



A History of Forestry & Timber

Maryborough / Fraser Island



**By
Dick Eckert**



Authors' Photo

The Author, V.E.R.Eckert worked for Hyne & Sons sawmill during the war years. He joined the R.A.A.F Air Training Corp as Aircraftsman N° 23372, from 1943 to 1945. Amongst the subjects studied whilst in the Corps was navigation. This was of particular use when he joined the forestry in 1949, transferring to Forest Soil Surveys in 1950. He was Forest Survey Overseer in the Gympie district in 1956. In 1957 he attended the first Forest Surveyors School at Beerburrum, conducted by Forest Surveyor D.H.Timms. Due to ill health, he retired from Forestry after serving almost forty years. He served one year in General Forestry, thirteen years in Surveys and over twenty-five as Maryborough Research Officer.

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To my regrets, some of the above friends are no longer with us to read this book. I hope that their relatives find great comfort in these memories.

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"Growing Up, Forestry In Queensland" by Peter Taylor 1994.
"Early Days of Fraser Island" by Rollo Petrie 1995.

Cover:

A fine example of Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus signata*) at State Forest 915 Tuan. It grew on the best soils there. The original surveyors on Fraser Island (1912) called it "White Gum".

Foreword

Dick Eckert for most of his long forestry career was not called by his first given name, but by his third. Unfortunately Dick's outstanding career as Surveyor, odd job man to the District Forester and Research Officer was curtailed by his sudden retirement due to arthritis. On his final day he was taken home ill at 11.00am. Dick and his wife Gwen were well known artists in country music, being awarded Life Membership of the Australasian Country Music Association in 1970.

Since his retirement Dick has written several history books; The Newtown Rodeo; Early History of the Bidwill/Magnolia Area and The First Ten Years of the Australasian Country Music Association. It was a pleasant surprise to me, to find that he was busy writing a forestry & timber book, placing on paper, camp locations, methods, events personnel etc.

Injustices to forestry these days abound, especially attacks on the worlds best practice management of our native forests, to such an extent that our descendants will not be able to enjoy the many and varied timbers that our country can provide and which will not be put into plantations for perceived economic reasons. They will be able to have only a cerebral appreciation of ecological process since they will soon become but the realm of academics, "eccentrics" and superficial voyeurs. This is not to say that pillaging and undermining of forestry has not occurred in the past. Through political pressure, ultimately the vote of the citizenry, the forest resources of Queensland have been assailed or whittled away since they were first set aside for the production of timber (ostensibly, it now would seem) "in perpetuity", sometimes on the grounds that the resource was "limitless" and sometimes for local often very short-term economic or political gain e.g. over-harvesting to satisfy the saw milling industry; alienation of frost-free steep (erodible) slopes for winter bean, banana or pineapple production! Now they are about to be locked up as National Parks and their production "replaced" by "greenstick" timber from a very small number of native hardwood species in plantations. Queenslanders were traditionally used to be able to call on about 50 fairly common species some of which were ideal for specific end uses without any chemical treatment and most of which were naturally resistant to the otherwise dreaded termite or rot (wet or dry). In addition there were about 200 more used here and there fairly frequently. These are being replaced mainly by two or three hardwoods and two conifers, none of which is particularly durable in the ground unless treated.

The injustices are perhaps even more insidious and extensive with a perceived plot to destroy the reputation of the forestry profession or the profession itself. We see the Queensland Forestry library, containing the heart and soul of our endeavours seriously curtailed and archived for lack of funds; we see Australia's best forest research establishment hamstrung by lack of trained staff and pressured to make a short-term profit at the expense of long-term necessities; we see forestry split up among several government departments with increasing inefficiencies as widely

experienced staff retire due to the lack of a "critical mass" of expertise; and we see the removal of forestry extension and advisory services leaving the public susceptible to unregulated exploitation. As another blow locally, Maryborough has ceased to be a major forestry centre with the removal of government administration to Gympie. One bright star survives and flourishes, plantation forestry, but this public service continues to march along a road towards corporatisation and possible privatisation.

The boundaries of the Maryborough Forestry District ebbed and flowed a bit on the edges but a substantial core remained in the fold. It contained forests as diverse as cypress pine, hoop pine, wet and dry rainforests (which we called "scrubs"), wet and dry eucalypts and plantations of both native and exotic conifers with part of the second largest plantation in Australia at Tuan. A great jewel in this heritage was Fraser (or Great Sandy) Island where the isolation of workers was character building, the management of blackbutt one of the great success stories in native forest production in Australia, and the spectacle of sea transport to the mainland something to behold! St. Mary's State Forest even contained a village complete with school and church in the days when silvicultural treatment was practised. Here as elsewhere forestry assisted the country socially, helping to assimilate refugees and providing meaningful employment for seasonal workers. Most State Forests of any size were lived on by the staff in cottages and barracks or well set up tents deterring poaching and affording an intimacy with the ecology at the grass-roots level, a way of life enjoyed now perhaps only by academics working on specific projects and dedicated wildlife amateurs.

Dick and I were fortunate to have worked in the hey-day of Forestry in Queensland myself generally but he mainly in the Maryborough area of which he has an encyclopaedic knowledge and an indelible cartography engraved in his very being. It is fitting that such a questioning and methodical seeker after the truth as Dick should be able to chronicle these days and areas of former social and economic importance before their memory is completely erased from out society.

Ernie Rider
Forester.

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Early Photo of the Longest Log Milled at Wilson & Hart Sawmill Maryborough 58feet by 89inch Girth. Supplied by V & P Chapman: (Stan Coe Photo)

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Chapter One

The Discovery Of The Timber Stands In The Maryborough District

The vast quantities of timber in the Maryborough area remained unknown for quite awhile, to the people of the Moreton Bay settlement. This remained so until Andrew Petrie was sent in 1842, to find the grave of Captain Fraser on Fraser Island. Petrie had a great knowledge of aboriginal ways and he could converse with them. He was unsuccessful in his task, but he was the first white man to discover the Southern Kauri Pine (*Agathis robusta*). This, he found actually on 10th May 1842, at the mouth of the river that he had discovered and named Wide Bay River (the aboriginal name for the river was "Moonaboola").

The pine was growing on the north river headland of the river (Bingham). Today 1996 it is a barge landing point. Andrew Petrie, however, was amazed at the large amount of timber growing on Fraser Island. He found neither the grave of Captain Fraser, nor, any of his crew. Petrie had a personal interest in his search, for he had travelled out from England on Fraser's ship, the "Stirling Castle"(in 1831). He travelled as far as he could up the Wide Bay River until the water became too shallow for their boat, (where Tiaro is today).

His timber discoveries, on Fraser Island and along the river, prompted the government of the day, to declare the mainland area open for free immigration of settlers. With Petrie on his expedition were three men, Henry S. Russel, Mr. Jolliffe and the honourable Mr. W. Wrottesberg plus five convicts to sail and row the boat. This was a Government boat called a "gig" and they were away about a month. On the way north to Wide Bay River, they had explored the Maroochy and the Noosa area travelling from Moreton Bay.

Jolliffe was looking for sheep country, for he later brought sheep to Tiaro via the Darling Downs and ranges to Tiaro. This venture failed but others followed. By June 1847, George Furber had opened a wool store at the Wide Bay Village, handling wool from stations already established up country. He had built a wharf, a store and an inn, before E.T. Aldridge and the Palmer brothers arrived. More people arrived that year, 1847, mostly engaged in working timber. Cutters, bullock drivers, axemen with broadaxe and adze, came to split, trim and square timber.

With them came the pitsaw men with their large two-men straight pitsaws to saw planks from the pine, cedar and beech logs. Being softer than the hardwoods, these timbers could be sawn by hand- powered pitsaws. Along with the store and inn, a boiling down works was established the next year 1848, to reduce sheep to meat extract. That same year, gold had been discovered in California U.S.A., and hopeful gold seekers left Australia in droves.

In 1848 also, Land Commissioner, John Carne Bidwill, Came to Wide Bay Village, Being the legal man for everything. He brought news that Wide Bay Village would be renamed "Maryborough" and the river be renamed "Mary River". Governor Fitzroy directed the name changes in honour of his late wife Mary, who had been killed in a buggy accident at Parramatta Park. The district was still a part of the colony of New South Wales (being changed into the colony of Queensland in 1859). The settlement on the Mary grew slowly, with families arriving to live in primitive conditions. Cottages were made with hewn hardwood slabs, covered by bark roofs with water carted from water holes in barrels. The cottages were situated haphazardly, not in lines.

This situation was corrected when surveyor H.H.Labatt arrived. In 1849 and 1850, he surveyed land allotments north east of the settlement where the land was higher and the river deeper. This was better situated for ships, not having to travel around the loop of the pocket area. The year 1856 saw rapid development in the new township. Stores of all sorts were built. Sawpits

were dug, sawing up logs that were being cleared from allotments. Some of the timber came from the jungle area, later called "the Pocket".

Churches were built, mainly of hewn slab timber. The Church of England, built in 1853, was moved from the old township to its present site in 1856. The Roman Catholic Church, to seat 300 persons was built in 1858. In 1859, the colony, including Moreton Bay and areas northward, became the colony of Queensland in honour of Queen Victoria, the current Monarch. Maryborough was gazetted as an immigration port of entry. Customs officer Robert Sheridan arrived. He was also water police, magistrate, harbour master and immigration agent.

In 1860, Fraser Island was declared an aboriginal reserve, but this did not last long. This came about because aboriginal lawbreakers used it as a base to hide away on. In 1861, the Government of the colony of Queensland released agricultural land on both sides of the Mary River. By June there were more than twenty farms of from 85 acres (34.3 ha) to 136 acres (55.0 ha) established along the river. The timber industry began its development in 1861 with the coming of the sawmills.



Forestry Label

Chapter Two

Timber: The Coming of the Maryborough Sawmills

1. The Union Sawmill 1861

In August 1861 partners Gladwell & Greathead built their Union Sawmill on the northwest corner of Kent and Guava Streets. It was Maryborough's first sawmill, that is, with fixed saw benches, circular saws being housed in a permanent building and powered by a steam engine. The mill began operations by sawing timber from logs cut from the nearby vicinity. These were probably both hardwood (Eucalyptus) and softwoods (pine, cedar, beech etc.), possibly from what is now called the Pocket, but was then called "The Jungle". (Richard Hyne later built his first sawmill [National Sawmill], near this site). Gladwell & Greathead sold their mill to Cooper & Jones who in turn sold it to John Meiklejohn.

In 1871, William Sim, (a partner of Pettigrew in his Dundathu Sawmill) took out a lease on the mill, from Meiklejohn. He made great improvements to the mill, entirely reconstructing it. His sudden death brought an end to all this. Pettigrew bought the mill after he closed down the

Dundathu mill. He called the new mill "Urara Sawmill", shifting it across the road, and then selling it to the Sims family.

2. Dundathu Sawmill 1862

Pettigrew & Sims

The name of one man stands out for his part in the timber industry: William Pettigrew. He came from a well financed family, born 1825 in Ayrshire Scotland, being one of the four sons of the Laird of Torshaw. First he tried a medical career, but changed to land surveying. He took a position as the surveyor with Reverend J. Dunmore Lang, sailing with Lang's group of migrants on the ship "Fortitude" arriving in Brisbane in 1849. He then discovered that no provision had been made for his salary. He managed to secure work with Crown Commissioner Simpson, based at the farm at Woogaroo (now Goodna). During this period of his life he gained experience and knowledge that would be of use in his future.

During his survey work, he noticed the size and straightness of the trees in his new land and that they would make excellent sawn timber. Bark and slab timber were used extensively for house building in those days, and Pettigrew saw the potential in providing sawn timber for house building. In 1853 at Brisbane, he opened the first steam-operated sawmill in the colony. Huge logs were hauled out of the river by steam winches and then were sawn lengthwise by spinning circular saws. However, it was burnt down two years later by jealous pit-sawyers. The mill, at the corner of William and Margaret Streets, Brisbane, was rebuilt and resumed operations.

Pettigrew was well known for his public activities. Encouraged by Andrew Petrie's story of timber in the Maryborough and Fraser Island areas, in 1862, he persuaded Andrews's son, Tom Petrie, to take him to view the timber. They went by steamer to Maryborough where they tied up at the wharves to spend the night. Tom Petrie and two aboriginals he had brought with him, walked ashore to stretch their legs. Seeing two aboriginal women coming towards them, Tom asked them in aboriginal language, where they were going. They were surprised and excited by a white man, who spoke their language. He told them that he was after timber. Next morning the wharf was crowded with aboriginals wanting to show the white man where the big timber grew. They chose one man and his wife to accompany them. The steamer went up the Susan River, then back down the Mary, over to Fraser and on to Tin Can Bay.

The timber they saw must have made a big impression on Pettigrew. That same year, 1862, he formed a business with Robert Sims. They did not waste any time, for before long, a big sawmill was built at Dundathu on the north side of the Mary River. This was about seven miles (11kms) downstream from Maryborough. The riverbank in front of the mill was extended out with rock and soil to make a surface on which to seat boats on at low tide. The extension of the river bank made the river at that point a lot narrower, removing any silt and keeping the water there more fast flowing and deeper.

In 1863, the mill of three circular saws began operations cutting the first Kauri pine logs brought from Fraser Island. It is supposed that a six-man team operating at Turnbowah Creek (Turnbowah: deadly snake) cut some of the first logs. One of the six men cutting was a big red-headed man John Piggott, who called himself "Jack". It wasn't long before the 34year old American was nicknamed "Yankee Jack", an expert axeman; the Kauri pine he cut was of similar texture to the pines of USA that he was used to.

Earlier in the next year, on 8th March 1864, the American sailing ship the barque "Panama" of 141 tons. Losing sight of landmarks, in cyclonic weather, struck the northwest corner of Fraser Island, near Rooney Point. Heavy surf and wind shifted the wrecked vessel up the beach nearly out of the water. Two boats were made seaworthy, and the captain with several others in one, left to go to Maryborough port for help. The survivors stayed near the wreck, as it had provisions and

provided shelter. Venturing away from the wreck eventually, they came across the body of a big red haired white man, lying on the beach. Later on it was found that it was the body of "Yankee Jack" Piggott.

For some unknown reason, Jack and workmate John Barry had sailed a small boat to near Bool Creek. Barry said that Jack and he had landed on the beach. They had met some aboriginals who later clubbed Jack to death. Barry himself had been clubbed and left to die in the surf. Reviving, he had managed to make his way southwards. On the way he had met some aboriginals who, noticing his beaten condition, had fed him with fish and helped him on his way. {Piggott's death brought about a lull in timber getting until 1868}.

The first white people to land near Bool Creek were Mathew Flinders and party in 1802. Some six years after the "Panama" wreck, the Sandy Cape lighthouse was erected (in 1870).

Meanwhile during the 1863/1864 periods, sawmiller Pettigrew was busy buying and converting steamers to bring logs to the Dundathu mill. The way of transporting logs, (pine, cedar and beech) by raft was a new idea, as was the use of steamers. The fleet of vessels operated by Pettigrew & Sims was quite impressive. Firstly, in 1863, he converted the sailing ship "Granite City" into the paddle steamer "Gneering". He then bought the "Fiery Star" 1864, "Muanchin" 1864, "Tadorna Radjah" 1866, "Hercules" 1872, "City of Melbourne" 1873, "Marchioness of Lorne" 1882, and "Ellen" 1884.

During this period of time, the Hervey Bay area was being opened up by timber-getters who felled the pine in the nearby scrubs. The logs were dragged onto the beach at low tide to form rafts, which at high tide were towed by bullock teams, neck deep in water to Urangan Point. A steamer then towed the rafts to Pettigrew's Sawmill at Dundathu. The mill cut pine, cedar and beech.

Pettigrew had the idea of transporting harvested logs by tramway, but it was his partner Sims who put the idea into practice. In 1873 they ordered a locomotive from Walker & Co. Called "Mary Ann" it consisted of an upright boiler on four railway wheels. It had a water tank on the front of the carriage, and a large diameter pulley wheel on the left side. This pulley wheel, powered a portable saw bench that was towed behind. It was able to cut it's own hardwood railway lines, as well as firewood. The "Mary Ann" was used on a 9mile (14km) tramline at Kaloola, Tin Can Bay (from 1873 to 1884).

The new means of log transport proved a great success, and proved the basis for future mills to transport logs. (This idea later was used by Wilson & Hart and Hynes at Urang Creek, Woongoolbver and also M^cKenzie's at Barlorgan Creek). The logs were hauled from the end of the tramway to the beach at low tide, below high tide mark, where they were laid side by side and when floating, were tied together to form a raft. When enough logs were secured to form a raft, it was secured to the towing steamer, and towed away up the straits and Mary River to the Dundathu sawmill.

Pettigrew & Sim's tug "Hercules" towed rafts of logs averaging 100,000 to 150,000 super feet from Tin Can Bay to Dundathu. The remains of "Hercules" could be seen still on the little river island at the mouth of Tinana Creek. She was a wooden paddle steamer of 40 tons being 77 feet long. Built in Maryborough as a punt, she was purchased by Pettigrew and fitted with a 20 hp steam engine with two cylinders, one 8.25 inches diameter (206mm) and the other one 16.0 inches diameter (400mm) with an 18 inch stroke (450mm) to make her a tug boat.

Paddle wheel powered boats could work in very shallow water. Stern paddles could nose into shallow water but were harder to steer in wind and tide current, than side-wheelers. During the work on the Tin Can Bay tramway in 1873, Robert Sim was killed while unloading a single 5-foot

(1.5m) diameter log from a tramway truck. His body was returned to Maryborough in the "Hercules". From then on Pettigrew's fortunes seemed to suffer with the death of his partner.

Disastrous floods in 1890, and in 1893, badly damaged the mill. It was repaired, but was totally destroyed by fire in December in 1893. Pettigrew closed down the Dundathu Mill and then bought the Union Sawmill in Guava Street. He transferred this mill across the road to the northeast corner of Kent and Street, calling the transferred sawmill Urara Sawmills. Later Sims Limited purchased the mill in 1910, closing it down in 1930. Hume's Pipe Works used the site until 1936, when it became part of the Hyne sawmill complex.

It must be mentioned that Robert Sim's funeral was the largest ever seen in Maryborough. The funeral cortege started from the junction of John Street and Saltwater Creek Road, comprised 250 horsemen, 80 vehicles and a multitude of mourners on foot. The funeral service was held in the Presbyterian Church. After Pettigrew sold the Urara Sawmill in 1910, he seems to have disappeared from the Maryborough scene.

3. Wilson, Hart & Bartholomew 1866 Sawmillers

In 1866, James Bartholomew, Andrew Heron Wilson and Robert Hart built their sawmill on the Granville River flat, at the river end of Banana Street. Andrew Wilson had imported a complete sawmilling plant from England, which had arrived on the sailing ship, "Maryborough". Bartholomew and Hart were experienced sawmillers and the three formed a partnership. The big mill took advantage of the large stands of timber trees, growing closely on the Granville flat. It also had its own wharf to receive logs by water transport and to export sawn timber by ship. In 1875 James Bartholomew was drowned and the firm became known as Wilson, Hart & Co.

Before the year of 1876, the company had used other ships to handle its products, coming and going. The first record of a company ship shows that the topsail schooner "Caroline" of 62 Tons was bought by Wilson, Hart & Co. for three hundred and five pounds on 23rd October 1876. The company also traded with another topsail schooner "Royal Duke" (of which Robert Hart was part owner). When the mill caught fire, both ships were set adrift to save them being burnt. This fire in 1881 burnt the mill to the ground.

After the fire, a decision was made to erect a new one on site near the park. Robert Hart was authorised to travel to England to secure new machinery and a ship. As a result of his visit, the iron single screw steamer "Sylvan" left the United Kingdom and arrived in Maryborough on 22nd May 1883 after a fast voyage of 70 days. "Sylvan" was built specially for the timber trade, being 119 feet long, and could carry 100,000 super feet of timber in her hold (some 63 feet or 19mtrs long). She could steam at 8.75 knots. Her first trip was to take timber to Mackey on 5th June 1883. "Sylvan" on one occasion carried coal from Queensland Colleries Ltd (Howard) for Lakes Creek Meatworks, Rockhampton. She was used until 1912. A strong mill wharf was built in 1883 by John Linklater.

One of the ships that were used continually from both mills (Granville and Maryborough) was the wooden paddle steamer, "Sir John Young". Built in 1866, bought by Wilson, Hart and Bartholomew (later Wilson Hart & Co.) she was 49 tons, being 112 feet long (61.6m) with a steam engine of 39hp. An 1875 newspaper report stated "*The Sir John Young is kept constantly employed towing rafts of logs from Tin Can Bay, Fraser Island and the Burrum River.*"

Another Newspaper report in later years stated, *The timber business was booming in the north, and Robert Hart again went to Britain to buy another vessel. He Bought "Queensland", a new steel single screw steamer, 160 feet long (48m), which arrived in Maryborough on 13th October 1894. She carried some cargo of timber but was used mainly in the Queensland coal trade until*

1911. Another one of their ships was the "Bopple"; a steel single screw steamer of 267 tons, being 127 feet (38m) long built in 1911.

In 1892 Robert Hart originally bought "Annie", a wooden schooner of 70 tons being 80 feet (24m) long. The ship foundered off Samaria in May 1921. Wilson Hart & Co. bought the iron single screw "Lass O' Gowrie", Removing the engines etc. to make it an unpowered logging barge. The "Lass O' Gowrie" made many trips to and from Fraser Island from 1938 until 1968. She was later condemned and sunk on the artificial reef off Woody Island. Before she was bought by Wilson Hart & Co., she had been a well-known trader along the Queensland coast, rescuing Mrs Banfield of Dunk Island.

The "Goori" was an unpowered steel barge used by Wilson, Hart & Co. She was formerly a single screw steamer "Goondi", being 150 feet long (45m) built in 1894. She was written off and sunk on Woody Island Artificial Reef in 1989. The company had two small tugs to tow the "Lass O' Gowrie" and "Goori", being the "Sylvan" and "Trade Winds".

The shift made by Wilson Hart & Co. in 1881 to high land near Queens Park proved to be a good move, for the 1893 flood destroyed Hyne's and Dundathu mills. The company did well for many years until the fire of 1934. The mill was rebuilt and served the population of Maryborough with timber and employment for many years until its closure in the late 1980's.

A history of expansion of the company, which was formed in 1890, began with the opening of the Townsville branch in 1892. Sailing ships were used first to convey timber to the north, but they were eventually superseded by steamers "Sylvan", "Queensland" and "Bopple". These had been built to the company's specifications in the British Shipyards.

Mills were established outside Maryborough, at Elgin Vale in 1946. Quite a while later Kandanga mill was purchased in 1949, then Miriam Vale in 1950, and the Theodore in 1955. A further ten years went by before Eidsvold and Moura were purchased. The year of 1970 saw the purchase of a Gladstone base, and in 1971, a large expansion was made in Rockhampton. By then timber yards and joinery facilities of Wilson & Hart were available in Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone.

The company was converted to a public company and was listed on the Stock Exchange in January 1956. It remained listed until 1978 when shareholders accepted an offer to join the Carrick Group. After joining the group, the Townsville branch acquired the building material business formally operated by James Campbell and Sons. Mackay had expanded into building materials. Gladstone timber yards were improved while Rockhampton acquired a Brickworks. Maryborough established a new building material branch by 1981. Maryborough Sawmillers Pty. Ltd bought the Maryborough mill in 1983. Robert Dollin was the manager of this mill. It closed in 1986 after it was taken over by Noel Chapman as Maryborough Timbers. Started in 1866, the company ran for 120 years until 1986.

4. Miller Brothers 1863. Howard.

In 1863, the Miller brothers built the first sawmill in the Howard area located on the banks of the Burrum River.

5. Fairlie & Sons 1868

James Fairlie arrived with his son James from Glasgow in 1862. First he tried farming, and then became a builder. In 1868, he established a sawmill, steam Joinery works, and a sash and door factory in Richmond Street, Maryborough. In 1870, samples of Fairlies well finished joinery, won

prizes of merit in the United States and France. Many of the public buildings erected in Brisbane in the last century were fitted with joinery made by Fairlies. James Fairlie imported the first steam traction engine ever seen in Maryborough. When this massive machine, more or less a huge boiler on heavily spoked high wheels left the wharf, huffing and puffing, it was preceded by a man carrying a red flag. Fairlie expanded his business until he owned the complete block of Alice, Richmond, Albert and Bazaar Streets.

In 1882 his son James (Jim) began planting a pine and timber plantation in the Clifton Seaview Range area near North Aramara (some forty miles west of Maryborough). It flourished until destroyed by fire during the drought of 1900-1902. In 1963, remnants of this plantation, (about a dozen or so large bunya pines), stood near a circle of stones, that locals said was the fireplace of the Bailiff's hut, who was the caretaker of the plantation. In this case, a Bailiff is a landowner's steward, who handled the land owners estate.

This was near Fairlies Knob in Portion 1508 Parish of Doongul. Fairlies gave the public some of this area as National Park Reserve 336, "Fairlies Knob". This high point had been used by the Forestry as a lookout. It was on the east side of portion 1508, being National Park NP336 gazetted in 1910, area 100 acres (40.47ha).

Fairlies's mill was a large mill covering a complete block of land south east of the business part of Maryborough. In later years after the closure of the mill, it became a shopping complex called "Maryborough Plaza".

As well as a sawmill sawing up logs, Fairlie had a planing mill, plywood distributors licence, sash and door factory, as well as carrying out a glazing service for the public. The main office was at 80 Richmond Street and they advertised themselves as manufacturers of joinery of every description.

After the war, fire destroyed the sawmill, joinery works and office in 1946. This brought production to a halt until rebuilding and the arrival of new machinery allowed it to resume. It again sold timber, joinery, glass etc. Fairlies closed the mill etc. on 30th August 1985. They had also bought the Wide Bay Joinery Works (Prongers), on the corner of Kent and March Streets, and also the derelict Maryborough Flour Mill. The original Fairlie mill area, was purchased to be used by G. J. Coles stores with others as the Maryborough Plaza on the site. The Plaza opened for business with a number of various stores in Nov 1991.

Fairlies eventually sold the Prongers property bringing to a close their part in the Maryborough sawmilling industry.

6. Hyne & Sons 1882

In 1882 Richard Matthew Hyne built his National Sawmill near the northwest corner of Kent and Guava Streets, Maryborough. This was not far from where the Union Sawmill was formerly situated. The mill began well for it was situated near the river for supply and dispatch. It was also near to one of the main streets for local supply.

However floods caused a lot of expense and loss of time. The 1890 flood shattered the mill, but the flood in 1893 completely devastated it. However, R.M. Hyne had bought the Mungar mill and then it had lain idle. With his National Sawmill out of action, R.M. started the Mungar mill, diverting all logs there. He was able to continue producing timber while construction of a new mill began. This was built on a new site in Kent Street further east, near Tiger Street, (The Granville Bridge near by was built 30 years later). This mill is still on the same place today and has outlasted all other mills in the Maryborough area.



Richard Matthews Hyne.

A newspaper reported on the new mill: -

"This plant, when finally set up and complete, will be, we are informed, to be second to none in the colony. The mill building will consist of five attached sheds, each 120 feet by 50 feet (36m x 15m). Covering a total of 600 feet by 50 feet (180m x 15m). Along the river frontage a substantial wharf will be erected. The supply of timber will still be brought by rafts, punts and bullocks wagons."

From the 1880's the principle opposition to Hynes, was the timber mill of Wilson & Hart. They had schooners and the steamships to deliver their sawn timber to central and the northern coastal parts of Queensland. To counter this R.M. Hyne bought the 82foot (24.6m) schooner "Agnes" in 1884. Then in 1886 he was fortunate enough to salvage the 112foot (33.6m) schooner "Mayflower" that had been wrecked on Lady Elliot Island.

R.M.Hyne bought the wreck for five hundred pounds. He later sold her cargo for two thousand pounds. Wrapping tarpaulins around her hull he brought her to Hansens boat slip in Granville, where she was repaired. In the 1890 steamships were beginning to take over the sailing ships and Hynes opposition had bought the new steamer "Queensland". Because of this R.M.Hynes went to Scotland and had the 145foot (43.5m) "Hopewell" built. On the 26th August 1900, the Hopewell arrived at Maryborough under the care of Captain Sam Hyne (R.M.Hyne's cousin).

Shortly after her arrival, Augustus Paesch, an experienced mariner became her Captain. He guided her on many trips for about 30 years. During the depression she was laid up in 1930. Her Captain died about that time. Hyne tried to put her on the run again about 1934 but it was too costly. She was sunk in Moreton Bay. Her hulk is ashore at Comboyuro.

Some of the later boats owned by Hyne & Sons were: -

Pelican. A self-propelled log barge. Originally built in 1880 as an iron hull twin screw steamer of 81 tons, being 80 feet (24m) long powered by a 40hp steam engine, (converted by Hyne to be powered by two International truck engines after buying her from Berthelsons in 1945. She was a lot faster than towed barges. Laid up in 1967. Later scuttled on artificial reef.

Otter. Built in 1884 as Steel hull twinscrew steamer of 272 ton being 128feet (38.4m) long. Bought by Hyne in 1949, who removed the engine to make her an unpowered log barge. Scuttled at Woody Island artificial reef after an active career.

K'gari. Built in 1897 as twinscrew steamer "Caroo" of 248 tons being 130 feet (39m) long. Bought by Hyne in 1954, who removed engines to make her an unpowered log barge. Abandoned at Figtree, later scuttled on artificial reef.

Kundu. A self-propelled log barge, similar to the Pelican being 66 feet long of 81 tons powered by twin Fordson engines of 86.5 hp.

Hopewell.II. A new self-propelled barge especially built to carry logs from Fraser Island to Maryborough. Commenced 1976. Last load on 9th January 1992.

In 1902 R. M. Hyne passed on. The Hyne mill came under the control of Henry James (Harry) Hyne who became the General Manager. Being in poor health he took a trip to England leaving B.J. M^cKay as acting manager. Returning in 1903 Henry saw the band saw mill in England and meant to get one if possible. This came about in 1905 when he bought a band saw mill that had been bought by a New South Wales mill who had bought it to cut hardwood. This was a failure but it was what H.J. Hyne wanted to cut hoop pine. The saw sharpener Bill Tate came with the mill to Maryborough in 1905. An engine driver at Hyne, James Smith with a gift for engineering installed the band saw mill. He was assisted by Harry Ruback, the mill- wright and together they sorted out

the problems associated with the new fangled band saw. This "Waterous" band saw was discarded in Christmas 1978, after over 70 years of service.

In 1906 H.J. Hyne bought a country property "Coolreagh" of 1800 acres situated about fifteen miles from Maryborough, which was within buggy driving distance. However it was tough going for a mill owner, even during the war years of 1914-18. Then it was even worse in the 1920's, which brought in the depression years. About 1930/31, Hyne had a visit from the Queensland Premier William Forgan -Smith who had come with Billy Demaine to ask of the state of the timber industry. Forgan Smith distressed to see so many machines idle, that he called for an enquiry into the timber industry.

The ensuing Commission of Enquiry recommended a proposal for a rebate of royalty and a reduction in rail freights on pine exported out of the state. This completely changed the timber industry and prosperity again prevailed as Queensland sawmillers recaptured the southern markets. Henry James Hyne passed away in June 1936 at the age of 70 years. His son J.R. Lambert Hyne had been assisting Henry in running the business since 1928, so he was quite able to take over the reins. The Second World War used an immense quantity of timber. Mostly pine but also a lot of hardwood.

In August 1942, Hyne started their first country sawmill at Brovinia and then another in the Monto area. They also cut Kauri Pine from Fraser Island, Tin Can Bay, Kauri Creek etc. This sawn timber was called "Rough Maryborough Pine" when sold in Sydney.

Henry Hyne had bought a small sawmill in 1928, owned by Lars Andersen of Esk, along with a splendid stand of log pine in the Bunya Mountains. This was at a place called Wengenville. It had a quiet life until 1934 when the Queensland Timber Export Association enabled sawmillers to operate profitably again. This enabled the mill to work fully and later provide a lot of timber for the war effort Alfred Pearson, Hynes secretary, was instrumental in pestering Hyne to purchase this mill.

During Lambert Hynes reign as manager of Hyne & Sons there was a great expansion. He published a book called "Hyne Sight" in 1976 that showed the following: -

Mills: Maryborough (Hardwood & Pine)
Rockhampton
Dingo
Gladstone
Mundubbera
Melawondi
Churchille (Hardwood & Pine)
Monto

Mills: (with Joint Owners) Boondoole, Biggenden, Gayndah, Hervey Bay.

Truss Plants: Maryborough, Townsville, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Brisbane.

Pole Plants: Maryborough, Townsville, Chinchilla.

In 1999 Hyne & Sons Pty. Ltd., was featured in a 32 page Feature in the Herald Newspaper (Maryborough). Inside was a photo of their Tuan Sawmill situated in Tuan State Forest, an exotic pine plantation. The Tuan mill currently processes about 375,000 cubic metres of sawn softwood per annum. Hyne & Son operate five hardwood mills, two softwood mills, six trade and retail centres, four roof and wall framing plants, ten wholesale warehouses and five manufacturing plants including the new "I" Beam plant in Virginia Brisbane. They have a joint chipboard venture with Sumitomo Co-operation at Owanyilla, near Maryborough. Hynes employs a workforce of from 850 - 900 people, half in the Maryborough region.

J.R.Lambert Hyne was managing director of Hyne & Sons from 1936-1978 when he retired, he continued as Chairman of Directors until his death in 1985. He had been honoured in the Queens Birthday Awards with a C. M. G. Award in 1976. Tributes were made to the skill and devotion of the three sons, Warren, Richard and Chris. Warren became Managing Director on 1st November 1978. He was and still is supported by his brothers Richard, as General Manager of Development and Technical Services, Chris as Manager of Business and Development.

When Lambert died in 1985, Warren took over as Chairman of Directors. In September 1997, The Governor of Queensland awarded Warren Hyne with the Insignia of a Member in the General Order of Australia. In January 1999 John McNamara became managing director taking over from Warren, who is still Chairman of Directors.

Today, Hyne & Sons Pty. Ltd., is one of the largest and most successful privately owned timber companies in Australia.



7. Hyne & Sons, Wilson, Hart & Co. Combined Operations.

In 1906 Wilson, Hart & Co. and Hyne & Son combined forces and jointly purchased the right (from the Department of Lands) to log 4300 acres (2690ha) on Fraser Island in return for a fee known as a stumpage charge. In this case it was initially set at fivepence per 100 super feet. Of great concern to both sawmillers was the distance of the timber trees from their sawmills.

Firstly the long hauls over sandy country with most ridges and valleys running north- west to southeast. The sandy soils in the damp scrub (rainforest) areas were quite hard to carry wagons, but where the sun shone through open forest or heath country, could become quite loose and deep. Then the long haul along Sandy Straits and up the Mary River by boat was quite deterring. They solved the problem by adopting Pettigrews and Sim's idea of tramways or small narrow railway lines and using steam locomotives to pull log trucks.

Peter Sorrenson got the contract to haul the sleepers for the tramway. Edward Armitage, a man with previous experience in laying tramline, got the contract to lay the steel tram rails. Each rail weighed about 26 pounds. The line ran from Urang (Yerong) eastward to the Bogimbah Scrub, where the line forked, the west line going through a tallowwood area, being called "The Tallowwood Line". The east line went through a blackbutt area and called by operators "The Blackbutt Line".

A report in the Maryborough Chronicle of 18th September 1915: -
"Railway lines on Fraser Island at Urang to Bogimbah Scrub are being lifted and relaid at Woongoolbver Creek to top a new block of timber. This line has been used for the past ten years by Hyne & Son and Wilson Hart & Co. to bring out timber at the back of Bogimbah. The area has now been worked out."

This line from the mouth of Woongoolbver Creek ran along a causeway, south of the creek running eastward then to Central Station. From Central Station running southeast to a fork, the south fork was later called the Louisa Road. The second fork of the tramline ran to the edge of the scrub (rainforest).

It was thought that the tram engines pulling the log wagons along the line burnt wood in the fireboxes, but the author found pieces of coal along the tramway, about 50 chains or one kilometre southeast from Central Station. The line ran along the south side of Central Station.

The coal found along the tramway was probably an isolated occasion. Rollo Petrie in his book "Early Days of Fraser Island", mentioned Ben Harrop, who cut cordwood to burn in the tramway engines. This tramway line was in use from 1915 until 1923. The Maryborough Chronicle on the 17th January 1923 reported the sale of the tramlines to Morton Central Sugar Mill, Nambour. The trucks, spare parts and buildings were reported sold to the Fairymead Sugar Mill Bundaberg.

Maryborough Chronicle Report 20th September 1906: -

"An auction sale of the hardwood timber on a block of 5280 acres on Fraser Island will be made at the Lands Office at 11 o'clock this morning. The upset price is sixpence per one hundred feet to be removed within five years."

8. M^cKenzie Sawmills 1919

In April 1918 sawmillers H.M^cKenzie Ltd. (Sydney) bought the timber rights for ten years to 10,000 acres of Fraser Island. They immediately began working on the first and only timber mill on the Island. They also began the construction of a jetty leading to a loading wharf, to export the sawn timber to Sydney. This area was known as North White Cliffs. The author in an interview with the late Bill Seelke asked when the jetty was built. The answer was that "when the war of 1914 finished on 11th November 1918, the jetty was almost completed. We knocked off work and had a great party." (Rollo Petrie recorded that M^cKenzies owned a 35foot launch called "Sunset"). The tramline ran from the wharf and jetty along the south side of Barlorgan Creek. There were houses on the south or topside of the tramline. The line then crossed the creek northeast to the sawmill. Another line, the one to bring in the logs to the mill, headed eastwards in a rambling way east, north, east, south, then east to cross the Northern Road. Then ran southeast to the 6-40 Junction, or rather six miles, forty chains from the mill (10.40km).

The main tramline went straight ahead southeast, whilst the east fork line ran northward for approximately 2 miles (3.2km) to the Stanford terminus. This area was in Stanford Logging Area, named by the Forestry Department in honour of K. Stanford, the Manager of M^cKenzies. The main tramline then went southeast again from 6-40 to the 7-20 Junction or seven miles, twenty chains, from the mill (11.6km). The western fork ran only a short distance to a camp commonly called "The Rats Camp", a distance of approximately 40 chains (0.8km). The east fork ran eastward along mainly the north side of the ridge with a lot of side-cuts to near the eastern firebreak, ending at a terminus. Seelke's Road ran northwest from there in a circle northeast. This road had been grubbed in preparation for a future tramway extension, but was never carried out.

East of the terminus, there was a huge steam log hauler, set in concrete to pull logs from the southeast hollow up a steep hill to the terminus. The author, in 1960 found the large concrete slab, (with threaded bolts) where the log hauler was seated. Nearby was a 10 foot diameter (3m) roll of rusted steel cable about 7/8 inch (22mm) diameter, the roll being about 12 inches (300mm) round, above the ground. Scattered around the ground were seven hardwood fork slides with ringbolts at the "v" end.

The cable from the hauler had a hook on the free end. This hook was put through the wire sling that ran around the log end, (which was seated on the slide) and hooked in the sling eyes. The log was drawn up the hill by the cable rolling on the log haulers drum, the slide thus keeping the nose of the log from digging in the sand. In 1960, there were still several deep grooves where the logs were drawn over the lip of the hill. They were higher or rather deeper than a man's height,

possibly seven or eight feet (2+meters). According to Fred William's book "Written In the Sand", this log hauler was installed by two American engineers in 1924.

Whilst the author was surveying the boundary line between Compartment 19 and 20 M^cKenzie, he found sleepers cut off and split, some squared ready for the tramway. They were all cut from turpentine trees (*Syncarpia hillii*), later called Satinay. The author inspected the remains of old sleepers on all tramlines and they were all turpentine timber. (It was the board timber that was first called "Satinay", which sounds better than turpentine, [if one wanted to sell it]. Box timber was sold as "Red Lustre" to the public).

The terminus northward of the 6-40 Junction was on the edge of the blackbutt/ banksia country. The north part of the area was open, and the remains of several huts were still there in 1959. However the terminus on the southeast end of the tramway was in bastard scrub (now marginal rainforest) country inter-mixed with eucalypts.

The author, whilst in the old Central Station Office one rainy day, came across a stock card, dated 1927, headed "Ex-M^cKenzie Mill Stock". This was equipment bought by the forestry from M^cKenzie. First thing on the list was a tramway engine, plus so many wagons, eleven miles twenty odd chains of old tramway track, plus axes, cross-cut saws, grubbers, shovels, (including coal shovels) etc. The tramway engines burnt wood mainly, but the author found pieces of coal along some of these tramway tracks.

This brings to mind one day in 1960 when Overseer Col Ambrose was issuing the author and offsider George Wex with some gear from the storeroom, George remarked to me that it looked old enough to come from M^cKenzie. Col was very upset when the author agreed that the billycans in question did look rather ancient. The next time we asked him for some gear, he sarcastically commented that, "you pair of beggars probably want some more M^cKenzie stock".

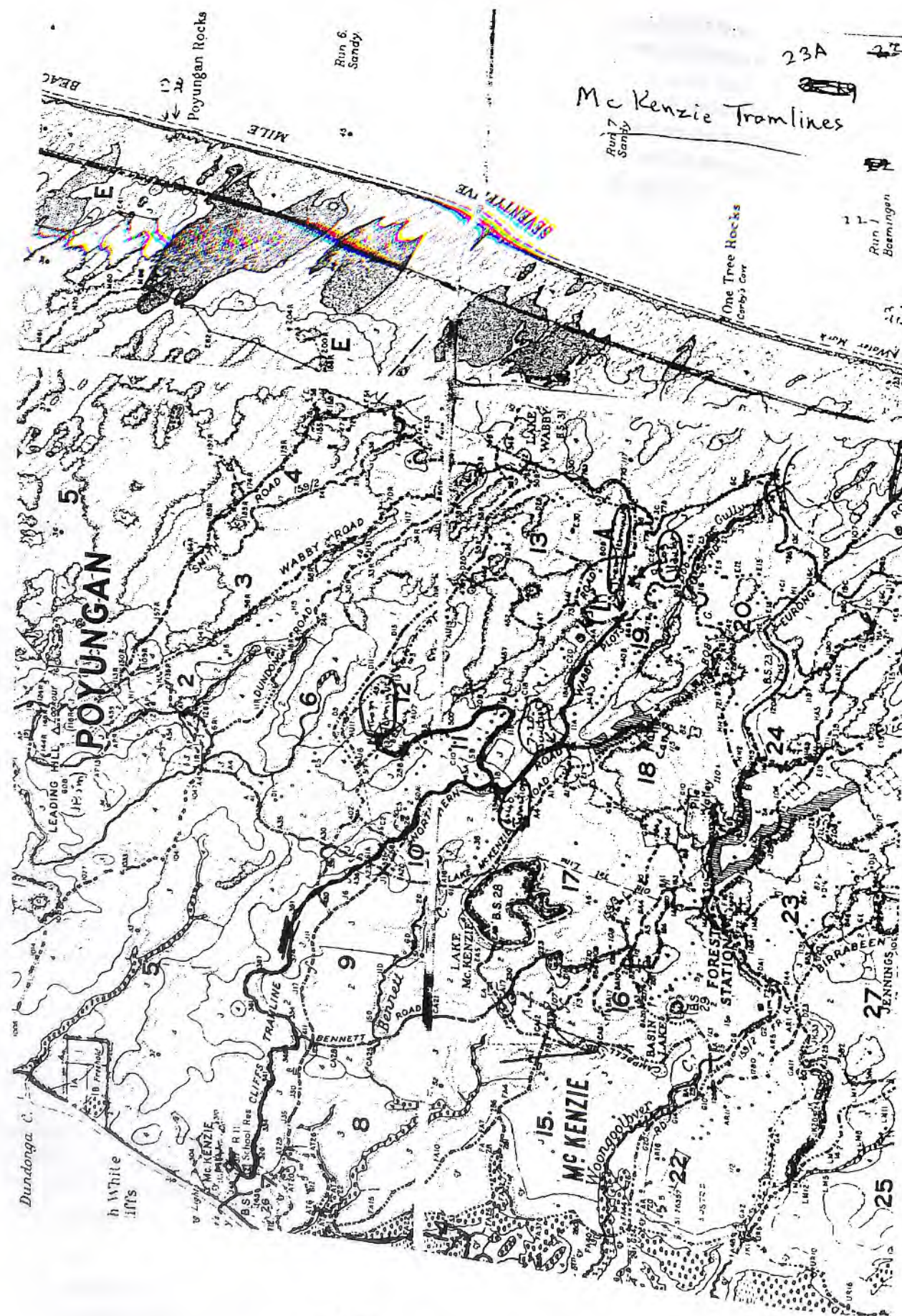
Fred William's book "Written In the Sand" (1982) has some great photographs of tramways. M^cKenzie Jetty, log punts, rafts, log-haulers etc. and is recommended as great reading.

However M^cKenzie was not popular in Maryborough, as their bulked timber was taken direct by ship to Sydney. They also ran into trouble with waterside workers who had to be paid from when they left Maryborough as travelling time, before they even handled any timber. Then in 1925 after six years of operation M^cKenzie closed down, auctioning all their equipment. The forestry bought one tram engine, tramline and jetty etc., placed on stock in 1927, as above thus it was the end of M^cKenzie.

5. Lahey's Sawmill, Brooweena

Talbot (Tal) Lahey began building a sawmill at Brooweena, in late 1923. The mill began operations in April 1924. It cut both hardwood and pine timber, later having a planing mill and a kiln drying area. Tal's son, Maxwell E. Lahey, then aged 22 years, took over the management of the mill in 1947. In 1948 the Lahey's started a hoop pine plantation that is flourishing today. Talbot Lahey died in 1958. The mill was sold to the Robertson Brothers of Gympie. Maxwell Lahey died in July 2002. His wife Myra, kindly contributed this story.

Other sawmills in the Maryborough, Bundaberg area, were as follows: - Armstrongs (Magnolia-Tiaro), North Aramara, Nelsons (Antigua), Riley (Baddow), Lawrence (Kanighan), Dale & Meyers (Tiaro). Others were Eureka Sawmills (Childers), Burnett Sawmills (Bundaberg), Petersen Brothers, South Burnett Saw and Planing Mill, both in Bundaberg area also.



McKenzie's Tram Lines

Chapter Three

The Beginning of Forestry in Queensland

Section One

Formation

The timber licensing system that had been introduced in 1863 was replaced by the Royalty system in 1883. In 1883 there was also concern for the amount of timber being removed from Fraser Island and attempts were made to replace the loss by replanting. Through out 1883 to 1884 the planting of Kauri pine was carried out on an area of 230 acres (93ha) near Bogimbah Creek. The Mitchell Brothers with the help of aborigines from the nearby Mission (Bogimbah Mission) carried out the planting. This was a failure due to the competition of undergrowth and the overhead canopy. This planting was carried after the area of Fraser Island was gazetted a reserve for timber in 1882.

In September 1889, Richard Matthew Hyne MLA from Maryborough, called for the establishment of a Department of Forestry to take control and management of Queensland forest. This seemed to be an odd proposal, especially from a sawmiller. However he was a man who saw the need to control exploitation and destruction of forests. His concern was related for the future of his own business as well as those of his own country. The Government money allotment for Fraser Island in 1891 amounted to 65 pounds. The Lands Department persisted year after year with the need for a Forestry Department, a request in 1898 again reported.

The Government after 30 years of delay finally decided on a forestry section set up within the Lands Department. Although this was a much-needed proposal, it was limiting in what was wanted. It was more or less an off-handed response to quieten down the requests of the Lands Department. Forestry in Queensland began on 1st August 1900 when an Inspector of Forests was appointed.

Richard Matthew Hyne, although a sawmiller, had been the Mayor of Maryborough. In 1878 he had convened a meeting of citizens that had led to the establishment of both a Maryborough Boys Grammar School and a Girls Grammar School. In 1884 he started the movement for public Swimming Baths in Maryborough. As stated beforehand he had established a sawmill in 1882. He was appalled at the puny efforts of the Government to provide funds for Forestry purposes. A member of enlightened sawmillers, who were eager to safeguard their future timber supplies, joined the growing forestry conservancy movement of the 1870's.

Two major ideals were formed: -

- 1) Queensland forests should be managed to sustain future timber supplies.
- 2) Forests of scenic grandeur and high conservation significance should be preserved.

Several reports commissioned by the Queensland Government endorsed this "wise use" policy. This led to the creation in 1900, of the Forestry Branch within the Department of Public Lands.