

**The closure of the Villeneuve Saw-mill is a blow to that part of the district. It will take the livelihood from many, as most of the employees were married men.**

From TROVE: *THE BRISBANE COURIER* 14 July 1892

It was the flood of 1893 that saw the mill wiped out.

The damage done to Villeneuve is very sad, as the whole of the sawmill and the machinery have been destroyed, besides the store and eight cottages, amongst them the dwelling of Mr. Rosser, teacher of the Villeneuve school, who lost his furniture and clothes, besides a valuable stock of books.

From TROVE: *THE TELEGRAPH* 20 March 1893



*The mill site from Westvale Road*



**Woodford Historical Society 2025**

**Compiled using information from:-**

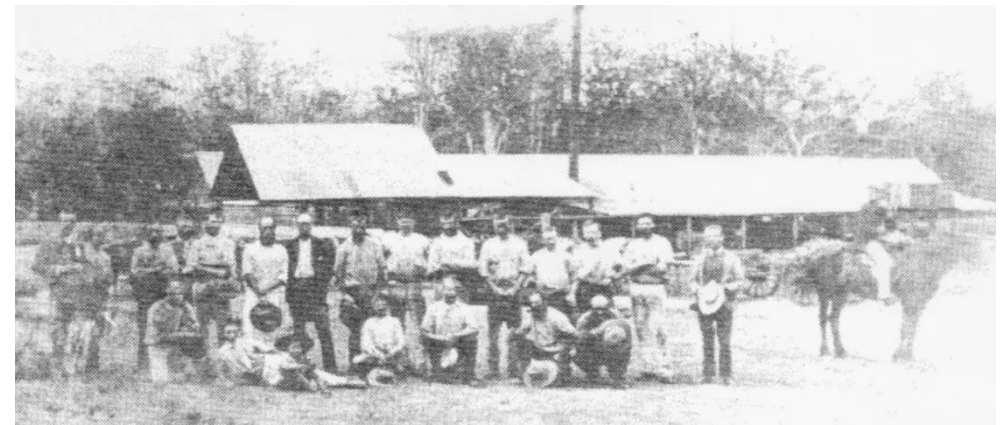
*'Milestones from Woodford to Durundur' by Woodford Historical Society,  
Kate Mobsby, great-granddaughter of F V Nicholson,  
Trove Newspapers, local historian Ron Trim*

## Fact Sheet – V1



*Sawmills of Durundur ...*

### Nicholson's Sawmill (1885 – 1893)



*Workers at Nicholson's Sawmill, Villeneuve*

In 1885, Frank Villeneuve Nicholson commenced sawmilling on his selection to take advantage of the supply of timber on his property. It was the first sawmill of the district and it provided employment for approx 20 men.

*Frank Villeneuve Nicholson (1843-1898)*



*villeneuve Sawmills*

## Nicholson's Sawmill *continued*

Mr. F. V. Nicholson holds a considerable area of land in the parish of Byron, on the Stanley River, and has for some years past gone in for improving his breed of cattle. The almost inexhaustible supply of pine in the scrubs belonging to the Villeneuve property has led him now, however, to erect a saw-mill at Villeneuve, which has just got into working order.

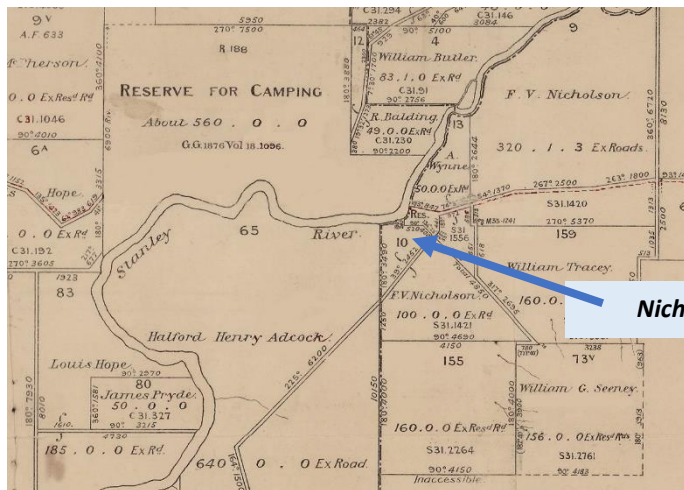
From TROVE: *THE BRISBANE COURIER* 29 July 1885



1880: Nicholson's Homestead, Villeneuve

SAWMILL—Villeneuve Sawmill: Proprietor, F. V. Nicholson; Mgr., Harry James

From *QUEENSLAND PO DIRECTORY* 1892



Nicholson's Sawmill



### Local historian Ron Trim's recollections:

Next came Frank Villeneuve Nicholson, at Villeneuve. Frank had selected a parcel of blocks from Durundur, Kilcoy and Mt Brisbane resumptions. He came to live on his blocks in about 1876.

There was so much wonderful timber both hardwood and hoop pine, that it was a simple decision to think of milling. He selected the site for the mill on the south bank of the river, a few hundred metres down from the crossing over the river between Kilcoy and Woodford.

## Through the Moreton District.

(BY OUR TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT.)

Mr. Nicholson has lately started as a saw-miller, having invested in a complete Canadian Waterous mill, 25-horse power. On account of the drought the mill was not at work when I visited the place, as the contract teamsters were compelled to give up drawing, their losses in bullocks being so severe. The mill finds employment for twenty regular hands, and ten teamsters also get a living by it. To accommodate these men several huts and a dining-room with kitchen have been erected from timber grown and cut on the estate. These houses are faithfully built, the walls being of strong 4in. pine battens, tongued and chamfered; this, on the inside, gives a smooth surface, doing away with lining and further preventing all draughts and shrinking of the timber. Here, too, are the overseer's house, blacksmith's and carpenter's shops, with a large store in course of construction, with offices, &c., attached, 45ft. long by 28ft. in width.

From TROVE: *THE QUEENSLANDER* 23 January 1886

He erected a shed and when the mill started operating, houses for his workers and a school for their children.

The only problem with the mill was the distance to market, to either Brisbane or Ipswich (then called Limestone). It was a long way to Ipswich by bullock wagons over many river crossings, no bridges. It took about three weeks for a trip and a little less to Caboolture, but with the rail reaching Caboolture in 1888, this was reduced to about three days.

Times were tough and became worse with a small flood in 1890 that washed some of his stacks away. This was the start of a disaster. The flood in 1893 wiped out his village houses, mill timber and all except his own house and the school where most of the people took refuge.

Nicholson was ruined and had to go to Brisbane to find a job.

The flood of 1890 caused Nicholson financial difficulties. By 1 July 1892, the Bank of NSW had taken possession of his property and the sawmill.