

**WOODFORD**

**SETTLEMENT - DEVELOPMENT**

**Compiled by**

**The Woodford State School**

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## CONTENTS

Preface

Chapter	1	Moreton Bay Settlement and Beginning of Free Settlement
	II	Durundur and the Archers 1841 - 1848
	III	The McConnells at Durundur
	IV	J McConnel and H C Wood
	V	The Growth of the Township
	VI	Woodford Today

## PREFACE

Tom Archer, one of the original settlers in this district, later became Agent-General for Queensland. On one occasion when dining with the Minister for the Colonies, the Minister said, "I suppose the original settlers of Queensland were a very rough and uncultivated set of people?"

"Yes," was Tom's reply, "and I was one of them.

"Oh, indeed! I beg your pardon," said the Minister.

Then they began to discuss California when Tom's host remarked, "Well, at any rate, I am sure that the original settlers in California were an unmitigated lot of ruffians."

"You are quite right," Tom answered, "and I was also one of them."

"Well, Well! I never made such bad shots in my life," said the Minister. "Why don't you write a book?"

So Tom wrote "Recollections of a Wanderer's Life," and a very interesting book it is. From these recollections, material was obtained on the Archers for this booklet which was written because it seemed very necessary to have to hand primarily for the school children, a connected account of the early days of Woodford and District.

During the past few years, the school has made many attempts to write a history of Woodford, but few seemed to be interested in the past, and little co-operation was obtained until a few weeks before the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Woodford State School (25<sup>th</sup> October, 1952).

It was decided that a history should be read at the function and a great deal of detail was collected locally. In this connection, Messrs T H Mason, H Beanland and E Johnstone, and Mesdames J Brown, Chalmers and O'Brien were of great assistance.

The history was written, and was well received, and it was evident that some at least, thought it worthwhile to delve into the past and get a picture of the early days of Woodford, but it was felt that a more comprehensive work should be attempted.

Mr Alister Archer of Gracemere was contacted, and he kindly lent Tom Archer's book, "Recollections of a Wanderer's Life" and also copies of letters written by the Archers to their parents in Norway. From these books, it was possible to get a good idea of life in this area during the time of the Archers.

A number of visits to the Oxley Memorial Library in William Street, Brisbane, was necessary to read the story of the McConnells. Mr A J McConnel, son of John, one of the original McConnells of Durundur, wrote these full and very interesting notes. His task was made more difficult because many old records were lost in a fire which burnt the house at Durundur in 1879, and in another fire which destroyed the office at Cressbrook.

This booklet deals with the first settlers and pioneers in particular while Woodford in later years and today is treated generally.

After the passing of the Act for closer settlement in 1868.

Mr A Archer is a son of James Archer who was the youngest brother of the original settlers here.

(Chapter IV) big blocks were carved off the old station and the names of those who took over this land are mentioned. This information was taken from McConnel's notes.

The resumption of land in 1878 which cut the land into smaller blocks (Chapter V) meant much closer settlement. In regard to this resumption, only those settlers are mentioned who took up land fronting the main road to Brisbane from the Head Station to D'Aguilar.

The compilers have not yet been able to find enough reliable data to go any further here and moreover if this resumption were extensive all over the district, it is beyond the scope of this short history to deal with it, hence many old families who have done much to develop this district are not mentioned.

An endeavour has been made to make the booklet a school project. The children have collected a good deal of data and assistance has been given by the staff and school committee. The V Grade boys have done much of the work of book binding while the stencils were by Miss L Fyfe, a member of the staff.

Although the account is short, there will be no doubt some inaccuracies and omissions, for much of the matter has been supplied by those who had no written records, and had to rely on memory. The history is long overdue and because of this, checking has been difficult - in some cases, impossible.

To all those who have helped in any way, the compilers express their thanks.

The history of Woodford and District begins with Durundur sheep station which the Archers took up in September 1841. The whole district was then part of the station.

The Cruice family now owns that portion of the station where the head buildings were. This land is situated on the right bank of the Stanley River about 2.1/2 miles from the local Post Office. The brick chimney of the house built by the McConnells still remains as does the old boiling-down works.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Moreton Bay Settlement and Beginning of Free Settlement

Oxley discovered the Brisbane River in 1823, and in the following year was sent to form a settlement for convicts in the area. After a few months at Redcliffe, the convict settlement was established on the Brisbane River, 20 miles from its mouth.

Settlers were forbidden to take up land within 50 miles of the station, and even when in 1839, the convict settlement was broken up, the rule still held. The last of the convicts left in 1841.

In 1839, surveyors were sent from Sydney to make a survey, preparatory to throwing the land open for free settlement, this work being completed in 1842. During this year Brisbane land was sold in Sydney, and settlers flocked to the area. The land around Moreton Bay was then named "The Northern District of New South Wales" and land was sold at 12/- per acre.

A considerable number of immigrants arrived and settled on the banks of the Brisbane River, growing wheat and maize. The settlement flourished and others came to share in the prosperity, and as early as 1843, the free settlers and representatives of the Legislative Council in Sydney.

About this time there was a depression. Land speculation, drought and the arrival of 27,000 immigrants to Australia helped to produce this. The Bank of Australia failed, and many were made bankrupt as a result. Sheep sold at as low a figure as 6d. The squatters discovered that they could get about 6/- a head by boiling them down for tallow, and this saved many from ruin.

Australia of the forties was purely pastoral, wool and tallow being the main exports, and the whole colony was run for the wool growers' convenience. Towns were built as far up the rivers as ships could go, and at river crossings where teams camped on the way to market. The Aborigines were troublesome and many shepherds were killed by the blacks and blacks were killed in revenge. The position was particularly bad in 1843.

The first squatters in Queensland were the Leslie Brothers (June 1840) who settled on the Darling Downs, bringing with them about 6,000 sheep. As early as 1841, men crossed the Downs, and occupied land on the edge of the forbidden area from Grantham to Helidon and from Cressbrook to Durundur. Queensland owes its foundation to these squatters, and not to the convicts.

On the upper waters of the Brisbane River in 1841 were the McConnells at Cressbrook (1<sup>st</sup> squatters), the Balfours at Colinton, the McKenzies at Kilcoy, and in September 1841, the Archers at Durundur. The Bigges took up land at Mount Brisbane inside the forbidden area. It seems that the Act regarding the 50 miles radius was never enforced.

These squatters were men of good families from England and Scotland, and most were well educated and altogether fine settlers. The Balfours at Colinton were uncles of Robert Louis Balfour Stephenson, the noted author, and both Evan and Colin McKenzie succeeded to a baronetcy.

## CHAPTER 2

### Durundur and the Archers 1841 - 1848

The Archers were a notable family - a family still prominent in Queensland. David was the principal of the firm, Archer & Co, Charles afterwards took up a sheep station at Minnie Downs near Tambo, Archibald was a noted politician, Colin was a shipbuilder of note building "The Fram" Nansen's famous ship, John was a sea captain, Alexander was the first manager in Brisbane of the Bank of New South Wales, Thomas became Agent-General for Queensland, and Charles and William Archer discovered the Fitzroy River in 1853, and with their flocks and herds settled on its banks in August 1855.

They were of Scotch origin. Their father, William Archer was a junior partner in a timber firm in Scotland, but in 1825 went to Norway to take part in the lobster trade. Eight of his children were born in Scotland and five in Norway, there being nine sons.

David the third son came to Australia in 1835 at the age of 17 and went to his great-uncle William Walker who had a sheep station, Wallerawang, 100 miles west of Sydney. Here he gained experience, eventually becoming manager.

In 1839, he formed a partnership with Edward Walker, the new firm being known as David Archer & Co. David had 1,600 sheep and with Walker's sheep, the number totalled 5,000. The firm planned to take up land on the Darling Downs. Setting out from the Castlereagh River, they had not gone far before they discovered a disease called "scab" among the sheep. As the sheep could not travel, and had to be treated, they had to postpone their journey for about a year.

The journey to the Downs took from four to five months and when they arrived, they thought erroneously that all the good land had been taken up, and not wishing to lose the opportunity of selecting good land around the Brisbane River, they pushed on, David going ahead to select land. A site was eventually chosen on the right bank of the Stanley River on a ridge out of flood level.

The party consisted of David and his brothers, John and Tom, four shepherds, two blackfellows and Paddy Hogan, driver of the bullock team. Hogan and most of the men were emancipists and nearly all were Irish. They were a good lot excepting Paddy who was a cross-grained surly type of fellow perpetually grumbling and trying to cause trouble. David was boss, John was horse driver and storekeeper, and Tom was overseer.

The route taken from the Downs passed where Allora, Clifton and Drayton now are to Hodgson's Gap. Passing through the gap, they went along the Brisbane Road, and then struck north to Wingate's Lagoon near Tarampa. They then followed the tracks of the McConnells, Balfours and McKenzies, crossed the Brisbane twice and then the Stanley, cut through a scrub and came upon Durundur. This word is Aboriginal in origin and means "Moreton Bay Ash". Mr A J McConnel believed the word was an Aboriginal word for "rain" or "wet".

This country was swarming with wild blacks, and the land was inferior to much through which they had passed, but much better than a good deal of the land they had seen in New South Wales.

They tried to find more suitable country by making many trips into the surrounding country, but without success.

On one of these excursions, Tom climbed one of the Glass House Mountains, Mt Beerwah, and was disgusted to find that John Petrie (senior) had been up there before him. On another occasion, he with one of the Bigges explored the Maroochy River discovered by J Petrie. It took five days to reach the river on horseback. David explored the Bunya Mountains separating the Stanley River from the Mary River.

At Durundur, they built huts with bark roofs. Their table was made of slabs with posts in the ground and they sat on three legged stools. They cooked their food in a three legged cast iron pot, and their crockery consisted of tin plates. Conditions of living were primitive. Sometimes in the early months of settlement food was scarce although mutton was plentiful, but Tom writes about the country as being very beautiful as compared with what he saw in New South Wales and about the neighbours as being better people with whom to mix.

The blacks helped about the station being paid in rice, flour, meat and clothes. The Archers were not too hard on them for thieving if they worked. David believed that they were the hereditary owners of the land and they would be friendly if treated kindly and with justice. He had to abandon this theory to some extent later on, although from 1843 to 1845 records show that no sheep were stolen.

The Archers were big men in stature as well as in their ideals and ideas. The average height of six of the brothers was over 6 feet according to a picture taken of them in Brisbane. They were gentle but firm, and many of them had a strong religious bent. They showed in their letters home to their family a very strong family affection.

In 1842, a new road was made to Brisbane. The old road through Kilcoy was roughly a semi-circle and brought them to Brisbane on the south bank through Limestone (Ipswich). Goods had to be ferried across the river. The McKenzies and Archers therefore with teams and men set out keeping the D'Aguilar Range on the right and the track was made.

In this year, Cambayo, a black, speared a shepherd on one of the out-stations. Evan McKenzie a J.P. issued a warrant for his arrest and Tom, David and another white man with two blacks set out after him. After travelling several miles, they came across him with several other blacks. Tom grappled with him and captured him. He described him as being as slippery as an eel which in slipperiness and odour he closely resembled.

By January 1842, they had sweet potatoes, cabbage, melons, pumpkins and other vegetables growing, and this gave to their diet the variety which they very badly needed. A bridge with a span of 54 feet was built over the Stanley by July 1842.

Dr Ludwig Leichhardt, the famous explorer, stayed with the Archers seven or eight months in 1842-1843. During his visit, he discovered about 100 different varieties of wood and many new insects. He was never attacked by the blacks. At night, he set a candle in a hollowed out pumpkin with holes cut to look like a face. This succeeded in keeping the blacks away.

Charles Archer writes of him, "He is the most agreeable and well-informed man I have ever seen in the colony - an enthusiast in his profession, and what is more rare, there is not a grain of pedantry in his composition."

In 1843, Charles Archer arrived and John Archer went back to sea. Tom Archer was on one occasion "run in" and fined because his bullocks had broken down a fence and trespassed on a paddock where the G.P.O. now stands.

In 1845, David and Tom Archer were still here, but were in search of a new station. They had reluctantly come to the conclusion that Durundur was not good sheep country, it being too wet and the grasses were not suitable for fattening sheep. The ewes died of foot-rot, and it was decided to shift the sheep and use Durundur for cattle. The land and grass improved later on with drier years, ring-barking and fencing.

David and Tom set out and found good land, higher and drier, past Kilcoy and Colinton at Emu Creek and Cooyar Creek. The sheep were taken there, and after six months, put on from 30 to 40 lbs and the mutton was a better flavour. Their intention was to bring the sheep back to Durundur every year for shearing as they had a shearing shed there.

In 1845, cattle were brought to the station, and Tom writes, "They were a source of infinite enjoyment to the coast and Bunya blacks who hunted and killed them and were for many a day the only people who derived much benefit from them."

In 1848, David Archer disposed of Durundur to the McConnel's of Cressbrook, and decided to sell Cooyar. The Archers then took up land on the Burnett, establishing the stations, Coonambula and Eidsvold, and later explored the Fitzroy River. The family still own Gracemere and Strathdarr.

Before leaving here, they built very substantial cattle yards which stood for many years. Their name is still well-known in the District as there is Archer Street, the main street of Woodford and Mt Archer. The original name for the Stanley River was Archer Creek.

## CHAPTER 3

### The McConnels at Durundur 1848 - 1867

James McConnel founded a firm of cotton spinners in 1790, and this firm is still in existence in Manchester. He had three sons, John, David and Frederic. John was well educated and entered into a partnership in a silk spinning business. David decided to emigrate to Australia after he had finished his education, arriving in 1840 aged 22. He bought cattle and sheep, and made for the Moreton Bay District following Leslie's tracks over the New England Tableland. The ewes began to lamb on Leslie's property on the Downs and David was allowed to use a piece of land near Killarney now known as McConnel's Plains.

When the sheep could travel again, he set out, crossed the Great Dividing Range where Crows Nest is situated now, and followed down the Cressbrook to its junction with the Brisbane River.

He took up Cressbrook on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1841, and was the first to take up land on the upper waters of the Brisbane River. The first head station was a few miles from where Toogoolawah now is, but it was shortly moved to the present site.

When the land was opened up for settlement, settlers were given a licence which gave them the right to use the area for one year. In 1847, an Act gave the McConnels a lease for eight years for 200 square miles at Cressbrook.

John disposed of his silk business and arrived in Australia bringing Frederic with him. Frederic and David went into partnership which came to an end when Frederic returned to England, and then John and David became partners.

In 1848, they bought Durundur from Archer & Co. The price paid is not on record, but it seems certain it was not for cash.

The area was the basin of the Stanley River from its head to the boundary of the Kilcoy run and to the boundary of the Mt Brisbane run; in the north it stretched to the watershed of the Mary River and to the east to the D'Aguilar Range as far south as Mt Mee and southern watershed of the Nurus Nurus. This area was 250 square miles. In the area were good hardwoods and cedar. The Durundur blacks were fairly well-behaved, but this could not be said for the Bribie and Mary River blacks.

The McConnels went in for cattle and horses at Durundur. Cheese was made at the station in the first few years of the McConnel's ownership.

In 1850, a branch of the Bank of New South Wales was established in Brisbane, D McConnel was a local director.

In the forties, the sailing ships the "Tamar" and the "Sovereign" were ships on the Brisbane - Sydney run.

The McConnel men were temperate, non-smokers and religious. They were good living and retiring and both John and David suffered from deafness. John became a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland. In 1862, the partnership between David and John was dissolved, David living at Cressbrook and John at Durundur.

In 1863, the dwelling house at Durundur, built of cedar, was in the shape on the letter "L". It had a shingle roof. There were three bedrooms, a lobby, a pantry, two store rooms and a veranda. At right angles connected by a short covered way were the kitchen buildings with slab walls, a veranda back and front, kitchen, scullery, three bedrooms and a brick fire place with an oven big enough to hold a man.

In 1866, another wing was added, making three sides of a square. In this section were four bedrooms, a laundry and three wide verandas. Then there was the manager's cottage with veranda, living room, three bedrooms, office and brick fireplace, the married couple's cottage, the store room, the saddle and harness room and five or six huts for the men.

In 1864, the Sandgate home "Morven" was built of cedar grown and sawn at Durundur. 1863 - 1864 were very wet and it took more than a month for the wagons to go to Brisbane and back.

During 1864, a bunya year, there was a big corroboree at Durundur and it was feared that with 500 to 600 blacks in the area, there would be serious loss of cattle. The scent of the blacks disturbed the cattle, but they were induced to keep away from the cattle by the strychnine poisoning of their dogs which they valued far more than their gins.

During the American Civil War, Manchester brothers of the McConnells thought that cotton could be grown out here, so land was secured near the Caboolture River. Beyond clearing the land and sending out boxes of seed, nothing appears to have been done. The seed remained at Durundur for years, and the land was sold and sugar was grown there for a time. Thus Morayfield came into existence, and kanakas were brought to work in the plantation. Frost proved too much for the cane, and the project was abandoned. Durundur lost business for it provided meat for the workers of the farm.

Eighteen Hereford bulls were bought in 1865 replacing the Shorthorns. Only one station, Rosalie Plains, owned by J F McDougall, used Herefords before Durundur. McDougall bought his Herefords in 1864.

About this time, some blacks were poisoned by shepherds who left poisoned flour in a hut, knowing the blacks would thief it. This they did as a reprisal for the killing of shepherds. One of the men was named McKenzie, and henceforth in this area the blacks called poison "McKenzie".

A weekly mail went by Durundur and the Mary Valley to Maryborough through the Postman's track to the upper Mary River. The first rider was Tom O'Shanessey.

The first manager at Durundur in the McConnel's time was a Mr Cameron. After him, came Mr W Noble, then Mr Butler, and in 1867, Mr Henry Conwell Wood after whom Woodford is named.

## CHAPTER 4

### J McConnel and H C Wood 1867 - 1879

Wood arrived at Durundur in February 1864. He came out in the ship "Flying Cloud" bringing letters of introduction from Mr William McConnel to his brothers, David and John.

At the time, he was about 24 years of age and had worked with his uncles who were members of the London Stock Exchange. His father was Colonel Wood of the East India Co's service, and one of his brothers was Major Herbert Wood of the Royal Engineers who was a Central Asian explorer and author of several books of travel.

On arrival at Brisbane, he bought a horse and proceeded to Durundur. On reaching the North Pine River, he didn't realise that he should wait till the tide went out and in crossing lost his straw hat. He arrived at Durundur wearing an M.C.C. cap, and his condition on reaching Durundur can be imagined after a ride on a hot summer's day in February.

He was a man of ability and came out to learn the sheep and cattle business. In 1874, Wood became a partner of J McConnel, the firm being known as J McConnel & Co. For some years he was a member of the Legislative Council.

It was Wood who secured the services of Mr George Mason to take charge of the Conondale section of the run and in 1876 McConnel, Wood and Mason went into partnership to cut and sell red cedar logs. Some of these logs were carted to Caboolture and some went by river to Maryborough. The men waited till a flood came and floated the logs down the Mary. They followed the logs in boats to prevent jamming and to see the logs did not end up in backwaters. At Tiaro, the logs were made into rafts and floated to Maryborough.

Some trouble was experienced with the teamsters who had the right to cut timber from crown land and to graze their bullocks there. Often timber was taken from the station, and the bullocks were found grazing on station property.

While Manager at Durundur, Wood bred fine horses with an Arab strain. He was prominent in the first export of frozen meat from Brisbane. At his suggest, the meat export company was named "Queensland Meat Export Agency Co."

In 1873, Queen Victoria gave the Queensland government six red deer. These deer were sent to Durundur, but were released from Cressbrook between that property and Kilcoy, and there are today many deer in the area.

In 1866, Sir George Bowen then Governor of Queensland stayed at Durundur. In this year, the Bank of Queensland closed its doors. The year was a bad one for Queensland. Fat cows sold at £3 each and bullocks at £4 with 50% discount for cash. Bank rate of interest on loans was 10%. The Gympie gold rush (1867) saved Queensland, bringing prosperity to the colony.

In that year, George Mason was put in charge of Conondale. His father had been manager at Baramba for years and George had been in charge of a property owned by C & P Lawless.

The homestead house was built of red cedar slabs. Stores came by cutter to the Mooloolah River and were taken by pack horse to Conondale.

George Mason was a very fine man with stock, and showed himself to be a very good manager. The men on the way to Gympie in 1867 went through Durundur and Conondale, and although most were decent fellows, there were some who gave trouble and didn't pay for the meat that was sold at 3d per lb. Both Wood and Mason had trouble with some and cattle disappeared. Some wanted bread, but the stations could not provide this commodity. A stock of ship's biscuits 6" in diameter and ½" thick, hard and good eating, was purchased from Brisbane and filled the bill.

Caboolture came into existence when the new road to Gympie was made in 1868. The bushranger, Gardiner, stole horses from Durundur about this time.

In 1868, J McConnel resigned his seat in the Legislative Council and in the same year, an Act for closer settlement came into force.

Under the Act the total area to be held by one person was 10,880 acres - 640 acres of agricultural land at 15/- an acre, 2,560 acres 1<sup>st</sup> class pastoral land at 10/- an acre and 7,680 acres of 2<sup>nd</sup> class pastoral land at 5/- an acre, payable in 10 year instalments of 1/6, 1/- and 6d an acre. The agricultural land had to be cultivated and enclosed by a fence, and it was compulsory for the owner to reside on his selection for two years.

The resumed land was soon taken up. Michael McCarthy took up Commissioner's Flat, Major R Lewis - The Cove, G A Mason - Stanmore, Wood - land fronting the Stanley River and Stony Creek, and W C Geddes - land between Stony Creek and Mary Smokes Creek named Stanley Park, later Holmwood.

Mr Butler took up land from Mary Smokes Creek to the Kilcoy boundary - Royston. J McConnell's piece included the head station and some choice flats on Nurum Nurum Creek. A J McConnel's grandmother and Wood selected some more, and a compact piece of land of about 18,000 acres was secured.

The block of country which included the Kilcoy Creek valley from near its head to the boundary of the Kilcoy lease was named Mt Kilcoy and was a good fattening depot. The unresumed land was secured to the squatters by a lease over a number of years and any portion not thrown open to settlement could be secured by a yearly occupation lease.

About 1875, the notorious Johnny Campbell, the native outlaw included this area in his territory. He was an intelligent black fellow, but of evil disposition feared by other Aborigines as well as the white population. He was captured at Noosa by other blacks, was tried in Brisbane, found guilty and hanged.

A famous figure in this district was Bucknor, the black king of Durundur. When he was young, some-one had given him a clay pipe filled with gun powder, topped with tobacco. The explosion that followed the lighting of the pipe caused the loss of sight in one eye and his face was so scarred that it gave him a rather terrifying appearance. His sole item of dress was the tin plate on which was his name.

Some of the maids working at Durundur objected to his appearing at the station without clothes, so he was given clothes and told to wear them on his next visit.

The next day, he appeared wearing a top hat and waistcoat and on being chased away from the house again said, "White Mary b----- fool."

In January 1878, a Roman Catholic priest, Father McNab, induced the government to declare a reserve of 3,000 acres for the blacks. This land was along the Monkeybong Creek. Monkeybong Creek was named in the Archer's time. Many sheep died along its banks and the black shepherds in reporting this said, "More monkey bong" meaning, "More sheep have died." All the blacks from far and wide were gathered in. The government fed and clothed them and all went well until the rations ceased and the novelty wore off, and then only the Durundur blacks remained. This attempt to bring Christianity to them was a failure.

The partnership between Wood and McConnel came to an end in 1879, but Wood still made Durundur his headquarters. A J McConnel then became manager.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Growth of the Township

In 1878, the balance of the Durundur lease was resumed and opened to selection in homestead areas at 15/- an acre.

The land facing the main road to Brisbane near to the Stanley was chiefly selected by old Durundur employees, among them being John Daley, Owen Haggar, Fletcher and McGilvery. These sub-divided their blocks and sold to newcomers and formed the nucleus of the township of Woodford, proclaimed a township in 1885.

The following were the original holders of the land in the town area:

From Durundur to the Cove Road turnoff	T Beanland
From Cove Road turnoff to the One Mile Creek	J McGilvery
From the One Mile Creek to the Woodford Hotel	W McGuire
Blacksmith's shop where Woodford Motors now is	A Tilney
From Sale Yards to the Woodford State School grounds	A Nonmus
St Joseph's Convent grounds	G Johnstone
Draper's slaughtering yards	A Mason
Present Show Grounds	Common camping grounds
Show Grounds to where Rudduck's furniture business Is today	J Fletcher
Police Station to the Methodist Church	William Yates ( <i>he had a hotel where Mrs O'Brien now lives</i> )
From the Church to opposite the State School	W Brotherton
Walker's property	O Haggar

Early settlers on the southern side of the town along the main road were G Draper, G Mason, R Bell and J Flux.

In the 1880s, fat cattle prices dropped, and as there were no frozen facilities, many gave up and dairying began. Some owners sold for sub-division.

The old township was built close to the Stanley River. The Woodford Post and Telegraph Office opened in 1886. Mr Quinn being the first Postmaster. In October 1884, Tom King was appointed first policeman. The Police Station was on the site where Mrs M Jones now lives. The Post Office and Court House were adjoining buildings and were known as the Government Buildings, and these buildings were at North Woodford.

The second hotel was built opposite the original Post Office and was owned by T Beanland. When a school was proposed some wanted it near the original settlement, others wanted it where it now is. A Nonmus travelled to Brisbane, placed his case for the present site, and had an area of 10 acres declared a School reserve. The first school, a provisional one, opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1882, the first Head Teacher being Thomas Donnelly who opened the school with 17 pupils, 8 boys and 9 girls. He was followed by Mr George Penny.

The building was a weatherboard structure with a shingle roof and it was situated in front and to the left of the present building. It became a State School in 1886 and the Head Teacher then was John Fewtrell who later became a District Inspector.

The Caboolture Shire Council was the first Shire Council on the North Coast, and W Bleakley was the first representative on that Council from this district. He was for 33 years a councillor and was the father of N Bleakley who has for 30 years given service on the Council. The Shire then stretched from Redcliffe to Maryoochydore, and included Landsborough and Kilcoy.

The first cemetery was behind the old Police Station and three people were buried there. After a great deal of controversy - the names McConnel, Yatesville, Oakwood and Wood being considered, the present town was named Yatesville after William Yates. The town later on took the name of Woodford. The name was made up of "Wood" after H C Wood and "ford" a river crossing.

Travel by coach began here in the 1880's. The run was between Brisbane and Kilcoy Station. Alec McCallum was the first driver. The Yatesville Hotel was a changing place for horses and the present Race Course was a paddock for the horses. When the railway line came to Caboolture, the run was a daily one.

The Church of England built the first church in the district. It was slab building with a bark roof. It was situated on the property of Mrs A Chalmers.

Before this time, visiting ministers christened children at Durundur Station or at a gum log which was lying at a spot near the site of R.E.V. Motors. It was after the death of Wood's oldest child at whose graveside he read the burial service himself that the first move was made to build a church. Mr Wood was instrumental in having a better building erected near the old site. He took a photo of the old building, and sent it to his relatives in England who raised about £100 for the construction of a new church. In 1913, the church was shifted to its present site.

The first Roman Catholic Church was built in 1890 on an acre of land given by Mr Brotherton. The present church and convent were opened in 1930.

The Methodist Church was built in 1912 and the Baptist Church in 1923.

The first Public Hall was erected about 1887 near where the present building is, and the first store which was brought in from Neurum Station, was built at the Neurum Road turn-off.

The first baker was Tom King who also owned the first shop. Mr Stanton was the first butcher. His yards were at the Creek, and his shop was on the town side of the railway line.

The original Government Buildings were built by Mr O Haggard who also built the Woodford State School.

The present bridges over the Stanley River and Post Office Creek were built in 1909 by Mr F Schroder. Two local men, Ted Walker and Ernie Johnstone, worked on the building of these bridges.

The first sawmill was situated behind where the present Police Station now stands. It was owned by a company - J & A Kirby, W Tracey (Senior) and W Jenkinson. The next mill was at the rear of Tom King's store. It was owned by Messrs Green & Seeney. J Green later built where the Railway Station is now, and it was here that wooden blocks for Queen Street, Brisbane, were cut. The original Race Course was behind Beanland's Hotel near the Stanley River. The next course was in the Police Paddock. Beanland's Hotel was later removed into town and built where R.E.V. Motors is now.

The 1893 flood was 11 feet high in the first store and after this, the store was moved to where M Brooks has his business today. This flood was partly responsible for the movement of the town from the old station to its present site.

In 1909, the railway came to Woodford, and in the same year, both the Woodford and Yatesville Hotels were built on their present sites. The Post Office then was moved, and in 1911, the Police Station was shifted to its present site, the Police Sergeant then being C Bateman. At this time town  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre allotments sold at £8 each. The Butter Factory was built in 1904.

After World War I, the Bush Nursing Home was built by public subscription as a memorial to those who served. This home was built on the land of the late Mrs Tilney who for years was a local midwife, and many people owe their lives to her skill. It was opened by Sir Matthew Nathan, then Governor of Queensland.

It is said that he inspected a pine tree that was planted by Leichhardt and which was a landmark for miles around. Strange as it may seem, the story goes on to report that from that day the tree began to die.

By 1927, the Vocational Class Section of the Woodford State School was opened. The school was raised on high blocks at this time as the playshed was converted into a Manual Training Room. In 1947, the Neorum School building was added to the Woodford School accommodation.

A cyclone hit the town in 1935 when many houses were unroofed. In June 1937 the Post Office was burnt down, the present building being built in March 1938.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1937, on the occasion of the coronation of the late King George VI, a tree planting ceremony was organised by the local branch of the C.W.A. Trees were planted in Coronation Avenue by old residents - Mrs Beanland (Senior), Mrs Brotherton, Mrs Brooker (Senior), Mrs S Brown, Mrs H C Wood, Mrs Walton, Mrs Pearce, Mrs Mountford and Mrs O'Brien.

Trees were also planted on each side of the main street in the town area after World War I as a memorial to those who made the supreme sacrifice. This planting was extended after World War II by the Main Road Commission for beautification purposes.

As part of the Jubilee of the Commonwealth celebrations in 1951, trees were planted in the State School ground by the State MLA Mr G F R Nicklin and his wife and representatives of the Shire Council, School Committee, staff and children of the school.

In 1952 it became necessary to remove some trees from the plot of trees planted in 1941. To replace these, trees were planted around the school boundary to serve as a reminder of those who served in World Wars I and II.

## CHAPTER 6

### Woodford Today

The town of Woodford today has about 1,000 inhabitants while the population of the District is approximately 2,000. The district radiates from the town for a distance of from 8 to 10 miles.

This little township situated on the D'Aguilar Range, 50 miles from Brisbane, the capital city, is one of the most beautiful in the State. The Stanley River, a tributary of the Brisbane River, flows through the District.

There is a daily bus and train service to Brisbane, and some of the State's best scenic spots are within easy reach. Redcliffe, Sandgate, Beachmere and Caloundra (seaside resorts) are approximately an hour's drive by car from the township, while Mt Mee, Maleny, Bellthorpe and Peachester provide mountain scenic beauty.

The State Forests on Woodford's eastern border produce hardwood and pine. The Glass House Mountains can be seen from the town, and the Somerset Dam is 33 miles to the west. Much of the rugged mountain scenery in the area is little known.

The principal industries are dairying, timber and fruit growing. Woodford has an extensive butter factory which has been partly rebuilt recently, three sawmills and a case mill.

In 1950, the factory manufactured 1,105,000 lbs of butter and received 588,000 gallons of milk while in 1951, a very dry year, 859,000 lbs of butter were made and 536,000 gallons of milk were received. Trucks bring the cream and milk to the factory from the farms and large road tankers carry the milk from the factory to Brisbane. The chief breeds of dairy cattle are Jersey and Australian Illawarra Shorthorns, while the beef cattle are mainly Herefords and Aberdeen Angus. Large numbers of pigs are also produced.

The sawmills cut blackbutt, tallowwood, ironbark, blue gum, stringybark, flooded gum, box red gum and grey gum which are hardwoods. Occasionally cedar and beech are cut. There is a large traffic of logs by rail and road to the capital. Over 1,000,000 superficial feet of logs are cut by the mills in a year. Sewn timber has been sent to New Zealand and Korea recently.

Pineapples and bananas are the main fruit produced.

The main road between Brisbane and Kilcoy passes through the centre of the town. The road was three chains wide, but today bitumen one-way traffic lanes have been made and parking areas provided. Trees line each side of the main street. The shopping centre has modern shops which cater well for the needs of the people. The main street has a bright and tidy appearance and is in a beautiful setting.

The houses are mainly of wood built on stumps and stretch for about 2 miles along the main road.

The traveller has a choice of two roads to the capital city - one along the coastal plain through Caboolture and the other over Mt Mee and through Dayboro. The latter is a scenic drive. At points along the mountain road vast expanses of coastal country stretching from the seaside resorts of Caloundra to Redcliffe can be seen.

Roads leading to the main north coast road (the Bruce Highway) are numerous. As well as those mentioned which lead south, there are three roads which go through the State Forests and one passing through Stanmore, Commissioner's Flat and Peachester. This road is on the northern edge of the Forests. Each of these roads takes in mountain scenery which affords opportunity at many points for wonderful panoramic views.

A feature of all views out of Woodford towards the coast is the Glass House Mountains which were named by Captain Cook when he discovered the east coast of Australia in 1770. These isolated rocky mountains rise abruptly from the coastal plain and are Australia's strangest mountains. Mt Beerwah [*an Aboriginal word meaning 'highest'*] is the highest (1,760 ft). Crookneck has the strangest shape and all are volcanic in origin, but just how they came there, geologists have not been able to determine.

As part of its re-forestation scheme, the Queensland Government has cleared and planted an area of over 8,000 acres of pine trees. About 7 miles to the east of Woodford begins the descent from the D'Aguilar Range to the coast and at the foot of the range on the plain is this area of planted softwoods. These trees are not native trees but are exotics mainly from the south-east of USA, and there are approximately 4,000,000 trees in the area.

In the bush, animal life includes kangaroos, wallabies, o'possums and snakes of various kinds while birds and water fowl are plentiful. Woodford District is heavily timbered and it is not surprising that the stranger believes that this is the reason for its name.

It is now over 111 years since the first settlers arrived and Woodford has made slow but steady progress. Over recent years, development has speeded up. Many new homes and shops have been built in the town area and a Golf Course, Bowling Green and Night Tennis Courts have been constructed.

Mt Mee, Delaney's Creek, Neurum, Stoney Creek, Stanmore, Bellthorpe and Commissioner's Flat form the major portion of the district with the town of Woodford as the centre. Most of these divisions have a School and a Public Hall.

An outstanding personality residing at Delaney's Creek today is Mr J M Newman, a descendant of one of the pioneer families. He is well known throughout Australia as a public figure and mining engineer and is Chairman of Directors of Mt Morgan Company. He is prominent in the cattle industry of Queensland as a breeder of Aberdeen Angus cattle on his property "Banyak Suka" of 3,000 acres of splendid grass lands.

The War Veterans' Home at Caboolture was once the home of Mr J M Newman. This magnificent building was a gift from him to the Returned Soldiers' League.

The District forms part of the Caboolture Shire. Messrs N Bleakley, H Nichols, E Bateman and J Newman (junior) are councillors for the area. It is part of the Electoral District of Landsborough in the State of Queensland and Mr G F R Nicklin, leader of the Opposition, is the state member of parliament. Woodford forms part of the Fisher Electorate of the Commonwealth and Mr C F Adermann is the member of the House of Representatives.