and keep them safe from Aboriginal attacks.

Most of these regulations also applied to land thrown open for settlement for the first time, and to land opened earlier for tender, but not finalised because of the administrative backlog. Leases, whether under licence or tender, were usually for 14 years. Assessment that the provisions were fulfilled came after four years, followed by two five-year lease periods. Rent for the first period was paid in advance at a rate of 10s. per square mile, per annum. Rents were reassessed at the end of each period (hence the bleating from squatters that their land was of low quality, to beat down the price). Resumptions could occur after 12 months' notice, although in normal circumstances squatters could expect to remain on the land for 14 years.

The 1860 *Lands Act* relevant to the early settlement of the Pioneer Valley was the *Act for Regulating the Occupation of Unoccupied Crown Lands in the Unsettled Districts*, which commenced in October 1860. It offered pastoralists 14-year leases: there was an occupation fee of 10s. per square mile and a rental fee for the first four years of the same amount. Over the next five years, depending on the lease's acreage and carrying capacity, the rent for 25 square miles was between £25 and £50; and for the last five years the rent was between £30 and £70 for the same size area. As each pastoral lease usually covered 25 to 50 square miles, with no limit to the number of contiguous runs which one individual could hold (if they complied with stocking regulations), convincing the Commissioner of Lands that the leases had a low carrying capacity became an art which could halve costs. Even though the rents were relatively low, a big land holding was still a considerable financial burden. Very few individuals had sufficient personal capital to invest in stock and pay government charges.

### **The 1862, 1863, and 1864 *Lands Acts***

The Government relied on pastoralism as the backbone of the economy and had to formulate policy encouraging pastoral settlement in new areas, balanced against precedent in the southern colonies, the greed for newly opened land on the frontier, and plans to develop agriculture. There was money to be made, but pastoralists always required substantial finances and had to be willing to work and live on isolated properties. In 1862, the Legislative Council set up a select committee to report on the workings of the 1860 Acts, which were criticised for being ambiguous. The role of the Commissioners of Lands was poorly defined, and many settlers felt that stocking should be the main factor in deciding the grant of leases.

The 1862–64 Acts ironed out anomalies in the 1860 Acts. The *Pastoral Occupation Act* of 1862 dealt with the time and mode of paying licenses, and dual claims for the same leases. (This came into play in helping work out the site and size of the Shamrock Vale lease in the Pioneer Valley.) The next year, the *Agricultural Reserves Act* ensured that agricultural land was available near urban areas, and the consolidating *Pastoral Leases Act* of 1863

provided new conditions for pastoral settlement in the settled (meaning proclaimed, i.e. the South Kennedy District) and unsettled districts. Leases in settled districts were for five years, to be offered at auction at not less than £1 per square mile. In unsettled districts, licences to occupy land were set at 10s. per square mile and were to be between 25 and 100 square miles. Subsequent rents were 10s. a square mile for the first four years, with the rent for the next 10 years subject to future appraisals, fixed at between £25 and £50 for the first five years, and £50 to £75 per block of 25 square mile for the second five years. There were a number of other provisions relating to renewal of leases, sales by auction of forfeited leases, stocking and compensation for improvements.

The *Pastoral Assessment Act* of 1864 facilitated the assessment of rent on Crown land leases in unsettled districts. The Act created a fund to cover the costs of the appraisal of rents. The lessee had to pay the Treasury £5 for each 25 square mile block, and 4s. for each additional square mile. If there was no default in payments, then the rent to be paid from the fifth to the ninth years of the lease was fixed at £27 10s. for each 25 square mile block, and £1 2s. for every additional square mile of available land. Between the tenth and the fourteenth years the rent was to be £35 per block of 25 square miles, and £1 15s. for every additional square mile. From a situation where regulation of pastoral settlement was haphazard and largely in the hands of the Commissioners, the rules had tightened and default was an expensive option, to be avoided. One sign of coming change was that the introduction of the Sugar and Coffee Regulations on 1 October 1864—was the basis for beginning the first sugarcane plantations in the Pioneer Valley. The regulations allowed individuals or companies to lease one block of land between 320 (129 ha) and 1,280 acres (518 ha), limited to within 10-miles of the coast or any navigable river. Once the lessee convinced the government that they had planted one-twentieth of the block with coffee or sugarcane, and that they had spent 20 shillings or more on improving each acre, they received a freehold title. Subsequently, a clause of the 1868 *Crown Lands Alienation Act* enabled land obtained under the 1864 regulations to be incorporated under the Act.

In 1863, the Lands and Survey Department was separated into two departments, which improved the administrative flow. The roles of the commissioners were redefined, and land had to be stocked for leases to be issued. The 1863 *Pastoral Leases Act* stated that applicants for new leases had to furnish a declaration of stocking with their applications, and earlier licence holders were given nine months as of 8 August 1862 to stock their runs. After 8 April 1863, all land forfeited (because it had not been stocked) was thrown open for new occupation. The pastoralists now had a deadline and could no longer manipulate the system by collecting unstocked runs. Calculations suggested that one million sheep and 100,000 cattle were needed, which would strain the supply of stock available and cause congestion on stock routes from the southern colonies. The pastoralists sometimes resorted to ‘rent-a-herd’ tactics, moving the same mob of sheep or cattle from station to station. This Act prevented pastoralists ‘arranging’ stocking declarations and other delaying tactics. The lease holders marshalled their arguments. They said that the timing of lambing and shearing needed to be considered, and, if forced, pastoralists would introduce inferior stock which was in no one’s interests. Pastoralists also argued that there was not enough stock available. If this was true, why did they need the extra land? It was all to no avail and the result was a rush to stock new country. Stocking leases with enough livestock, and within the regulation time, was always an issue.

The 1863 *Pastoral Leases Act* made the situation worse. All land holders were required to make a sworn declaration that their country was stocked by the due date or forfeit the land. After that, anyone could bring in stock, declare ownership and ‘jump’ the land. For instance, it rained all through the first part of 1863, and for most of the rest of the year. In January, sheep for Eaglefield (Dabin) station, west of Nebo, were being driven north, but had



only reached Yaamba, near Rockhampton. A neighbour, thinking the flocks could not arrive in time to secure the lease, put his own sheep on the land and was ready to send off an application. James John Martin, afterwards of Hamilton and Hopetoun stations at the western end of the Pioneer Valley, drove the strongest of the flock by forced marches from Yaamba, swam them over flooded creeks and put them on the country the night before the regulation time was up. Martin became famous for this feat of droving.

The squatters' pre-emptive purchase rights also caused many bitter debates. The non-permanent land tenure of leases, and their reduction in size when closer settlement began to impinge, was a disadvantage for pastoralists. Nevertheless, pre-emptive rights to permanently alienate the best parts of the leases were an advantage. Although pastoralists ended up with smaller properties, they owned them freehold. For example, when Hamilton station was reduced from 100 square miles to 12¾ square miles, much of the area lost was too hilly for use. The remainder, all useful land, was converted to pre-emptive purchases, and annual Occupational Licenses under the 1884 and 1897 *Lands Acts*. Pre-emptive rights did not end until the clause was removed from the 1897 Act. Some of the leases, even if reduced in size, remained in the same hands until the 1890s. In the 1880s, 1890s and 1900s, the Hamilton, Hopetoun, The Pinnacle, and The Hollow (Mirani) freehold land began to be sold for agricultural use. Many parliamentarians were themselves pastoralists with land leases and were in favour of what they saw as safeguarding pastoral rights.

Another issue concerned the powers of the Commissioners of Lands, particularly over the decision as to whether a lease was granted. It was argued that once the land was applied for, inspected, and stocked, the grant should take place. Administrative provision was made for the Commissioners to grant the lease without actual inspection, based on general knowledge of the district.

The 1860–64 *Lands Acts* enabled the quick settlement of the Burdekin headwaters, and the Pioneer Valley and the nearby coast. In 1860, Landsborough set out again, this time from Broadsound, accompanied by Andrew Diehm and William H. Wiseman, the Leichhardt Commissioner for Lands, who inspected pastoral leases awaiting registration. At this point, Philip F. Sellheim, another German, who had travelled with Dalrymple's 1859 expedition, took up Lake Elphinstone station near Mount Britton. In 1861, with Charles W. Toussaint, Sellheim took up Strathmore station, the first pastoral lease in the Kennedy District, which they kept until 1865. In January 1862, John Mackay settled (unsuccessfully) at Greenmount, and also briefly gained control of the Cape Palmerston lease. Dick Spencer settled (unsuccessfully) at Mt Spencer in May 1862, and later that year Louis Ross and John Cook settled (successfully) at Balnagowan. John McCrossin applied for Shamrock Vale in 1863 (to transfer to James Starr), and later in the year Robert Martin was ensconced on Hamilton at the far end of the valley, with the Macartney cousins and their partners nearby at St Helens by 1862–64. Their applications were all made under the early land legislation.

### **The 1868 *Lands Act*, and the 1869 *Pastoral Leases Act***

During the 1860s and 1870s, pastoralists dominated the economic and political life of the colony. Because of attempts emanating from Brisbane to control pastoral expansion, there was unhappiness among the northern pastoralists, to an extent that in the mid-1860s they began a Land League and proposed separation of northern Queensland from the south. However, the pastoralists were not united and even in the Parliament there were different factions, largely divided between the needs of settled and unsettled areas. In 1866, there were Bills dealing with agricultural reserves, Crown land sales, and pastoral tenants' relief in districts without agricultural development, where the pastoralist's situation was precarious with no rights other than their 14-year leases. Neither the squatters nor the Government made

much advance, although Premier Macalister lost control of the Government to Robert R. Mackenzie, who installed a new Lands Minister, Edward Lamb. Pastoralists in settled areas (like Darling Downs, Port Curtis, Burnett, and Leichhardt) held their land under New South Wales legislation, with the more northern land districts like Kennedy begun under Queensland legislation. Pastoralists were beginning to use more extensive methods of stock management, which were more costly. The Land League, mainly based in Port Curtis and the Burnett districts, adopted a positive policy. They accepted the inevitable resumptions but wanted pre-emptive rights to the best areas of their leases, while at the same time tried to block or amend legislation intended to encourage closer settlement. They lost half of their leases, succeeded in obtaining favourable pre-emptive rights, but failed to hold back the advance of closer settlement. This all played out in the Pioneer Valley during the 1860s.

Charles Bernays discussed the 1868 *Crown Lands Alienation Act* in his *Queensland Politics During Sixty (1859–1919) Years*. Parliament actually debated it in 1867, after the bank crash mentioned earlier. It was an attempt to bolster the economy and a reaction to the various inadequacies in land settlement which became obvious as closer settlement, rather than only pastoral settlement, became important. The 1868 Act was intended to consolidate the early 1860s laws for settled districts and was the first comprehensive attempt to deal with closer settlement. The pastoral leases along the coast had to be truncated to accommodate towns such as Mackay, Walkerston, and Eton, as well as adjacent agricultural settlement. On twelve months' notice, the new Act enabled blocks of up to 10,000 acres to be alienated from pastoral leases for urban and agricultural use. To off-set this loss to pastoral lease holders, they could gain a pre-emptive right of selection of one acre for every 10s. value of improvements undertaken.

The upshot of the 1868 Act was that any land not under pastoral lease was available for selection as agricultural or small acreage pastoral use. They were styled as 'homesteads' in three classes: blocks of agricultural land between 40 and 640 acres (259 ha), which could be converted to freehold in three years if all conditions had been met; first-class pastoral land between 80 and 2,560 acres (1,036 ha); and second-class pastoral land between 80 and 7,680 acres (3,108 ha). Prices varied from 5s. to 15s. per acre, depending on classification. The terms 'selections' and 'selectors' start to be used in relation to 'homestead' leases. (The term 'homestead' was also used in American legislation.)

Small acreages within and close to urban areas were sold at auction, with the price fixed at £8 per acre for town land, and £1 per acre within one mile (1.6 km) from towns, and 15s. per acre beyond one mile from town land. Agricultural land sold for 15s. per acre, first-class pastoral lands for 10s. per acre, and second-class pastoral lands for 5s. per acre. Smaller selections up to 160 acres could be procured for between 3s. 9d. and 2s. 6d. per acre, payable over five years. This explains the sizes of land parcels on the outskirts of Mackay (obvious in maps), which date back to these years. Selectors were able to obtain agricultural land, however, one result was that many of the close-in sugar plantations bought up these small blocks to expand their plantations. Map 10.1, showing the occupation of Crown lands for homesteads between 1868 and 1886, illustrates the alienation of the core plantation and farming land along the river just outside Mackay.

The *Pastoral Leases Act* was passed in the following session in 1869. It enabled pastoralists to be granted 21-year leases, with an option to freehold one block of 2,560 acres, at 10s. an acre. There was also a lower rental on pastoral leases of 5s. per square mile for seven years, not four and five years as previously. The rent from eight to 14 years was 10s. per square mile, and 15s. per square mile for the remainder of the lease.

Although these changes were piecemeal, their overall effect was a better pastoral lands system than any of the other Australian colonies achieved in the next 20 years. There were no more major changes to the Queensland *Lands Acts* until 1876, followed by another

new Act in the mid-1880s. The several 1860s Acts influenced pastoral and agricultural developments in the first decade of settlement in the Pioneer Valley and its surrounds.

### **Pastoral Stations in the Pioneer Valley Region**

Chapter 3 dealt with John Mackay's exploits in the valley. This section of Chapter 4 continues the themes of individuals and pastoral leases. Many of the properties changed hands during the 1860s, although there were also continuities in family ownership of some of them over the next several decades. A valley pastoral lifestyle developed, with camaraderie between the owners, which is discussed in the final section of this chapter and in Chapter 5. Most, but not all, of them had connections to the British aristocracy, gentry, and merchant classes. Often, they had access to family finances, private investors or 'sleeping partners', with banks and other financial institutions also playing a large part in securing these pastoral fiefdoms. The level of financial support needed was outlined in Chapter 2. Today, it is extraordinary to think of about 20 individuals controlling the land between Bloomsbury, Sarina, Mirani, and Mt Spencer. Later, some of them attempted to make the transition into agriculture. The Rawsons and the Macartneys both tried to enter the sugar industry in the 1880s, with negative results. The Athertons, Bells and Cooks were more successful in making the transition in the 1890s. The Finch-Hattons hoped to make their fortunes goldmining at Mount Britton, with calamitous results. Looking from the distance of today, their hey days were the 1870s and 1880s. What in the 1860s seemed to be a pastoral system designed for their success, never worked out that way, except to a minor extent.

### **John Cook and Louis Ross of Balnagowan**

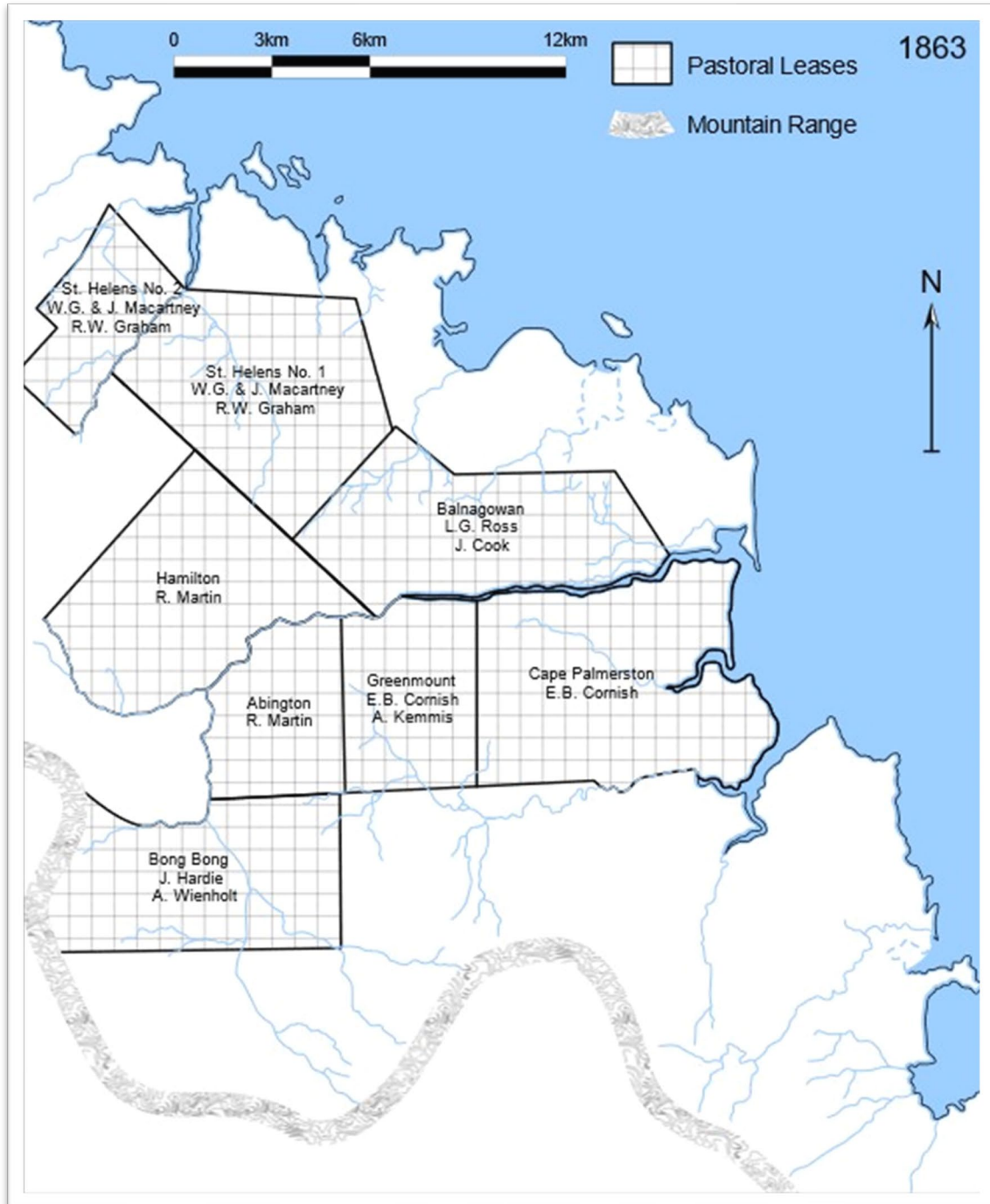
One long-term success story from Pioneer Valley pastoralism in the 1860s was the Cook family through three generations. But when it came to selecting pastoral runs, double-crosses and manipulations seem to have been the order of the day. John McCrossin had selected Shamrock Vale directly across the river from John Mackay's Greenmount. It was later renamed Balnagowan by Louis Gerald Ross, after a castle which was the ancestral home of the Earls of Ross, near the village of Kildary, Invernesshire, in the Scottish Highland. As mentioned in Chapter 3, John Mackay claimed to have sold Shamrock Vale to Ross, when he was droving his brother-in-law John Cook's cattle north from Serpentine station east of Armidale in August 1862. Mackay's naivety showed through once more, as he presumed that he had done a deal with Ross and later tried to collect on the £600 owed, whereas Ross realised that the *Lands Acts* specified that the unsettled run was available to be re-selected.

John Cook (1838–1901) was born on Turanville station near Scone in New South Wales, the third child of Samuel Wellington Cook and Elizabeth Cary née Dangar who arrived in Australia in 1837 from Cornwall, after an earlier migration to Canada. The Dangars had been in Australia since the 1820s. One of them, Henry, was the Government Surveyor for New South Wales. In 1854, his brother William Dangar at Turanville station in the upper Hunter Valley installed Thomas (Tom) Cook, John's older Canada-born brother, as manager, in complete charge of his land, which also included 39,000 acres (15,783 ha) at Kangaroo Hills in the New England district. William Dangar returned to England in 1857. In 1863, Thomas formally leased the station and adjacent land. When William Dangar died in 1868, Thomas inherited over 4,000 acres (1,619 ha) at Turanville from his uncle. He remained at Turanville until his death in 1912.

During the 1840s, Samuel Cook also formed pastoral stations at Myall Creek, Paradise Creek, Bulleroi, Bunnabunna, and Barren, while his wife Elizabeth and their children remained at Turanville. When John Cook decided to settle in the Pioneer Valley, his father was manager



of Serpentine River station near Ebor in the Armidale district. Subsequently, his main residence became Nemingha station near Tamworth. The upshot of all this was that John Cook had access to money and stock for his Pioneer Valley venture. Compared to the McCrossins and the Mackays, the Cooks were substantial land holders.

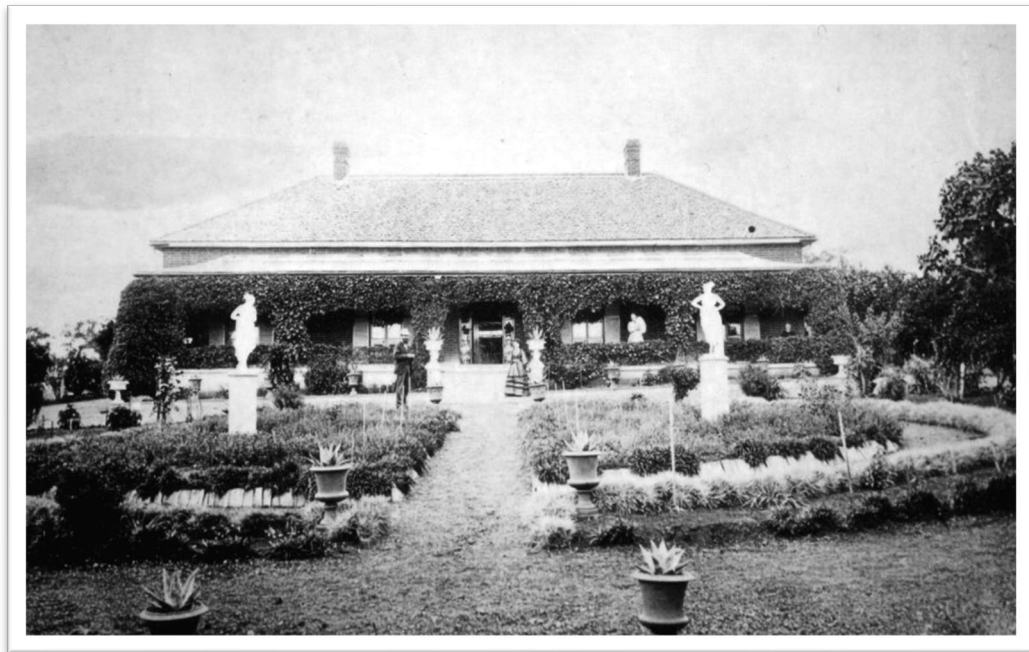


**Map 4.2: Map of the initial pastoral leases in the Pioneer Valley, 1863.**  
Source: Cartography by Vincent Verheyen. Clive Moore Collection.



**Plate 4.3:** The first Turanville station homestead at Scone, demolished in the 1860s to make way for the new house. Thomas Cook, F.H. Murray and a station hand are standing in front of the house. The increase in wealth is obvious when comparing this house with the new homestead below (Plate 4.4).

Source: Courtesy of Free Stetter or Felon: William Dangar, [www.jenwillets.com/william\\_dangar.htm](http://www.jenwillets.com/william_dangar.htm).



**Plate 4.4:** The new Turanville station homestead, 1870s.

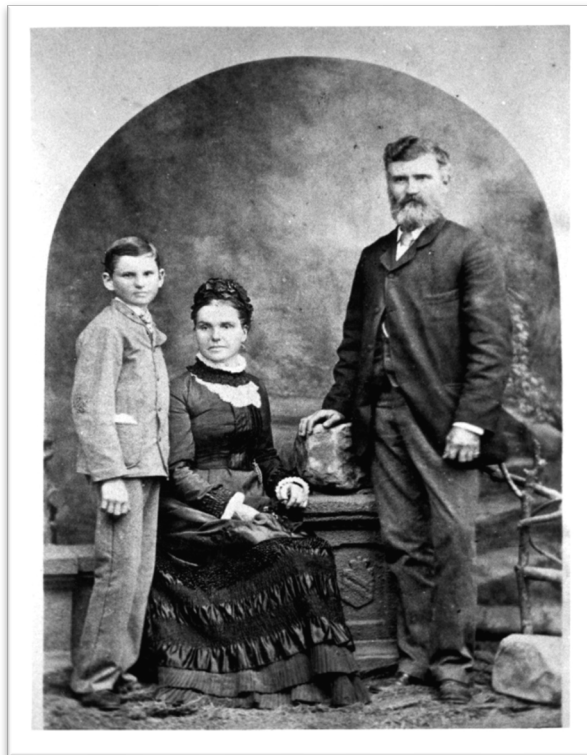
Source: Courtesy of Turanville Shorthorns, [turanville.com.au/turanville-history/](http://turanville.com.au/turanville-history/).

News of the McCrossin and Mackay expedition to the Pioneer Valley was circulating in New England, and that only John Mackay had taken up land there. The agreement between Cook and Ross was that Ross would go ahead, but they would enter an equal partnership. However, Ross applied for the lease only in his own name, calling it Balnagowan. Cook arrived with more cattle, to a *fait accompli*. Cook reached a settlement of £1,000 with Ross in 1866, placing the station into both names. However, Ross died intestate in 1870 while

attempting to swim the river while in flood.



**Plate 4.5: Louis Ross, John Cook's partner and brother-in-law, who died in 1870.**  
Source: T.A. Cook Collection, Heritage Collection, Mackay Regional Library.



**Plate 4.6: Albert (born 1875), Elizabeth and John Cook in the 1880s.**  
Source: T.A. Cook Collection, Heritage Collection, Mackay Regional Library.

In 1860, John Cook had married Elizabeth Cormack Ross (sister of Louis Ross). They had eight children, the final four born at Balnagowan. In the early years, Ross and Cook had continuous trouble with the local Yuwibara people who, understandably, resented the foreign presence. As with the other 1860s arrivals, by the mid-1870s, Cook was able to consolidate his position by purchasing other properties: Wandoo in 1874 about 100 kilometres south of



the western side of the Sarina Range, which he developed as a cattle stud; and Spring and Springvale stations in the Cooktown district in 1885. Cattle from Balnagowan and Wandoo were used to stock Spring and Springvale, managed by Sam Cook, the eldest son.

As with other stations, at Balnagowan a similar pattern of reduction in land size took place, as did freeholding through pre-emptive purchases. A government coastal reserve was instituted, ensuring that most pastoral leases started well back from the coast. The two Northside neighbouring properties were St Helens No. 1 (Jolimount), and Hamilton to the west. Greenmount and Cape Palmerston stations were the southern neighbours across the Pioneer River. From an original 88-square-miles, beginning on the river and extending north to below Jolimount, in 1869 the area was halved, and by 1883 only covered ten square miles, maintaining the boundary with Hamilton, with the eastern portion resumed for agricultural selections. As with the Macartneys and Rawsons, once the sugar industry was prospering, John Cook wanted to be part of the development. Smartly, Cook selected 320 acres of agricultural land under the 1864 Sugar and Coffee Regulations, on which the station buildings on the river had been erected. He also applied for pre-emptive land which he freeholded. The rest of Balnagowan, including rugged land around Mt de Moleyns on the border with Hamilton, remained in the lease but was little used. Fulfilling the terms of the 1864 regulations, Cook and Ross planted cane in 1868 and had plans for a mill and plantation. However, after Ross' death, Cook chose to concentrate on pastoralism, leasing out much of his sugar land. In 1893, with the construction of Pleystowe central mill, the main land was centred on ex-Pleystowe plantation on the south side of the river, but it also provided an opportunity to cut up Cook's 4,000 pre-empted Northside acres, which he sold for cane farms. In the long term, only one of the Cook children remained in the Mackay district, Albert, as manager of Wandoo and later Balnagowan stations. After John Cook's death in 1901, Albert took charge of Balnagowan, and became a director of Pleystowe central mill between 1906 and 1926.



**Plate 4.7: Greenmount homestead, built by the Cooks in 1915.**

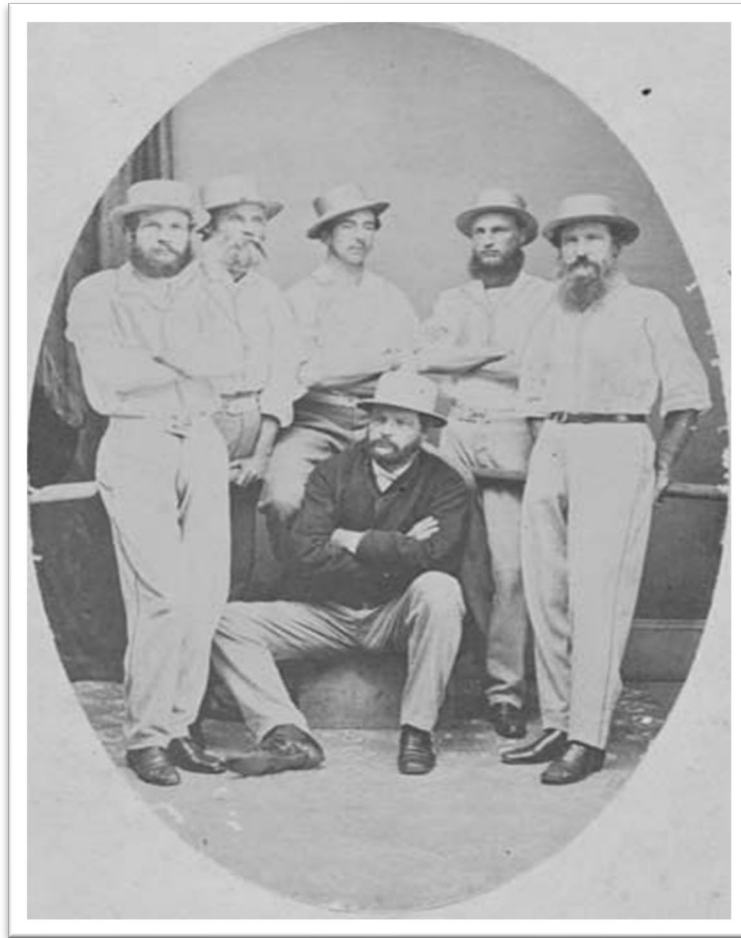
Source: Clive Moore Collection, 1979.

Having survived as a pastoralist and moved into the sugar industry, in 1907 Albert Cook and his friend John Alfred Michelmore set up a pastoral company, Cook, Michelmore & Co. Pty Ltd, combining and expanding their joint pastoral interests. In 1891, Michelmore, with the backing of William Thomas Bagley and Edmund Dimmock (both early settlers and town businessmen) also established J. Michelmore & Co. Pty Ltd, Mackay's longstanding wholesale merchant business, with riverside wharves and premises. The Pleystowe expansion, and the reduction in size of Balnagowan, enabled the Cooks to purchase Greenmount in 1912 and build a new house there in 1915. Greenmount remained the centre of their pastoral interests until the 1980s, as an Aberdeen-Angus cattle stud. Balnagowan rose and declined, through no fault of the Cooks, as it was converted into agricultural land.

### **The Rices and the Finch-Hattons at Mt Spencer**

The surviving written evidence shows the complexity of the 1860–62 movements into the ranges and the valley. The names Bong Bong and Mt Spencer were used interchangeably, although the area covered altered in size over time, and The Retreat was also absorbed into Mt Spencer. As well folk memory of ownership is often different from government archival records. By the 1880s, Mt Spencer station covered a huge 400 square miles, much of it rugged country. While connections to the Finch-Hatton family are well known for the 1880s, they go back as far as 1869 and continue until the 1930s through the Turnor family on Bolingbroke station just over the mountains at the back of the Pioneer Valley.

John Kerr's research suggests that the original pastoral leases in that area, Bong Bong No. 1 and No. 2, bordered Greenmount and had been marked out by the McCrossin-Mackay expedition in 1860. The first Bong Bong lease was settled by Richard (Honest Dick) Spencer in January 1862, acting for John Hardie and A.D. Broughton from the Darling Downs. The site of the first house was on Spencer's Lagoon at the head of Denison Creek and the property was then known as The Retreat. The names of John Hardie and Arthur Wienholt, pastoralists from Fassifern station, in the Moreton District of south-east Queensland, also appear in the records, but they forfeited at the beginning of 1864. Spencer may have purchased the stock from them, although he never had enough money to develop the station and may better be described as a manager. Archival records show that by September 1866 the Bong Bong No. 1 and No. 2 leases were in the hands of Alexander Anderson on behalf of the Bank of Queensland, which collapsed the same year. The Mt Spencer and Bong Bong leases were next controlled by one extended English aristocratic family, when the station seems to have become a colonial bachelors' paradise. The two Bong Bong leases were consolidated in 1869 when the area passed to Edward Graves Mayne of Beechworth, a goldrush town in Victoria. Mayne was also the 1857–84 financial partner of John A. Macartney of Waverley. At Mt Spencer, Mayne joined forces with 22-year-old Lionel Knight Rice (1844–1929). Bong Bong was rugged country and later seems to have been worked as an extension of the Mt Spencer lease.



**Plate 4.8: Lionel Knight Rice and five of the Archer Brothers (standing) of Gracemere, ca. 1867.**

Source: Courtesy of QAGOMA, Accession No. 2008 247.

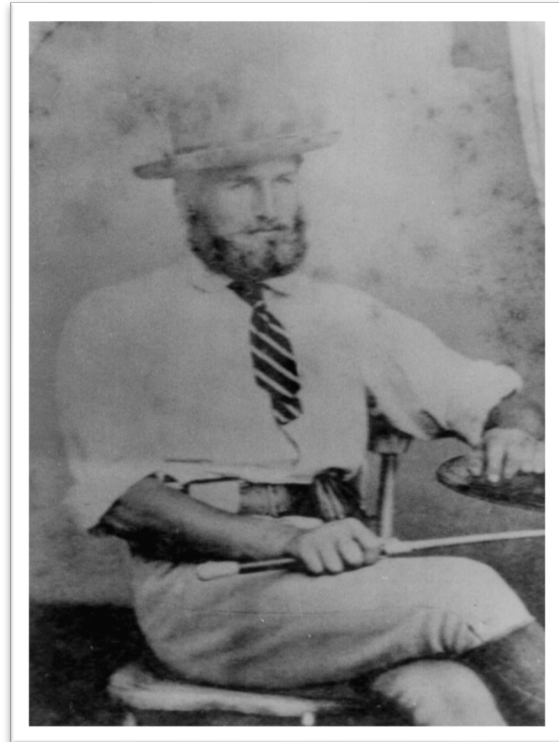
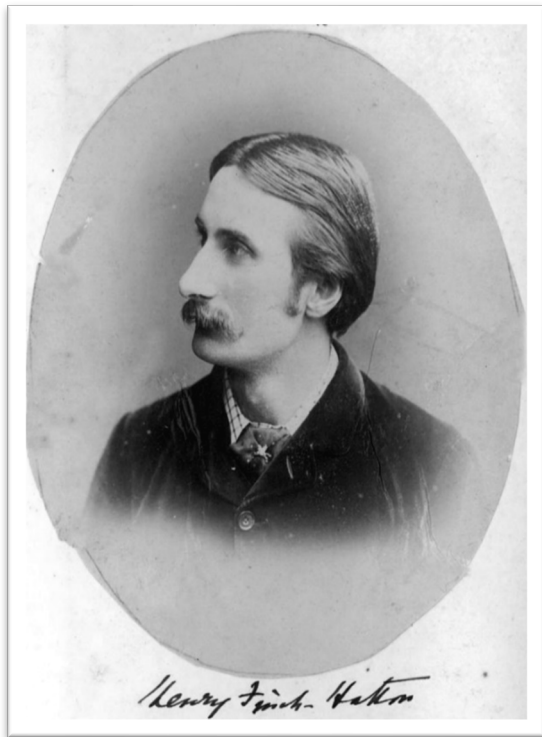
Mayne withdrew from the partnership in October 1872, replaced by Christopher Turnor of stately Stoke Rochford Hall in Lincolnshire (Plate 5.18), as an investor, not a resident owner. The Australian Joint Stock Co. (AJS) Bank took control in 1874 and in 1879 ownership altered to Rice, Charles Walter Toussaint, and Henry and Harold Finch-Hatton. Perhaps there had been an injection of Finch-Hatton family money. Charles Toussaint, a French Huguenot (Protestant) trained in agriculture, arrived in Queensland in the second half of the 1850s, taking up Strathmore station (1862–65) in partnership with German explorer and pastoralist Philip Frederick Sellheim. Over several years, Toussaint was also manager sequentially of Oxford Downs, and The Hollow. Presumably, he was the practical component of the resident owners at Mt Spencer station.

There are also other links between pastoralists in the mountains beyond Mackay and English merchants, the gentry, and the aristocracy. For instance, Andrew Throckmorton Ball (1841–97) was born in Mountford, Tasmania. His father, Captain George Palmer Ball, was a retired East India Company officer, and his maternal grandfather Colonel Haslewood also served in India. A.T. Ball moved to England, returning to Australia in 1856. His brother, who died in 1879, was a wealthy member of the New York Cotton Exchange, a commodities exchange founded in 1870 by a group of 100 leading cotton brokers and merchants. After a pastoral beginning in the Burnett in 1859, during the same year A.T. Ball is said to have taken up Wandoo and Haslewood runs south of Connor's Range.<sup>1</sup> Later, he owned Bolingbroke, Tierawoomba, Blue Mountain, and Colston Park stations. He began to sell his



pastoral holdings in 1867 when he sold Bolingbroke to John Harney and Cornwallis Wade-Browne. In the early 1870s, he sold his remaining pastoral properties and became a sugar planter in partnership with Thomas Fitzgerald at Te Kowai outside Mackay. On 27 November 1873, the *Mackay Mercury* reported that Ball sold his Haslewood station (just south of Spencer's Gap and contiguous with the Mt Spencer run) to Rice and Turnor, along with 2,000 head of cattle valued at £5 10s. per head. The next year, John Cook of Balnagowan purchased Wandoo.

The links go deeper as Graham Augustus Turnor, born in 1853 to Christopher and Caroline (née Finch-Hatton, sister of Henry and Harold Finch-Hatton) emigrated to Queensland in about 1880. He married twice and produced six children. When he died in 1934, he had for several decades owned Bolingbroke station, Ball's ex-property, which adjoined Wandoo station, not far from Koumala and 26 kilometres south of Sarina. Families such as the Rices and Turnors remained in the district for decades, although the family financial links are impossible to unravel. Interestingly, the internet has enabled far better searching of family connections and the histories of pastoral stations than ever before. The links between the Rice, Turnor and Finch-Hattons families are all revealed within ancestry and stately home material available online.

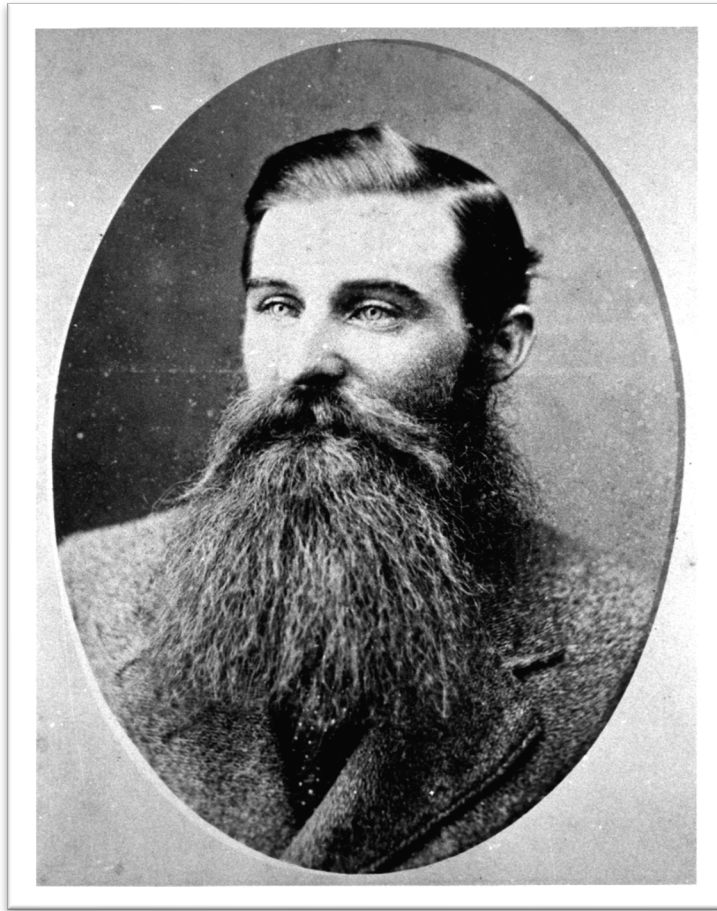


**Plate 4.9: Hon. Henry Finch-Hatton.**

Source: State Library of Queensland.

**Plate 4.10: Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton.**

Source: The Harold Finch-Hatton Site, by Jim Foley. [www.mackayhistory.org/research/finchhatton/index.html](http://www.mackayhistory.org/research/finchhatton/index.html)



**Plate 4.11: Graham Turnor of Bolingbroke station.**

Source: Mackay Regional Council, Greenmount Homestead Collection.

Henry Finch-Hatton (1852–1927) had been in residence at Mt Spencer for several years when his brother Harold arrived. Lionel Rice's name first appears on the lease in 1869. Henry may have arrived with him or soon after. His brother Harold (1856–1904) wrote *Advance Australia!* about his Australian adventures. Educated at Eton and for a short time at Balliol College, Oxford University, he arrived at 19 years of age in 1875 via Singapore. His brother Henry was waiting for him in Rockhampton, from where they caught a smaller vessel back to Mackay. The next day they set off for Mt Spencer, 72-kilometres away. He recorded his first impressions:

The view ...from Mount Spencer is magnificent... . The station stands on a low broad ridge, which was originally timbered like the surrounding Bush, but the trees have all been cleared away, the stumps burned out, and the holes filled in, so that the ground is now a smooth expanse of short green turf, sloping gently down to the edge of a large lagoon, about 300 yards away. The lagoon itself is a mile and a half long, and about a mile across, the centre covered with water lilies, and the edges fringed with a thick wide belt of rushes. On the far side from the station a forest of huge gum-trees follows the winding shores of the lagoon, its outline broken by one or two little promontories running out into the water; and above the forest, like an amphitheatre, rise the mountains of the coast, running in broken rocky spurs to Blue Mountain, a vast densely-wooded range 3000 feet high and fourteen miles away.<sup>2</sup>



**Plate 4.12: An 1883 view of Mt Spencer headstation showing the house and lagoon. Hon. Henry S. Finch-Hatton and Basil Brooke are in the boat. The photographer was G.H.M. King from Branscombe plantation.**

Source: Roth 1908, 41.

Mt Spencer was wild, mountainous and beautiful, as Harold Finch-Hatton continued:

Mount Spencer country consisted of three runs adjoining each other, known respectively as Mount Spencer, Haslewood [now Hazelwood], and Blue Mountain. The whole area was nearly 400 square miles, capable of carrying over 20,000 head of cattle in any season, but when I first went there, there were not above 12,000. Though some parts of the run were very rough riding, it was all good cattle country, and wonderfully well watered. Numbers of large creeks ran in every direction, and large water holes were scattered all over the run, so that it hardly suffered at all in the severest drought. The cattle were a very well-bred herd, and the grass was first rate, so they fattened splendidly. The head station was at Mount Spencer, and the adjoining run was kept principally for a breeding station. At Haslewood there was another station, with yards and paddocks, and the run was fenced off from Mount Spencer by a line of fence twelve miles long, and was used with Blue Mountain run for a fattening station for bullocks. At Blue Mountain there was a small hut, a horse paddock, and a stockyard, and at the far end of Mount Spencer run was another small hut, used for camping out, and a sapling yard for yarding cattle at night, when it was too late to take them to the headstation.<sup>3</sup>

A July 1877 photograph (Plate 5.20) shows Henry Finch-Hatton and Charles Toussaint in residence at Mt Spencer, and in July that year there is a photograph of Henry as one of the first party to climb Mt Dalrymple. Reginald (later General Sir Reginald) Pole-Carew (1849–1924) is in both photographs. A member of the family of the Pole baronets of Shute (his son became the 12<sup>th</sup> baronet), in 1869 he joined the Coldstream Guards, and in 1877 was a staff officer. Presumably, he was visiting his friends the Finch-Hatton brothers or their Rice cousins.

By April 1879, the leases were in the names of Rice, Toussaint, and the Finch-Hatton brothers. There were four main ‘runs’ adjoining each other, covering 400-square-miles: Blue Mountain in the headwaters of the Pioneer River, Mt Spencer (also called Bong Bong No. 1

and No. 2), and Haslewood. Attempts to sell Bong Bong in 1881–82 failed, ownership remaining with Rice & Co., although the land area was much reduced by resumptions. Onwards from 1884, the Mt Spencer name is used for the consolidated property. The Finch-Hattons' homestead was not far off the road between Mackay and Nebo. The main house was built in the 1870s, a primitive mansion on a tropical frontier (Plates 4.12, 5.19–22).

Hon. Harold returned to England in 1883, having tried but failed to make his fortune at the Mount Britton goldfield, followed home by Hon. Henry in 1886. In 1882, Henry had married Anne, daughter of Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Henry J. Codrington. It seems that Mt Spencer station was either not doing well, or they invested too much money into their Mt Britton goldmine. In 1886, the partners consolidated nine leases under the Mt Spencer name, the brothers were declared insolvent, and the property was taken over by mortgage companies. In 1898, Henry succeeded another brother as the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Winchester and the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Nottingham.

Mt Spencer station passed into the hands of the Australian & New Zealand Mortgage Co., although the Finch-Hattons continued to own the property. In 1911, Mt Spencer was sold to Alfred J. Cotton of Hidden Vale station, Grandchester, outside Brisbane, who owned many stations in the 1900s and 1910s. Adding in John B. Macartney, who inherited an Irish baronetcy in 1867, in the 1870s and 1880s the far end of the valley and the adjoining St Helens leases became one of the most aristocratic areas of Queensland. These pastoralists, along with the Rawsons, formed an elite clique at Mackay and in the Pioneer Valley.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Macartneys: the Jolimount, St Helens, and Bloomsbury pastoral leases**

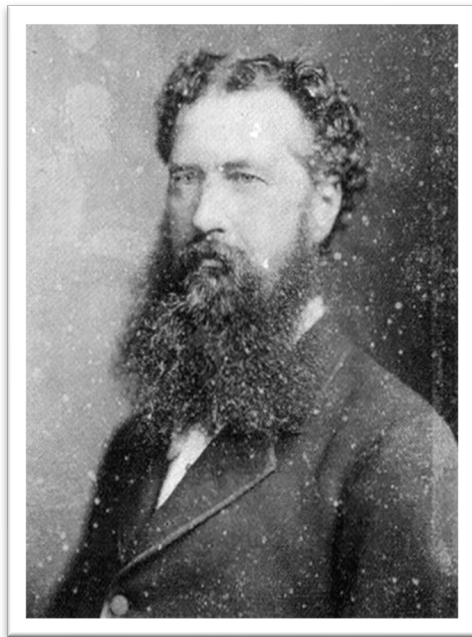
The entry of the Macartneys into the Pioneer region may date back to April 1862, before John Mackay departed. The Macartneys did not have the same august aristocratic pedigree as the Finch-Hattons, although they too had a famous member of the family, Earl Macartney, the first British emissary to Beijing in 1793. The direct descendants of the Victorian and Queensland branch of the family had an Irish House of Commons parliamentary and Anglican Church background, which had gained them a baronetcy in 1799, over Lish in County Armagh. There was family money and three members of the family became astute Queensland frontier pastoralists. The background of John A. Macartney and his stepcousins was outlined in Chapter 2. The St Helens leases may have involved J.A. Macartney, and possibly George Dalrymple. However, the named 1860s leaseholders were John Barrington (Young Johnny) Macartney (1832–1911), his brother William George (Willie) Macartney (1835?–1883), and Robert William Graham. Older than the brothers, Graham was from Kildare, Ireland, and a friend from their days in Victoria.<sup>5</sup>

After his trip down the coast from Bowen, and his Greenmount visit in March 1862, Commissioner of Lands George Dalrymple called at J.A. Macartney's Waverley station at Broadsound, where he described the verdant well-watered area he had passed through between the Proserpine and Pioneer rivers. Although what happened next is not entirely clear, this seems to have provoked J.A. Macartney to be interested in the land extending north from Mt Blackwood and Mt Jukes to the O'Connell River near Proserpine (St Helens leases Nos. 1–4). Later the area became the pastoral base for J.A. Macartney's stepcousins and their partners. Dalrymple was carrying John Mackay's applications for the Greenmount and Cape Palmerston leases to be lodged in Rockhampton. There were also rumours that Dalrymple had formed a partnership with J.A. Macartney in relation to the St Helens properties.

It seems clear that, while at Waverley station on his way to Rockhampton, Dalrymple opened Mackay's sealed applications and showed them to J.A. Macartney and probably also to his Macartney stepcousins and Robert Graham. This would have been in character for Dalrymple, and it was the only way that J.A. Macartney could have known how to position his

four St Helens lease applications, the most southern of which shared a boundary with Balnagowan and Lochnagar (Hamilton). That was enough for J.A. Macartney to apply for the St Helens leases, sight unseen, but vouched for by Dalrymple. He accompanied Dalrymple to Rockhampton and on 4 April registered four leases. Desmond Dunn, who wrote a book on the St Helens Macartneys, believes that initially J.A. Macartney was involved. There is also reference in a 1975 paper by Mavis McClements, and in a 1979 Mackay Region National Estate Study, to J.A. Macartney owning Bloomsbury with Dalrymple in 1862, with Dalrymple selling his share to William Macartney and Robert Graham. William Dangar (related to the Cooks of Balnagowan) and Frederick Bode (one of Dalrymple's 1859 overland party) took out leases over nearby Gorging, Neotsfield and Bonaventura (later combined as Bromby Park) in 1862–63. Between 1861 and 1863, the Emmerson brothers (Charles, William, and Daniel) took out leases over runs which included Proserpine, Cattle Vale, and Amelia Vale stations, adjoining to the north.

My research has not located archival evidence of the Macartney-Dalrymple deal, nor of Dalrymple's involvement with Dangar and Bode, but it does fit well with his other land dealings and lack of ethics. His investment may have been through stock, not land. The Commissioner was self-serving and in his own way a 'run hunter' even when a public servant, to the extent that he helped others, perhaps for rewards. As Kett Kennedy reminded us, many years later, John Mackay wrote kind words about Dalrymple. Perhaps Mackay had forgotten that close to the time of the 1860s lease applications he had written to Surveyor-General Gregory that 'a sealed tender' may have been used by 'another party' to secure runs in the district, which seems to implicate Dalrymple and, at least, J.A. Macartney.<sup>6</sup> Desmond Dunn believed that after discussions with Dalrymple, J.A. Macartney rode north to examine the St Helens land before making his application on 4 April 1862. This is unlikely, as there was not enough time. J.A. Macartney was well used to trading in pastoral leases and Dalrymple thought nothing of being in a secret partnership with Premier Herbert at the Valley of Lagoons lease. Why would a secret partnership with J.A. Macartney be any different?



**Plate 4.13: Sir John Barrington Macartney**

Source: Desmond Dunn Collection.

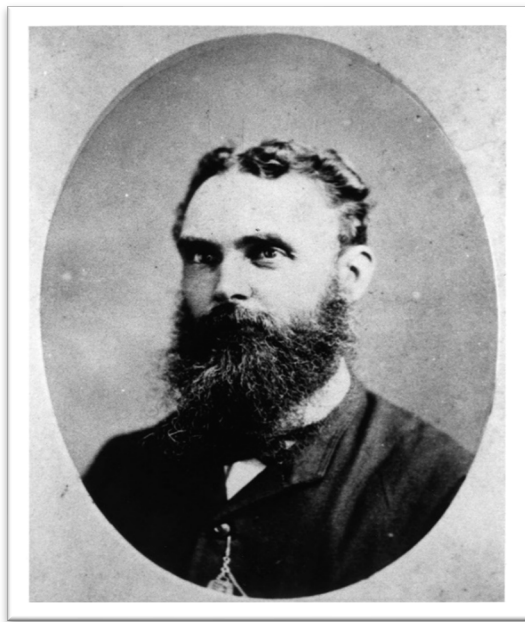


**Plate 4.14: Robert William Graham**

Source: Deirdre Morrish Collection.

The St Helens Macartney brothers were the sons of Rev. Sir William Isaac Macartney Bart., Rector of Desertegney, County Donegal, Ireland, and Ellen, daughter of another baronet, Sir John Barrington. John and William arrived in Australia in the 1850s, probably initially staying with their step uncle Archdeacon Hussey Burgh Macartney in Melbourne, father of J.A. Macartney. Their introduction to pastoralism was on J.A. Macartney's Glenmore station north of Rockhampton in 1858. In that year, 26-year-old J.B. Macartney took the first dray load of provisions to the Canoona goldfield and tried his luck there, bringing in a small puddling machine. He found £80 worth of gold in two days, then was forced off the field by claim-jumpers. Early the next year, the three Macartneys, together with Dan Conner and others, explored land around the Mackenzie, Isaac and Connor rivers, and as far as the northern end of the Leichhardt District. J.A. Macartney returned to stock Waverley before setting out again in 1860, this time with Graham, to inspect Peak Downs properties and as far north as Mt McConnell (near the Burdekin River). J.A. Macartney applied for Avon Downs and a neighbouring lease. Also, at about that time, J.B. Macartney explored the islands off the coast, looking for possible pastoral properties.

In February 1863, John Charles Binney, a relative of the Macartneys, was employed to assist J.A. Macartney and Robert Graham to drive the first mob of cattle from Waverley to St Helens. They arrived at primitive Mackay on 4 March. J.A. Macartney seems to have withdrawn from St Helens in 1864. The transition from J.A. Macartney to the Macartney brothers and Graham is not at all clear as J.A. Macartney's name never appears on the post-1863 leases. If true, it seems to have been a family arrangement between cousins: he made the initial application and provided the cattle herd, but then they took over.



**Plate 4.15 John Charles Binney.**

Source: Mackay Regional Council, Greenmount Homestead Collection.

1863 and 1864 were wet years. In 1863 it rained constantly through January and February, continuing with more than average rain during the year, then began solidly at Christmas and continued for many weeks. There were two floods in the early months of 1864. The days were hot and steamy, and the small town of Mackay was a muddy mess. The river rose and flooded many areas and one terrible storm ripped iron sheets off roofs. Roads were impassable until late February. At Fort Cooper and other stations thousands of sheep



were drowned in flood waters. The settlers were worried that what they had experienced was the norm, not an isolated event. The land was boggy, but the grass was green and abundant. The partners set out from Waverley with a bullock dray stocked with rations, cooking utensils, picks and shovels, cross-cut saws, firearms, mortising axes, axes, and augers. The rivers and creeks were swollen, slowing the trip to St Helens.

The State Archives land registers record 75 square mile Jolimount run as No. 1 of the four St Helens runs applied for by the brothers and Graham on 4 July 1863, all confirmed in August 1864. Jolimount, adjoined Balnagowan and Hamilton, and was in the names of J.B. Macartney, William Macartney, and R.W. Graham. Then, in 1864, William Macartney's name was shifted to St Helens Nos. 3–4 (Bloomsbury) at the Andromache and O'Connell rivers, leaving only J.B. Macartney and R.W. Graham's names on the No. 1 lease.

As soon as the initial work was complete, J.B. Macartney left his brother and Graham to carry on building the stockyard and the horse paddock, riding south to Gracemere where he bought 500 breeding cattle from the Archers, which he and stockmen drove to St Helens. Soon after, he went south again, this time to Wetheran station of the Burnett River where he purchased 700 cattle.

The 1860s were not good years to begin the St Helens leases, nor any of the other new pastoral properties. The colonial Government was virtually bankrupt in 1866 and personal insolvencies and bankruptcies abounded. J.B. Macartney's elevation to the baronetcy in 1867 did not come at a propitious moment. The Macartneys and Graham could barely pay their lease rents and in 1867 payments due on all four leases were in arrears. It is no wonder that Burke, Cook and Kennedy squatters petitioned the Government for rental relief. Although the herds increased in size, the market had not. Mackay and Bowen were small, and the St Helens partners sometimes had to drive stock as far as Clermont to obtain sales. However, as the sugar industry built up in the Pioneer Valley, a new market emerged—bullocks for drays used on the plantations, and for ploughing. The partners realised something worthwhile was occurring when they broke in ten teams each of ten bullocks and sold them at £10 a head. They also began to breed stock horses, something Sir John continued at Jolimount and Forrest Hill.

### **Jolimount-Royston**

The 301 square miles four-run holding was too large to be worked from St Helens No. 2, leading to an 1872 realignment of the partnership. Graham stayed on at St Helens No. 2 but withdrew from the Jolimount lease. Sir John moved to Jolimount), and his brother William relocated to St Helens Nos. 3 and 4 (Bloomsbury).

Development beyond St Helens No. 2 had to begin from scratch. The first Jolimount homestead—consisting of five rooms (later enlarged) and two wide verandahs, all built from a single huge red cedar tree—was on a rise near Jolimount Creek, with views of Mt Blackwood and Mt Jukes. The walls and floors of these early homes were made from wooden slabs squared with broad axes and adzes (a tool like an axe, with an arched blade at right angles to the handle, used for cutting or shaping large pieces of wood).

Sir John applied for pre-emptive rights over around 250 acres, which when received he fenced for use as a horse paddock. In 1879, Sir John took on two new partners, Arthur E. Garnier and A.K. Murray (after 1885 a partner in the Martin brothers' Hamilton and Hopetoun runs). In late 1880, they sold Jolimont to Adam Roy MacGregor (1839–1907) and Johnathan Henry McLean, along with 2,500 cattle. McLean's older sister Isabella had married A.R. MacGregor, and a younger sister married David Hay Dalrymple, who was a partner with the Martins in Hamilton and Hopetoun runs, as well as a pastoralist in his own right at The Pinnacle. They renamed the lease Royston. Its size was reduced regularly

between then and 1891, when Royston passed to Strong, and the Kable brothers, with the mortgage held by the Queensland National Bank. The property was opened to annual Occupational License under the 1897 *Lands Act*. Most of the pastoral lease portion was opened for small selections, with settlers applying for land, initially for grazing and mixed farms, in hopes of new sugar mills being erected that could take their cane.

Jolimount was inland from Cape Hillsborough, and Sir John maintained a 'proprietary' interest in all proposals to develop the nearby coast. In December 1876, a 14,000-acre Aboriginal Reserve, arranged by the Catholic Church, was gazetted at Cape Hillsborough to accommodate up to 1,000 First Nations Australians. At about the same time, Sir John decided to broaden his interests, wanting to venture directly into sugar production. As the number of agricultural selections increased on the Northside of the river Sir John attempted, in collaboration with John McBryde and Hector Mackenzie Finlayson from Richmond mill, to begin a plantation at Seaforth, adjoining Cape Hillsborough.

In 1879, McBryde and Finlayson selected 10,000 acres (4,047 ha) on the coast just north of Cape Hillsborough, for a potential mill and subdivision into cane farms. Seaforth estate's eastern boundary was the coast, with the original homestead on a rise on the crescent shaped beach. Sir John Macartney was keen to join the venture; he had an Occupational License over the remainder of what had been the Jolimount lease, and he selected 4,000 acres at Forrest Hill, adjoining McBryde and Finlayson's Seaforth estate.

It looked as if Sir John's 1860s dreams were about to come true. However, when a government railway was built in the Pioneer Valley in the mid-1880s, it was on the south of the river, although there was a plan to build a future road and extend the railway from Mirani to Port Newry. The Government considered plans to build a harbour at Port Newry, sheltered by Outer Newry Island, just north of what is now Seaforth, surrounded by small urban centres for settlers living on farms, to be organised under the Village Settlement Scheme of 1885. The Port Newry scheme came to nought in 1884, although it kept being discussed until the 1930s. The town of Hillsborough was surveyed in 1888, for farmers and their families who would work on surrounding small subsistence farms. The village settlement scheme failed, and soon after McBryde moved to northern New South Wales to manage Rous mill at Ballina. The late 1870s concept of a Catholic Mission at Cape Hillsborough never eventuated.

McBryde and Finlayson's Seaforth mill plans received other blows. In 1885, the Government of Premier Griffith announced an end to the Pacific labour trade by December 1890, and at the same time promised to build two government-financed central mills in Queensland. As both mills eventuated in the Pioneer Valley, one of them could easily have been built at Seaforth. Instead, the recommendation went to farmers north of Eton and around Mackay's racecourse. Disappointed, McBryde and Finlayson used their Seaforth land for cattle breeding and secured an annual Occupational License over another land selection to the north-west, up towards the Murray River. The Seaforth Hereford herd grew quite large but suffered from 'red water' fever transmitted by ticks, with only a remnant 400 surviving, which were sold to John Cook at Balnagowan. McBryde and Finlayson decided to sell up in 1897, and two years later the Government purchased Seaforth estate, which was subdivided into small agricultural selections and the coastal town. Once family cars were in common use in the early twentieth century, Seaforth Beach became a sleepy holiday retreat for the people of Mackay. My family spent several holidays there in the 1950s and 1960s. It was my father's favourite fishing area.

Although McBryde and Finlayson failed at pastoralism, Sir John succeeded. By 1882 the original 60 square mile Jolimount lease had been reduced to 6.3 square miles as surrounding land was selected for agricultural farms. Sir John kept Forrest Hill as his place of residence, a small grazing property for 1,000 cattle, where he also bred draught and stock

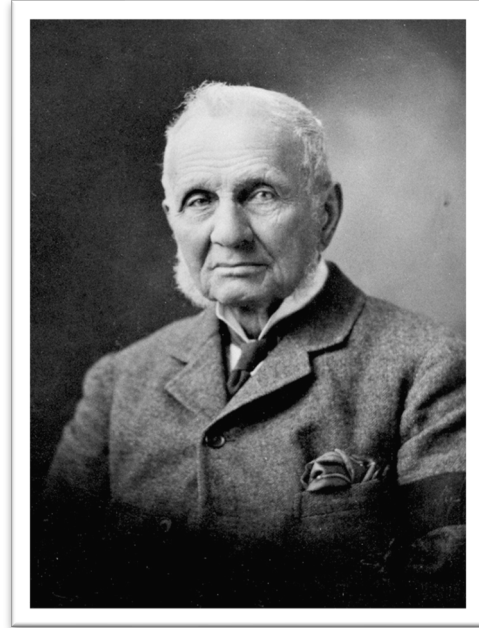
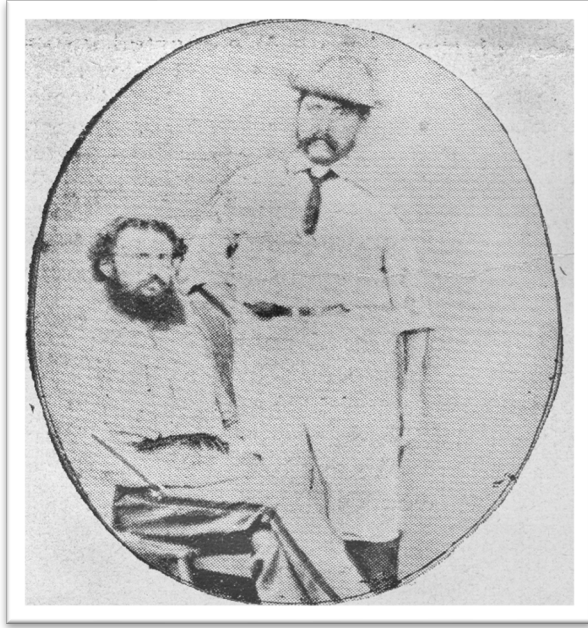
horses. He remained there until Forrest Hill was sold in 1902. In old age, he moved to Belmunda, a smaller property on the coast nearby. After Lady Catherine died in 1904, Sir John, then with a cancer in his right eye, moved to Rockhampton to live with his niece Constance Rawson, dying there not long after in 1911.

### **St Helens**

St Helens No. 2 (usually just called St Helens) was 76 square miles in size and in the names of J.B. Macartney and W.R. Graham, with A.R. MacGregor and J.H. McLean added in 1869. The station was retained only by Robert Graham after 1873 when Sir John moved to Jolimount. In 1876, the Mercantile Bank took possession, holding the land until it was opened to Occupational License renewable yearly under the 1884 and 1897 *Lands Acts*. Graham left St Helens entirely in December 1875 and moved to Lilliesmere sugar plantation (now the site of Kalamia mill) in the Burdekin, in partnership with A.C. MacMillan, forming the Burdekin Delta Sugar Co. He is said to have selected 7,000 acres (2,833 ha) of Burdekin land. Graham died in 1886, which left his wife Maggie with an inheritance of only two blocks of land in Ayr. She moved to Forrest Hill to be under the protection of Lady Catherine, wife of Sir John Macartney, and then to Melbourne in 1889.

### **Bloomsbury**

St Helens No. 3 and No 4—Bloomsbury, from Cathu to the Andromache and O'Connell rivers—also possibly began in 1862 under J.A. Macartney, is in what is now the Proserpine district. St Helens No. 3 covered 100 square miles and St Helens No. 4 covered 50 square miles. From August 1864, the leases were in the name of William G. Macartney, Sir John's brother, who consolidated the two runs in 1868. The same year, a branch of the Native Mounted Police was established at Bloomsbury, an indication that relations between the pastoralists and First Nations people were fraught and that 'pacification' was in progress. While local memory concentrates on the original lessees, they had many partners, who came and went. One at Bloomsbury was sugar planter Thomas Fitzgerald who in 1873 speculatively obtained a selection at O'Connell River north of Bloomsbury, and the next year purchased a share in J.B. Macartney and R.W. Murray's Jolimount (St Helens No. 1) pastoral station. Three years later, when he became insolvent because of the rust disease in the district's cane crop, Fitzgerald's involvement ceased. The land often remained in the name of the original leasees, and it is likely that the short-term partnerships related more to stock.



**Plate 4.16: William George Macartney (left) and Robert Walker. With E.M. Long, Walker purchased Lake Elphinstone pastoral station in 1875, then was manager of Foulden plantation in the late 1870s.**

Source: State Library of Queensland.

**Plate 4.17: Dyson Lacey**

Source: State Library of Queensland; Mackay *Daily Mercury Jubilee Edition*, 1912.

Another name entered the St Helens and Mt Spencer picture in the 1880s. Dyson Lacy (1836–1928) was from a prominent family in Newark-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire in England, the same area in which the Finch-Hatton family lived. His father, James Prior Lacy, was a medical doctor there, and Dyson attended Rugby School in Warwickshire. He arrived in Victoria in 1856 during the goldrushes, returned to England and came back to Victoria in 1859, moving to Queensland the same year, where he became a partner with John Rule in Aramac station near Muttaborra between 1862–63 and about 1871. Next, he moved to the Mackay district and became manager for the Rice and Finch-Hatton brothers at Mt Spencer for several years. On 12 January 1876, the *Brisbane Courier* noted that Lacy had purchased St Helens station, 1,550 cattle, stores, and plant for £6,484, although there is no government archival record of the lease being in his name. When W.G. Macartney died in 1883, Lacy became his executor and once probate was granted took over the Bloomsbury station leases until 1888, when he became managing-agent for the Australian and New Zealand Mortgage Co.

In 1890, the Lacys sent their two daughters off to England on RMS *Quetta* to attend a finishing school. The ship struck a reef in Torres Strait and sank: one daughter and their uncle drowned, and the other daughter survived 36 hours at sea. The same year, the bank foreclosed on Lacy, and the next year he was declared insolvent, ruined by lack of market for his cattle, and enormous stock losses from ‘red water’ tick fever and pleuropneumonia amongst his herd. Lacy retreated to manage dilapidated Mt Spencer station. He was also general manager of the Finch-Hatton butchery in Mackay. In about 1898, the Lacys returned to England in much straightened circumstances, although Dyson Lacy returned to Australia in about 1915. His wife had died two years earlier.

Much reduced in size during the 1880s to accommodate agricultural development, by 1891 Bloomsbury station was in the hands of the Queensland National Bank, which went broke and was taken over by the Commercial Bank of Sydney. Under the 1884 and 1897 *Lands Acts*, Jolimount followed the pattern elsewhere of being opened to annual

Occupational License. The bank found the property unprofitable, selling its herd and abandoning the station in 1913. After William's death in 1883 his wife Bessie moved to Mowo, a smaller property north of Bloomsbury, and then to Proserpine, where she died in 1932.

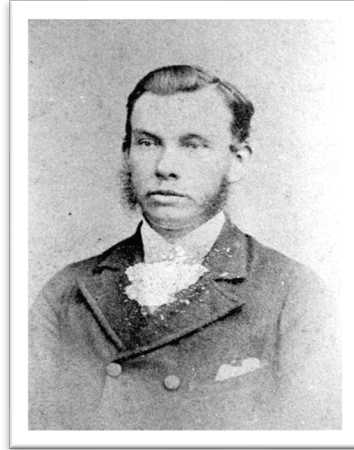
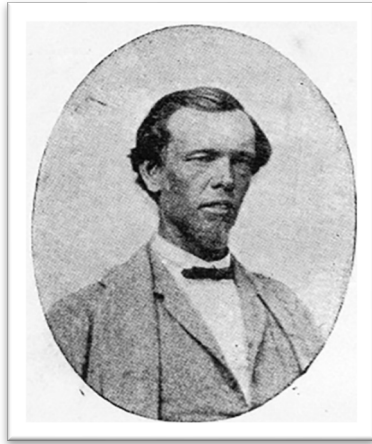
Clearly, there was some skulduggery involving George Dalrymple in 1862, when J.A. Macartney may have gained temporary control of the four leases. The St Helens Macartney, Graham, and Lacy story shows how hard it was to survive in pastoralism, and the great flexibility needed, as they took advantage of the close-by agricultural development through breeding stock and hoping to participate in the sugar industry. Today, the area between Jolimount and Bloomsbury is covered by sugarcane farms and there is little sign of the original 1860s pastoral properties, except for their names.

### **The Martins and Dalrymples of Hamilton, Hopetoun and The Pinnacle**

The geographic areas claimed under the Martins' 1860s leases were not always clear. McCrossin's 1860 Shamrock Vale (later Balnagowan) was on the north side of the river. It adjoined Lochnagar (roughly what became Hamilton) which was selected by Hamilton Robinson in 1860, then never taken up. Lochnagar became Hamilton station leased by James John Martin (1836–79) and his brother Robert (1840–98). They seem to have arrived in Queensland at about the same time in the second half of the 1850s. The Martin brothers took up three leases around what is today the town of Mirani: Hamilton, Hopetoun and Abington. The mines around their home village, Leadhills in Scotland, belonged to the Earl of Hopetoun. The towns of Abington and Hamilton, and Hamilton Palace (now demolished, once the seat of the Dukes of Hamilton) were close by.

James Martin was in New South Wales in late 1862 when he was employed to drive a herd of sheep up to Dr J. Wilkin's Eaglefield (later Dabin) pastoral station on the Suttor River over the range from the Pioneer Valley, arriving in early 1863. This is probably when he first inspected the unselected area at the end of the valley, although it is Robert's name that appears on the initial Hamilton application on 28 November 1863. He was granted the lease in September 1864 when he was 23 years old. Although no archival proof has been located, according to Roth, in the same year the two brothers applied for Abington (better known as The Hollow), opposite Hamilton on the south side of the river, which they forfeited in 1865. In *Pioneer Pageant*, John Kerr says that Abington, only in Robert's name, was forfeited, then restored in 1865. In its stead, they applied on 5 December 1865 for 50 square mile Hopetoun (also Hopetown) run, which adjoined Hamilton on the south side of Cattle Creek, with the Pioneer River on its eastern side (Maps 4.2–3). It included the Mt Martin Plain drained by McGregor Creek, and further west The Pinnacle or Middle Plains surrounding Cattle Creek. Archival records show that in 1869 the consolidated Hamilton and Hopetoun runs covered 80 square miles. In May 1869, John Barker, a southern Queensland pastoralist, joined the partnership. He withdrew in 1876, taking up 10 leases on the high plateau to the west, at Eungella, Urannah and Mount Cawte, each averaging 25 square miles, bounded by Broken River, and Hazlewood and Urannah creeks.

The changing mixtures of years and acreages are a lesson to historians not to be too dogmatic about early descriptions and sources. Perhaps we should settle for Hamilton, being controlled by the Martin brothers, occupying the end of the valley and consisting of plains and rugged areas at the base of Eungella Range, excellent but isolated land. Their closest neighbours were Sir John and Lady Catherine Macartney at Jolimount, the Rices and Finch-Hattons at Mt Spencer, and the Rawsons at The Hollow.



**Plates 4.18–20: James Martin**

**Robert Martin**

**David Dalrymple**

Source: Roth 1908, 70; Mackay Regional Council, Greenmount Homestead Collection; State Library of Queensland.

There is no sign in the lease records that Hamilton and Hopetoun were mortgaged to a bank or financial company. However, it is unlikely that Dr Martin's Leadhills medical practice could have provided all of the necessary funds. The wives may have brought dowries, but the only financial partners seem to have been Barker, followed by David Hay (Dal) Dalrymple, and A.K. Murray.

Born in 1840 at Newbury, Berkshire, England, Dalrymple was the son of James Dalrymple, a tea merchant, and his wife Georgina. Educated at the West of England Dissenters' Proprietary School at Taunton in Somerset, Dalrymple studied medicine at the Bristol Medical School, failed to qualify, and went on to train as an Associate of the Pharmaceutical Society. He arrived in Melbourne in 1862, the next year travelling to Rockhampton and on to Mackay. Dalrymple was Mackay's first pharmacist, the first mayor (1869–71), a justice of the peace (1870–), and a Member of Parliament and Government Minister (1888–1904). His pharmacy became a meeting place for the 'old brigade', such as John Ewan Davidson, the Finch-Hattons, and the Martin and Rawson brothers, whenever they came to town. In 1870, Dalrymple had entered a one-fifth partnership with the Martin brothers and in 1877 he acquired in his own name a neighbouring run, The Pinnacle, which bordered Hamilton and J.B. Macartney's Jolimount. He also owned land at Wallingford between Greenmount and Marian. It may be that, up until then, Dalrymple had a financial arrangement with the Martin brothers based on cattle numbers and had not sought to be included in the leases.

James Martin's station diary for these years still exists, in Sydney's Mitchell Library. The brothers were fighting, and James regularly rode to Mackay to negotiate with his estranged brother. In 1877–78, Hamilton and Hopetoun had around 6,000 cattle, along with land and stock valued at £20,000. To be fair to Robert, his brother and Dalrymple agreed to put the Hopetoun property up for auction. As mentioned above, in 1880, Dalrymple married Euphemia Margaret McLean; they had two daughters and two sons. Her father became part-owner of Graham's St Helens No. 2 run in 1869, and of Macartney's Jolimount run in 1880. At various times, the nine adjoining leases (Hamilton, Hopetoun, The Pinnacle, The Hollow, Jolimount, and the four St Helens leases) were all linked by ownership, kinship, and marriage.





**Plate 4.21: Hamilton Station homestead was on the bank of the Pioneer River, made from sawn timber, sealed and lined with red cedar, with verandahs and detached kitchen. This photograph is from 1874.**  
Source: Marten Photographic Collection. Mackay Library Heritage Collection.

In January 1878, 27-year-old aristocrat Lord Henry G.B. Phipps, third son of the Marquis of Normanby, Governor of Queensland (1871–74), New Zealand (1874–78), and Victoria (1879–84), visited with the intention of buying the Hopetoun lease and its cattle. The Martin brothers fell out over the sale. Robert had married at the beginning of 1876, first renting a house at Palms Estate near Mackay and then moving to a small property at Mandurana near The Leap. For several years he avoided direct meetings with James, using his lawyers to prevent the sale. Perhaps the shenanigans between the Martin brothers were too much for Phipps, as he soon gave up. Matters were also complicated by changes in land legislation which split the stations into resumed and unresumed areas. Hamilton was opened for selection from 31 December 1878 (the end of the 14-year lease), with Robert goading his brother by applying for the Pinnacle Plains section of Hopetoun early in April that year. This was ruled out by the Lands Department. The land was part of the original Martin leases, for which only the previous lessees (both of them) were able to apply. James offered Robert the Hopetoun lease and 1,000 cattle, and at about the same time Dalrymple asked to be bought out, preferring his The Pinnacle lease further up Cattle Creek. Such was the saga of the Martin brothers.

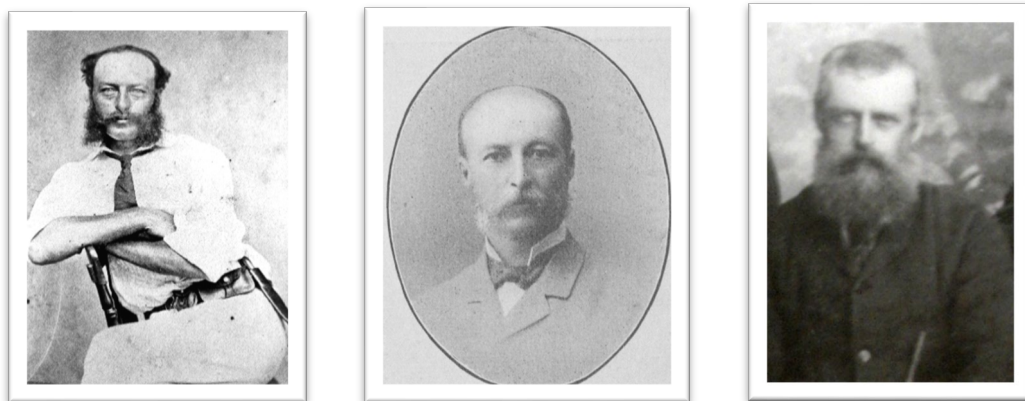
By the mid-1880s, the 100 square mile property had been reduced to just 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> square miles, which is not as severe as it seems as much of the land resumed was too mountainous to be useful. James Martin was not in good health and died in 1879, while Robert continued to live at Mandurana, farming cane and breeding cattle, until his death in 1898.

A.K. Murray (one of Sir John Macartney's 1879–80 partners in Jolimount, along with McLean) purchased James Martin's share in 1885, in partnership with Dalrymple. Hamilton

and The Pinnacle was operated as one property and converted to an annual Occupational License under the 1897 *Lands Act*, still covering 50 square miles—much of it hilly and mountainous, extending to the foot of Eungella Range. Large tracts of land suitable for agriculture had been converted to freehold over the several decades since the first 1860s pastoral leases. In 1894, the Hamilton Trust contained 20,000 acres (8,094 ha) of freehold land around The Pinnacle, and Dalrymple had another 8,000 acres suitable for agriculture. There were plans for a central mill in the mid-1890s, although sugar-growing largely had to wait until the 1902–11 extension of the Government railway line into the area, and the founding of Cattle Creek central mill in 1906.

### **The Rawsons of Abington (Shamrock Vale or The Hollow)**

As mentioned in the section above on the Martins, the early history of Abington across the river from Hamilton, is not clear cut. The boundaries of the first Pioneer Valley leases were based on marked trees, and compass directions to creeks, rivers, and mountains. In his January 1862 lease application, John McCrossin described Shamrock Vale as on the north side of the river with the coast as the eastern boundary. This was the same area that John Mackay illegally attempted to sell to Louis Ross in August 1862 and seems to be the area of land that became Ross and Cook's Balnagowan. McCrossin also held a lease over the Abington area, received on 30 January 1862, which he transferred to James Starr the next year to repay his debt for the latter helping finance his proposed pastoral venture in the valley (which never eventuated). The licence was granted in July the same year and the lease was issued from 1 January 1863. In July 1864, Starr described this as Shamrock Vale: 60 square miles or 38,400 acres (15,540 ha) beginning 37 kilometres inland from the mouth of the Pioneer River, the area that became the Rawson's Abington. One possible explanation is that after Ross renamed the original Shamrock Vale as Balnagowan, McCrossin and Starr both reused the name. Starr's application was refused as it was identical to another application, presumably that of the Martins. After Starr became insolvent, the lease McCrossin had transferred to him was acquired by Alexander McDonald and Charles Smith in August 1865, probably representatives of the Bank of Queensland. To add to the complexity, Abington clearly received its name from Robert and James Martin as it was named after a town near their village in Scotland. And Abington was not contiguous with McCrossin's original Shamrock Vale (Balnagowan).



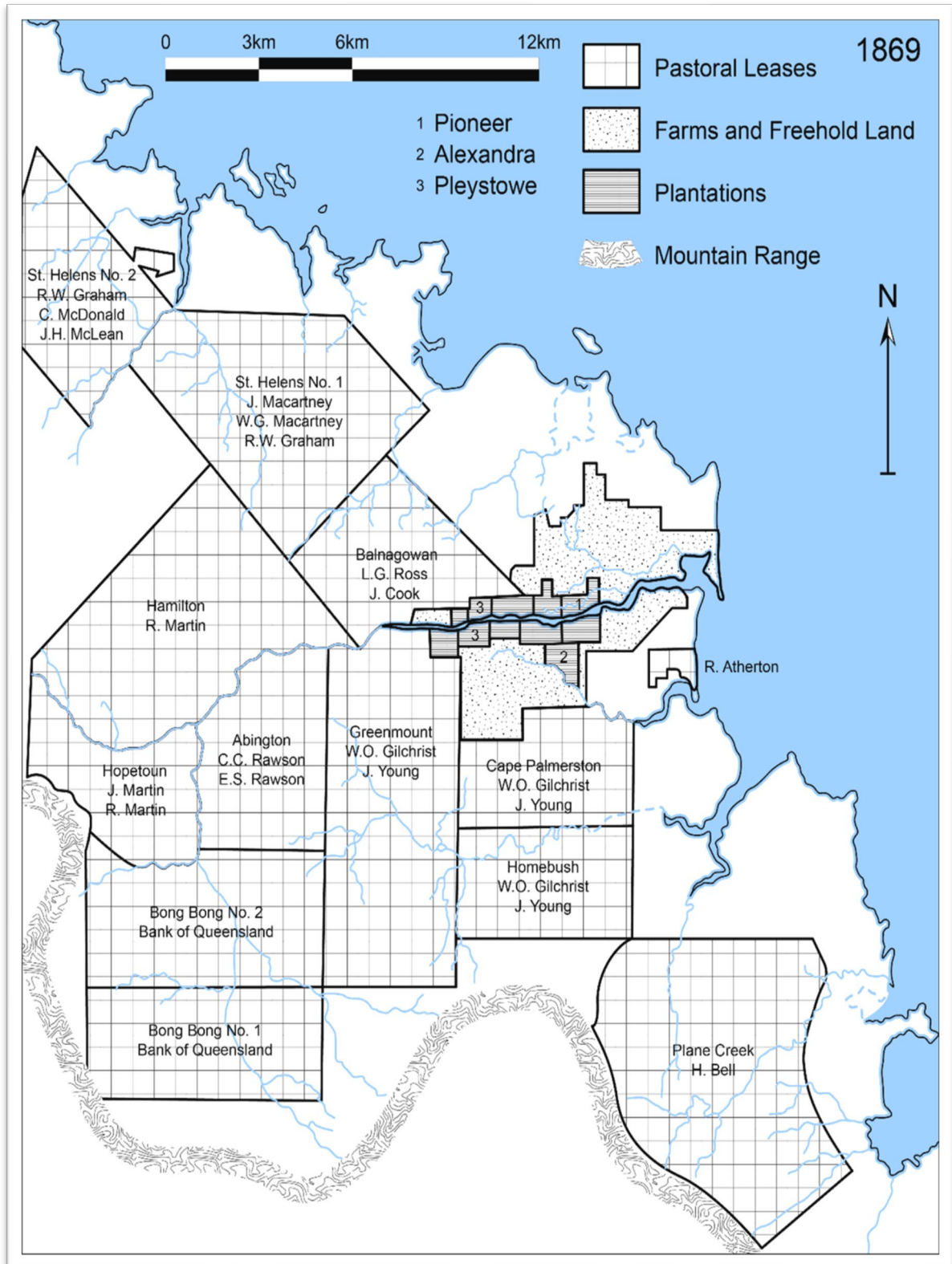
**Plates 4.22–24: L to R: Charles Collinson Rawson, Edmund Stansfeld Rawson, and Lancelot Rawson**

Source: (4.22–23) Roth 1908, 59; (4.24) Courtesy of the Deirdre Moorish Collection.

An attempt began in 1867 to sort out the mess over property names and boundaries. By resolution of the Governor-in-Council, on 20 May 1868 Balnagowan was no longer called Shamrock Vale, the name transferred to the area also known as Abington. Brisbane's John Oxley Library holds a Rawson station diary from 1871 clearly named 'Shamrock Vale' (Plate 4.25). Henry Roth, a resident of the district during the 1870s and 1880s, in his 1908 book gives Shamrock Vale as an alternative name for The Hollow (Abington). Roth is probably correct when he says that Abington was applied for by both Martin brothers in 1865 and forfeited when they took up Hamilton and Hopetoun.

We are on firmer ground once the Rawson brothers, Charles (Charley) (1840–1928) and Edmund (Ned) (1845–1911) arrived in the Pioneer Valley. Following the pattern of many southern Queensland squatters, they moved further north, had access to family money and seem to have had less need of local bank mortgages than some of the other pastoralists. They applied for the Abington lease (which they usually called The Hollow or Sleepy Hollow) in December 1865. The Rawsons were also joined by their cousin Harry Redesdale James from about 1870 to 1873.

Charles is said to have arrived in Sydney in 1857 at the age of 17, with his brothers Ned and Lancelot (Lance) (1843–1919). Ned's obituary in the *Mackay Mercury* says that before settling in the Pioneer Valley he and Charles were part-owners of Tenningering station near Mt Perry in the North Burnett district, which, based on age, seems unlikely, although they may well have undergone 'new chum' pastoral training there. In December 1866, Ned (aged 26) and Charles (aged 21) selected Shamrock Vale (Abington), bordered by the Pioneer River on two sides, adjoining Greenmount to the east with Hamilton across the river, with Bong Bong (Mt Spencer) on the southern boundary (Map 4.3). They purchased 600 head of Starr and Mackay's cattle from Arthur Kemmis, agent for the mortgagee, which would have fulfilled stocking requirements. Their brother Lance joined them on Shamrock Vale in 1867, although his name was never added to the leases.

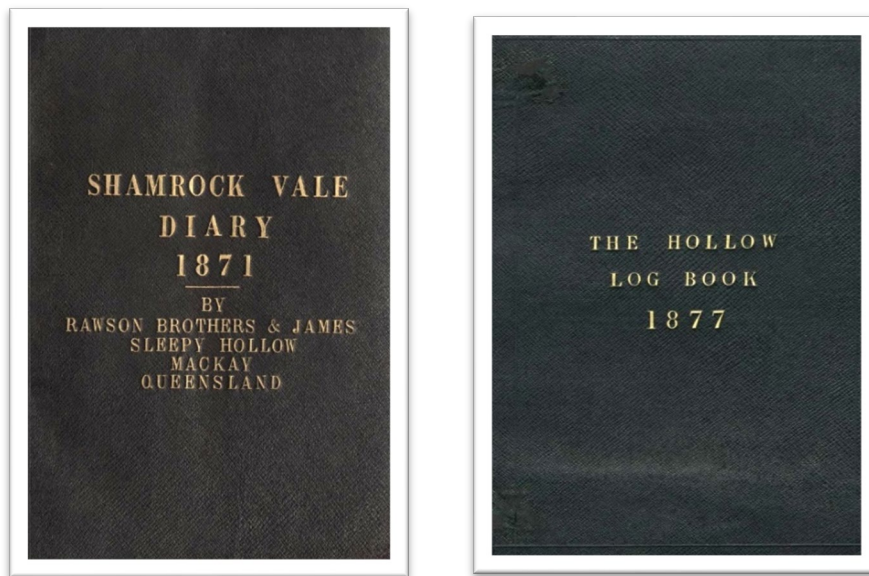


**Map 4.3:** This map shows pastoral and agricultural properties in the Mackay district in 1869. The initial coastal pastoral leases had been pushed back to make space for plantations along the river and small agricultural properties around them. The first sugarcane plantations were Pioneer (1), Alexandra (2) and Pleystowe (3).

Source: Cartography by Vincent Verheyen. Clive Moore Collection.



Harry Redesdale James, son of magistrate and landowner Thomas James of opulent Otterburn Tower in Northumberland, England (Plate 5.28), was part-owner of The Hollow between 1870 and his death in 1873, which occurred during a voyage on the labour trade vessel *Petrel*. The Rawson brothers then became sole owners of The Hollow. There is a watercolour painting by Charles of the Rawson's original Shamrock Vale house which shows it to be on the bank of the river (Plate 5.39). In 1876, Lance and his wife Mina moved to Maryborough where he became part-owner of a sugar plantation, clearly a financial disaster. One cannot help wondering if he was forced out of The Hollow by his brothers, or if he wanted to establish himself separately and made a poor decision to take on a primitive unprofitable mill.



**Plates 4.25—26: The 1871 diary from the Rawson brothers and their cousin Harry James' Shamrock Vale also used the name Sleepy Hollow (The Hollow). By 1877, the property was known only as The Hollow. A 20 May 1868 resolution by the Governor-in-Council resolved that Shamrock Vale was henceforth included in The Hollow, which does not match the diary cover details.**

Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Charles married Winifred (née Harrisdon) in 1870, and they had four boys born between 1872 and 1879. Their son Harry lies buried at The Hollow. In 1885, Charles and Wini and their other three boys returned to England, living in London where Charles was engaged in business, part of the time in partnership with R.B.B. Clayton, father of Rev. 'Tubby' Clayton of 'Toc H', an interdenominational Christian movement. Charles Rawson held annual dinners in London for Queensland colonists residing there or passing through.

The same pattern of land resumptions noted elsewhere applied to The Hollow, although the Rawsons continued to hold the remnants of the Abington lease until the early 1910s. In the 1880s, land around The Hollow began to be selected for agriculture. Faced with the inevitable, and happy to turn to sugar milling, Charles secured English financial backing for a scheme to begin a central mill at The Hollow. The Rawsons formed the North Queensland Sugar Estate Co. Ltd in England, planning to subdivide 11,500 freehold acres (4,654 ha) on The Hollow into agricultural blocks for sale and lease, and to erect a sugar mill. This was just before the 1885 government announcement that importing Pacific Islander labour would end in 1890. Even though onwards from 1885 the new government railway ran through the estate, the Rawsons could not guarantee sufficient labour and their scheme failed.

Charles W. Toussaint took over as manager, and by 1891 large areas of fertile alluvial freehold land obtained by the Rawsons through pre-emptive purchases were thrown open for sale, with 3,500 acres sold by 1894.

Although Charles Rawson and his family returned to England, he came back to Queensland another three times, mainly living in Brisbane with one of his sons, or in his own house in New Farm (Plate 4.27). Two of his sons died in World War I. When he died in February 1928, he was living at Gore Lodge, Hampton, Middlesex, England.



**Plate 4.27: ‘The Hollow’, Charles and Wini Rawson’s house on the river at the Teneriffe end of Merthyr Road, New Farm, Brisbane.**

Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Ned stayed in the Pioneer Valley for another decade, diversifying his interests, forming a partnership in Mackay with a Mr Stewart, as E.S. Rawson & Co., planters and squatters’ commission agents, importers, and auctioneers. Through this business, he built a wharf (Rawson’s Wharf) and store at the eastern end of what was later known as the Adelaide Steamship Co. Wharf. The western end of the new valley railway terminated near The Hollow, and there were selectors living nearby. A small town grew up, originally called Hamilton, the name changed to Mirani, to avoid any conflict with another Hamilton, a Brisbane suburb.

Always interested in civic affairs, in 1882–83 Ned Rawson was mayor of Mackay, then living at Mortonvilla in Brisbane Street, as well as at The Hollow. He interested himself in public institutions, was vice-president of the Mackay Turf Club for a number of years and became a trustee of the Church of England Holy Trinity Church, where he was also a lay reader.

Even though the Pacific labour trade resumed in 1892, the tide had well and truly turned against the original pastoral properties. Shortly afterwards, in 1894 Ned Rawson also retired to London. Like his brother, he had trouble staying away and returned in 1895 to be on a committee to examine the proposed Mirani-Cattle Creek railway extension. He kept his house in Mackay until 1898. Ned died in 1911. The Hollow partnership was not dissolved until 1914.





**Plate 4.28: Charles and Ned Rawson's homestead The Hollow, on the south bank of the Pioneer River in 1874. The original slab-walled house from 1866 (Plates 2.2, 5.37–38) is the partly obscured building at the back of the main house. It served as the kitchen, and later it became a store house.**

Source: Boah & Mills Collection, State Library of Queensland.

### **The Bells and Athertons at Plane Creek, Cliftonville and Howard Park**

The Athertons were one of the most ancient prominent families in Lancashire, England, dating back to the twelfth century. They were originally relatively minor country gentry who married well into other leading Cheshire and Lancashire gentry families, such as the Powys and Lilfords. During the eighteenth century, the lack of male heirs saw the family name almost die out. Their palatial Atherton Hall was demolished in 1824–25, by its then owner Lord Lilford as surplus to his needs.



**Plate 4.29: Atherton Hall in the eighteenth Century.**

Source: [engole.info/atherton-hall/](http://engole.info/atherton-hall/) Wikimedia Commons.

The nineteenth century Atherton family lived in much reduced circumstances from their situation in earlier centuries. Edmund Atherton (1804–63) and his wife Esther Ainscough (1806–88) migrated to Australia in 1844, taking up grazing land outside Armidale in the New England district, before beginning a family move to Queensland between 1856 and 1858. Edmund's immigration record lists him as a farm labourer, although Fox's *History of Queensland* described him as a 'Lancashire gentleman' and 'agricultural land owner'<sup>7</sup>. Given their level of successful property ownership, the family are probably best described as well-to-do yeomen farmers. There were nine children, and because the family had a propensity for repeating the same Christian names in each generation, tracking them presents difficulties. Seven of their nine children were born in Blackrod, Lancashire, and the final two in New South Wales. In 1856, James (born in 1830) and John (born in 1837) overlanded sheep from the family property Bald Blair (which also produced wheat and mixed crops), midway between Armidale and Glen Innes in the New England region, to Queensland to form Rosewood sheep station on the Fitzroy River about 80 kilometres from Rockhampton. Seeing the possibilities, they encouraged their father to sell his Armidale farm and join them. Guided by John, in 1858 Edmund senior and the rest of his family set out from Armidale to Rosewood: an epic four-month journey consisting of 26 people, three horse teams and a bullock team, drays, and 2,000 shorthorn cattle. Edmund senior took up Mt Hedlow station near Yeppoon but died in 1863. John married in 1862, took up Bamoyea station at Limestone Creek near Yeppoon, then moved to Woodlands at Emerald, soon after taking up the adjoining Corio station.

The next year, the family (including John) moved to West Hill on the coast midway between Mackay and St Lawrence, which they abandoned in 1865 after eighteen months. They faced antagonism from the local Aboriginal people, an outbreak of pleuropneumonia among their cattle, and the family and station hands suffered from fever. Henry Bell (1839–1915), an original member of the expedition to West Hill, moved further north and in 1865 selected Plane Creek station on Bell's Creek close to modern Sarina, adjoining the southern side of Homebush (Map 4.3). Married to Alice Atherton in 1861, in 1866 Bell invited her brothers, Edmund (born in 1839) and Richard (born in NSW in 1847), to become his partners, an arrangement which ended in 1872. The West Hill herd was driven north to Plane Creek.

The web of Atherton pastoral properties is not easy to unravel; few families were as large and lasted as long in the cattle industry. In 1872, each of the Plane Creek partners established their own properties in the area. Henry Bell retained the Plane Creek run, which was largely resumed in 1884 for urban use and agricultural settlement. Richard Atherton formed Woonon station adjoining Plane Creek on the south side, which he held until 1901, then sold it to his nephew Thomas. He also owned Plevna station on the Eungella Plateau, Suttor Creek station near Nebo, and Mount Funnell station (1906–14), about 50 miles south of Mackay. His principal place of residence became Howard Park, a small coastal beef property between Bakers Creek and present-day Mackay Airport. In about 1914 he retired to Brisbane. Based on pre-emptive selections from the original Plane Creek lease, Edmund selected Cliftonville, close to the coast, then in 1883 pushed further north to Midlothian near Normanton.

In 1875, John drove his shorthorn herd north to Basalt Downs (Cashmere) station on the old telegraph line between Cardwell and the Gulf, in the headwaters of the Burdekin River. Selling out after an unsuccessful 18 months, he moved further north to Emerald End station at the junction of Emerald Creek and the Barron River in 1877, at what became Mareeba on the Atherton Tablelands. It was not an easy move, as he was opposed by the local First Nations people and used the Native Police to disperse whole populations. Although tin mining became important in the area, Richard chose to stay with beef cattle

production, using the northern tin- and goldminers as his market.

In 1893, Henry Bell, and Richard and Edmund Atherton began growing sugarcane and helped found Plane Creek central mill. Bell retained 6,240 acres of freehold land pre-empted from Plane Creek station. Atherton retained 6,000 acres at Cliftonville. They provided the Queensland Government with security for the mill by pledging their freehold land under the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act*. Edmund became the mill's first chairman and Henry was the largest shareholder. Whereas the Macartneys and Rawsons failed in their plans to move into the sugar industry, the Cooks and Athertons made the move successfully in the 1890s, while maintaining their pastoral interests.



**Plate 4.30: Henry Bell and Richard Atherton's Plane Creek Station homestead, with Mt Chelona in the background. Willie Bell is sitting on the fence. Alice Atherton and her daughters are standing beside the house.**

Source: Mackay Family History Society Inc. 2009, 47.

### **Male Pursuits**

While clearly the leaseholders were in control, almost all of them worked alongside their men. Work hours were long and early conditions were rough and remained so for outstation workers. As pastoralist Edward Palmer put it:

The duties were shared by all alike; each had to take a turn at anything and everything, cooking one time, driving a team another, shepherding sheep occasionally, herding cattle sometimes, cutting timber, making bough-yards for sheep, lambing down a flock of ewes, shifting hurdles, and poisoning dingoes, killing and salting beef, ear-marking, washing and shearing sheep, looking for stragglers, yoking bullocks, building huts, tracking and hunting stock, all little duties that made up the life of a grazier. They all took their turn, and generally there was one dish and one table. Where the ways and customs consequent on the life brought all on a partial level, the man who could turn his hand to anything from shoeing a horse to weighing out quinine or driving a bullock team, was the most valuable.

Palmer also described the work of a stockman:

His work is not by any means easy; there are long hours, hard fare, and often no lodging but the bare ground; he must endure hunger and thirst, cold, heat, and wet, and often has to take a watch at night. When at work in the yard branding and drafting, he has either to endure tremendous dust, or else he is covered in mud. But the trained stockrider makes light of these discomforts, in fact he looks on them as all in the bill of fare, and belonging to a day's work. He is hardy, wiry, as well as possessed of a good deal of endurance and pluck, and like men who ride much, is nearly always lean in condition. He is generally the owner of a couple of horses and an outfit of saddle, swag, stock whip, and spurs, and takes an interest in all racing and sporting matters. As a rule, he is not a saving man, although some may lay up enough money to start a small store. The native youth makes the best all-round stockman; many follow horse-breaking at times, or take a turn at droving. To draft on horseback in the cattle yard, or in the yard on foot, to castrate and brand horses and calves, to ride a young horse, to make a leg or head rope out of green hide, or a pair of hobbles, to counter-line a saddle, to cook a damper, all come within the province of the stockman... . Moleskins, Crimean shirt, Cossack boots, and a felt hat, are his rig out.<sup>8</sup>

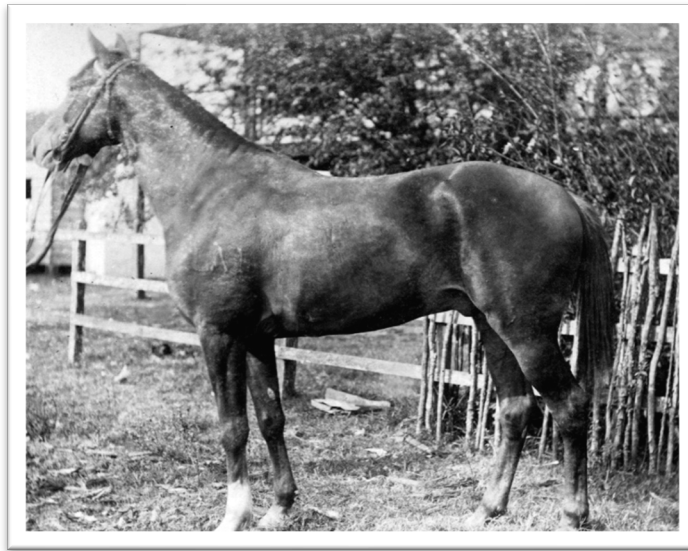
Initially there were no fences on pastoral leases, which meant an open range system with limited herd management. Cattle and sheep were branded, and shepherds and stockmen had to work hard to keep herds and flocks separated from those of their neighbours. There were large flocks of sheep in the Pioneer Valley during the 1860s, although a transition to cattle was occurring at the same time. Shepherds usually lived alone or in pairs on outstations and were in danger from attacks from First Nations people. Flocks of sheep were driven to more central sites for shearing, branding and earmarking, and hurdles (temporary enclosures) had to be moved about. Cattle roamed over the greater proportion of the runs and needed to be worked so that they were comfortable around humans; otherwise, they became wild and difficult to herd. Cattle-camps were built at intervals of several kilometres where cattle from the surrounding districts were mustered. To accustom cattle to these places, stockmen rode around constantly, putting them into different camps. Once cattle found their way to isolated mountainous areas it was almost impossible to bring them back. Boundary fences between sheep and cattle stations were built well after first settlement, as were internal sub-divisions into large paddocks.

About three times a year, as many of the cattle as possible were mustered and passed through the drafting-yards, enabling young calves to be branded and the older ones to be weaned. The larger yards could hold about 1,000 cattle at any one time. To make the task easier at musters, stockmen from neighbouring properties assisted, which was useful as the practice enabled sorting out any cattle that have strayed from neighbouring leases. Other than at musters, stockmen often worked in isolation from the main homestead, alongside Aboriginal assistants.

Accommodation on out-stations was always primitive. Stockmen could be working alone for several days at the far end of runs, with only horses and dogs for company. Men out mustering carried a blanket, limited rations of dried salt beef, flour, cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda for making dampers, and tea and sugar, all contained in labelled unbleached calico bags. They also carried plenty of tobacco, matches and pipes, as well as rice, curry powder, and treacle. Their billycans had flat sides to fit against the horses' sides, and were of different sizes, each stored inside the other when empty. The outstations had basic cooking equipment like camp ovens, a teapot and a couple of saucepans, suspended on

iron rods over a fire. Mugs were often just small tins with handles soldered on. Plates were made from tin. Lighting came from the glow of the fire, or from tallow and wicks, inserted in glass bottles. Some outstations (and homesteads) had ovens made from antbed, wetted, and plastered into shape, with a fire underneath and a hole in the middle to cook bread and dampers.

Condy's crystals were used to clean wounds and control dermatitis. Venice Turpentine, a mixture of Turps and a resin, which had the consistency of treacle, worked as a drawing ointment and was used to extract splinters and poisonous thorns, and to treat strains and muscular pain in horses and humans. The bushman's kit was completed with a rifle, whip, axe and knives, which they never travelled without. Falls could easily be fatal and help was unlikely to arrive in time.



**Plate 4.31: The Beau, a champion horse, at River plantation ca. 1880.**  
Source: Henry Brandon Collection, State Library of Queensland.

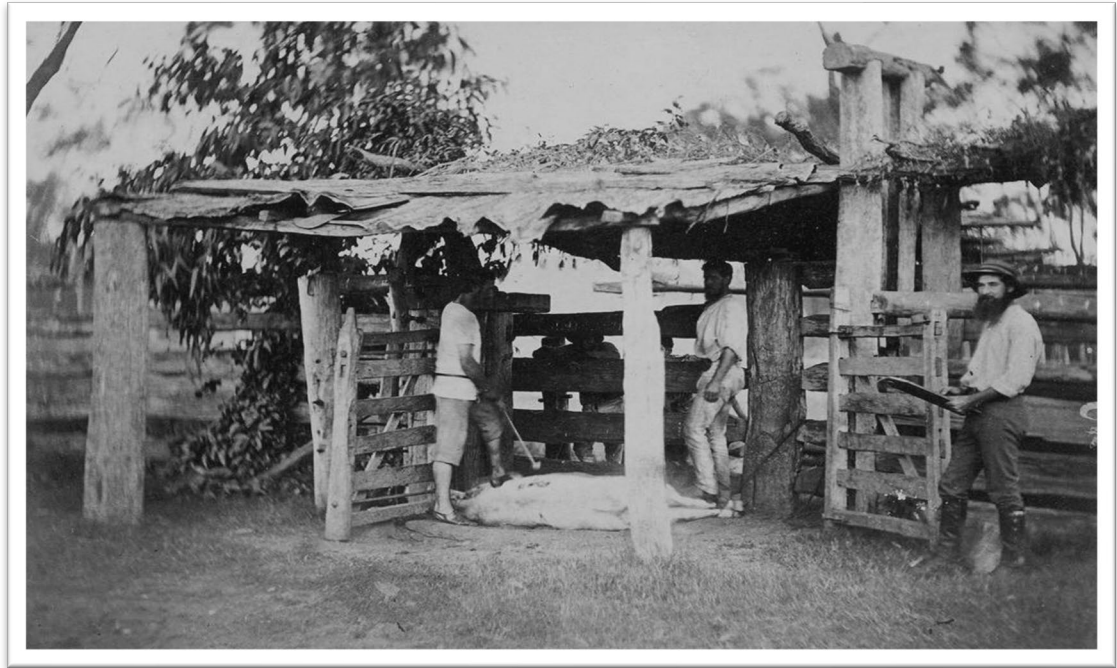
While sheep and cattle were the main product of pastoralism, we should not forget horses, the main means of transport. The bosses rode the best thoroughbred horses, and there was always money in breeding horses as a sideline. Multiple horses were needed as they had to be rested after long rides and saddle-sore horses needed to be left to recuperate. One station might carry 80 to 90 horses. On long-distance rides, such as Hamilton to Mackay—35 kilometres in a straight line—they often took a spare horse with them or arranged to change horses at one of the stations or plantations on the way. Good prices were paid for the best horses. They were trained for riding in the bush and could go at a canter, always avoiding foliage. It was not wise to try to guide them when cantering through heavily forested areas as they managed best by themselves.

Reading James Martin's 1876–79 diaries from Hamilton and Hopetoun stations, one of the most remarkable aspects is the number of accidents that occurred. The 1877 diary contains a constant litany of falls: James's horse shied, and he fell off stunned; on another occasion a horse kicked his arm and left him out of action for several days; his brother Charlie fell off his horse; David (Dal) Dalrymple was bucked by his horse; and Alexander (Sandy) Shields' horse threw him off. The women, who always rode side-saddle, were not immune. Polly Martin's horse threw her, and one of the wives had her mare fall on her.

Other accidents also occurred, particularly with cattle, but also with other every-day tasks on pastoral stations. For instance, sometimes steers charged during mustering, and it



was easy to be kicked by a calf during branding. One of the worst accidents recorded in the 1877 diary involved Sir John Macartney in July. He was rolling a large log off the top of the saw pit when the pit floor gave way. Badly hurt, he broke an arm in two places and damaged a leg. His wife was away taking their sons to school in Rockhampton, so he sent a message over to his Martin neighbours. Young Charley Martin went immediately and spent two weeks assisting him.



**Plate 4.32: Branding calves on The Hollow, 1870s.**

Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.



**Plate 4.33: Horses in the stockyard at The Hollow, 1870s.**

Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.



**Plate 4.34:** Charles Rawson helping stretch the wire for a fence on The Hollow (Abington) station, 1870s.  
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.



**Plate 4.35:** Out-stations were always primitive, consisting of a hut and a series of stock yards, aimed to make cattle management easier, but usually not for permanent habitation. This out-station was on a pastoral property, presumably on the Blue Mountain or Mt Spencer runs in the 1880s. The house is made from saplings and bark sheets, tied together with hide strips. The cooking was done out in the open.  
Source: Finch-Hatton 1886, 77.

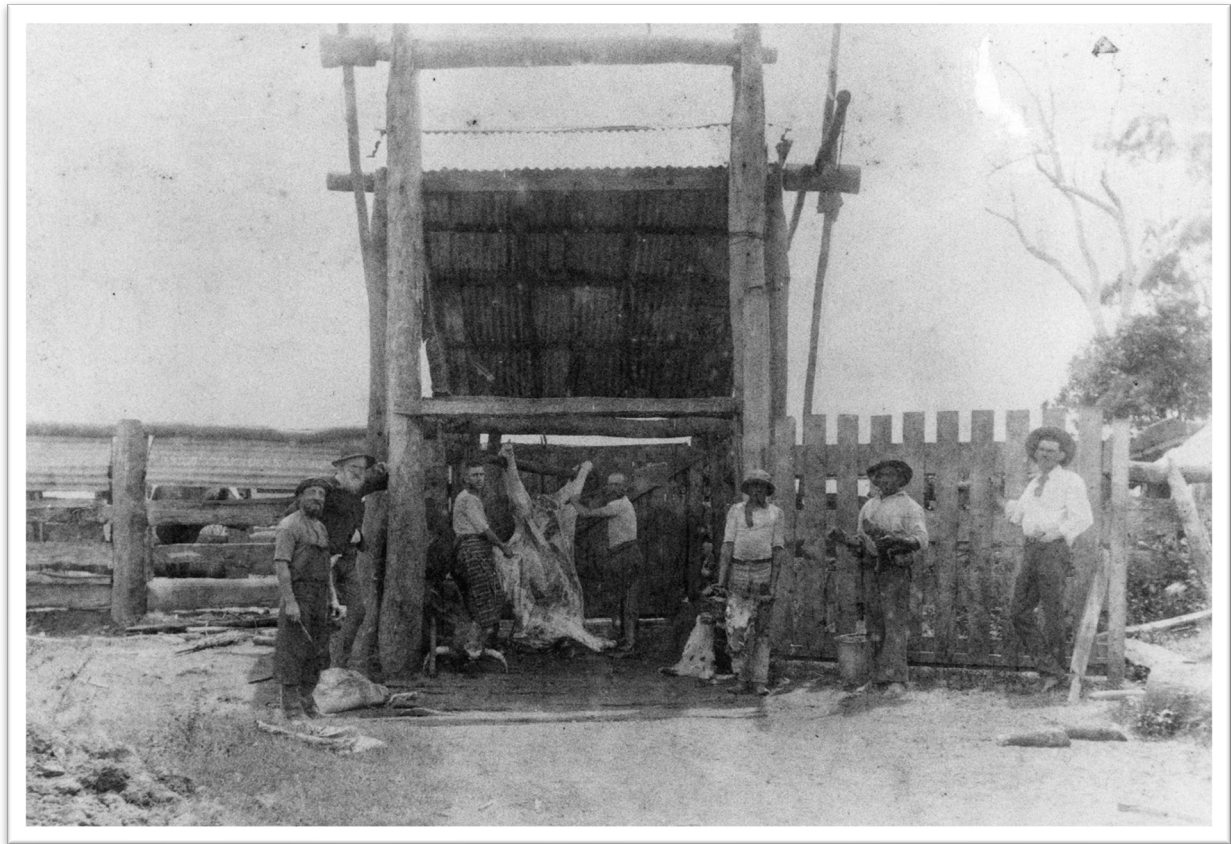
### **Butcheries and the Scrubby Creek and Eton Boiling Down Works**

One of the first buildings in 1862 Mackay was Kemmis and Bovey's primitive woolshed. Most, but not all, of the wool came from the properties in drier areas over the ranges. When local Cape Palmerston station began in 1863, it was stocked with sheep, which may have been more to fulfill stocking requirements than a long-term plan. Spencer's The Retreat station was the first in the region stocked solely with cattle. Within the first decade most stations changed over to cattle. As already mentioned, the arrival of herds altered the ground cover, and spear grass became prominent, ruining fleeces.

The market for beef and lamb grew as population levels increased—aided by the Queensland goldrushes of the 1860s to 1880s, and government-sponsored immigration—then became entrenched once refrigeration was introduced in the 1890s. Onwards from the 1870s, mining and sugarcane farming expanded Queensland's population; consequently, the larger

market which developed made cattle an economic proposition, even before refrigeration enabled long-distance transport of meat. The other use was in butcheries, and in boiling-down works to manufacture into tallow. In the mid-1860, brothers, Glen and John Walker operated a small boiling-down works on Bakers (Scrubby) Creek, now the site of Walkerston.

F.H. Wilson and Co.'s Mackay temporary boiling-down works was under construction in May 1867. It could process only 15 bullocks at one time. The next year a larger processing plant arrived from Sydney and was erected on Bakers Creek at Walkerston by Ramsay & Co., replacing the small plant begun by the Walker brothers. Ramsay & Co's production began in October when 3,000 aged ewes were walked down from Fort Cooper South station. By May 1869, the works were fully operational, with enough capacity to process 20,000 sheep from Fort Cooper North station, brought down by Frank Bridgeman. In the 1870s, Hyne & Co. (William Hyne's company) took over, expanding the plant with a 6-ton Cornish boiler. In the meantime, the sugar industry had come into being. The arrival of the South Sea Islander workforce meant that more meat was needed locally, and the growth in agriculture meant the truncation of cattle properties in the valley. In 1875, Hyne & Co. converted their boiling-down works into a profitable butchery. The boiling-down works was an early source of pollution in Bakers Creek, soon added to by run-off from the sugar mills. A later Mackay district boiling down works operated near Eton in the 1890s, making tallow and tinning tongues. This was on the site of the failed Victoria mill, killed off by the proximity of the new North Eton central mill.



**Plate 4.36: Balnagowan cattle killing pen.**

Source: State Library of Queensland.



There were many butcheries in the district. They were an ideal auxiliary enterprise for any cattle station, and for some plantations. Between 1867 and 1875, brothers George and Michael Hess were the second owners of Lake Elphinstone station, followed by Sutter Creek station, and another grazing property near Proserpine. In about 1889, they began Hess Brother's butchery in Victoria Street, Mackay. Their cattle properties provided the beef for their butchery. Similarly, when he owned Lake Elphinstone station, William Hyne (later of Balmoral and Meadowlands plantations) ran butcheries, first at nearby Fort Cooper/Nebo and then at Walkerston when he shifted to Mackay. The best known of these businesses was The Hermitage, the Rawson brothers' (of The Hollow) slaughter yard and butchery on 40 acres situated near what became the Mackay Hospital. The Rawson brothers bought the land from Macartney and Graham of St Helens, then in 1872 and 1873 the Rawsons operated it in partnership with Robert Martin from Hamilton, with John C. Binney as the manager. Rawsons had a small cottage at The Hermitage, which served as their early town house. In 1874, Martin's share was taken over by Frances Meynell. The Finch-Hattons from Mt Spencer had a butchery at Mackay, and James Ready and his brother Mick, also operated one, utilising Fort Cooper station stock.



**Plate 4.37: The Hermitage Paddock and cottage in 1876.**

Source: Mackay City Council Archives, 1979.



**Plate 4.38: The Rawson's Hermitage Butchery Paddock in the 1880s, reduced in size to accommodate what is now the Mackay Base Hospital.**

Source: Finch-Hatton 1886, 27.



**Plate 4.39: Hess Brothers butcher's shop in Victoria Street, Mackay, ca. 1896.**  
Source: State Library of Queensland.

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## **Bibliography**

The bibliographies for all chapters are in a separate file.

## **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> As he would have been under 21, then the legal age of adulthood, there is a discrepancy in the dates.
- <sup>2</sup> Finch-Hatton 1886, 39–40.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 54–55.
- <sup>4</sup> The land files can be found in Queensland State Archives: TRE/17, 17,CLO/N20, N46. Also see *Warwick Argus and Tenterfield Chronicle*, 21 November 1878, 2; *Brisbane Courier*, 13 December 1905, 5; [https://www.myheritage.com/names/henry\\_phipps](https://www.myheritage.com/names/henry_phipps).
- <sup>5</sup> I did not find evidence of John A. Macartney's involvement in my 1970s searches of the Lands Department files, but Desmond Dunn in his 2012 book seems very certain.
- <sup>6</sup> Kennedy 2002, 21.
- <sup>7</sup> Fox 1919, Vol. 1, 344.
- <sup>8</sup> Palmer 1903, Chapter X, n.p. See digital text.