

MACLEAN SHIRE



A THEMATIC HISTORY

MARCH 2006

A THEMATIC HISTORY of MACLEAN SHIRE
Volume 2

Maclean Shire (former)

Community Based Heritage Study

Prepared by E.H. (Lin) McSwan and Margaret Switzer

MARCH 2006

FOREWORD

I was not born in the Clarence Valley nor schooled there but on school holidays and even before that at regular intervals, without the confines of the school curriculum to stop us, my parents and I would make the long trip up the Pacific Highway from Sydney to stay with my grandparents on their farm at Palmers Channel.

Their farm was actually on Palmers Island at the tip where Palmers Channel flows into “The Lake”. However, Palmers Channel was the community (us on the North Bank - the South Bank being on the mainland), connected by the now demolished Cameron Bridge.

For a child from Sydney, each trip was a memorable experience entering such a unique and strange land where fishing boats chugged past one’s bedroom at night and fish miraculously appeared on the front lawn in the morning. Mail, bread and milk were placed in a flying fox (red tin) and hauled across the Channel. The Pacific Highway still had vehicular car ferries at many places where travellers could escape the hurly burly of car travel and enjoy the tranquillity of a river or talk to fellow travellers while waiting to get to the other side. It was a world of cane cutters and tugs, the changing of the tides into and out of the Lake, surfing at Yamba and Brooms Head or picnics on the beaches on the other side of the Lake.

Looking back, I realise how lucky I was to have had such a unique and idyllic childhood but, most importantly, a reference to compare this magical land to despite living at Newport in Sydney close to some of Sydney’s best beaches and waterways. I much preferred the beauty of the Clarence and could not wait for each school holiday to start.

I am now retired and it seems the world has changed so much since those innocent days of childhood. In my career, I was lucky to travel the world for close to twenty-five years. Tahiti, Fiji, Paris, London, you name it; I have been there often for prolonged periods. This has enabled me to put Maclean Shire in an international context. I may be biased, but to me nothing in my travels matches the beauty of our river and coastline, our unique, rich and wonderful history, our beautiful historic settlements and towns and our sense of community. That is why, after all those years, I returned to retire here. I hope in some way this thematic history of Maclean Shire can help to save the character, beauty, history and heritage of this truly unique area.

I wish to emphasise that I am not an academic. I have not done any original research for this project. I have merely compiled and edited original material. The credit for this project should go to the hardworking historians of Maclean Shire and their Historical Societies. Their dedication and exhaustive and extensive research made this manuscript possible. Without the long-standing work of Lin McSwan, Margaret Switzer, Stuart Lee, Joyce Plater, Ruth McAulay, Darrel Fisher, Mike Gillespie and many others I would not have had the information. They have kept our history alive and recorded it for future generations. They are now contributing to keep our history

alive in the visual world. Thanks must also go to Kay Paine and Lyn Overton for editing, indexing and the desktop publishing.

This voluminous body of work belongs to the historians named above and detailed in the bibliography. To get a full understanding and to learn of the wonderful history of the past you should consult these books.

Of course, this study would not have been undertaken had it not been for Council's Heritage Officer, Deborah Wray, and the Maclean Heritage Committee who encouraged Council to seek funding for this joint project from the NSW Heritage Office. The contribution of Deborah Wray, the Maclean Heritage Committee and the NSW Heritage Office is sincerely acknowledged.

Doug Mackenzie
March 2006.

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INTRODUCTION

We all walk in the giant footsteps of our ancestors. In doing so, we begin to understand who we are and what we stand for. These “footsteps” are a metaphor for today’s listed heritage items.

Unfortunately, like Longfellow’s “footsteps in the sand of time”, some disappeared almost overnight, as with physical evidence concerning the day-to-day life of the Yaygir Aborigines who lived here before European settlement. Inevitably too, even potentially more substantial “footsteps” in the form of public monuments built by the pioneers have been lost for all time as, for example, the halls which have been demolished to accommodate population trends as, in Yamba where a modern community centre complex replaces weatherboard Literary Institute type of assembly and dance hall. However, even in such a late-blossoming town as Yamba with its frenetic redevelopments in recent times, much evidence, largely overlooked, still survives as reminders of a past era if we only knew how to recognise them. As a community, we need to discover and, if possible, preserve these heritage items in order to strengthen our sense of identity and our bonds or links with the pioneers who created a heritage for us now living to build on.

Paradoxically, in order to appreciate fully our heritage as preserved in physical objects still surviving, we need to know what that heritage is. Such information is provided, for example, by historians relying largely on information gleaned from a wide variety of sources other than (often now non-existent) relics of the past. Administrators, or laypersons pressuring administrators, have neither the time nor the training and skills employed by academic or local historians. However, these resources in a real sense are just as much heritage items as the preserved CSR tug, *Beardmore*. It is the mission of various historical societies to preserve and make accessible to everyone the materials that make possible a thorough understanding of the local heritage.

Let us briefly consider some of the ways historians bring to life knowledge of a community’s history, that is to say, its cultural, social, economic or political heritage, things too complex or abstract to be represented by artefacts or buildings. Then the purpose of this study will be better understood: a physical survivor from the past is better understood if we understand the context in which it was constructed. Historians then depend largely on primary documents or printed resources among which we may list the following: newspapers, journals and factual books recording events as they happen; letters and dramas written as private lives unfold; reading contemporary literature, especially novels, which explore how, long ago, people like you and I coped in establishing human relationships in a totally different environment; studying private and public documents and other records; examining contemporary photographs and drawings; interviewing older citizens and examining mementos- and reading accounts of the period written by other historians (knowledge acquired by such means must be available to those making responsible decisions about our heritage. However, they need help.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE THEMATIC HISTORY, CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL (MACLEAN) COMMUNITY BASED HERITAGE STUDY.

A thematic history is an essential part of a community based study as it both encourages the heritage committee and committee members to look for fabric which provides evidence of the Shire's history and in turn provides an overview of the history of the Lower Clarence. This final document then provides easily accessible information which would otherwise only be found by wading through often largish books in public libraries.

Accordingly, the ten chapters in this study attempt to collate in logical order and in a meaningful way, essential or relevant "readings" extracted from historical studies written by a number of local historians. Taken together these readings embody a detailed history of the Lower Clarence area beginning in pre-Christian times when the Yaygir aborigines inhabited the area, and moving on to the 16 decades of subsequent European settlement dating from 1838.

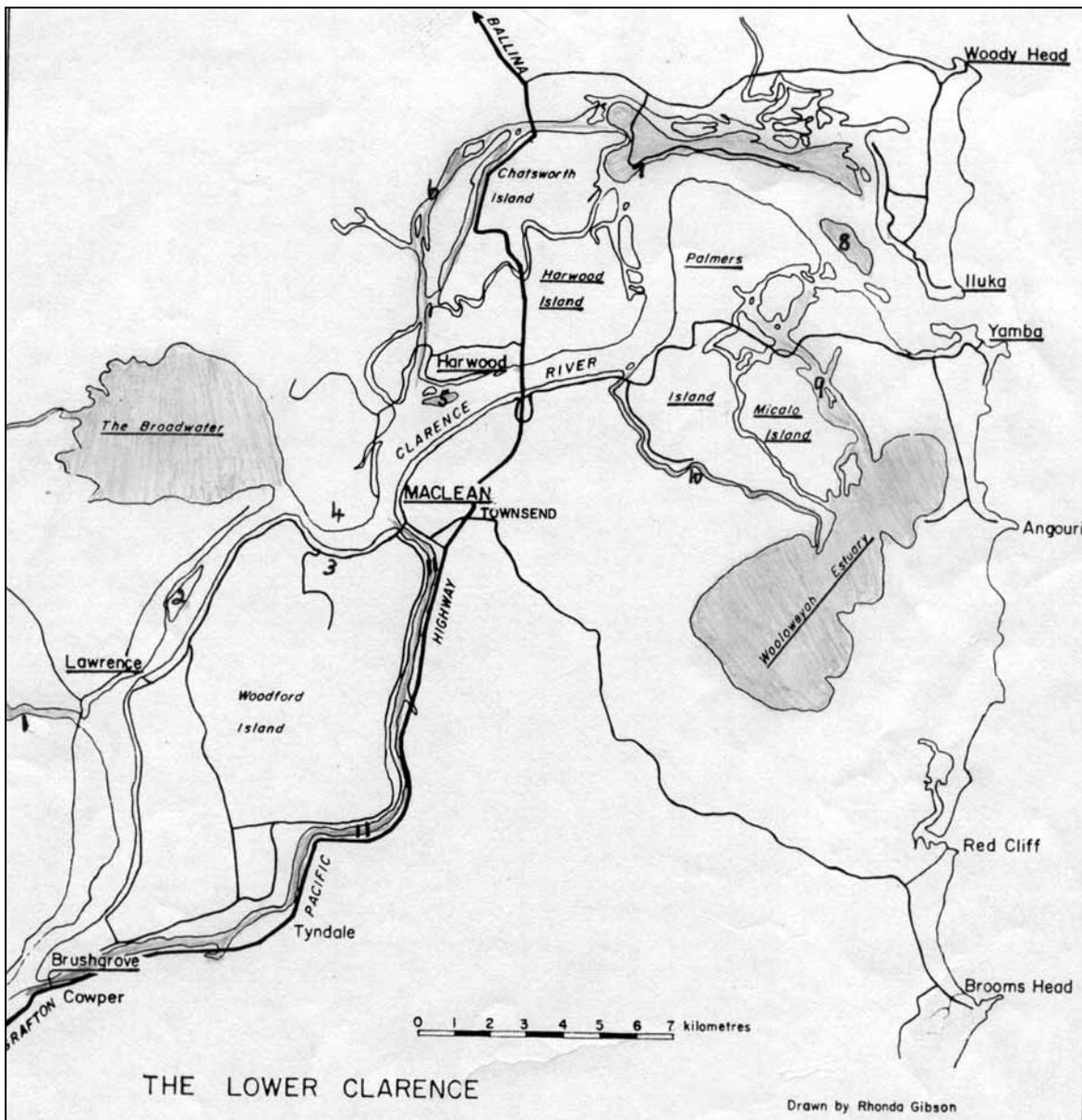
The aim is to present these historical accounts fresh and unsullied by explanations or interpretations by the editor/compiler and in the exact words used by the historians themselves. The readers will know that the information they acquire should be unbiased and accurate and may be used safely to make judgments about heritage items. In short, our historians have been plundered to provide readers with an interest in preserving our heritage with essential background information. It is hoped that this, in turn, will lead to the preservation of the important items, which are listed in the accompanying heritage coordinator's report and database.

E. H. (Lin) McSwan OAM

CHAPTER 1 THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Geographical Context and Features
2. The River and its islands
3. Weather

SHIRE OF MACLEAN MAP



Local Government

(Now a medical centre)



Harwood Shire Council 190 -1957 came into existence to, "serve the Lower Clarence outside the boundaries of the Maclean Municipality"

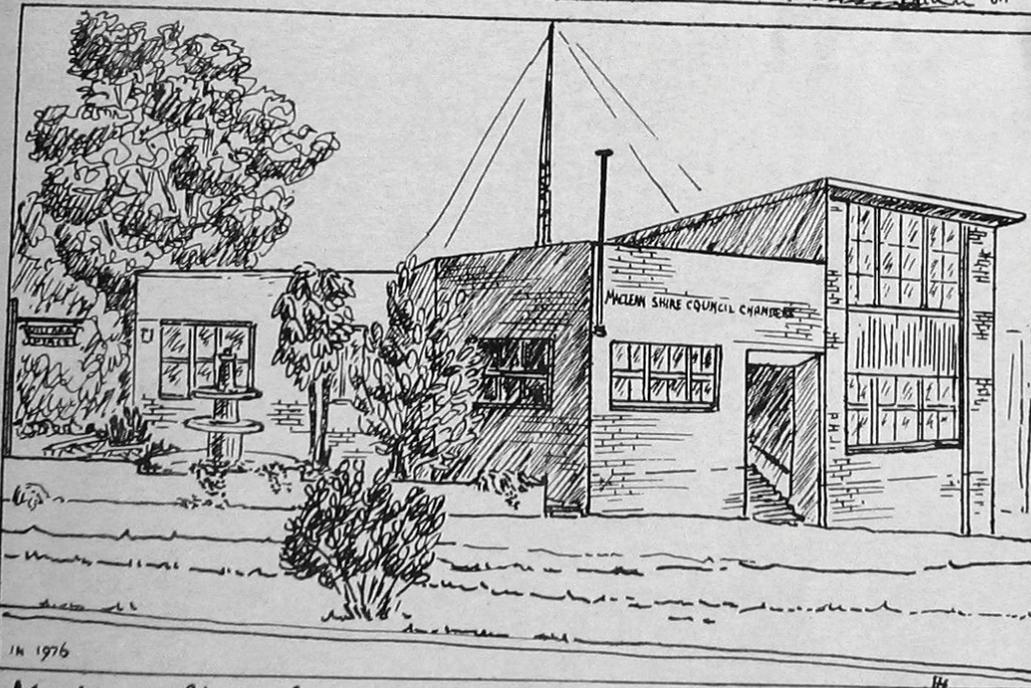
(now site of Commonwealth Bank)



Harwood Shire Office

Maclean Municipal Council
1887 - 1957

Maclean Municipal Council



Maclean Shire Council Chambers

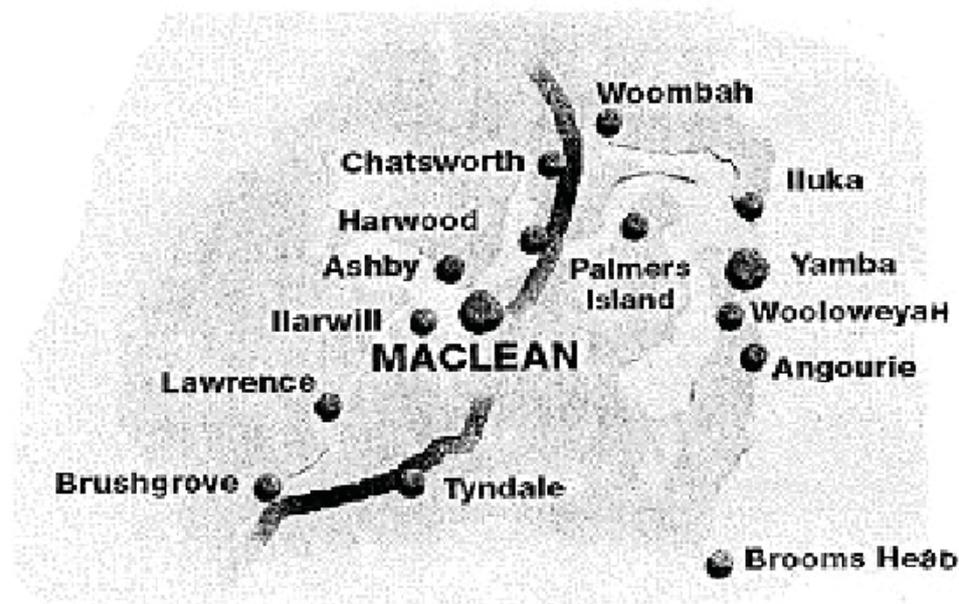
(built in 1959)

Amalgamation into Clarence Valley Council 2004

First Mayor Ian Tiley

drawings by June Huish

MACLEAN SHIRE COUNCIL AREA



From the preceding maps, it can be seen that the dominant feature of Maclean Shire is the Clarence River and the coastline. The Clarence River system extends approximately 380 kilometres from Yamba to the Queensland Border districts. However, it can be said the Clarence plays a more dominant role in the lives of Maclean Shire residents than any other Local Government area. Grafton on the river has a river that flows through it. The residents of Maclean Shire have a river they live in! The Clarence River at Brushgrove on Woodford Island marks the western boundary of Maclean Shire. It is here the mighty river is split by Woodford Island forming the river's South Arm and it is here the almost delta like character of Maclean Shire starts.

More than 100 islands form part of the Clarence River system. That is the conventional wisdom although the Richmond and Clarence Examiner 20 July 1907 challenged this assertion.

EXTRACT FROM *The Richmond and Clarence Examiner*, July 20, 1907

ISLANDS IN THE CLARENCE RIVER

There are 53 islands in the Clarence, besides a number of small islets. Seven are in Oyster Creek, two in Oyster Channel, three in Lake Channel, four in The Lake, one in main river near the mouth; two in main river, Parish of Taloumbi; twelve in North Arm, parishes Nanegai, Harwood and Ashby; eight in main river, parish Harwood;

three in Back Channel, parishes Harwood, Woombah and Ashby; one in each of parishes Woodford, Lawrence and Southgate; one in South Arm; four near Grafton – totalling 36,897 acres. The area of Woodford Island is 17,500 acres, freehold, c.p., a.l., and special lease; Palmer’s 600a., freehold and Chatsworth, 2,799 acres, freehold and c.p.; Micalo, 2,000 acres, freehold, c.p., and sp. Lease; Warregah, 800 acres, freehold and c.p.; Ashby, 430 acres; Orogandiman, 235 acres, annual lease; Carr’s 200 acres, Waringa, 270 acres, a.l.; Romiaka, 200 acres, freehold and c.p.; King’s 116 acres, freehold; Elizabeth 55, Susan 149, and Ulgundahi 45 acres. The acreage of islands not held under tenure totals 461 acres.

The Clarence system is the largest coastal river catchment in NSW at 22,700 sq. km., and its large alluvial floodplain has been crucial to the agricultural and economic development of Maclean Shire. The climate is largely warm, ranging from subtropical on the coast and temperate with an annual rainfall of up to 1500mm in some centres. The coastline, beaches, coastal lakes and particularly Bundjalung National Park, Iluka World Heritage reserve and Yuraygir National Park mean that a number of distinct coastal settlements make up Maclean Shire and this pattern of settlement on the coast will continue.

This combined with the Big River and its islands has also led to distinct inland river settlements, Maclean being the traditional political and cultural centre.

Maclean Shire, despite these coastal towns and settlements “up river”, could best still be described as a rural farming community at present heavily reliant on the sugar cane industry in an estuarine maritime environment. The river facilitates the fishing and prawn trawling industries both estuarine and oceanic and has played a vital role in Maclean Shire’s evolution and settlement. The “Big River” is an important cultural symbol to the indigenous community as well as the wider community. The Maclean Highland Gathering recently celebrated its 100th anniversary and is an important cultural event for the entire community celebrating the Scottish traditions and culture of the early Scottish settlers.

Key economic activities are sugar cane production (45% of the northern rivers region sugar production is grown and harvested locally). There are approximately 250 sugar cane farms which support 990 related jobs.

Commercial Fishing Maclean Shire has the second largest commercial fishery in NSW and supports 370 jobs.

Beef Cattle have come to replace dairying which is now extinct in Maclean Shire.

Tourism is a new growth industry.

Developing economic specialist areas include aquaculture, boat building and marina operations, restaurants emphasising local cuisine and products. The major retail areas of Maclean Shire are Maclean and Yamba.

The following Extract from Darrell Fisher's "*Change and Adjustment in the Dairy Industry of the Big River Country Northern NSW*" provides interesting contextual information regarding Maclean Shire.

On the 4th August 1831, Richard Craig, a convicted cattle thief and absconder from the Moreton Bay prison, turned himself in to the Commandant at the Port Macquarie penal settlement. Craig indicated that he had spent the last few years living with the Aborigines on the banks of the Big River to the north.

A year later, Black Jack Sheik Brown, also a run-away from Moreton Bay, gave himself up at Port Macquarie after over 3 years on the run spent mainly on the Big River.

Under interrogation, the convicts gave detailed and positive statements on the size and depth of the river and of its surrounding environmental resources such as cedar trees.

Although the river mouth was passed by Cook in May 1770 (at night) and Matthew Flinders anchored at its mouth in the Norfolk in 1799, the descriptions given by the convicts were the first references given to what was later called the Clarence River by Europeans. On 14th of November 1839, the Big River was officially gazetted as the Clarence.

The Clarence River Valley is the largest river catchment on coastal NSW covering an area of 22,600 sq.km., ahead of the Hawkesbury and Hunter in area. The surface water resource of the Clarence is more than twice that of any other coastal river and on the basis of depth of run-off, it is 20% greater than the average for coastal N.S.W.

The name "Big River" still persists in the local parlance and is observed in the names of local business houses such as Big River Credit Union, etc.

(b) The Topographic Stage

The Clarence rises on the Queensland border between Acacia Creek and Stanthorpe along the McPherson Range, a part of the Great Dividing Range. Streams flow south widening their valleys in the soft sandstone rocks forming alluvial floodplains between steep basalt capped ridges.

In the west tributaries such as the Mann River rise on the Northern Tablelands along the Gibraltar Range and Ban Lomond (1,500 metres), descending into deep dissected valleys. Granite from the New England batholith underlies most of this area.

The southern boundary is formed by an eastward spur of the Great Dividing Range from Ben Lomond through to Dorrigo including Mount Darkie and Doughboy Ranges. This area is capped by basalt. Southward from this spur the land drops steeply to the Bellinger River Valley. The Guy Fawkes and Nymboida Rivers leave

the plateau flowing north through rugged dissected country. The Orara River has a broader valley and some flood plain development.

The eastern boundary follows the Coast Range, generally around 200 metres high from Coffs Harbour to Yamba and in the north forms the Richmond Range, which sweeps inland behind Lismore to join the McPherson Range near Woodenbong.

Typically, the western and southern sections of the valley are quite rugged until Copmanhurst, below the Clarence River Gorge. Here the river is subject to tidal influence and it opens up into large areas of alluvial flats with meander loops, terraces, ox-bows and levee banks. Most of the intensive agriculture of the Clarence Valley is concentrated in this area.



Topography and Drainage of the Clarence River Valley indicating the alluvial lowlands of the Lower Clarence. From Darrel Fisher's "*Change and Adjustment in the Dairy Industry*"

VILLAGES IN AREA

(See map for location)

ASHBY	Believed to be called after Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire England. A coal mining area in England, with a ruined castle and in close proximity to Chatsworth and Harwood in England. Named by surveyor W.A.B. Greaves.
BROOMS HEAD	The popular name for Cakora Point, after a Broom was found floating in the sea. Was Broomes Head for years.
COWPER	After Sir Charles Cowper, Premier of NSW
BRUSHGROVE	Mr Archer an early hotel keeper named the village for the two words, brush and grove.
HARWOOD ISLAND	Named by W.A.B. Greaves who was born in England where the town or suburban district of Greater Harwood was not far away from County of Lancashire – Greaves’ home town district.
CHATSWORTH ISLAND	Chatsworth was the seat of the Duke of Devonshire in Derbyshire, near Dovedale, England. Greaves’ home in Grafton named “Dovedale”. Chatsworth Island is the leading settlement of the North Arm of the Clarence River.
WOMBAH – WOOMBAH	Aboriginal word for “tail”
MORORO	Aboriginal word for “fighting place”
ILUKA	Aboriginal word meaning “near the sea”
PALMERS ISLAND AND PALMERS CHANNEL	Named in 1845 after Palmer, a member of surveyors party or Palmer, a cedar getter who had a depot on the island.
LAWRENCE	Named after Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, a hero of the Indian Mutiny and the siege of Lucknow where he was killed in 1857. Also called “The Elbow” by sailors. The Aboriginal name for Lawrence is “Illbooyah” the place of coughing. A mid- Clarence settlement which owed its birth to the inland trade with the Tablelands.
SPORTSMAN ‘S CREEK	Passengers from the pioneering visit of S.S. King William went ashore here in 1839 for a day’s sporting activities.
KINGS CREEK AND KINGS ISLAND	After Steve King, a sawyer on board the “Susan”.
GULMARRAD	Among the Greek names given by Surveyor Wilson to parts of the Clarence, commemorating places in Greece, involved in Greek War of Independence. Wilson’s father-in-law had participated in this War. (see Woodford Island)
TALOUMBI	Aboriginal word “mountain” or “windy place”.
TOWNSEND	Named by Mrs John Skinner, nee Towell, one of the earliest residents, from Chittlehampton, England, where one part of this town was called Townsend. An appropriate name, as Townsend is on the outskirts of Maclean.

WOODFORD ISLAND	Named by Surveyor W.C.B. Wilson after General Woodford, Wilson's father-in-law who fought in Greek War of Independence. Wilson's wife was Elizabeth Woodford.
SANDEMANS LOOKOUT, ASHBY	After Alfred Sandeman Manager of Gordon Brook Station. Sandeman took up the Ashby run which was later sold to Clark Irving.
YAMBA	Accepted as an aboriginal word meaning "headland" or another Aboriginal theory Yamba was so called as yams grew there, or Freeburn said, Clarence River Heads, South Side, should be called "Yumbah" meaning "a large rough shell that clings to the rocks and is "edible" but is not the oyster.
FREEBURN ISLAND	After Francis Freeburn first pilot at Yamba 1851 – 1879.
ROCKY MOUTH 1840 MACLEAN 1885	W.A.B. Greaves, Commissioner for Lands Grafton – wrote, "May 1862, Surveyor General Alister McLean visited the Clarence to lay out villages of Rocky Mouth and Iluka. In 1840 a reserve at Rocky Mouth was to be the designated town area of MACLEAN after the Surveyor General of NSW ROCKY MOUTH – the first name for MACLEAN was given because of the group of rocks at the entrance of the South Arm. This name appeared on a chart of the river by Wilson Bros. in 1840. The name ROCKY MOUTH remained until the Post Office adopted MACLEAN as official in 1885.
BROADWATER	The stretch of water up river from Ashby
TYNDALE – TYNEDALE	Resemblance to the country near the coalmining area of River Tyne England, as there is a known coal seam running in the area here.
TULLYMORGAN	Said to be named after early settlers, Tully and Morgan
JACKYBULBIN	
ULMARRA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aboriginal word meaning "bend in river" 2. Mr Wilson went to survey the area and met King of the local Aboriginal tribe who told Wilson the name of the place was "Yoolmahra".

SCHOOLS OF LOWER CLARENCE

PAST SCHOOLS OF LOWER CLARENCE

Angowrie	1895-1899	
Ashby	1890-1928	
Brushgrove	Provisional 1867 – Sept 1873 – to Cowper	
Cheviot	1890 – 1910	
Esk	1896 – 1896	
Lower Lawrence	1883 – 1955	
Lower Palmers Island	1887 – 1919	
Micalo Island	1888 – 1889	
Mororo	1886 – 1939	
Murrayville	1899 – 1903	
Nanegai	1891 – 1899	
Palmers Channel / Taloumbi	1872 – 1975	
Shark Creek	1877 – 1927	
South Arm	1871 – 1875	



South Arm School circa 1942 (photograph courtesy Marion Cooney)

Taloumbi Station	1891 – 1894
Tullymorgan (Broadwater)	} 1886 – 1911
Tullymorgan 1 & 2	} to 1971
Tyndale	1868 – 1975
Ulgundahi Island	1908 – 1951
Wombah (Woombah)	1872 – 1953
Woodford Leigh	1869 – 1956
Woodford Park	1867 – 1876

Non-government & private schools

Oakdale

Yamba Catholic School 1900 - 1960

Shark Creek Catholic 1874 – 1874

Harwood Catholic School

1928 – 1957

Home Schools

Mrs Cameron

Mrs Currie

PRESENT SCHOOLS OF LOWER CLARENCE

MACLEAN

1. Rocky Mouth – Provisional / Public School 1865 – May 1891
Rocky Mouth till November 1888
2. Superior Public School May 1891 to March 1925
3. District Rural School – April 1925 – December 1950
4. Intermediate High School – Jan 1951 to Dec 1960

Split 1961

Primary School
On 1903 site
January 1961
To – ongoing

Maclean High School
Woombah Street
January 1961 to present day

YAMBA

Provisional School 1868 to March 1870.

Closed

Provisional School October 1882 to October 1883

Public School October 1883 to – Ongoing.

On two sites. Present site Angourie Road, formerly corner Wooli and River Streets

PALMERS ISLAND

Public School 1866 to present day – now on site 2. Site 1 – on riverbank – abandoned due to river bank erosion.

HARWOOD ISLAND

Provisional School January 1872 to September 1876
Public School September 1876 to present day.

CHATSWORTH ISLAND

Public School May 1868 to present day

ILUKA

Provisional School September 1879 to 1880
Public School 1880 to present day

WOODFORD DALE

Public School 1867 to December 1933
Provisional School September 1942 to June 1957
Public School – July 1957 to present day.

LAWRENCE

Provisional School 1868 to July 1876
Public School – July 1876 to present day...

GULMARRAD

Taloumbi Station until July 1894
Provisional School January 1891 to April 1906. Also known as Beach Road Public School
May 1906 to present day.

COWPER

Public School June 1874

PRIVATE – NON GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

St Joseph's Maclean—1867 originally Sisters of Mercy to present day.
First school conducted by Miss Coddington in home in Wharf Street.
St James, Carrs Drive, Yamba 1997 to present day ongoing.
St Andrews Presbyterian Church Grafton –Clarenza campus extension at Townsend.

This chapter seeks merely to be introductory and provide a geographic and general context to the historic themes of Maclean Shire which will unfold in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2 ABORIGINES – THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS

2.1 Yaegl People.

The area of the former Maclean Shire lies wholly within the lands of the Yaegl people whose lands range from Black Rock just south of Evans Head to Red Rock in the south (a highly significant meeting and ceremonial place) and westward from the coast to a line through Swan Creek. Lands to the north and west of this territory are those of the Bundjalung and to the south and southwest are those of the Gumbaingirr.

There are sites of significance to the Yaegl at the mouth of the Clarence River, in coastal areas adjacent to Lake Wooloweyah, near the lookout at Maclean, at Ashby, at Tyndale and on Woodford Island. A site at Iluka and a midden near Lake Wooloweyah have been dated to 6,000 years.

The Dirrangun woman is a creation being whose resting place is at the mouth of the Clarence River. The Yaegl people have a claim under the Federal Government's 1993 Native Title legislation over the lower reaches of the Clarence River to protect Dirrangun.

When Matthew Flinders visited the mouth of the Clarence River on 12th July 1799 he reported in detail on the huts of the Aboriginal people on Yamba Hill and his Aboriginal interpreter, Boongaree, considered that they were superior to any native houses he had seen before. There was no significant white population in the Lower Clarence before the 1860's by which time the worst of the massacres, which had occurred even on the Upper Clarence, had ended. Even when agriculture had forced the natives to become fringe dwellers in camps on the outskirts of places like Yamba, Angourie, Maclean and Ashby they were able to subsist and the men were increasingly able to find labour on farms. This was not to say that they prospered and indeed the decline in their population showed that their new way of life was not for the better. Dispossession of land was the main reason for population decline and the chief cause on the Clarence was the passage of the Robertson Land Acts of 1861-62, the most significant piece of legislation for this region in the second half of the nineteenth century. Whilst not a success in many parts of the State, it was extremely beneficial to this area, mainly because the land was so fertile, enabling would be farmers with little or no capital to take up land very cheaply. The purpose, as stated by John Robertson, was to "unlock the land" held in great quantity by the squatters, and make it available by Free Selection of land not previously surveyed in amounts of 40 to 320 acres at a price of one pound per acre with 25% deposit and repayment @ 5% for what amounted to an unlimited term. It had an instant appeal to the many migrants, mainly from Scotland and Ireland, but also from England and Germany, who were willing to work but had very little capital. Their success in farming crops like maize and sugar and later in dairying resulted in the locking up of land in small farms and the displacing of the original owners who had been hunters and gatherers, not agriculturists. It was not a deliberate policy of dispossession but certainly had that effect.

Following appropriation and occupation of their lands from the 1860's, the Yaegl became fringe dwellers in camps around small settlements such as Iluka, Yamba, Angourie, Palmers Island, Ashby, Maclean, Brushgrove, Tyndale, and Lawrence. Older Yaegl members keep a story of massacre of a clan group on the South Arm near Tyndale.

After the Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1883, there was increased control over the lives of the Yaegl and a number of reserves were created, although few were utilized and most were subsequently revoked and the land reallocated to settlers.

Yaegl is the name now in use by the local Land Council for the Lower Clarence area. It follows such terms as Jiegera, Yuragir, Yaygir and other spellings as has also been the case for adjoining portions Bundgalung, Bandjalang etc and Gumbayngir, Gumbaingar etc. It goes without saying that hearing and interpretation of the sounds of Aboriginal names have varied greatly since European occupation.

2.2 Ulgundahi

The island, so close to Maclean, was to become the haven for many of the fringe dwellers, and to become very important to the two or three generations of Aborigines who lived there and is still important to their descendants. The name is said to have come from “*nullgunda*” or “place of swans” and although the correct spelling is shown as above, and is generally used now, it was colloquially known as “Ullagundi”. It comprises 44 hectares and traditionally it was divided into two parts, two thirds for cultivated land and the remainder for home sites with a small area for a few workhorses.

In 1904, a reserve was established on Ulgundahi Island, just west of Harwood, and 20 people were reported in residence by the end of that year. A part-time manager was appointed, a manager’s residence, school and church were constructed and a number of timber huts for Yaegl families. Both small crop and sugar cane growing were commenced.

2.2.1 The School

The number of children from the island attending Maclean School was said to be about eight, but there were as many as seventeen of school age. It was also said that ‘parents of European children attending the Public School at Maclean objected to the Aboriginal children from Ulgundahi being allowed to go to the same school and that a separate school should be established’.



School with Miss Hamer at the door and Miss Duggan, later Mrs. Cameron 1910.

Another view from the Inspector of Schools, Mr. R. Henderson reported to the Board 18 May 1908 ‘Children are attending Maclean school but the Aborigines want their own school. These aborigines are respectable and industrious farmers and gardeners.’

The Inspector recommended that an Aboriginal Provisional School be established on the Island and a building, outhouses and a tank be provided at a cost of 57 pound (\$114). Till and Robinson completed the building by August.

The Board then approved the erection of a four - roomed residence for the teacher at the school. The teacher appointed was Miss Ethel M Hamer from the Aborigines Mission Station, Greenwell Point, Nowra. There were 21 pupils and the school was recommended to be reclassified as a seventh Class Public School with Miss Hamer still in charge. Her name appears a witness to several of the marriages that took place on the Island in this period.

2.2.2 The Church

Apparently a small church was built by the residents in 1910 (CRE 8March 1910) A report in the DE 13 January 1921 stated that Mr. John Cameron paid the balance of funds needed at the time and also for furnishing of the church. He had by this time succeeded to the estate left by Samuel Macnaughtan and continued the philanthropic work of his predecessors.

He was also on the Committee of Management of the Presbyterian Church so it was natural that the church should support a missionary endeavour among the Ulgundahi people. Until he left in 1910, the minister Rev. Scott Neil visited the island regularly to take services. His sister helped by taking Sunday school classes and becoming involved with the welfare of the women and children.

Other denominations became involved from time to time, especially the Baptists, Free Presbyterians and Salvation Army. An organ was later provided and a long time resident Mrs. Blakeney learnt to play.

2.2.3 The People

The policy of the Government throughout this period was that of benevolent paternalism. It was accepted by the community then. The people were not forced to stay at Ulgundahi but there was no real alternative. There was also a conflict between isolation and assimilation as the children were trained only for employment in the white community but only as farm labourers for the boys or in domestic service for the girls.

In 1910 (CRE 31May 1910) the New South Wales Inspector General of Police visited all the Aboriginal Stations on the North Coast. The one at Ulgundahi was found to be 'in excellent order' and the system of families having their own plot to cultivate was said to be very successful and apparently unique to this station.

Life was better for the men and boys as they could work their farms, sell any surplus produce, and be employed in seasonal work in the district for which they were often sought after and usually paid at a reasonable rate. As well, they could participate in sport, mainly football and athletics in which some were very highly skilled. Some women went out to work by the day to do washing and cleaning. Though the effort was made to find suitable places for the girls, they were often lonely and overworked. It took a long time for this situation to change.

The community of Ulgundahi expanded significantly in 1924/1925 when a number of families relocated there from the large Aboriginal community known as 'The Aborigines Home' located on 300 acres of farmland adjacent to the Agricultural Research Station near Southgate. A number of additional two room prefabricated 'mini orb' galvanized steel huts were constructed to cater for the expanding community.

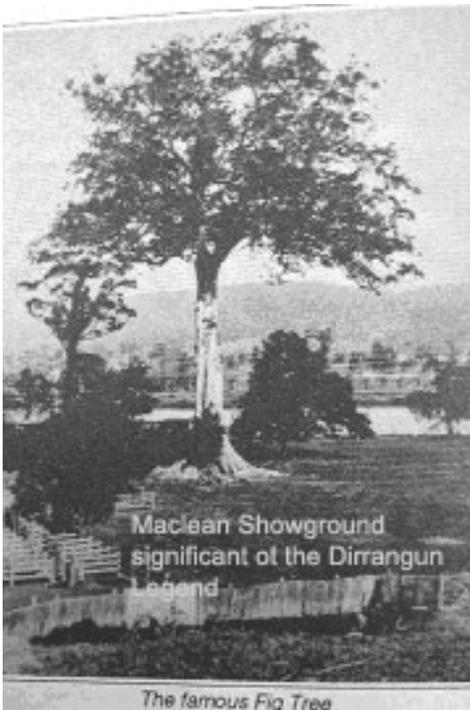
The families from Ulgundahi Island spent many months living in makeshift shelters at Ashby following many floods that inundated the Island and their homes. Ashby is also on record as the location of a traditional burial ground and there is official record of a burial-taking place there in 1916.

Although Della Walker was not born until 1932 on the Island the story she tells in her book, 'Me and You' would have been the same for the earlier generation. Hard work and sharing were part of life but also play so that she could say 'it was lovely on the island back in those days.'

In the end, it was a flood that decided Rocky Laurie to leave the island with his family as Della explains. The 1921 flood had been a bad experience but the next did not occur until 1928 and after that, there was a break until 1945. It was hazardous for the residents and their rescuers to be taken off the island. After the sequence of floods 1945-1954 and a big one in 1963, the decision was taken to provide housing on the mainland and the settlements at 'Hillcrest' and Yamba (Pippi Beach) eventuated. At Hillcrest, the first of several houses was occupied in 1961. In 1975, several more were purchased from the PWD after the Port Works closed at Illarwill. The Nungera Co-operative undertook a programme to replace some of the older homes in stages and in 1982 in what was described as cluster housing. In 1996, four superior homes were completed using Aboriginal apprentices and more have since been built.

2.2.4 Earliest Residents

The records kept by Mr Cameron and the Presbyterian Church show that many of the Aborigines at Ulgundahi adopted European names, mainly those of the early settlers e.g. Cameron, Campbell, Mackay and Freeburn. Others retained names such as Combo and Larrego. New names were added as people came from other areas and many of these are included in the present Aboriginal community of the Lower Clarence. Some who are leading sportsmen of the present carry on the tradition of men and a few women who earned a high reputation in the field of sport many years ago. Some of those were Johnny Blakeney who earned success and good prize money in the gaslight athletic meetings; Cameron and Percy Craig were in the leading football teams as was Jack Sims whose wife was a notable swimmer and rower. Butcher boat crews from the Island had considerable success in regattas of earlier times and some also played with district cricket teams. Mrs Blakeney was a talented musician and played the organ for the church services conducted regularly on the Island.



The marriage register of the Presbyterian Church also shows that many who were married at Ulgundahi had come from places as far distant as Rockhampton, Bellwood and Dubbo as well as from those in the Clarence Valley, e.g. Nymboida, Kangaroo Creek, Ulmarra, Orara, Chatsworth, Lawrence and Yamba.

One of the first deaths on the Island was that of Eliza Morris, 5 August 1906 aged about 73. Most were buried in the Aboriginal Reserve Cemetery at Ashby.

2.3 Nungera Society Cooperative Limited

Community members gathered under one of the large trees opposite the Hillcrest houses in April 1975 and formed Nungera Co-operative Society Ltd. The objective of the Co-operative was to take charge of the serious problems of inadequate housing, poor health, poor education outcomes and chronic unemployment. Farming was resumed on Ulgundahi Island, the tug *Beardmore*

purchased from CSR for river transport, Corolama Island, adjacent to Ulgundahi was purchased for farming and the Jubilee St land opposite Hillcrest purchased for a cluster housing development.

Subsequently the Yamboorah Aboriginal Corporation was formed at Yamba with similar objectives.

In 1983, the NSW Government introduced the Aborigines Land Rights Act and the Yaegl Local Aboriginal Land Council (Maclean) and Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council (Yamba) were formed. The former reserves at Ulgundahi Island, Hillcrest and Pippi Beach were transferred to the Land Councils. Additional former Crown Lands were granted to both Land Councils under the provisions of the Act.

Today, the Yaegl, traditional owners of these lands, are a thriving community with many plans for the future.

2.4 YAMBA

Yamba has already been mentioned in other contexts. However, the presence of a significant number of Aborigines in the past and at present in Yamba seems to warrant a further mention.

The name “Yamba” was thought to be of Aboriginal origin with a meaning of “headland” but there is a new theory of its being of Greek origin suggested by the Wilson brothers in their survey of 1842. The first name appears to have been Wooli. Whatever the name it has been shown that early visitors like Flinders and Perry found the natives to be superior in physique and crafts such as canoe making and in their methods of hunting. Estimates of numbers vary but it is agreed that they were numerous and that, like their relatives in the Maclean area, they co-existed with the early settlers but decreased markedly in numbers after the selectors took up the land for maize and later cane growing. Their survival in Yamba was prolonged by the slow development of the township and a camp of some kind existed along the Angourie road. It is not recorded that any men were employed in the Quarry work there in the latter 1800’s.

Ron Heron describes a campsite at Reedy Creek (Shores Drive) as being the first permanent settlement after the development of the Yamba township. He says that it was first established in 1935 when families began to move down from Ulgundahi. There was a midden there as well as one on the present golf course site. The Reedy Creek camp moved to where Story House is now and in 1962 to Pippi Beach where houses were built because of the same agitation by Rev Stan Gaden which led to the Hillcrest housing estate. The road leading out there was named Rocky Laurie Drive, an extension of Pacific Parade. There was a movement, so far unsuccessful, to have the former name changed

2.5 ROCKY LAURIE

It has been suggested that there should be mention of Rocky Laurie and the following is the account of him in “Yamba Yesterday”.

In the opinion of old time residents Rocky Laurie is the greatest all round athlete that the river has produced. As a Rugby League winger he was practically unstoppable, such was his speed, agility and intuitive ball sense. His son Raymond who later played for the Balmain Tigers and was under consideration for representative selection when he returned home, said that it was a family tradition that in his youth Rocky’s reflexes were so fast and his published speed off the mark so explosive that he could run down and catch a rabbit!

He was also a champion athlete (always off scratch, a contemporary recalled, and still won every race!), sculler and a first-rate cricketer. Needless to say, he was also a first rate fisherman and competent surfer-swimmer. He was respected in the community, among whom he had many firm friends, for his sportsmanship, his personal dignity and sense of family. He died on 2nd July 1963 aged about sixty. The obituary tribute in the Examiner of 3rd July 1963 concluded thus:

Perhaps “Rocky” Laurie was best known as a sprinter. He went to Victoria on several occasions to compete in top Gifts and had his share of successes.

Last season (1962), the Upper Rugby League asked him to kick off in the first semi-final of the League ever played in Maclean. Rocky Laurie also won renown as a fisherman and many an expert took his advice and followed him to favourite fishing spots.



The road that runs from Pacific Parade to the aboriginal settlement on Pippi Beach is named Rocky Laurie drive in his honour. His sons and grandsons have kept the name Laurie alive on the sporting field and the womenfolk have been articulate leaders on behalf of their people in community affairs.

Allan Laurie and Della Walker were two of Rocky’s children and the deaths of both this year (2004) have been sad events for the extended family. In his later years, Allan, known affectionately as “Pop”, became a revered father

figure. He was involved in 1995 in a controversy concerning the collecting and selling of beach worms for sale at Yamba. Allan was an expert but was forced out of the business when the NSW Government imposed a licence, the cost of which was out of reach of the casual wormer. Della had an amazingly busy life moving about a good deal but making her presence felt wherever she was. This was partly due to her marriage to William Walker and a move to Tabulam but she returned frequently to the Lower Clarence and was involved in the bridge walks, the teaching of dances and the translation of the Yaegl language. Her book, “*Me and You*”, published in 1989 is her life story written by Tina Coutts and launched by the local MP, Don Day. Her philosophy of ‘Me and You’ is whether you are white or black, caring and sharing is what it is all about.

TIMELINE

- 1904 It was recommended that 8 acres be set aside for an Aboriginal Reserve
- 1906 An Aboriginal Reserve was established by the Aboriginal Protection Board
This was to survive into the 1940's
- 1907 Five huts were built at a cost of L146 and the rest of the island was reserved for the use of Aborigines with trees and scrub to be protected by at least one chain along the water's edge
A corroboree was held to celebrate the commencement of the Reserve
- 1908 35 adults and children were in residence
- 1910 Population had risen to 60 and cultivation had begun of maize and sugar. A school was established for 25 pupils with Miss Hamer as the only white resident. Money was being raised to build a church. This was opened 2.5.1911 but damaged in the 1921 flood. An Aboriginal, Mrs R.Blakeney, was the organist
- 1911 Mr Allan Cameron was appointed as teacher and manager. He married Miss Kate Duggan, a missionary teacher and they lived on the island for a time before moving to Ashby. They had two children. Inspection reports continued to be satisfactory. Children won prizes at the Maclean Show for writing and artwork. The Presbyterian Church in Maclean supported the church work and Sunday School with interest shown by Mr John Cameron and the Cameron family.
- 1921 First flood of any size since 1893 causing damage and anxiety because there had been no training for such an emergency.
- 1928 Next big flood and residents evacuated safely
- 1945 Flood again caused damage. Residents evacuated from Ashby to Peteries' farm. Some went to Yamba and did not return
- 1950 Worst flood ever and residents evacuated to Showground in Maclean and this became the practice for subsequent floods
- 1951 School on island closed. Children rowed across to attend Maclean Public School.
- 1954 Another serious flood after which movement began to have houses built in Maclean. Rev S.Gaden, Anglican Minister led this and received support
- 1961 19th December Mrs Esther Mercy went to first home at Hillcrest
- 1982 Work commenced on new brick houses with work supervised by Nungera Co-operative and funded by the Federal Govt. through an Aboriginal Development Programme.
- 1994 Organic Farming commenced on island also funded by the A.D. Programme
- 1995 Activity extended to neighbouring Corolamo Island with 10 hectares to be worked together with the 28 hectares on Ulgundahi. Some volunteers elected to work 25 hours a week on wages similar to Unemployment benefits and topped up from profits. The CSR tug "*Beardmore*" was purchased to transport workers and machinery to the islands. Later sold to Maclean District Historical Society and now at the Harwood Mill.

2.7 LAND COUNCILS

The Aboriginal Land Council system was established in NSW in 1983 under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Their purpose was to present Aboriginal community views particularly in the matter of claims for unoccupied Crown land which is not needed for an essential public purpose. All adults are eligible for membership of a local Land Council and there are thirty or more such Councils in the North Coast, of which the Yaegl and Birrigan Gargle represent the Lower Clarence.

- 1984 Claims were being prepared
- 1985 More than 40 claims were lodged including Iluka golf course, industrial estate and rubbish dump, all the beaches between dunes and the ocean, public reserves, the camping area at Brooms Head the Blue Pool and Angourie Point and the Green Point Reserve. Hickey Island and Turners Beach were also included although these were formed because of the Port works. Understandably, the claims created some panic in the Council and citizenry although the terms of the Act allowed for the continued use of the areas for public access and recreational uses. It would take time for each claim to be considered and the anger and panic subsided until
- 1996 when Joyce Clague and Della Walker made claims on the waters of the Clarence from below the Harwood Bridge to the three mile offshore limit. This was probably sparked by a proposal that resurfaces regularly to blow up the reef, looked upon as a sacred site because of its association with the legend of the Dirrangun woman.
- 1998 A claim was made for Sleeper and Thorny Islands by the Yaegl Council. This meant that rehabilitation work supported by Valley Watch had to be halted, this work having been thought necessary due to inappropriate grazing of the islands.
- 1999 Birrigan Gargle Council made a successful claim over 250 hectares of coastal land between Yamba and Angourie. This was the land which had been freehold land before 1971 when it was resumed by the State Government and had come under consideration for extension of the Yuraygir National Park and also as the site for the Yamba Waters Development Project and may again be proposed by the new owners. A National Native Title Tribunal can mediate in such matters but as time has shown, it is a difficult task to respect everyone's rights and interests.

CHAPTER 3 EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

3.1 Explorers

The well-known names of early explorers have little connection with the history of the North Coast because knowledge of this area came from the sea rather than from the inland. An exception could possibly be made for John Oxley, who was an explorer of the hinterland but also, as Surveyor-General, saw the need for controlling the activities of the squatters. He introduced a Licensing System that was to have an effect on the development of the coastal strip also.

A law was enacted in 1818 for the "Protection of Crown Lands" against encroachment, intrusion and trespass. It proved difficult to enforce and in 1836, a Licensing System was introduced whereby payment of a fee was deemed to make squatting legal and respectable and was to be supervised by the Commissioner of Crown Lands. Under this system, Henry Oakes was appointed in 1837 for the area from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay. The first pastoralists in the Clarence Valley were Dr Dobie at Ramornie, the Mylne Brothers at Eatonsville and Edward Ogilvie at Yulgilbar and they had squatted on their runs beyond "the limits of Settlement" by 1839. In the following year three new areas of settlement were proclaimed, Moreton Bay, Darling Downs and the Clarence River on the premise that, the smaller the area, the greater the control.

The settlement of the Lower Clarence came about in a different way and on a much smaller scale. The first contact by Europeans was through the cedar getters.

3.2 Cedar Getters

There are some misapprehensions about red cedar. An authority on its history, John McPhee, states that it is a fallacy to believe that cedar existed in large stands in the rain forests along the eastern seaboard. Its botanical name has been changed several times and is now known as *Toona ciliata* and is found in clusters among the eucalypt forests. It is more noticeable in the spring when new, pinkish leaves appear. The new colony lacked a good timber like mahogany for houses, boats and furniture so red cedar rapidly became the most sought after wood for the foregoing purposes and was soon in high demand and financially rewarding. In the early 1800's, serious harvesting began in Sydney and the South Coast and proceeded river by river up the North Coast. It had its heyday in the Clarence in the 1840's and by the 1850's was no longer available in quantity for loading from the riverbank as had been the practice. Its use was very extravagant with only the best portion of the tree being used. The camps of the cedar getters preceded any form of land use but lasted for a short time only. As with other forms of land use the Government sought control by issuing licences in 1842 but by this time, it was too late to be effective.

3.3 Smalls

It was in the pursuit of cedar that the Small Family came to the Clarence but, unlike most others, they remained for farming purposes. The connection between Thomas Small of Kissing Point, Ryde, and Richard Craig, the escaped convict, is well known. There is a full account in Nola Mackey's book and includes the association with the lesser-known "Sheik" (Jack) Brown, another Moreton Bay escapee.

Thomas Small and his associate, Henry Gillett, took note of Craig's information when working at Small's Kissing Point timber yard. The schooner, "Susan", was being built for the cedar trade and made the first trip to the Big River in 1838. John Small, brother of Thomas, was in charge and was accompanied by Henry Gillett and twelve pairs of sawyers. One of the sawyers was Steve King

who remained on the Clarence until 1842. King's Creek and King Island near Lawrence were named after him. Unable to cross the bar the "*Susan*" returned to Sydney for a whaleboat and made a successful return trip. John Kellick's ship, "*Elizabeth*", followed and, proceeding up river, reached the site of present day Grafton.

The two islands there were named Susan and Elizabeth after the ships, the name, Susan having come from Small's daughter and Elizabeth from Kellick's daughter.

It was at this time that Maclean's former name, Rocky Mouth, was given by Small because of the rocks at the mouth of the South Arm near his surveyors' camp on Woodford Island. Next, still in 1838, came the "*Taree*", owned by Henry Girard. It was wrecked with its cargo of cedar and he then sent his other ship, "*Eliza*", under Captain James Butcher in August 1838 and it proceeded up river as far as Copmanhurst. Butcher made the first map dated 27.12.1838 but did not note the activities of Small and Girard's men.

Interest in the Big River was increasing and the Sydney entrepreneur, J.H.Grose, sent his steamer, the paddle wheeler, "*King William*", the first steamer to enter the river. The passengers included men interested in the commercial development and the deputy Surveyor-General, Captain S. Perry, who, in spite of his title, was not the master of the vessel. This was Captain F. Griffin who was advised in November 1839 that the river was now to be known as the Clarence in honour of King William IV, the Duke of Clarence. Sportsman's Creek was named in May 1839 when the "*King William*" ran aground near Lawrence and was so named for the abundance of wild life, particularly birds, for the pleasure of the sporting shooters on board.

3.4 John Small

John Small is credited with being the first pastoralist on the Lower Clarence, in particular for his decision to bring in horned cattle and horses. The distance from Sydney made it impractical to send cattle either by sea or by land so he is said to have commenced the dairying industry by shipping butter in 56lb casks. Pioneering was not an easy matter with sheep suffering from foot rot, rust spoiling the wheat crop and later a sugar mill proving a failure. Nevertheless, John and his son, John Frederick Small managed to build on the first 700 acres on Woodford Island and acquired larger holdings at Taloumbi and Newton Boyd. The private cemetery on Woodford Island with graves dating from 1855 to 1950 defines the importance of this family over several generations. Taloumbi Station was formed as a pastoral grant to C.E.Wilson in 1848 and acquired by the Smalls in 1868. It was later sold to John Waugh, became the largest grazing property to survive close to the coast, and is still in the possession of a Waugh descendant, Rosemary Allcock.

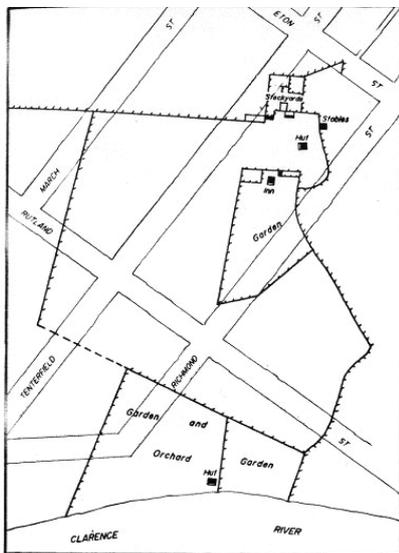
3.5 Ashby/Broadwater

This area was first occupied as a run about 1845 by Alfred Sandeman. His name survives for the high point of the hill opposite the lower part of Maclean. He sold to Clark Irving, M.P. an entrepreneur with interests on coastal shipping and holder of a vast area of land from the Clarence through to the Richmond. On a portion of 700 acres adjoining the Broadwater inlet and purchased by Irving in 1858 a flourishing Meat Works was established. The boiling down of sheep and cattle for tallow became widespread after the collapse of the market for beef. In 1860 the widely travelled and politically minded Presbyterian cleric, Rev. John Dunmore Lang, visited the site and reported seeing the establishment with twenty men being employed under the management of a Mr Acheson. The barrels of tallow were shipped from a stone wharf on the Broadwater shore traces of which are still visible. Irving who was an absentee landlord, died in 1865 and the Ashby

portion was sold from the estate in 1869 to H.M. Whitehead of England. Mr Blair Husband was manager in 1872 when tinned meat was being produced for consumption in the colony and overseas. Economic conditions brought about the failure of the business in 1880. As the township of Maclean had not been laid out until 1862 and developed slowly from that time, the Ashby industry had very little impact before it failed. Mr Husband became a resident of Maclean and was a prominent citizen in his later years. He died in 1925 aged 91. The oldest marked grave in this district is to be found at Ashby and records the death of Sarah Phillips on 31 January 1848. There is no official record of her death and it is assumed that she had some connection with the Ashby run, still owned at the time by Alfred Sandeman.

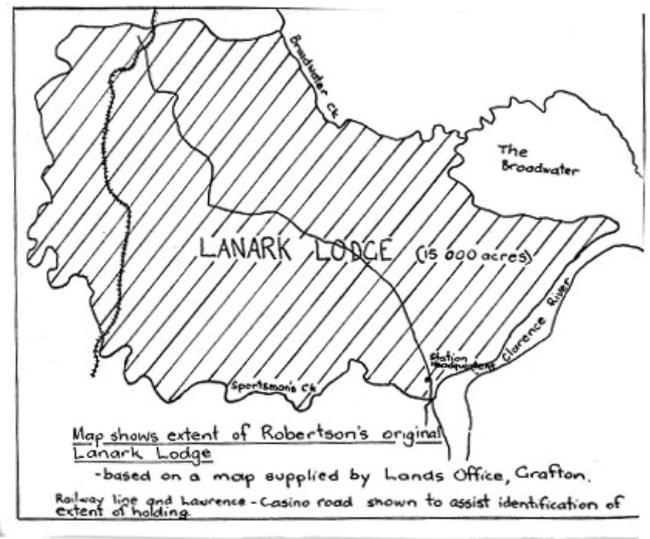
3.6 Lanark Lodge

Lanark Lodge was established in 1842 by Mr William Robertson with a homestead at Lawrence and extending north and west from Sportsman’s Creek to Broadwater Creek. It was named after his father’s home in Scotland and comprised some 15,000 acres. The Lanark Lodge homestead and associated buildings were located in the area west of Richmond Street on the first high ground up from the present Lawrence store. Robertson retired to Grafton in 1858 and in 1866 sold to another Scotsman, D.D.McBride who had been the manager since 1860. He died in 1889 by which time the family was well established as leading citizens of Lawrence. The last male descendant in Lawrence died in 1903. A daughter, Mary Jane McBride, was very well known for her charitable and philanthropic work and especially for her interest in the indigenous people of the Camira tribe. She retired to Grafton and died in 1939. The parents and three children are buried in the Lawrence Presbyterian Cemetery.



LAWRENCE, 1856
 From a plan by Surveyor
 W.A.B. Greaves
 (Streets shown to assist in locating site.)
 This plan shows the Lanark Lodge headquarters.

LANARK LODGE HOMESTEAD



Other pastoralists of importance associated with the Clarence

and not already mentioned were:

- Francis Girard 1839 of *Waterview* (South Grafton)
- J.H.Grose 1840 *Copmanhurst*
- Captain Crozier 1840 *Gordon Brook*
- Thomas Coutts 1840 *Kangaroo Creek*
- Thomas Small Snr 1840 *Swan Creek* (in addition to Woodford Island with John Small)

3.7 Surveyors

The work of surveyors has been largely undervalued. Once the colony was firmly established it became obvious that planning and control of land use must be done. It could be said that the explorers were the more important but it is significant that many of the early explorers were also surveyors and top in their field as Surveyors-General or their Deputies, John Oxley and Thomas Mitchell for example. Captain Perry on the *King William* was another and the man, after whom Maclean was named, Alexander Grant Maclean, was the Surveyor-General when he visited the Clarence in 1862.

By 1840, the Clarence had been included in the “settled lands”. This involved the land on either bank of the river, two miles (3.2km) in width and upstream at least 10 miles (16km) from the head of navigation, the Settlement, as Grafton was then known. Development of the squatting runs and the shipping particularly of wool and timber, led to the formation of villages and a demand for town lands. The work for surveyors was constantly increasing even though it was sometimes hazardous with risks in unknown territory involving weather, climate, transport, food, illness and accident and sometimes attacks from hostile natives. Nor was the work well paid, especially in the case of contract surveyors who had to provide their own gear and employ their assistants.

3.8 Wilson Brothers

Of the many surveyors who worked in the Clarence area the contribution of the Wilson Brothers was significant even though it was not very satisfactory for their employers or themselves. William Charles Borlace Wilson and Christopher Moore Wilson were born in England but emigrated in 1839 as young adults and were employed almost immediately as contract surveyors in the Clarence River District. They were given assigned convicts to assist and, in spite of difficulties accomplished a good deal of work in the years 1840-43. The Lower Clarence was surveyed in 1842 and their maps are most valuable including the Parishes of Taloumbi, Gulmarrad and Canoulam. Notes on the maps include reference to the nature of the terrain, soil type and vegetation. Apparently, they were on friendly terms with some aborigines that may account for the many names of aboriginal origin shown on these first maps. Some have changed in spelling in the years since but others are still the same e.g. Taloumbi and Wooloweyah and Micalo. W.B.C.Wilson wrote of “Taloumbi “that this was the name given by the blacks to a species of fish abundant in the estuary and weighing up to sixty pounds (27kg).

The adjoining Parish of Gulmarrad is said to be one of the Greek names including Clarenza, Lavadia, Lanitza and Tucabia, Sandon and Ulmarra and some now suggest that Yamba may have the same origin. The Greek connection came from the association of W.B.C.Wilson’s wife Elizabeth as a daughter of General Woodford who fought in the Greek War of Independence. The Wilsons worked on the southern bank of the Clarence.

3.9 Other Surveyors

Another contract surveyor was Major E.L.Burrowes who worked on the northern bank and was responsible for plans of several parishes including Copmanhurst.

Due to the demand, many other surveyors were brought from England and took over the work of contract surveyors. William Wedge Darke is remembered as the man who laid out the town of

Grafton on the north bank and completed in 1852. Having worked under the surveyor of Melbourne he used a similar design of wide streets for which Grafton has reason to be grateful. He gave the name “Grafton” and the many names connected with royalty that are still in use.

William Albert Braylesford Greaves was appointed to Grafton in 1856 as the Government Surveyor, the year in which he made his first visit to Rocky Mouth. In May 1862 he made another visit with the Surveyor-General, Alexander (Alister) Maclean and in a letter published in *The Clarence and Richmond Examiner* on 13 October 1906 he states that he was instructed to lay out the village of Rocky Mouth and Greaves named it Maclean. Greaves eventually retired to Grafton after laying out the towns of Katoomba and Leura in the Blue Mountains. He died in Sydney in 1925.

Another surveyor whose name appears on maps in Maclean subdivisions is that of Patrick R. Donaldson first mentioned in 1863. He surveyed blocks in Maclean, Chatsworth Harwood and Brushgrove as well as Ulmarra.

It has to be said that surveyors sometimes made purchases of land that led to profitable subdivisions and sales for themselves.

3.10 Free Settlers –Diversity of Origin

It is accepted that because the British Government in which the English component was the dominant one, English officials and later farmers established the Australian Colony. Tradesmen and others (including convicts) were the main ethnic group. As settlement progressed members of other nationalities chose to become Australians and were to form the diverse population we now have. A significant number with distinct ethnic origins also came to this country and three groups at least settled in the Clarence River district, mainly in the two decades of the 1850's and 1860's. They were Germans, Scots and Irish.

3.10.1 German Settlers

The book, *History of the German Community in the Clarence River District of NSW*, by Geoffrey Burkhardt and Nola Mackey and published in Grafton in 1999, examines this subject in detail. The following summary is indebted to these authors and their book is readily available for further study.

The reasons they suggest for German emigration in the 19th C. are briefly

1. Conditions in the German States in the 1850's leading to mass emigration included economic conditions, a harsh winter and land hunger. Others have added the political effects of the 1848 Revolution.
2. Labour shortage in NSW due to the gold discoveries and a Government scheme for assisting workers in specialised industries including wine growing. (The occupation of vinedresser or cooper is listed for many of the Clarence River migrants although it is now recognised that some had other trades.)
3. Private arrangements for sponsorship of particular families such as those made by Ogilvie for stonemasons to work on Yulgilbar.

The role of William Kirchner is an important one for the Clarence Valley. He was a Consul in Sydney for the State of Hamburg and contracted with large landowners to supply shepherds, agricultural labourers and “mechanics”. One of his projects for Grafton was a boiling down works

for the production of tallow. It was later converted to a soap and candle factory for which he is best remembered. The specialised work force needed arrived in 1855 by the *Caesar Godeffroy*, mentioned in many family histories. The soap and candle factory failed after some years but was sold and converted to a sawmill.

At its peak, Kirchner's factory employed between 50 and 80 workers and so, as the authors state, "It may reasonably be concluded that it was Kirchner's contingents of imported German workers which established the larger portion of the Grafton German community". By 1865 there were 200 German families making up 1/8th to 1/10th of the local population.

Although the majority of these stayed in Grafton, a sufficient number of families moved in time to the Lower Clarence and even after several generations, there are many names to remind us of their distinctive origin. It is interesting to note that almost all have retained the original spelling of the name and this was in spite of the anti-German feeling that prevailed during WW1 and caused many in other places to anglicise the name. No one in this area was interned and the young men who enlisted did so under their German sounding name. There have been some changes in spelling due more to the simplifying of a difficult name than to the desire to disguise its origin.

On the Lower River, some names are associated with a certain location in the early days.

In Maclean the names that belong to this early period include:

Albert, Busch, Englert, Fischer, Giese, Grebert, Hoschke, Kempnich, Klotz, Kratz, Kruse, Schwed, Schwonberg, Smidt.

At Wombah: -

Kempnich, Schweikert and in particular, John G.Schaefer who later moved to Maclean and built the Stone Cottage which is now part of the Maclean Historical Society's Museum

At Palmers Island: -

Engert, Umstatter, Schipp, Francis Kempnich, Lollbach now Lollback

At Ulmarra: -

Waltz, Oberfuchuber (now Foxover), Yaegar, (Yager), Felsch

At Clarence Heads: -

Schweikert, Schaumann (later Shawman)

At Grafton: -

F.W.Schaeffer was an architect whose home is now the Clarence River Historical Society Museum

J.W.Lindt was the photographer whose work is now highly valued

3.10.2 Scottish Settlers

Scottish settlers always outnumbered the Germans and Irish on the Lower River, especially after Free Selection. Almost all were farmers and were a distinctive

group in that most originated from the Highlands and Western Islands, notably the Isle of Skye.

It all had to do with the Highland Clearances. This is an important part of Scottish history about which little was known and so requires some explanation. The clan system existed for centuries in the Highlands with the clan chiefs owning the land and the clansmen working for him, usually with the utmost devotion and loyalty. The system ended catastrophically with the defeat of the

Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Under the authority of the English throne the clan chiefs lost their land or were too impoverished to look after their members in the old way. Worse still, they sold out to English landlords who turned the crofts into sheep walks or shooting preserves. There were some benefits from a more peaceful society. Cattle prices were high and the more reliable potato replaced oatmeal in the diet.

The population increased considerably and many of the surplus males were absorbed into the Highland Regiments that were formed and so highly valued during the Napoleonic Wars. When the Wars ended and sheep raising took over, the crofters were forced off the land with no prospect of employment. The “clearances” or evictions were carried out in many cases with the utmost cruelty. A landless class was created for who the only prospect of relief was in emigration. The influential Rev Dr J.D.Lang persuaded the government to use some funds accumulated from land sales to bring these dispossessed and needy people to the colony. The result was the Government Scheme, not to be confused with the Bounty Scheme that lasted much longer and brought many more migrants from all parts of Britain, not from Scotland only.

From 1837 to 1852, eleven ships were chartered to bring people directly from Highland ports or from Liverpool, to Sydney. They had been selected, mainly in Skye and the other Western Highlands on the grounds of need and health and sailed on voyages of up to three months, some without landfall. Some died on the voyage, the greatest loss being on the *Ontario* in 1852. Being Gaelic speaking it was difficult to find employment. Dr Lang’s brother, Andrew Lang of Paterson on the Hunter River, employed many on clearing leases and as tenants whereby they learned farming in the Australian way. A big flood on the Hunter in 1857 sparked a desire to move and the solution was soon to be provided by Free Selection. From 1862 to 1870 the majority of selectors were from these Scottish families, settling on farms in all parts of the Lower Clarence with most, perhaps, on Chatsworth and Woodford Islands. They prospered and in good time they and their descendants formed the organizations like the Caledonian Society, the Scottish Rifles, the Pipe Band and later the Lower Clarence Scottish Association which has been responsible for developing the concept of Maclean as the Scottish Town in Australia.



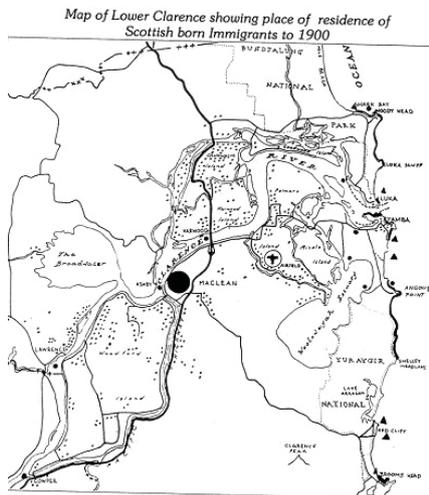
Scottish names are most easily recognized with the prefix Mac (son of) more often abbreviated locally to Mc but others like Cameron, Ross, Munro and Burns were also numerous and more scattered throughout the Lower Clarence than the Germans and Irish. Many are still represented in the district. The use of many Scottish names for streets is due mainly to John McLachlan who first owned the subdivision including Argyle, Morven, Sun art, Salen, Oban, Clyde, John and McLachlan Streets. Alexander and Cameron Streets and Macnaughtan Place are named for the influential Cameron family although the original spelling for the latter has changed.

Streets in the new area were given Scottish Names by the Council e.g. Rannoch, Iona, Islay, Dunoon, McCowan, McPhee and Ayr. Roderick Street was so named earlier for an early citizen, William Roderick, as were McCowan and McPhee. The others are place names.



The use of the Gaelic language disappeared well before the end of the century by which time the organizations perpetuating other aspects of Scottish society had begun to be formed. They were the Lower Clarence Caledonian Society (now the Scottish Association), the Scottish Rifles, and the Pipe Band. Much credit is given to the Murray brothers, William and John for these and for the promotion of Highland Gatherings.

The German settlers did not have their own church in the Lower Clarence but they did have a Lutheran Church in Grafton. The Presbyterians lost no time in building a church and the one constructed in 1864 on the corner of River and Wharf Streets is believed to be the oldest church in continuous use in the Clarence Valley. It continues to have the traditions of the Church as they knew it in the Highlands and is now part of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, geographically limited to the eastern States. There is also a Presbyterian Church of Australia established in Maclean in 1882. The original building is now a hall and a new church was opened in 1958.



The first Scot was Alexander Cameron who was not one of the Highland migrants of the period of the Clearances although he did come from the Argyleshire area. He had gone first to the United States and had seen something of the sugar industry in the southern States. He came first to Ulmarra about 1857 and purchased the block then adjoining the town reserve before the town of Maclean was laid out. It comprised the central business district from Stanley to Argyle Streets. None of this land was sold until after the death of his great nephew, John Cameron in 1924. Alexander Cameron's nephew, Samuel Macnaughtan inherited the property and managed it so well that he became the wealthiest and

most generous citizen in the history of Maclean. He was unmarried and left his property to his nephew, John Cameron. None of the land was sold but shops, the Maclean Hotel and banks were built and rented to selected tenants. The Maclean Services Club was the original home of the Cameron dynasty. After the death of John Cameron, the entire property was sold piecemeal for the benefit of his son, Alexander, then a small boy who was brought up in Melbourne. So ended a period of over sixty years of domination of the commercial life of Maclean.

3.10.3 Irish Settlers

The Irish settlers were more numerous than the Germans but less so than the Scots. They were a less cohesive group in that they came from a number of different counties but they had in common an escape from economic hardship and a degree of persecution from landowners, largely of English origin, who had government support against agricultural labourers and their religion of Roman Catholicism.

Most made their escape to a land of fresh hope by means of the Bounty System or Assisted Emigration. Under it, a resident of the colony could deposit money towards the fare and costs of having a nominated person come to the colony. Under the system, a person could deposit a sum of, on average, 4 to 7 pounds, to assist a relative or a prospective employee to come to Australia. This helped to create family units or labourers intended to help on a farm or in a business. Having a common language, religion and social background they tended to form a larger group that had an impact on a particular area. A good example is the settlement and development of Shark Creek.



Shark Creek is a tributary of the Clarence River entering the South Arm of the main river. The land was mainly owned by G.R.Powell, later of Tyndale. . However, after Free Selection it was settled by the following families: - Bloomers, Connollys, Corbetts, Mitchells, Fennesseys, Gallaghers, Hincheys, Kellys, Loughmans, Maguires, McDonnells, McIntyres, Moloneys, O'Maras and Ryans. All except for the McIntyres were Irish. When the question of a school was raised, it was said that 'the whole of the farmers there belonged to the Roman Catholic persuasion'. A school was established in 1885 and operated until 1927. A former Catholic school had existed and became a government school for a short period.

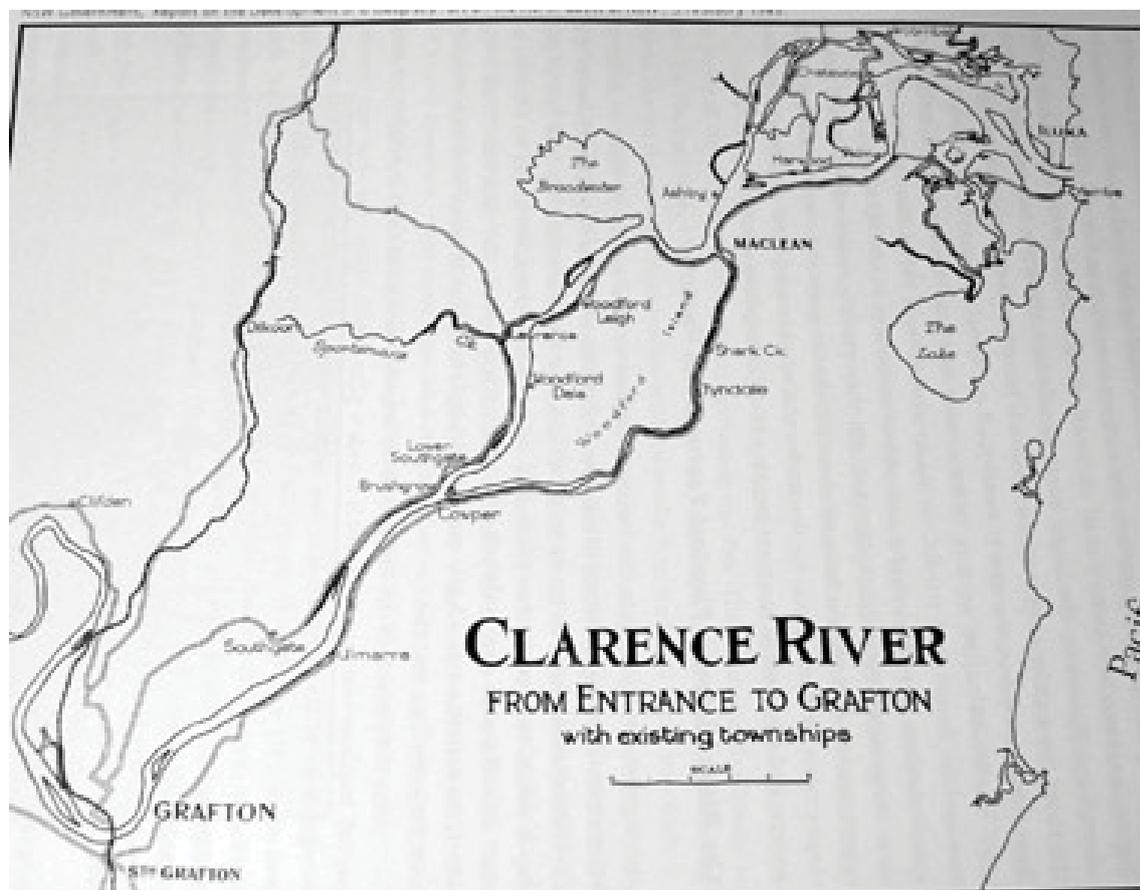
Although they became a close-knit community, the settlers came from a number of different Irish counties.

In Maclean itself, St Mary's Church in its commanding position in Woodford Street overlooking the town and built in 1893, is a fitting tribute to the Irish pioneers.

CHAPTER 4 THE RIVER COMMERCE AND TRANSPORT

4.1 The River—a natural transport network

A Sydney Morning Herald correspondent wrote from the Clarence in 1871:



The Clarence River is to this part of the country pretty much what the Nile is to Egypt. It is the great highway of commerce, and by its deposits of rich alluvium from time immemorial has given fertility to the land along its course, making it adequate for the support of a dense population. *Without the river, the Clarence district would be absolutely nowhere*". It is, therefore, not much to be wondered at if the inhabitants are proud of the noble river which from day to day they see "moving in majesty". The river, its tributaries, creeks and channels have provided a navigable transport network from the earliest days of settlement. Indeed the "Big River" acted as the catalyst for its commercial development. It was the cedar getters who first used the Clarence for commerce and its first industry was shipbuilding.

At its lower end Maclean Shire, it could be argued, is an estuarine maritime community. The tides, the floods, the sometimes treacherous bar and ocean, the many islands and the stretches of water in the Broadwater and Lake Wooloweyah, make Maclean Shire almost delta like.

Because most towns, villages and settlements are on the river or a tributary, the River plays a part in our daily lives. Whether we fish in it, drive over the Oyster Channel or McFarlane Bridges, catch the ferry to Iluka or the car ferry to Lawrence, it is entwined into our daily lives and is the living thread that connects with our unique history.

4.2 Early Shipping

The history of navigation and transport on the Clarence is one of evolution from a role of virtually total dependence to a minor one. This evolution can be described under three headings.

1. How has the river been used?
2. What settlements and infrastructure were created to facilitate this use?
3. What remains today?

4.2.1 Early use of the River

The river in its earliest use first provided access to cedar and its transport to market and secondly to export wool from the Tablelands. From 1838, when the “Susan” took out the first cargo of cedar to 1850 when a fleet of sailing ships carried on a significant trade between the Clarence and Sydney, the shipping trade itself had assumed some importance. The ‘Susan’; ‘Elizabeth’, ‘Taree’ and ‘Eliza’ were the first and described as schooners. The ‘Susan’ made 115 trips before being wrecked in 1850. Others were: -

Alfred, Bessy, Coquette, Hope, Paterson, Resolution, Sally, Harlequin, Lark, Nancy, Sir David Ogilby, Martha & Elizabeth (owned by Thomas Small)

Some of the above were built locally so shipbuilding could be called the first industry on the Big River. The Dairy industry commenced by John Small did not survive for any length of time but was to become very important later.

The first steamship ‘King William IV’ arrived 25 May 1839. The transfer from sail to steam was a very gradual process and sailing ships continued on the Clarence well into the 20th C.

As time went on the variety in the cargoes departing from the Clarence included, besides timber and wool, gold, tin, corn, sugar, bones and horns, tallow and hides



As far as the people were concerned the river dictated a great deal of their way of life, not only in earning a living but socially as well. A boat, be it a rowing boat or a river steamer, was necessary for trading, schooling, a visit to a friend or a doctor or attendance at church. As roads improved horse drawn vehicles came into their own to be succeeded by the motorcar. The very popular riverboat excursions to Yamba continued until the 1930’s when the famous Pullen boats were in service. They included the “Lady Beatrice”, “Atlanta”, “Otis”, “Clarence”, the aptly named “Favourite” and the “Mulgi” which still operates in Sydney Harbour.

4.2.2 Settlements of Lawrence and Palmers Island

W.A.B. Greaves, surveyor of Maclean and Lawrence townships stated in his diary that he designed the town and named it after Sir Thomas Lawrence, the hero of the Indian Mutiny. Surprisingly, he was in error as the hero of the Mutiny was Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence.

Early spelling of the name was also Lawrencetown. Greaves did point out that the stretch of water there was known as the “Devil’s Elbow” or just “The Elbow” because sailors said it was “the devil of an elbow” to get round because of the channel and bend close to the north bank.]

Lawrence has already been mentioned as an important point of trade between the Clarence and the Tablelands in connection with the wool industry in the early days. Using the “Old Line” Bullock wagons brought loads from Tabulam to Lawrence not only of wool but also the items listed in early cargoes.



PHOTO "LAWRENCE - THE HISTORY OF A CLARENCE RIVER SETTLEMENT" BY ALICE GILLIES

This “Line” serviced the north bank of the Clarence and Lawrence developed as a port rather than a town. It provided for teamsters rather than farmers and as such, the population remained small. It is not surprising that the first two buildings of note were two hotels; the Lawrence for James Bryce and Thomas Bawden’s Commercial, both built in 1860.



Two other buildings, which predated the above, were Lanark Lodge and Traveller’s Rest. The former comprised a homestead and associated buildings owned by William Robertson on land taken up in 1842. While Lanark Lodge was in the present town area, Traveller’s Rest was on the adjoining run on the Grafton side. The Inn built in 1843 was an important link for many years between the coast and tablelands developed by an early owner, James Pringle. It was just a day’s journey to the deep-water port at Lawrence.

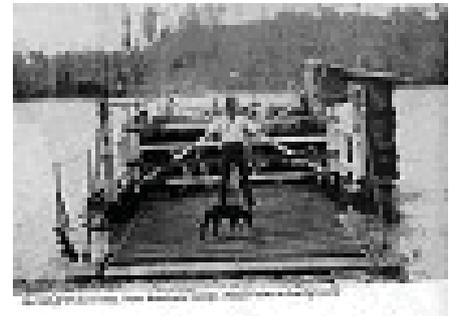
The amount of trade coming through Lawrence increased steadily until the business people of Grafton recognised the threat and with the support of the Parliamentary representative, Clark Irving, a New Line was made from Tabulam to Grafton, bypassing Traveller’s Rest and Lawrence.

Grafton won the battle of the road and the battle of the ports but it was not an easy or annihilating victory. Grafton prevailed, but quite apart from the rivalry of the old and new lines. It won because of the traffic coming down from the Armidale and Glen Innes lines

during the seventies and in the eighties, the New England railway line reached Tenterfield. (Glen Hall)

The lack of rail transport was to hinder the development of the North Coast for almost 50 years. Even when the railway came, Lawrence was given only a Siding and the Lower Clarence was overlooked, for the same reason as the North Coast in general, because of the need for numerous and costly river crossings.

A great hindrance to Lawrence has been the lack of bridge connection to Woodford Island and hence to Maclean. A hand operated ferry was in use in 1883 at Bluff Point, this being the narrowest part of the River between Grafton and The Heads. It was the responsibility of the Public Works Department until taken over by Harwood Shire Council. Efforts to get a bridge have been unsuccessful but the capacity of the ferry has steadily increased. Another ferry operated across Sportsman's Creek but a bridge was achieved in 1885 and rebuilt in 1910 and now needing to be replaced. An unusual feature of the area was the construction of a Weir to save the flooding of an area of good arable land by salt water.



Lawrence once had a Customs House due to its role as a port. Charles Dobbin was the first Officer 1861-1870. The office was transferred to Clarence Heads but the Dobbin family remained. Another symbol of its importance was a Court House. Although the first two buildings were considered to be temporary, the third was quite substantial and used 1920-1957 and later demolished. A Police Station remains and its role from 1863 is summed up as follows:

Over the years, the policeman at Lawrence filled much more than the role of protector of life and property, the prevention of crime and the apprehension of offenders. Many Lawrence Police Officers have taken a prominent part in community organisations. (Mike Gillespie, "Lawrence; the History of a Clarence River Settlement".

A full history of the Lawrence Public School is included in the above-mentioned book

The Lawrence Post Office served the town and district from 1859 in a succession of premises until the present building dating back to 1894 and, like the Court House, located in part of the Police paddock and not very convenient for the business centre.

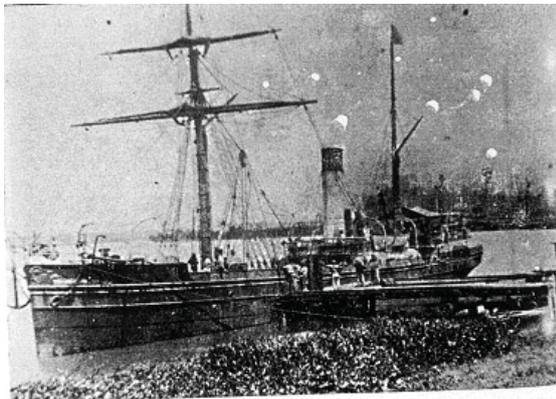
Mention must be made of the dedicated service of shopkeepers to their customers. Butcher Bros, the grocers and the Archers at the butchery gave outstanding service for many years including the flood times when they made every effort to supply clients not only at Lawrence but also on Woodford Island and other areas.

As with most country hotels their history is one of participation in town life generally, supporting events "in house" or elsewhere such as dances, dinners, shooting matches and horse racing. The most impressive hotel building was that of the Lawrence Hotel after

being rebuilt as a two storied construction. It remained a landmark until it was destroyed by fire in 1987.

Lawrence was well served with churches, all major denominations being represented from earliest times. The headquarters of the Lower Clarence Church of England Parish was in Lawrence before Maclean. Some suffered storm damage and all have been rebuilt or renovated in some way. There are no resident clergy but are worked in connection with Maclean or other parishes.

It was something of a triumph to have the Broadcasting Station, 2NR, established in Lawrence. The mast was constructed in 1936 together with the transmitting station and residences for the staff and the official opening took place 17.07.1936. It was regarded as a major catastrophe when the mast was blown down in November 1946. In course of time, the station became redundant with the studio being transferred to Lismore and the staff residences were also removed. Fortunately, the Station has been given a new life as the centre of the Lawrence Historical Society and is making excellent progress.



The S.S. "New England" loading cargo at one of the Lawrence Wharves about 1875. She was later wrecked at Iluka on 27th December, 1882. 11 lives were lost. San Greenhalgh Collection.



Kallatina at Bishop's wharf Maclean 1919

Palmers Island

As happened with Lawrence, Palmers Island was to suffer negative impacts that completely changed the course of its history.

Mrs June Alexander, a resident of the Island and a well-known artist, wrote: -

The history of the river port of Palmers Island has not been well documented. It seems neglected, overlooked or scattered, yet it was one of the most important ports on the Clarence River.

Her list of historical facts is as follows: -

1845 Naming of Palmers Is. (The identity of Palmer is unknown, suggest a cedar getter or a member of the Surveyor-General's party.) Cedar tree growth was the main economic attraction

1861-1867 Cedar getters had cleared all the cedar

1864 The first permanent settlers. These pioneers were in search of an industry which, after cedar, would prove most suitable to the Island.

1864 Alexander Ross built a place near the wharf to establish a Post & Telegraph Office.

A public wharf was built in the village. (The straight stretch along the riverbank called "The Reach" has very deep water close to the riverbank ideal for the largest ships to anchor).

Fish and oysters were first exported until a disease attacking the oysters closed that industry for a while. Rust wiped out the wheat industry .

Maize growing was prominent until 1874

1865 Rev John Garven came to Palmers Is. He was no longer an ordained minister but had retained a licence to perform marriages. He was to conduct many weddings for people on the Island and elsewhere. He came to own much land and built many houses.

1866 John Garven was largely responsible for establishing a school

1869 Alexander Ross built the first General Store that later had two dealing vans out daily and a trading launch with two men employed for five days a week. Also one man who worked in the Office and two in the Store. Ross also built a sawmill that later became one of the early sugar mills. He kept on dairying and oyster farming and made the first ice works. He also planned the establishment of a butter factory. He married a daughter of Rev Garven.

1890's Sugar cane was hit by a disease, which affected the whole area. General farming and dairying were practised until sugar growing could be resumed as a viable crop.

The public wharf was still a link of importance and maintained regular cargo services for ocean going ships. As many as 13 crews could be working and packing fish for shipment to Sydney at this public wharf.

Next to the store was the Commercial Hotel that permanently employed a groom, cook, housemaid and waitress. The island bakery had a baker, two carters and a boatman. A policeman was stationed there.

An important business was the blacksmith, wheelwright and coach painting establishment, two forges going non stop six days a week employing four men. There was also a butcher's shop and many churches.

1882 Palmers Island became the centre of a new Roman Catholic Parish with a resident priest. There was a church and presbytery. The Parish took in Harwood and Chatsworth Islands, Iluka and Yamba. In 1905, the Parish reverted to Maclean. In 1931, the Palmers Island church was dismantled and worked into a church for Yamba.

There were a number of hotels, possibly eight, a community hall, a billiard room and other schools were at Lower Palmers Island and Palmers Channel. In the village, there were swimming baths, a cricket pitch and tennis courts along the riverbank.

The outbreak of war in 1914 meant a sad decline in the number of permanent local residents. The Islanders struggled through a Depression and World War 11.

1945 and 1950 were major flood years. The public wharf was washed away in the 1945 flood and not replaced.

Mechanisation meant greater ability to expand productivity with less local labour. The ease of transport and the convenience of radio, telephone and TV have tended to disintegrate the community interests which had pulsed life into the Palmers Islanders of earlier times. June Alexander adds reminiscence from 1974: -

In March 1874, sugar cane was being cut by hand and tugged to the mill via the river. Prawn trawling in the river was big business.

There were about 25 old weatherboard houses in the village that had stood the test of time and floods, some for over a century .All dwellings were still occupied except for the large building that had been a General Store when the main Yamba road passed the door. The building was not locked as seemed commonplace for houses and cars then. My entrance to this building was astonishing. It was as if I had just stepped back in time about 30 years.

Strewn on the floor were old newspapers, Smith's Weeklies etc. covered with dust. Long cedar shop benches stretched either side of the large building and at the rear were clerical rooms with cedar panelling and joinery. The store was still fully shelved and Bushell's Tea and Indian Root Pill signs were still displayed. A very high ceiling with small windows was at the top of the walls.

In contrast with the affluence of this earlier time, the business area is confined to one small general store opposite the school that also sells petrol and is currently engaged in a battle for the right to sell liquor.

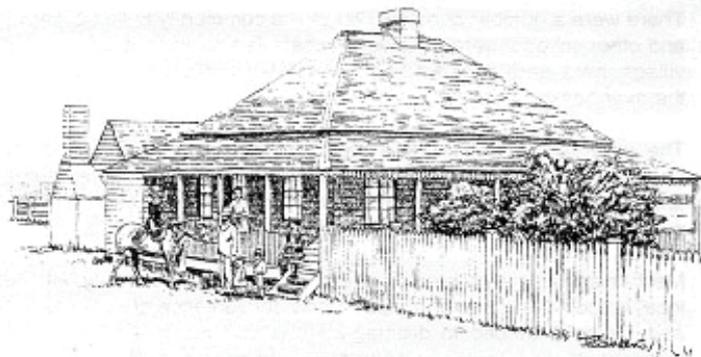
Erosion was a major problem in the middle of last century. In 1950, a large section in front of the school was washed away and the school and residence were moved to the present site. The number of pupils declined as had happened at Lawrence when secondary students were required to attend at Maclean but also has built up again as houses have come up for rental on blocks where bigger farms have been created. Along the riverfront, away from the main road to Yamba up market residences are appearing for non-farming owners. Whilst cane farming remains the primary form of agriculture there is some cattle raising and prawn farming has been tried with mixed success.

There is still a lot to discover in the Palmers Island history, fewer people are around today that can help fill in the gaps. I hope it can be salvaged before it is too late.

...June Alexander



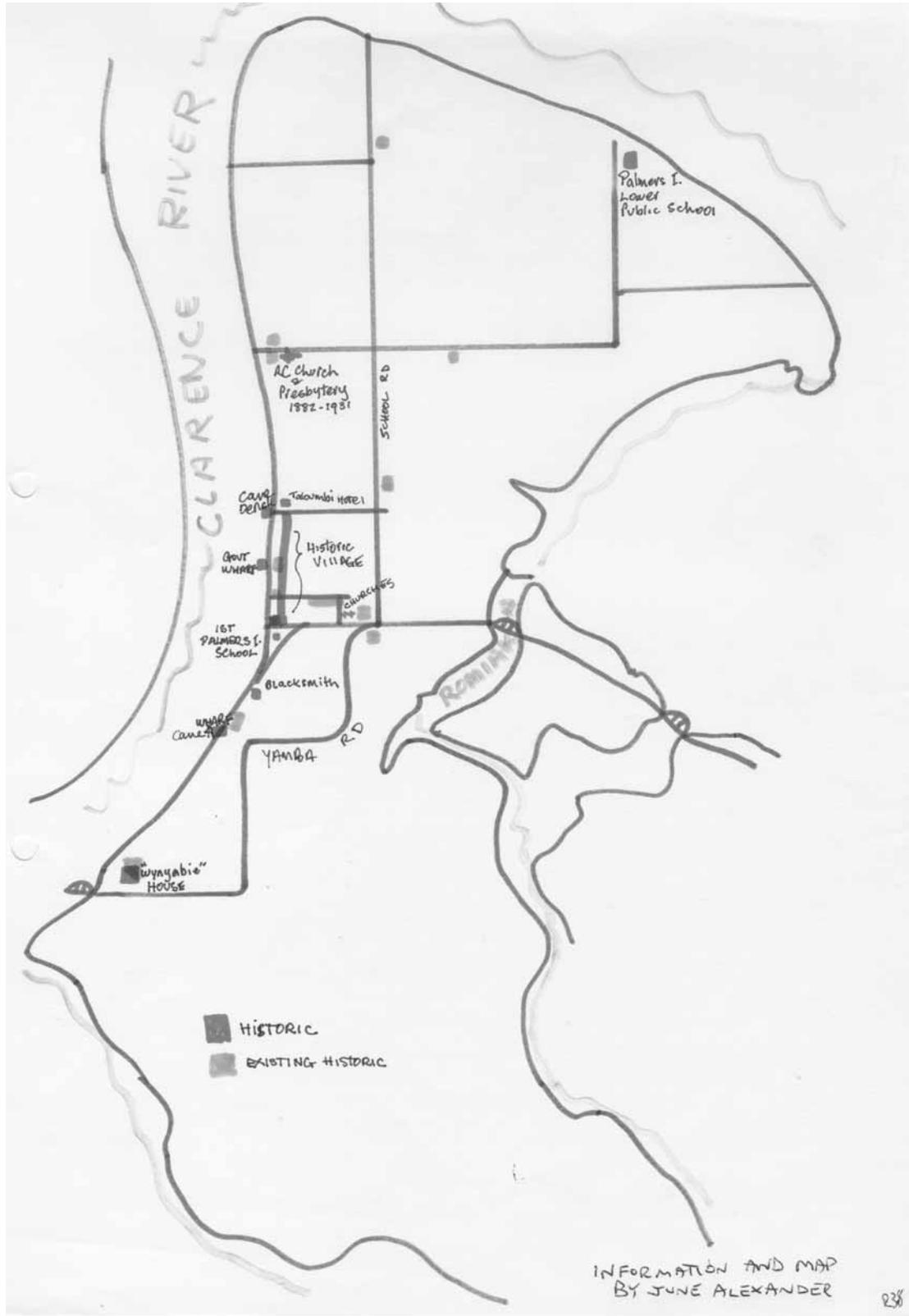
First Palmers Island General Store, Commercial Hotel in background and storage shed at the wharf. Sketch by June Alexander



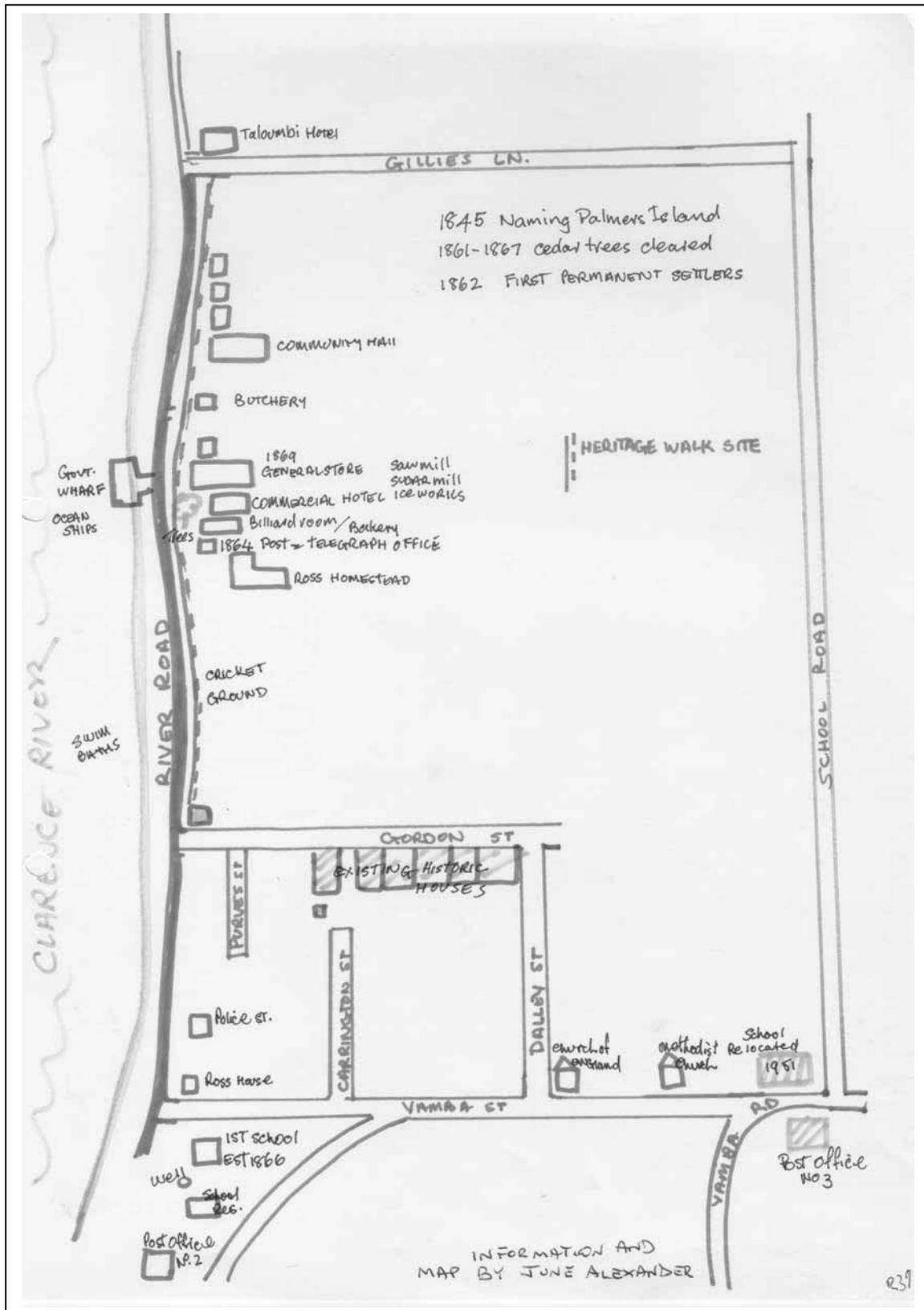
*Rev J H Garven's first home. Timber shingles on roof
Garven later built "Wynyabbie". Sketch by June Alexander*

4.3 River Transport

Palmers Island Village



Palmers Island Village with heritage walk on the left



4.3.1 Introduction

Stuart Lee in describing river traffic sees the river as a metaphor for today's highways:

Family rowboats equal the family car

Dealer boats equal the car travelling sales representatives

Riverboats equal the inter-urban buses carrying passengers and small parcels between public and private wharves (bus stops)

Ferries equal bridges carrying all manner of things across rivers

Droghers and cream boats equal trucks carrying products like livestock and heavier items

Tugs equal vehicles towing sugar cane and gravel e.g. semi-trailers

Rowing boats were as necessary as family cars today in cases where they were the only form of transport available and affordable. The boats were usually made locally and children often learnt to row at an early age, especially where the school was separated from the home by a relatively narrow waterway. The experience often led to skills in oarsmanship e.g. Henry Searle, the world champion rower of Wombah. Rowing boats were succeeded by launches with petrol engines and a varying degree of quality and comfort.

Dealer boats proved profitable to the owner and valuable to the farming family when the service included taking orders and delivering goods according to a set timetable.

Owners such as Gerard's in Grafton, McKittrick's in South Grafton and T.C.Davis in Brushgrove provided such services in steam driven boats. One such was the "Fairtrader".

The extent of its activity is described as ranging from Grafton to the South Arm, the Coldstream and Upper Southgate travelling 113km a week to a set timetable. Many farmers' wives traded poultry and eggs. A smaller boat SS "Ibis", built in Maclean by Schwonbergs (photo) conducted a "Saturday Special" giving residents of the North Arm several hours for shopping in Maclean.



SS Ibis, Captain Frank Schwonberg, at Maclean

As the traffic increased steamboats with larger engines, a cabin and decks provided a more comfortable trip. Well known for a period of forty years from the 1880's were the "Iolanthe" and "Woolwich" from Grafton. Shop owners in Maclean such as Bishop and Conlon in Maclean and Ross at Palmers Is. had similar services.

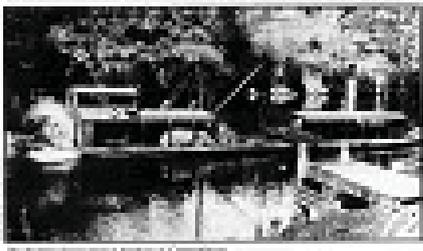
When J.T.McKittrick sold out to W.T.Pullen the dealers boats, more generally referred to as riverboats, took on another dimension and greatly diversified the riverboats' role. Starting with the "Ethel" and the "Young Dick" in the 1880's, Captain Charles Pullen ran a service for 60 years providing commuter services between Grafton and Yamba. Vessels used included "Lady Beatrice". "Atlanta", "Otis", "Clarence", "Favourite" (so spelt), "Moongi", "Mooli" and the diesel powered "Mulgi" which was the last boat in the service and only withdrawn in 1941 by which time faster road transport had taken over about all the passenger and most of the cargo traffic. (The "Mulgi", renamed for a time "Mulgai", was sent to Sydney and eventually used for chartered harbour cruises to the present time)

The Pullen boats are also remembered for the entertainment they provided. Sundays and Public Holidays were gala days. Four boats with flags and bunting flying, would travel in procession down river with the “Favourite”, pride of the fleet, leading the way with passengers dressed in their sporting best. The wharf at Yamba was in the bay and the walk up hill to reach the Pacific hotel or down to the main beach did not deter the people. Turner’s beach had no attraction at the time.

Leaving Ferries for the present, mention can be made of another kind of workhorse, the drogher. Derived apparently from the French or the Dutch, the word is rarely heard nowadays. It was used to describe slow and clumsy coasting vessels in the West Indies. On the Clarence and other northern NSW rivers it usually meant a slow, shallow, often punt-like steamer propelled by a single paddle wheel placed at the stern so that it could tie up close to banks when loading produce from farms that had no wharf or jetty.

John McFarlane (1854-1915) who was a produce agent as well as a Member of Parliament and after whom the McFarlane Bridge was named, gives the following summary of the use and importance of droghers.

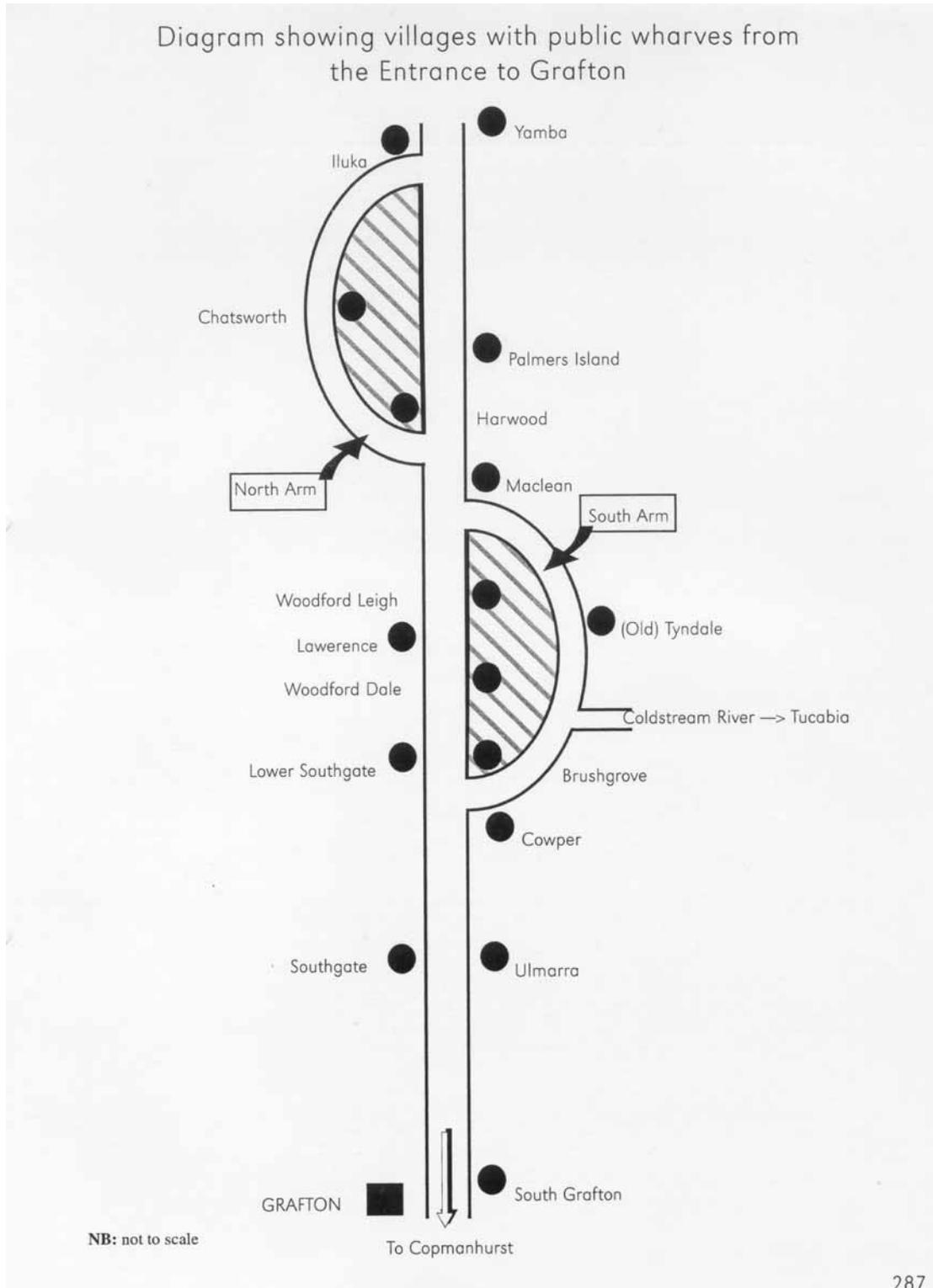
The advent of the river drogher supplied a want that was much appreciated by the settlers and induced them to take up land on the different arms, channels, and tributaries where it was impossible for ocean steamers to ply but could without difficulty be negotiated by the droghers. They were of shallow draught, being flat bottomed, and were usually driven by a stern wheel and consequently well fitted for serving the small rivers and creeks.



The first drogher to be built locally was the PS (Paddle Steamer) “Settler’s Friend” built in Ulmarra and the best known was the “Perseverance” and was registered until 1944. Another, also registered until that year, was the PS “Ramornie”. The droghering trade was left to the Pullens although in other ways the NCSN Co (North Coast Steam Navigation Company) was on the way to getting a monopoly of the North Coast trade.

Cream boats were a more specialised form of droghers in that they were generally smaller and faster but also needed to be manoeuvrable to pull in to many small wharves and jetties. They worked to a timetable to get the cans of cream to the butter factories as soon as possible and served a useful purpose in delivering newspapers and other items and had to work in all weathers.

4.3.2 Ferries



Space does not allow an analysis of all ferries but a few have been selected as examples. Towner provides the following information on Lawrence- Bluff Point Ferry.

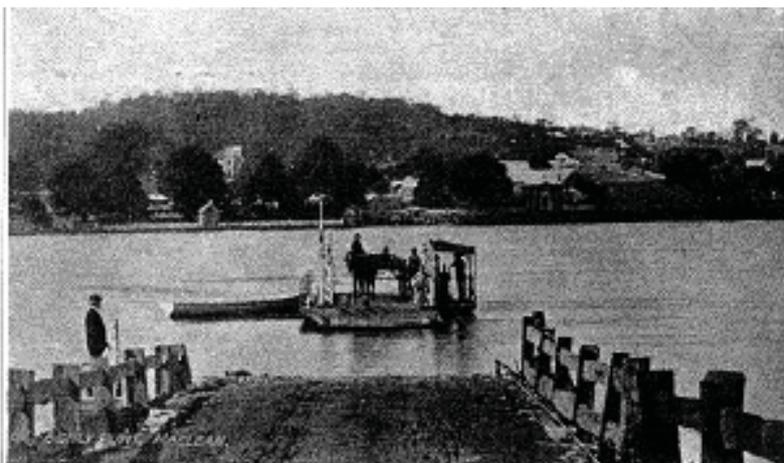
Situated almost midway between Grafton and the Clarence Heads Lawrence was an important centre in the early days and for a time vied with Grafton for the status of the leading commercial centre. It was the shipping place for the wool brought from the Tablelands via Tenterfield and also served the Richmond at Casino with a mail coach run. Lawrence never realised the expectations of its planner when Surveyor W.A.B. Greaves laid out the town in 1861 but it has always been important as a point of transfer of goods and passengers. Coastal steamers and the river boats called there. The ferry service provided the link with Southgate and Grafton upriver and with Woodford Island and Maclean downstream.

Tenders were called for the first ferry in 1882. It was hand operated of course and would have changed little until 1907 when taken over by Harwood Shire.

This ferry was obtained from the Public Works Department in 1907 at a cost of £100 (\$200). It was hand-operated until 1928-29 when a larger ferry was obtained.

This subsequent ferry was built by McArthur Bros., either in or near Grafton and was powered by a four cylinder invincible motor driving through gears to a rope wheel on the opposite side. The crossing was made in 1½ minutes but was later slowed down to 4-5 minutes. The motor was replaced with a 10-12 h.p. twin cylinder Lister diesel engine and, in May 1959, the whole system was replaced with a hydraulic unit. This operated satisfactorily until parts began to wear and then it became troublesome. This unit was again replaced with a 4 cylinder motor and torque converter.

E.H McSwan examines the history of **THE ASHBY FERRY**



Hand operated Ashby Ferry
Pole down river in place with opposite bank

In 1884, Parliament voted a large sum to build a railway line from Grafton to the Tweed and surveys were made to involve Maclean in a line to connect our town with Coraki which could somehow be part of the proposed new line.

It is curious to read now that this was the basis of the decision to install a ferry at Ashby – to connect Maclean with Coraki by a route along

the north bank and so avoid river crossings which would have been necessary had the line followed what was to become the Pacific Highway. The number of people living at Ashby was not considered high enough to justify a ferry on their behalf alone.

The Council agreed to make a start early in 1890 and the work was completed by August. It was launched without ceremony. It was of course a hand-operated vessel and quite hard work for such a wide crossing. The purchase price of the ferry was halved between the Maclean Municipality and Harwood Shire when it was sold by the PWD in 1907. This service continued until 1936 when a diesel engine was installed but it became clear that a larger

Ferry was required. Maclean Municipal Council and the Harwood Shire Councils amalgamated in 1957 to form the Maclean Shire Council. As the traffic relating to the sugar industry increased it was decided to scrap the Ashby ferry and build two bridges on narrow crossings from Ashby to Warregah Is and Warregah to Chatsworth to join the Pacific Highway. This work was completed and on the following day, 5th September 1981 the Ashby ferry ceased running. This left the Bluff Point ferry as the last operating in the Lower Clarence. The old ferry was retained by the Shire as a relief Ferry.

Stuart Lee here looks at the history of the Pacific Highway ferries.

As motor traffic developed after 1910, the Harwood punt became ever more important, because it carried traffic on what was slowly becoming the main road from Grafton to Lismore, and later, as motoring became more routine, from Sydney to Brisbane. By the late 1920s cars and roads were sufficiently good for this to be an important through route, although at that time trains, and even ships, still offered a much faster journey than the car from Sydney to the northern rivers district or Brisbane

In 1937, the 24-car 1926-built former Grafton punt was transferred to Harwood by the Department of Main Roads in time to help cope with the peak Christmas traffic. As "Ferry No. 8" it was the mainstay at Harwood for the rest of the life of the ferry. Motor traffic increased rapidly during the 1950s. In 1957, a second punt, and in 1962 a third punt were placed in service at this point, and punts were brought from other rivers as they were bridged to Harwood. Eventually a steel truss bridge (complete with lifting span for a by then completely non-existent maritime traffic) was opened at this point on 20 August 1966, much to the relief of traffic using what was by then known as State Highway No 1 (Pacific Highway). At 2,914 feet (888 m), when completed this bridge was the longest road bridge and the third longest bridge of any type in New South Wales (after the road and rail Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge). It also eliminated the last vehicular ferry on the highway between Sydney and Brisbane. In this way, history repeated itself, for, just as in 1932 the Grafton bridge over the Clarence was the last structure needed to open the through North Coast railway between Sydney and Brisbane, so in 1966 another Clarence bridge was the last structure to complete the Pacific Highway between the same two cities. Two vehicular ferries still operate on the Clarence, Southgate to Ulmarra and Woodford Island to Lawrence, the Bluff Point Ferry¹

YAMBA

¹ From "Riverboats of the Clarence" p233

Stuart Lee is the leading authority on the history of Yamba and in particular its history as an aid to navigating the Clarence River. The information supplied for the rest of this chapter comes from his two books “Yamba Yesterday” and “Riverboats of the Clarence”.

On the morning of 12 July 1799, Flinders went across to the north side of the entrance (Iluka) by boat. This is his description of the return trip:

Along this [north] shore there is a deeper channel but the swell from the sea seems to prevent the tide from making a clear passage out, for the channel becomes shoaler as it approaches the entrance. The water broke at times all across from the north point to the middle shoal and made such a jumble that the oar could scarcely be used.

Matthew Flinders’ party were the first white men to set foot on shore at Yamba, near where the Port of Yamba Historical Society has placed a commemorative stone. Flinders, in a 25-ton sloop named the Norfolk, had been sent by Governor Hunter on a brief six weeks expedition to examine the coast north of Sydney more closely. This section of coast had been left unmarked by Cook because he had passed by at night. Therefore Flinders decided to land to try to repair a leak; to take on fresh water; to map the bay “to which I gave the name Shoal Bay, an appellation which it too well merited”; and to take a fix so that its exact position could be noted.

On 12 July 1799 Flinders went across to the north head in the morning and at noon climbed Pilot Hill to make the observations that fixed “Shoal Bay” at latitude 29°26’28”. It did not occur to Flinders that just beyond the shoals and bushland to the west lay the big river he was trying to find. After only a cursory visual inspection, and paying little regard to the race of tide in the channel which would have indicated the presence of a river, the great explorer for once nodded and set sail again on a rising tide at 1 p.m. Flinders reported:

This bay not appearing to deserve more than a superficial examination, I did not think it worthwhile to consume my time I must acknowledge myself to have been disappointed in not being able to penetrate into the interior of New South Wales by any opening examined on this expedition; but however mortifying the conviction may be, it is now an ascertained fact that no river of any importance intersects the east coast between the 24th and 29th degrees of south latitude.

Thus, the entrance to the river proved troublesome from the very start. In 1799 it almost got Flinders in his little ship’s boat when returning from exploring the North Head to his sloop Norfolk anchored in the channel by the South Head. About 1840 Francis Freeburn went aground there when he tried to take the Susan in without taking new soundings. By 1900, it had claimed over 30 victims – 21 of them sailing ships.

Three distinct physical features, apart from high seas and the huge ebb tides of the mighty river, made the Clarence River Entrance so difficult and dangerous especially to engineless sailing ships. There were in turn (on entering): the Bar, the Reef and the North Spit (Iluka Beach).

The importance to Yamba of heavy sea-going traffic was that the safe passage of ships along the dangerous channel and through the reef and bar to sea had to be supervised by

the Yamba-based pilot and his staff. For all their best efforts from 1850-1896 no fewer than 17 ships were wrecked at the entrance.

The major importance, economically, was that the concern over these wrecks by local citizens and Sydney entrepreneurs who owned the ships pressured the Government into attempting to stabilize the channel through harbour works, which in three periods of construction 1862-1889, 1893-1903 and 1952-1971, provided a boost in population, employment possibilities for locals, and some kind of prosperity for local businessmen, including the hoteliers. In fact, many of the wall workers stayed on in Yamba to boost the population and provide a stable source of labour and enterprise, especially in the fishing industry.

Yamba owes its special character to the fact that it is situated at the entrance of the largest estuarine system in the state. When white settlers first arrived they found that their ships, their lives, their prosperity were constantly endangered by Dirrangun's bar and reef. For example, the District Surveyor, W.A.B. Greaves, recorded on 17 May 1861, that provisions were very scarce because steamers were being detained at the bar for up to twenty-three days. Calling on all their navigational and engineering skills they determined to tame the bar and make it safe for shipping. Consequently, significant contributions to the history and eventual physical setting and character of the town were made by the two government instrumentalities with responsibility in this area: the N.S.W. Maritime Services Board (for navigation and safety) and the N.S.W. Public Works Department (for harbour works and maintenance such as dredging).



In January 1854 Captain Francis Freeburn was selected to take charge of the first Pilot Station and was to write his name big in the history not just of Yamba but of the Clarence as a whole.

The present pilots normal day-to-day activities include the guiding of ships over the bar and into the Clarence River, control of water traffic in general and maintenance of the markers. The pilot station is the official recording station for the Bureau of Meteorology of the local weather.

The article that follows was researched and written by Mr Geoff Shawman, a great-grandson of Francis Freeburn.

From Francis Freeburn to “Francis Freeburn”

A letter written on 17 December 1853 by the Colonial Secretary, Sydney, to the Pilot Board of Port Jackson, reads as follows:

Provision having been made by the Legislative Council for the Establishment of a Pilot Station at Clarence River and appointment of a Pilot, I am directed by His Excellency the Governor-General to request you recommend a suitable person for the office.

Subsequently, Captain Francis Freeburn was appointed Pilot to the Clarence River by the Governor on 10 January 1854 at a salary of £750 per annum.

He had arrived in Sydney in 1840, and was born at Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, in 1812. For many years prior to his appointment he traded successfully along the N.S.W. coast to the Clarence and Richmond Rivers in the Bessie and Susan.

Shortly after his appointment as Pilot in 1854, Francis Freeburn, his wife, their three-year-old son, James, and pilot boatmen, sailed for the Clarence Heads where they erected two tents on the headland and became the first citizens.

The men were issued with five carbines and a proper quantity of ammunition to afford them the means of defence in their exposed position.

In October 1854, a scrub fire destroyed the boatshed and a number of the oars. Had the wind not changed the tents would have been burnt – thus wiping out the original settlement.

The first pilot boats were two four-oared whale boats, constructed at a cost of £40 each. They were kept constantly in use piloting vessels. It was not infrequent to see up to 20 schooners, brigs and barques waiting to cross in or out. One whaleboat was kept in the vicinity of the preset entrance to the Calypso Caravan Park, before any breakwaters were built and the bay filled in, whilst the other was kept adjacent to the now-called Convent Beach (McKittrick's Beach), before sandhills encroached on the area. The second boat was used if the bar was too rough to cross out. If the sea was too rough for this boat to be launched, Captain Freeburn would hoist a signal on the flagstaff for the vessel to send a boat towards the rocks on Yamba Headland and have a heaving line thrown to him from the boat. He would tie this line round his waist, jump into the sea, be pulled into the boat, taken aboard the vessel and then pilot it in.

One whaleboat was lost by Captain Freeburn whilst piloting the brigantine, Uncle Tom, to sea on 28 October 1854, and a replacement boat was built.

In 1972 the 50 foot (15.24 m) steel hulled Francis Freeburn was built for the Maritime Services Board and launched at Berrys Bay, Sydney, and is still the pilot boat at Yamba.

The naming of this vessel honours the first pilot who settled here in 1854. Freeburn Island is also named after the first pilot as well as the submerged Freeburn Rock, off Shelley Beach, south of the Clarence Heads.

On 4 May 1875 the Examiner reported that the local residents had gathered at the Woolli Hotel to present a testimonial to Mr Freeburn. This took the form of a silver lever watch which carried an inscription commending the Pilot for his "distinguished bravery" in rescuing several officers and crew from the S.S. Helen McGregor, which was wrecked on the bar with the loss of eight lives on 12 March 1875. Captain Freeburn was pilot until his death on 10 May 1879.

4.3.3 Tugs

Sugar tugboats continued to be used well after other forms of river transport had ceased, in fact until mechanisation was introduced. Indeed it could be said that "the tugs were to play a crucial role in the industry for just over a century from 1874 to 1976" (Stuart Lee). The picturesque sight of a tug pulling a number of punts gave pleasure to residents and tourists during the harvest period.

They were: -

SS Wommin c1881

SS Hebe 1890 sold to private ownership, fully restored and still in use in S.A.

SS Ajax 1912 like the Hebe built at Harwood.

MV Beardmore 1914 after decommissioning was sold to Aborigines in connection with farming on Ulgundahi. It was then sold to the Maclean District Historical Society, for a token amount, moved to shelter at Harwood Mill, restored with help from the Rotary Club and is on display there. It was the first diesel-powered boat.

MV Beardmore,
towing the last cane
barges to the mill
down Palmers
Channel under
Cameron Bridge.



SS Marama 1914

Yalanbah pre 1942

Harwood 11 1961

Chatsworth 11 1965 the latter two were both built on the Richmond replacing earlier boats of the same name. They were steel hulled and fitted with Gardner diesel engines and the pride of the fleet until the end of the service.

There were also the Seth and the Yamba used to tow barges from the shallow waterways to the larger tugs. The Condong was a pumping boat used when, for whatever reason, barges took on water and were too heavy to be towed.

The Benny was a steam driven launch used to take cane inspectors on their rounds. In addition, the Hitherto and the Max were later used for this purpose.

Tugs towed a string of barges from two or three up to a dozen according to need with drivers sometimes working 12 hour shifts with an assistant on board and galley facilities. The best-known driver was Kevin Shortt, skipper of the "Beardmore" and, together with John Wells, worked to restore and properly house the vessel.

4.4 Aids to Navigation

Pilot boats have provided an essential service from 1854 when Francis Freeburn was appointed as the first pilot at Yamba. His memory was honoured by the naming of the pilot boat, "Francis Freeburn" when added to the service in 1972 and was the first steel hulled vessel. The first one was a four-oared whaleboat and comparatively few vessels are listed as having been used in the history of the service under the control of the Maritime Services Board. It says something for the skill of the pilots most of whom had long terms at Yamba. Details supplied by the Port of Yamba Historical Society are as follows:-

- 1854 two four oared whaleboats
- 1891 "*Dunskey*" built at Balmain, a steamer
- 1896 "*Conqueror*" another steamer built at Balmain and under the command of Capt McAuley
- 1902 "*Alexandra*" under Frank Shawman and crew for many years and well known until replaced by
- 1940 "*Henry Miles*" the last wooden hulled tug built at Forster
- 1972 "*Francis Freeburn*" built by Stannard Bros of Berry's Bay

Pilots have a very responsible job and most of the 20 men who have held the post since 1854, stayed in their position for a number of years. None has matched Francis Freeburn who was still the pilot until his death in 1879 with help from his sons James and George Freeburn and his son in law Fred Schaumann (changed to Shawman). The longer serving men included Henry McAuley, Henry Hinde (died on the job in 1929 and is buried in Maclean), George Redburn, W.J. Williams 1958-1971, and Gordon W. Gray 1971-1997. Alan Jones succeeded Gray and is employed by the NSW Maritime Authority. He has one assistant called a Port Services officer.

A house was built for the pilot, replaced in 1894 and again in 1968. Two other cottages were available for the pilot's assistants. These have now been refurbished for rental, as they were no longer required for staff. They are on Crown land and under the control of the Dept. of Land and Water Conservation.

Some newer enterprises based at or working out of, Yamba.

The "Island Trader" owned by Lord Howe Island Sea Freight has operated a regular service with a rival in the MV "Sitka".

The Norfolk Island Shipping Marine replaced the long serving "Maasmond" with a new international class vessel, the "Norfolk Guardian" in 2001 to service a run to Norfolk Island and New Zealand. Koppers Yamba Shipping Company takes timber mainly and to the Philippines. It operates from the Goodwood Island wharf, which was built in 1969 and was idle until 1977 when the last named service began. The cargo is usually the hardwood telegraph poles and their return cargo is usually softwood. For all the ships, other forward cargo usually comprises food, household goods, building materials and machinery.

Shipbuilding has been a small component of the shipping industry on the Clarence. It is now advancing with the Slipway in Yamba greatly extending its capabilities and also

Yamba Welding. With the Marina expanding and demands for service on fishing craft and yachts there appears to be great scope for Yamba and Iluka in this respect.

4.4.1 Lighthouse



In the 1850's, when the traffic across the bar was becoming heavier, the first navigational aid for mariners was installed on Pilot Hill. It appears to have been a platform with a kerosene lamp on it situated on the most easterly part of Pilot Hill. In 1866 it was replaced by a small wooden humpy whose shutters were opened each night to disperse the rays of a large kerosene lamp

on a bench.

In 1879, a permanent brick and cement lighthouse was built inland from the present site where the reservoir now stands. It was 24' (7.3m) high with a copper dome over the light gallery, which contained an oil lamp mounted inside a lens. The light was said to be visible 6-7 miles (about 10km) out at sea. A lighthouse keeper was employed and living quarters attached. The first automatic light was installed in 1920.



Because the old lighthouse was being obscured by buildings, especially the Pacific Hotel, it was decided in 1955 to build a new lighthouse in its present picturesque site further out on the headland. The tower is 60' (18.3m) in height and can be seen 17 miles (27.3km) out to sea. The light flashes three times every fifteen seconds.

4.4.2 Harbour Works

The story officially began with the Clarence River Breakworks in 1862 and finished with the Deep-Sea Port Works ending in 1971. Work of this kind is very expensive and the claims of the Clarence River people had to be considered in conjunction with claims from other parts of the State for roads, railways, dams, irrigation etc through the Public Works Department of the day.

History shows that the problem of the entrance to the Clarence River was recognised as having to deal with the Bar and the Reef. Whilst the Reef remains as a major problem that of the Bar has been controlled as a result of huge expenditure on training walls and regular dredging of sand. Older residents will recognise that major changes have occurred mainly to the estuarine islands e.g. Hickey Island having joined the mainland to close off the original channel in the lee of Pilot Hill.

The actual work was done in three main periods: - 1862-1889; 1893-1903; 1950-1971.
1862-1889.

Grafton was the only centre of importance in 1860 when Sir Henry Parkes visited the town and promised financial support for a breakwater. By 1862, fifty men were at work as recommended by E.O.Moriarty, the chief engineer for Harbours and Rivers. (His name survives for Moriarty's Wall). The contractor for the southern training wall was J.H.White. Stone for the wall was obtained from Pilot Hill and the evidence of that still remains. Construction on the north side commenced about 1870 using stone from the Iluka Bluff. As time progressed it was clear that the work was not going to plan and was in fact described as a fiasco. This was mainly on the northern side and it was conceded that there was a benefit from protection of the Yamba foreshore and from Moriarty's Wall.

In 1885 an eminent engineer from England, Sir John Coode was in Australia and invited to offer advice which was

1. to remove the reef to a depth of 18' (5.4m)
2. that breakwaters be constructed out to sea, the southern one to be the longer
3. the inside training banks to follow a straight line to Freeburn Is to create a main channel.

2.1893-1903

The new work did not get under way until 1893. The stone from the Yamba quarry was exhausted and a new supply was chosen from Green Point, Angourie. This required a tramway to be built from there to Freeburn Is which was the starting point for the southern training wall. (The present Angourie Rd was built along the route, hence its straightness. The Blue and Green Pools at Angourie were created by fresh water filling them when the quarry work ceased.)



When work ceased in 1903, the main achievement had been the completion of the Middle Wall and the creation of a stable main channel. The work had the result of creating new islands, Dart and Hickey Islands. No attempt was made to remove the reef. By the 1940's Hickey Island had joined the mainland closing off forever the old main entrance to the River.

3.1950-1971

It seems that the drive for an international port was supported more by the New England population than the residents of the Clarence. The phrase "Deep-sea Port" began to be used and its purpose confirmed when on 25th March 1950 a tablet was unveiled at the Illarwill Quarry near Maclean by Lieut -Governor Northcott of NSW. A new era began for Illarwill, previously a small cluster of cottages and farmlets on Woodford Island not far from Maclean. Houses were built for the workers and one for the engineer, W.A.Moody, who was succeeded by M.J.Palmer. Other workers came from the district and it was undeniably a lift for the prosperity of Maclean. The quarried rock and later 40-ton blocks

of concrete constructed on the site, were transported to Yamba by barges loaded at the Quarry wharf. The barges were towed by tugs named "Yamba" and "Iluka".

The work proposed included: -

- 1, the extension of the Southern breakwater and the construction of the Northern breakwater to specified lengths
2. the removal of the reef and Moriarty's wall
3. the dredging of a navigable channel

Work proceeded slowly attributed partly to the lack of finance but also because engineering tests showed that the work achieved by 1981 would serve the original purpose as far as was practicable. The dream of a deep-sea port was "replaced by a more realistic vision of Iluka as the centre of a viable fishing industry and of Yamba as a prosperous tourist centre" (.S.Lee "Yamba Yesterday").

Removal of the reef remained a non-event in spite of the firm recommendation of Sir John Coode. One obstacle had been the claim of the Aboriginal population that the reef was a sacred site connected with Dirangun (several spellings) the woman from up river who had been swept away at the mouth of the River and whose spirit was still there. She was also associated with the fig tree at Maclean Showground. Tests showed that the work already done had achieved as much as could be expected or needed to this present time.

4.5 Floods

When the town of Maclean was laid out in 1862 the surveyor, W. Greaves, evidently was aware of the danger of floods because he chose its location on the heights for the town with Wharf Street leading down to the waterfront. It was recognised that water transport was all-important and the town site was favoured with deep water. Unfortunately, convenience outweighed safety and when Alexander Cameron opened his shop on land outside the town boundary, but right on the waterfront, he set the pattern, which others were to follow, and the town became flood prone.



Nevertheless, people coped because major floods were a comparatively rare occurrence. For example, there was no big flood between 1893 and 1921. The next came in 1928 but not another until the disastrous series 1945-1956 and authorities were forced to take more action. The term "Flood Mitigation" came into use with the recognition of the fact that floods cannot be prevented but measures can be taken to lessen the impact. These ranged from early warning systems to financial compensation to individuals and councils.

There is no pattern for the occurrence of floods. Records for the Clarence River show that there were over 100 significant floods between 1839 and 2001. 1890 was probably the worst year with three major floods in the one year and, even worse, four floods in 1950 with the one in June measured at 7.79 metres. Metric conversion of figures took place in 1974.

A table of flood heights for Grafton is available but not applicable to Maclean where the figures are lower but equally disastrous in the closely settled delta region.

The local newspaper, the “Clarence River Advocate” published figures 27 June 1950 as follows:-

No. of houses evacuated 66

Houses under but not evacuated 15 (“under“, taken to mean having water inside”

Shops in River St under water 43

With every flood, residents learned something more about coping with the situation especially after flood warnings were given over the battery-operated radios. The NSW Bureau of Meteorology developed procedures together with the State Emergency Services. Even as late as 1950 electricity and telephone services were cut but by the 1960’s things had improved. A helicopter service was added for emergency evacuations and the delivery of urgently needed supplies including fodder for stock. At first, the helicopter landed at the Hospital but later at the Lookout.

(In 2005 the Maclean Rotary Club had a helipad installed at the Hospital)

The most significant advance would have been the building of levee walls and the larger towns in the Valley are protected in this way. It is recognised that these walls have to be properly maintained and, in some cases, having the height increased to cope with the One in One Hundred Year estimate.

4.6 Coastguard and Crest

These two organisations need a mention for the quality service they render in a voluntary capacity in emergency situations.

The Yamba /Iluka Coastguard Squadron is part of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard service and began in Yamba I 1982 with a marine radio base and forms a link between the Evans Head and Coffs Harbour bases.

CREST was formed nationally in 1976 as the Citizens Radio Emergency Service Teams. It operates from Yamba with an emergency radio channel and liaises with emergency services throughout the country. Although especially valuable during crises like floods, it serves in any kind of emergency.

The Yamba base began in 1979 as a post attached to Grafton operating from the old Signals hut on Pilot Hill and in 1982 received an award for being the best division (club) of the year including community involvement and calls actioned.

CHAPTER 5 THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

5.1 Beginnings

Cane growing for the production of raw sugar has been an important industry on the Lower Clarence since the 1860's. The present day subsidiary industries associated with cane growing include the baling of the leaves (trash) for mulching in the nursery industry and fodder for cattle. The growing of cane as a major rural enterprise is affected by seasonal and economic conditions.

The glut of maize, the growing of coffee, cotton, tobacco, and wheat, dairying, and the importance of Robertson Land Act of 1861, enabled small farms to be established. As sugar prices rose, the small farmers considered the growing of sugar cane, together with dairying and small crops, the best option for primary industry.

Cane growing on the Clarence was first mentioned in 1859 with the formation, using sorghum, of an Experimental Sugar Association at Grafton. Attention then turned to the growing of sugar cane.

The growing of sugar cane on the fertile flats of the Lower Clarence proved very successful. Attempts to grow cane on the Mid Clarence proved unsuccessful in general due to climatic conditions, particularly winter frosts.

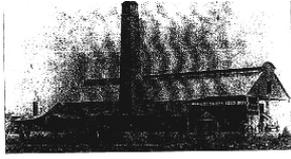
5.2 Sugar Mills

Small sugar mills started to be built on many small farms. Around Ulmarra, the first mill was Belmore Mill (Clarence River Sugar Manufacturing Company) the largest working in 1869 with 6 smaller mills in the area. On the South Arm, mills were on the property of Duncan Robertson and Stewart Robinson. Thomas Plater established a mill at Taloumbi. Near Maclean, William Newby and Alfred Catt produced sugar. On Harwood Island, the big CSR mill, still in production in 2006, was established with a Refinery on site owned as a co-operative by the New South Wales Sugar Milling Co-operative. A distillery was established with the raw sugar production. In 1883, the Harwood CSR Company produced 3,000 gallons of rum per week.



Other small mills on Harwood Island were McLachlan's, George Martin's, Miller's and John Nicholson's. Mills were also at James Creek, Palmers Creek, Palmers Channel (7), Palmers Island (10), Micalo Island (2), Woombah (3), Carrs Peninsular (2), Carrs Creek (3), Alumny Creek (3), Southgate (6) where the CSR Co also had a large Mill; Sportsmans Creek (1), Lawrence (1), Kings Creek (1), Woodford Island (6), Ashby (3), North Arm (2), Serpentine (1), Warregah Island (3), Chatsworth Island, where another large CSR Co. mill was established, together with 5 other small mills; Goodwood Island (2).

As far as can be ascertained there were 65 to 70 mills erected on the river between 1868 and 1890. Harwood is the only working mill today.



Dyrabbie Mill

Raw Sugar produced by these mills was marketed on the river and up to the Tablelands as well as being used by the farmers themselves or sent to Sydney. As CSR increased its milling and crushing facilities, sugar produced in the small mills was sold to CSR and consequently the small millers found it not viable to crush their cane and sold it to CSR for milling.

5.3 CSR Dominates the Industry

With the decline in the number of farm mills, the more successful mills bought cane from the small mill owners and transported the cane by punt to the more successful mills.

These small mills were all erected at considerable cost and great physical effort. Sadly, they were used for only a short time and without great profit. Some went bankrupt in the slump of the nineties. Lack of capital and expertise left the way open for the milling monopoly of the CSR Company.

In 1868, *“the directors of CSR desire to notify that on being assured that a sufficient area of land has been planted they are prepared to establish central sugar mills in the sugar growing districts”*.

On the Clarence, up to date mills were erected at Southgate and Chatsworth Island. Southgate opened in 1870 but was not a success due to frost damage and closed in 1879. This was dismantled in 1885. Chatsworth continued until 1887 when much of its plant was moved to the Harwood Island Mill that had commenced in 1874, with much of its plant transferred from Darkwater on the Macleay River. Harwood is the oldest operating mill in Australia.

CSR set about helping farmers to be efficient in order to ensure an adequate supply of good quality cane. Control of diseases and pests, use of fertilizers, P.O.C.S (Pure Obtainable Cane Sugar) system was devised; cane permits regulated the acreage to the capacity of the mill; mill chemists were employed to control the quality at every stage. This gave CSR superiority over small mills. Research into varieties of cane suitable for the area, is a constant scientific duty by plant technologists.

One reason for the location of the cane industry was a fine waterway of the river and the development of river transport, taking the cane to the mills.

5.4 Cane Harvesting

Various methods of harvesting were employed by cane cutters to harvest the cane. Cane was usually burnt, mainly to remove the dead leaves (trash) and to prevent Weils disease caused by rats in the cane. Gangs of men hand cut the cane, loaded the cane onto the carts and carried the cane using shin sticks from the cart to the punt or

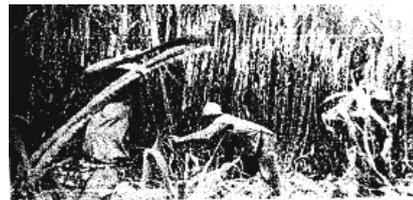


Carting cane from the fields

stacking the cane in bundles on the ground and hand loading onto carts which, drawn by horses, took the cane carts to the derricks to be loaded into cane punts, which were then towed to the processing mill and unloaded by the big grab onto the cane carrier.

Mechanical harvesting was slow to develop in NSW, mainly because NSW crops were two years growing to maturity and were often twisted and very heavy. Gradually mechanical harvesters were developed, the first major being Toft loaders, freeing the cane cutters from loading and speeding up delivery to the mill.

Cane cutters formed gangs. Most gangs in the 20's, 30's and 40's were made up of farmers' sons and other local men. It was only in the 1950's when newly arrived assisted immigrants started. This was why the cane cutters' huts were built as some cane cutters in the 50's did not live locally and the CSR felt better accommodation had to be provided to attract workers. A CSR tug such as the *Beardmore* delivered all the cane cutters' accommodation/camping equipment, tents, cooking equipment, bunks. It was physically demanding work.



Cutting and trashing cane

The fleet of tugs pulling the punts to and from the mill were originally steam driven, one was petrol driven, and the first diesel powered boat was the well-known *Beardmore*.

5.5 Sugar Processing—by products.

Sugar crops were processed to the raw sugar stage and thus developed to bulk loading of the raw sugar for transportation to Sydney by large ships to the Refinery built at Pyrmont.

The by-products of the sugar manufacturing included, molasses, treacle and golden syrup – all a chain of processing from raw sugar to refined sugar. Bagasse or megass is the pithy residue of the crushed cane and is used to fuel the fires for the boilers and in the manufacture of caneite (now not available). Filter mud is the residue from the raw sugar juice, often containing some dirt or mud. It is transported back to the farms, on request, and used as fertiliser.

In September 1970, CSR Co. celebrated the centenary of sugar milling in Australia.

The increasing inefficiency of the punt delivery system and the increased efficiencies offered by mechanical harvesting led the CSR to look for a new way to deliver the mechanically harvested crop. The idea was to implement a road delivery system called the multi lift system using demountable bins. Of course, the Harwood Bridge was opened in 1966, thus accessibility by road was completed.

The Sugar Board supervised the marketing and sale of all Australian Sugar and on a contractual basis; the Queensland Government purchased all raw sugar produced in NSW. The NSW sugar all went to CSR refineries, mainly to Pyrmont and a small amount to Brisbane, governed by a Memorandum of Agreement.

Every 5 years the grower organisations from the 3 River Canegrowers Association, would meet with CSR to consider alterations and amendments to the agreement.

In 1973, the first moves were evident to see if CSR mill at Condong “*would be sold to growers and at what price*”. However, “*CSR would not contemplate selling an individual mill*”.

By 1977, the Committee’s concern re CSR intentions led it to approach the NSW Minister for Decentralisation and Development, Don Day, to use his influence to have CSR advise the committee of a proposal.

By January 1976, CSR was offered \$12.5 million to be paid over five years with \$2.5 million on settlement plus \$1 million per year for 4 years. CSR rejected this offer. They would be prepared to accept \$15 million for the mills that could be paid over a number of years. Negotiations between the Committee and CSR continued. The indication of another buyer was frightening to the Committee, now called the Transfer of Ownership Committee.

Finally after much “toing and froing”, CSR, being aware of the social repercussions within northern NSW, would now prefer to sell to the growers. Study concluded that a co-operative owned by the growers would be formed. It should purchase the mills outright and the CSR should withdraw from NSW but CSR’s input staffing and technical input would remain for five years. The initial take over date was 31 March 1978.

Don Day intervened again, as total agreement on price and terms could not be negotiated with CSR. CSR was told that the government would not finance the deal with any earn out clause. Day told CSR, clearly, that the government would not lend money to the growers at a cheap rate so CSR could pick up the profits of the new proposal venture. CSR was told that the only price the government would support was that for scrap.

5.6 NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative Ltd

The final price was to be \$5.5 million for the mills, their equipment and any land necessary for the operation of the mills. Final resolution was “*That the NSW Cane Growers Association be requested to form a Co-operative to be known as the NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative Ltd for the purpose of purchasing and operating the sugar mills at Harwood, Condong and Broadwater as outlined in reports sent to growers*”. A total of 750 growers voted to form a co-operative, 85 against and 1 informal. The Co-operative was incorporated as a Rural Society on 22 May 1978.

Getting the finance was now critical. A loan of \$3.1 million from the Country Industries Assistance Fund could be applied by a single grower’s co-operative to take over the ownership and operation of the three northern rivers sugar mills. \$3 million had still to be raised. A new Board was formed. A \$3 million overdraft was obtained with the Bank of NSW in Sydney with the Reserve Bank supplying the finance.

1979 saw the Queensland & Federal Governments renew the Commonwealth/Queensland Sugar Agreement, which ensured the embargo on importing of sugar and a guaranteed

domestic price. The member owned and member controlled NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative became the regulating and controlling authority of all aspects of the commercial production of sugar cane in NSW. CSR terms were associated with the Queensland Sugar Board regulations.

In 1983, the Staff agreement with CSR finished in March. Most CSR staff stayed with the Co-operative.

In 1983, the Board also applied to the Department of Decentralisation and Development to defer loan payments for 12 months as a loss in income had occurred. For the first time the Board placed a levy on all members. 30 cents per tonne levy raised \$500,000.

The bulk sugar handling operations started in 1954 and continued until 1984, when the MV Poolta took the last shipment of bulk raw sugar.

By 1988, negotiations commenced with Manildra to discuss how the two companies could help one another. "A refinery owned by the Co-operative and built by Manildra" would see the Co-operative producing the raw sugar, refined then in the refinery and marketed by Manildra under the name of Sunshine Sugar.

A breakaway from Queensland dominance had occurred. This refinery proposal was the most radical decision taken in the history of the Australian Sugar industry.

"In 1988, a Deed of Agreement to formalise the partnership was signed by McRae and Honan on 12 December. Manildra Harwood Sugars had been formed, the first time in Australia, a co-operative had formed a partnership with another company."

After the 1988 season was completed, the sugar shed was to be demolished for the start of construction of the refinery. The construction contract was an off the shelf design provided by Tate & Lyle.

"It is our intentions that the NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative will market sugar independently of the Queensland Sugar Board and its agents in the domestic market from 1 July 1989", Messiter. State Bank approved finance of the needed \$7 million for the refinery and \$3 million for seasonal finance.

Cane production increased. Marketing of the sugar, raw and refined, was well established. Transport facilities improved and saw the building of a bulk storage shed at South Grafton where rail transport took sugar to Sydney. Large transport trucks took the packaged sugar to many customers such as Coca Cola. Manildra Harwood Sugars promised and delivered whatever quantity the customer asked for. Manildra Harwood worked on a 24 hour, seven days a week to provide customer requirements.

The multi lift system of transporting cane to the mills was a fleet of large vehicles and the associated in field buggy system with the increased efficiency of the cane harvesters.

Raw sugar is transported by bulk carriers to Harwood refinery from Condong and Broadwater.

A \$2 million loan was made available from the Queensland Treasury Corporation for the export of power into the electricity grid. In 1977, Broadwater began electricity export with future development planned.

Throughout the 24-year history of the NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative, great advancements in NSW sugar industry have been made.

Sunshine Sugar and Sunshine Electricity (Delta Power) have great prospects for the future.

CHAPTER 6 THE DAIRYING INDUSTRY

6.1 Beginnings

According to David Fisher, the origin of dairying began on the South Coast of NSW in the 1820's with the establishment of butter and cheese making facilities for the consumption of these products within the growing colony of NSW. In 2004, the South Coast of NSW was still a very successful dairying region.

6.2 Free Selection Act

The importance of the Free Selection Act, passed in 1861, by John Robertson's government, now allowed small farmers, without capital, to take up small but economically viable units of farmland.

Dairy farming moved from the South Coast of NSW and the Hunter region to the North Coast where pioneers were able to obtain small acreages. In the 1880's sugar production was in decline, due in 1890's to disease, and the increase in crop production, such as corn, wheat, cotton, bananas, coffee, arrowroot, vegetables, in particular potatoes, combined with dairying saw a major increase in prosperity for the new settlers. Sugar cane was still being grown, but these other crops and dairying saw the "mixed farming syndrome" develop rapidly.

Dairying was a very labour intensive occupation and relied upon unpaid family work and the willingness to organise family life around morning/night 7 day a week labour necessity.

It became a viable industry, and its growth, although hampered by floods, drought, pests, disease, and the problem with types of suitable pasture grasses, was expanding dramatically.

The farmers with the production of milk, butter, and cheese, developed from a cottage industry for survival, to a very highly organised dairy industry. Combined with the continuum of sugar cane growing and its expansion, farmers became prosperous.

Clearly, dairying was one of the earliest activities on the Lower Clarence following settlement, with the earliest reference to dairying on the Clarence given as 1866 in the Bawden Lectures.

However, John Small had a depot on the South Arm of the Clarence River below Cowper in 1837. Butter in fact was consigned to the Sydney Market aboard S.S. Tamar in 1842 heavily salted and shipped in "firkins" (casks of 25.4 kgs). A dairy farm was established in Villiers Street, Grafton, after Joseph Sharp arrived on the Clarence in 1841. Thomas Small, who held a very large selection – Coldstream to Pillar Valley -, developed dairying in this region. In 1884, William Goodyer established a cheese factory at Matildadale, near Tucabia, with 300 head of dairy cows. In 1889, Goodyer's Manager, Thomas Davey, demonstrated the first separator in the district, and by 1899, the first machine made butter.

As the industry continued to develop, from a survival cottage industry to an intensive agricultural industry, in conjunction in most cases, with sugar production, technology developed and farmers formed co-operatives.

6.3 Technological Advances

During the 1880's and 1890's, great technological advances occurred in the dairy industry. In 1888, the first cream separator was demonstrated in the district. This led to the big expansion in butter production and because of the advent of refrigeration in 1883 and the 1892 Babcock test for butter fat content and with the subsequent methods of pasteurisation of dairy products in 1893, dairying became a very progressive industry. On the farms, great improvements in facilities and designs of dairy bails were evident. These included the headlock bail, to the walk through in the 1930's to herringbone design in 1967.



Burns Farm on Romiaka Island

Herd breeding, fodder conservation, electric fences, rotational grazing, and computerisation, led to greatly improved productivity. Milking machines were introduced in 1910 and were well established in the 1930's.

Dairying was now a major industry having developed from a labour intensive industry on most small acreages to a highly mechanised computerised industry where the development of large-scale dairies developed, and the smaller dairies declined.

6.4 Creameries

The creameries were established to help the many small dairy farmers as a centrifugal separator was not available for several years, so creameries were established in central areas, as co-operatives, so farmers could bring their milk to the creamery, for separation with the skim milk (the result of the separation of the cream from the milk) returning to the farmers for pigs and calves. Transportation of the milk to the creameries was very slow.



In 1896, one of the first creameries built by the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company was at Maclean near Cameron Wharf at the back of the Commercial Bank, but in 2004, approximate site of the Fisheries Offices. Others developed at Lawrence (1896), Chatsworth (1896), South Arm (1897), Palmers Island (1897), Tyndale

(1897), Coldstream (1897), Southgate (1898), Lower Southgate (1898), Calliope (1900), Cowper (1900), Lavadia (1896).

Palmers Island was the first co-operative creamery and later a butter factory.

Factories were generally larger establishments and were the receiving depots for the cream in order to make butter and cheese. Later factories produced other products such as whole milk, in bottles/cartons/plastic containers, as well as powdered milk and ice cream.

Maclean butter factory (now the Fish Co-operative)



6.5 The Clarence River Co-operative Pioneer Co., Butter Factory

The Clarence River Co-operative Pioneer Dairy Co., butter factory at Ulmarra was opened on 19 March 1892, rebuilt in 1923 and amalgamated with Grafton in 1970, sold to Norco in 1990 and closed in 1999.

The success of the Ulmarra factory, a true pioneer, saw other butter factories develop such as the one at Brushgrove, but as transport improved, these became less effective.

Farmers on the Lower Clarence, following the success of Ulmarra and Grafton proposed a central co-operative for their area. JG Kempnich built Refrigeration Works and Butter Factory in Maclean, but a co-operative was considered a better way. The Maclean Dairy Co-operative opened their factory in 1907, near the Newby's Sugar Mill. This operated until 1929 when local farmers transferred supplies to Ulmarra. In 1945, the Maclean building became the Clarence Valley Fishermen's Co-operative.

In the 1940's there were over 500 dairy farms stocked with about 25,000 cows in the Shires of Ulmarra and Harwood, producing over six million gallons of milk.

6.6 Transportation of Milk & Cream

Transportation of cream and milk was initially by horse and dray to creameries, to river transport as many small cream boats plied the river, picking up cream at the many small wharves. About the 1930's, trucks took over the transport with a few small cream boats remaining. To maintain quality of the cream, gradually trucks were the only form of transportation, particularly as roads were improving.

For 24 years, Jim and Dido Marsh delivered cream, first to the Maclean Factory and then to Ulmarra. The cream cans were stored in pick up sheds, often standing in water to help maintain freshness.

From the factories, vendors to the local community marketed whole milk.

Now road transport provides a bulk milk pick up from on-farm refrigerated vats, and is transported to Lismore (Norco) or to Toowoomba or Labrador (Dairy Farmers) in Queensland.

6.7 Decline in Dairying

From a very intensive primary industry, in conjunction with sugar cane growing, dairying has declined to the point of there only being a small number of mechanised dairy producers still in the 2000's operating, such as Barnier's at Cowper, Carlton's at Ulmarra, Smith's at Southgate.



Politics were the major cause of the decline, in dairying, as Mrs E B Burns verified as, after more than 100 years, the Burns family of Romiaka "called it a day". Deregulation of the dairy industry saw many protests by the farmers, in several states, but to no "avail" – dairying was in major decline on the North Coast of NSW, with Victoria and the South Coast of NSW basically supporting milk production. Large retail firms such as Woolworths and Coles commenced a price war, when deregulation allowed the distribution factor to be open interstate.

Burns farm on Romiaka Island carriage system of hay from silo

6.8 Political Timeline

Government policies affect many producers, as shown by this time line.

1897	Regulatory for liquid milk was the Dairy Supervision Act
1916	State Governments responsible Registration of dairies and control by local authorities. Dairy Inspections by Board of Health.
WW1	Butter prices fixed by Commonwealth Government. Quota system in place for local market to ensure domestic supply.
1931	Milk Act – Formation of Milk Board. Set wholesale prices, required registration. Milk zones established. No access to Sydney Markets.
1955-56	Quota System Act.
1970	NSW Dairy Authority Act: Milk supply under control of Authority. Reason for herringbone bails, refrigeration and development of larger dairies. Control of quotas, quality marketing and promotion. Cost to small farmers too high.
1983	Dairy Industry Amendment Act – Establish the NSW Dairy Co-operative.
2000	Federation Government deregulation. Domestic Market Support Scheme abolished. Financial compensation to farmers on exit. Removal of barriers for interstate trade in dairy products.

CHAPTER 7 FISHING

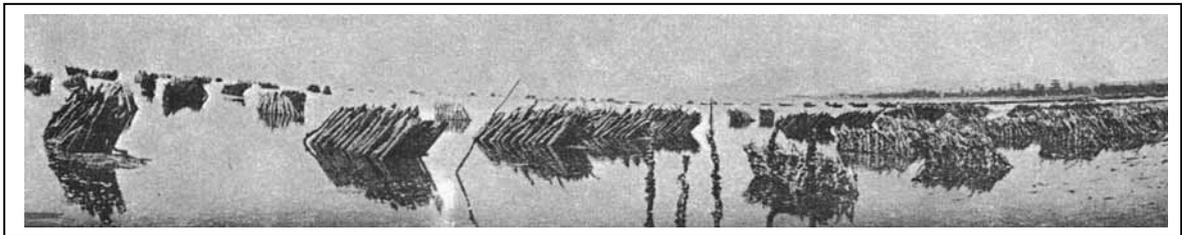
7.1 Beginnings

The Aborigines were the first fishers on the Clarence River. The abundance of fish oysters and shellfish in the river and ocean provided plenty of food, as is evident by the huge middens found along the riverbanks and seashore. Early white settlers spoke about the quality of the Aborigines' fishing nets, spears and tidal fish traps.

The Clarence River has consistently been a leading supplier of quality and variety of fish to the Sydney Fish Markets. In the early days, the industry was hampered by weather, lack of transport and refrigeration to enable a fresh supply reaching the markets. Oysters were the original main source for the fledgling industry, but now, prawns, and fish have provided a very lucrative industry. In recent years size of trawlers, modernisation of trawler equipment, new freezing methods, and the use of road transport have transformed the industry with many traditional original fishing families still involved.

7.2 The Oyster Industry

The oyster industry preceded the fishing industry. In 1868, bags of oysters were being shipped from the Clarence River. Oysters were found naturally and abundantly in the waters of the estuary. In 1878 a petition from the Oyster Dredgers and residents of the Clarence River Fishing District, advocated to preserve the oyster beds. The method used to harvest the oysters was by a scoop type dredge along the mud flats, mainly in the Wooloweyah estuary.



7.3 Net Fishing

Iluka was established as the centre of the fishing industry with the commencement of the breakwater wall in the 1860's. John Wallace, a local mail contractor between Iluka and Yamba, decided to go net fishing when he saw the potential for a market to supply fish to the workmen and families employed on the wall construction. Mary (Larkin) Wallace had come from a fishing district in Ireland and was experienced in net making. She wove him a net and with the assistance of an Aborigine a two man fishing industry developed. When the break wall harbour



works ended, several workmen and their families stayed in Iluka to commence a fishing industry. Pioneer families were the Coombes, Hanley, Larkin, Hoartys, Files, Marshalls,

Wallaces, Everson and Eyles. While the men netted the fish, the womenfolk packed the fish in ice brought up from Sydney by steamers. Ferns were also used to help with insulation between the layers of ice.

7.4 Iluka Canning Industry

In 1887, to cope with the quantity of fish being caught a canning industry was commenced in Iluka.



The Cannery employed 4/5 men, who cleaned the fish ready for processing keeping the fish in a cool chamber. This did not prove profitable but supplies of canned fish could be ordered from Mr F Rankin the Iluka Manager.

Later, when the fishing industry extended from its original base to Maclean, then called Rocky Mouth, it developed steadily until it exceeded that of Iluka.

In 1901, J G Kempnich purchased the site and buildings of the defunct Maclean Creamery, where he installed the latest machinery for butter as well as cooling chambers and ice works. They continued to operate satisfactorily for some years, but by 1929, was forced into liquidation. C.W. King took over the Kempnich Ice Works and by 1945 had purchased the old Butter Factory for a Fish Dept.

7.5 Ice Works

Fishermen in the early 1900's now had access to an ice supply to pack their fish for market. By mid 1903, the fishing industry had grown extensively, largely due to extensive net fishing grounds of the river.

Mr A Ross of Palmers Island also established Ice Works. In 1903 TA & EA Powell butchers, also established a refrigeration plant and manufactured ice in their butcher's shop, making some available for fishermen.

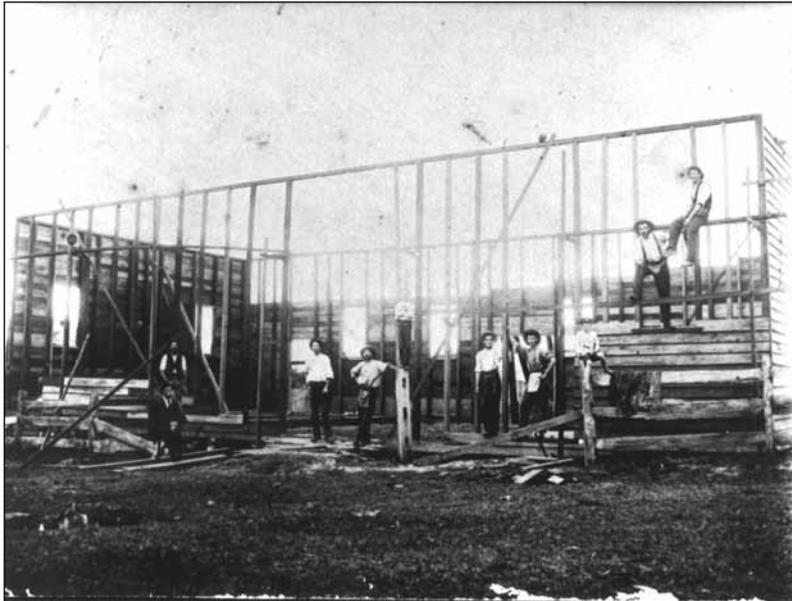
In late 1903, local fishermen met in Maclean with the Fresh Food & Ice Company to discuss establishing a Fish Cannery on co-operative lines.

7.6 Fish Cannery

By October, the Fish Cannery was completed on the riverbank in Taloumbi Street, Maclean.

Operation of this cannery was brief. By early February 1904, the cannery was closed, dismantled and materials used to build the Baptist Church, corner Short and River Streets, Maclean that is now a craft shop.

By 1905, a report stated that the Clarence River was the greatest fish producing water in NSW, with praise to the fishermen for their care in packing in ice for transporting to markets.



7.7 Iluka Fish Company

In 1907, the Fresh Fish Company commenced operation in Iluka. Fish were gutted to extract valuable oil. The fish were to be treated by a special floating plant at Iluka designed to treat 15 ton of fish per week. This venture failed and the plant was removed to Maclean, but this failed

too. The plant ceased working and was returned to Iluka for ice making for the fishermen. It capsized and sank in bad weather.

By 1908, Pacific Fisheries Co Ltd was floated at Maclean. Many shares were sold locally and a prospectus issued. Pacific Fisheries proposed a large processing plant.

In 1910, the Palmers Island Fish Co. advertised to provide “prime wholesome fish”. The Iluka Ice Works established by Powell Bros.

Nets were made of mainly cotton or hemp. The fishermen pulled their nets from the punts onto net poles. Nets were dried, mended and preserved by either soaking in tar, and dried or tanned every second week in a solution of iron bark or wattle bark, boiled in water. Fishermen used motorboats to pull their punts with nets in them, to varying locations in the river. Iluka and Palmers Island fishers worked mainly in Lake Woollooweyah.

The prawn industry was virtually non-existent and the cray fish catch was hampered by poorly designed wire pots and a snapper line and hook.

7.8 Northern Rivers Fishermen’s Association

Huge hauls of fish were caught in 1911. Those interested in the fishing industry were invited to form a Fish & Co-operative Factory on the Lower River. The Northern Rivers Fishermen’s Association Ltd was formed and operations to commence in late July.

The Clarence River State Fish Depot commenced operation in February 1918, on the site of the Government Quarry, Ilarwill, with a fine wharf with a light trolley track to facilitate inward and outward loading of catches. Building, water supply, power plant, ice plant and refrigeration plant were constructed.

By 1919, the State Fish Depot was overstocked. The State Fisheries Boat "Colliboi" with 3 freezing chambers and a carrying capacity of "2000 kerosene boxes of fish" took 700 boxes of fish to Sydney market.

By 1920, fishermen from Iluka, Grafton and Maclean formed Clarence River Fishermen's Association. The Maclean Fish Depot had closed in 1920, having been unable to handle the quantity of fish caught. This depot was sold in 1923.

The Maclean and Palmers Island Dairy Companies had amalgamated and needed a central factory and an offer was made to purchase the Refrigeration and Ice Making Plant at Ilarwill depot.

In 1935, at Grafton, the Clarence River Fish Cannery Company was in the old butter factory premises. Alterations were made and machinery installed.

When farmers from the Maclean Dairy Co-operative decided to transfer their supplies to Ulmarra this Maclean building became in 1945, the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative.

The Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative was provisionally formed and operations commenced at the Grafton depot in September 1946, leasing from Grafton Dairy Co-operative.

Plans were in hand for the Maclean depot to be built on the freehold land purchased by the Co-operative. A sub depot was to be built at Wooli. Iluka ice works were to be purchased by the co-operative for use by the fishermen. By products were treated at the South Grafton abattoirs. Mr King was approached re the purchasing of his ice works beside the old Maclean Dairy Co-operative.

In 1946, because of the lack of ice, and shortage of cold storage, boats were idle. Plans for the construction of a cool room and packing room at Maclean, would go ahead. The Co-op was officially registered in June 1946.

Mr King was prepared to sell the Maclean Fish and Ice Works and negotiations were completed and the complex taken over on 2 July 1948.

In 1949, the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative negotiated to purchase the Wooli Ice Works.

Control of fish marketing in NSW was a proposal to be given to Co-operatives, but there was opposition. Prices increased slightly as announced by the Prices Commissioner. In 1950, a Fish Industry Advisory Committee was established and the Government planned to hand the Sydney Fish Markets over to a parent co-operative.

7.9 Prawn Industry

The commercial prawn industry started in earnest in 1947, where fishermen used a fish basket to scoop the prawns mainly out of the Wooloweyah Lake. Prawns were cooked on

the riverbank, placed into cane baskets and dipped back into the water to cool, and then sent to the Sydney Markets.

In the early 1950's, the lack of refrigerated rail trucks caused a large loss to Clarence River fishermen. However, by 1956 the Rail Authority improved transport facilities by installing two insulated vans for the transportation of fish and prawns.

In the early 1950's, the Oyster Industry had many setbacks with continual floods and freshes.

Big improvements occurred at the Maclean Depot. A compressor, new cool rooms, co-op shop, refrigerated transport for snap frozen products were purchased. The old smoke house was removed and a new ice holding room to store 40/50 ton of produce plus an additional ice tank, were purchased. Staff amenities were provided where the smoke house was originally. The prawn cooling plant was replaced. Storage rooms and a new wharf were erected at Iluka, and large refrigerated trucks were purchased.

The Co-op could now manufacture small consumer packs of fish fillets, prawns and other food items.

The Maclean Co-op was now the regional processing centre for the North Coast.

At Iluka prawn cooking and cooling facilities were extended with extra wharf facilities providing petrol and diesel service.

By 1959, a dehydration plant to process offal into fishmeal for poultry food was opened at the rear of the Co-op buildings.

The Co-op experimented with a new pre pack of fish fillets with a lemon slice and a sprig of parsley in a cellophane cover, ready to cook, for the local markets only.



Usually in May each year, large hauls of sea mullet were caught off the beaches at Woody Head, Brooms Head, Sandon River, Minnie Waters and Woolli. The Co-op processed most of these local catches as snap frozen fish fillets. The mullet roe was a very popular export commodity.

The Clarence River was now the largest mullet-producing river in Australia and the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative one of the largest co-operatives in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 1968, the Fish Meal & Oil Plant was established on Woodford Island.

In the 1970's, work started on safe anchorage in Iluka Bay for deep-sea boats to moor. The Department of Public Works proposed to dredge the Bay close to the foreshore and use the spoil to reclaim the low lying areas adjacent, to provide a roadway to the township of Iluka. By 1976, the new processing plant was officially opened. After 11½ years, Manager Alwyn Ellem resigned.

By 1980 the Co-op secured a \$2.5 million contract to send red fish (ocean fish) to the Middle East. Red Fish were taken from the oceans south of Sydney and brought to Maclean in refrigerated vans for processing.

In addition, an order of 45 tonnes of eels was received for export to Dunkirk, France where they would be smoked and distributed through the European Economic Countries.

In 1982, Fishermen were alarmed at the practice of using a chemical to clear waterweeds from flood drains that feed into the river. *“Our main concern is in the wide range of poisons being used and that we cannot get any satisfaction on the toxicity and effect on marine life.”*

The development of the gem fish industry had increased tremendously since 1970 and this was due to research being carried out by State Fisheries. Regulation is essential to control the exploitation of our fishing resource. In 1981 a new State Fisheries Vessel, *Alopias* was commissioned at Maclean. It was built at Mona Vale at a cost of \$85,000.

The annual turnover of the Fishing Co-operative in 1981 was in excess of \$10 million.

7.10 Fish Kill

By 1983, the factory was processing jellyfish for export to buyers in Hong Kong and Taiwan, where they were considered a delicacy. Jellyfish was salt dried, reducing its weight by 95%. The dry product was boxed and sent in containers to the overseas buyers, who reconstituted the jellyfish by adding water. Jellyfish was a delicacy as an entrée.

A buffer zone was to be established off the North Coast to protect Clarence River trawlers working the rich royal prawn beds, from Japanese longliners. The Co-op sent a submission to the Federal Government appealing for the 40-kilometre zone off the coast to be extended by a further 10 kilometres.

By 1983, pesticide poisoning had been cleared as a possible cause of the ulcer disease affecting fish in the Clarence River. Exports say the fish are still edible. This “disease” is caused by a sudden change from saltwater to fresh water. Stress occurs and the fish immune system goes into shock.

Prawn netting commences in the river September to May when set nets are placed in different sites each month. The Fisheries' Officers select the sites and the fishermen must have a licensed inboard powerboat and a registered prawn net. Pocket netting provides a daily supply of excellent river school prawns for the markets.

In 1985, a protest over the continual increase in fuel prices was sent to Paul Keating, Federal Treasurer. The Fishing Industry was being crippled.

The Clarence River remained an open area for prawning and meshing and so after the Sydney area was restricted, the many surplus Queensland trawlers entered the NSW Fisheries zone, because it was an open area. In 1988, it was reported that 100 tonnes of cuttlefish and 150 tonnes were exported to Eastern Markets. The by catch products of the fishing industry were in demand.



In 1992, changes in the prawn trawling operation came into effect. Net limits were upgraded to 64 metres, and operators were allowed to divide fishing rights into smaller packages to sell to other eligible endorsement holders.

In 1995, the Nordmore Grid (pictured) became very popular on the river, as it kept unwanted fish out of the prawn catch.

Politics still played a major role in the development of the fishing industry. A time line entry shows the causes and effects political decisions made on the progress of the fishing industry.

In early 2001, a major fish kill occurred and was again blamed on use of chemicals that entered the river system after a major flood.

7.11 Political Timeline

- 1865 Fisheries Act – divided year into winter and summer and specified the type of net to be used.
- 1868 Bags of oysters shipped from Clarence River
- 1872 Sydney Municipal Council Fish Market. Growth of coastal steamship trade
- 1878 Legislative Council of NSW – Petition from Oyster Dredgers – “to preserve the oyster beds”
- 1880 Issuing of licences at local Court House or by mail
- 1887 Northern Division of Fisheries – virtually no fishing but a very good oyster industry – change as refrigeration chamber available on new steamer Electra.
- 1884 Oyster Bed Act of 1884 – regulated gathering of oysters
- 1889 Prawns first caught commercially.
- 1894-5 Second Royal Commission into industry.
- 1902 State Fisheries Report re fishing on Clarence. Fisheries Bill introduced to promote and develop industry and to improve supply of fish, oysters, and crayfish to consumer. Legislative Council – Bill passed.
- 1903 Bill in force. Description of approved nets.
- 1904 Fishermen representative on Fisheries Board and a representative from Fishermen’s & Oystermen’s Union.
- 1905 Department of Fisheries introduces notice re garfish nets.
- 1905 Formation of the Fishermen’s Co-operative Association of NSW
- 1908 Protest by Lower Clarence Fishermen to Board re closure of Lake Wooloweyah to net fishing
- 1909 Informed not necessary to close part of river to netting.
- 1910 New Fisheries Bill to be discussed (GS Briner MP)
- 1910 Amended Fisheries Bill
- 1911 Formation Northern Rivers Fishermen’s Association
- 1915 State Fisheries – Gazette Notice re prohibition of Fish Traps
- 1916 Grievances in industry discuss with Mr Black Chief Secretary
- 1918 GW Fuller Chief Secretary of NSW officially opened the State Depot At Ilarwill. Oversupply of fish. Depot could not take the fish.
- 1920 Formation Clarence River Fishermen’s Association.
- 1921 Iluka Fishermen Union to rejoin NSW Licensed Fishermen’s Union

- 1923 Fishing Act amendment – re meshing nets length size of mesh
- 1926 Chief Secretary – proposal to amend law to extend the powers of the Fisheries Department re better marketing.
- 1928 To Chief Secretary re prohibition of nets and traps in Yamba waters – Yamba Bay. Strictly regulate fish traps.
- 1930 New Fisheries Bill – suggestions. Company formed to be known as Clarence River Co-operative Fisheries Ltd.
- 1933 Regulation re lawful length of prawns.
- 1934 Mr Chaffey, Chief Secretary – prepare New Bill – “to exercise stricter control in the protection and conservation of fisheries”.
- 1935 Amended Fisheries Bill to Legislative Assembly
- 1935 Bill eventually passes
- 1937 Chief Secretary appointed on Advisory Council of Fisheries
- 1940 Department blamed use of long lines and changed lawful length of fish. To become law in December 1942
- 1946 Clarence River Fishermen’s Co-op Society formed.
- 1947 Commercial prawn industry starts
- 1949 Fisheries to be under Department
- 1992 East Coast Trawl Management Advisory Committee Management Plan changing prawn trawl plan
 1. divide fishing rights into smaller packages to sell
 2. upgrade net limits
- 1997 Accused by Minister of Fisheries of raping and pillaging fish resources. Professional fishers to meet with Premier.
- 1998 Minister for Fisheries accepted recommendations of the six Fishery Management Advisory Committees.
- 2001 NSW Government urges Commonwealth Government to ban imported green prawns. Disease.
- 2002 Carr Government ban on certain areas of the river to commercial fishing activities. Eddie Obeid, Fisheries Minister. No river closure.

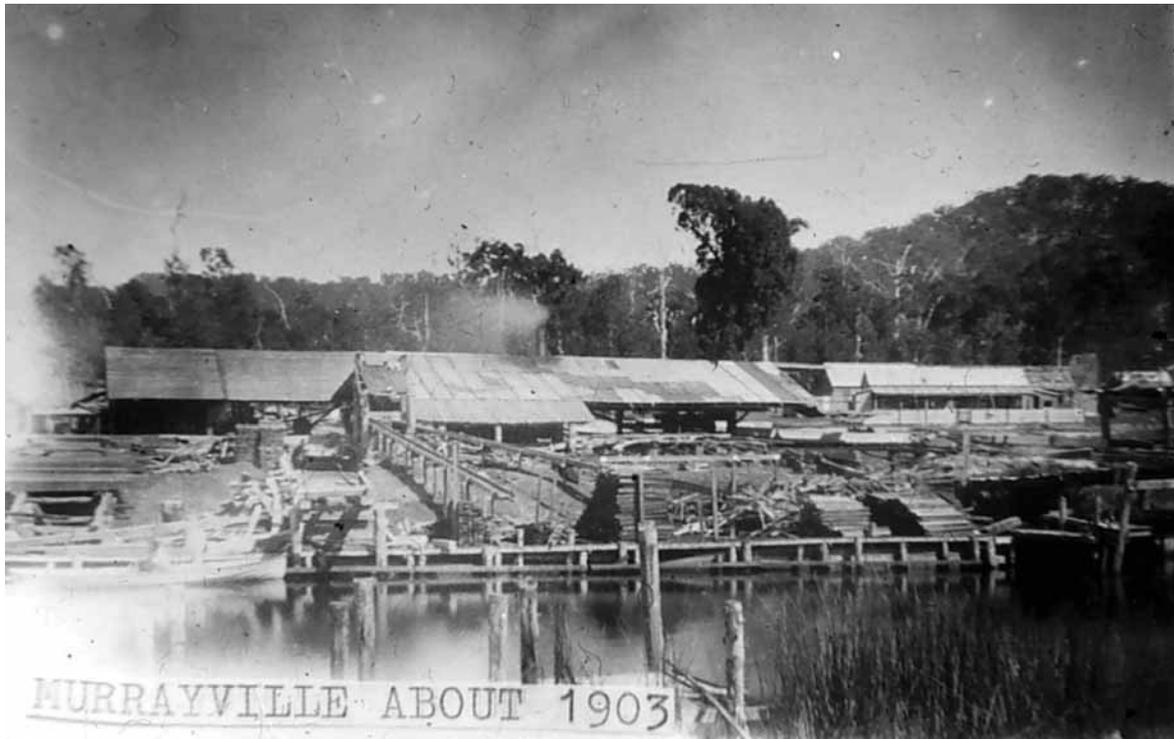
CHAPTER 8 TIMBER

8.1 Red Cedar

Of all the valuable timbers in the sub tropical forests of this area, Australian red cedar (*toona ciliata*) was the first to be cut but did not have any permanency. First, the Small family was the major supplier settling on Woodford Island and cutting and transporting cedar back to Sydney.

The first sawmill was built in the 1860's, but many pioneers were using pit saws, cross cut saws to cut any timber for the construction of their original slab huts, and then the pioneer homes.

At the turn of the century, major timber production took place at Murrayville – Cormicks Creek area, near Tullymorgan. The Murray Brothers were the proprietors of this very progressive industry.



8.2 Shark Creek Mill

In 1872, James Gallagher started a sawmill on the eastern bank of Shark Creek. This mill worked successfully for 10 years. His steamboat “Maggie” transported the logs and timbers around. Sometimes timber was loaded on to square end barges and towed by “Maggie” around the river – some being loaded onto visiting sailing ships, which entered the Clarence River to procure cut timber for Sydney and New Zealand trades.

The Gallagher saw mill was transferred to Mangrove Creek in 1882, and then to Maclean where the Gallagher sons Patrick and Francis operated this sawmill from 1910. Gallaghers also made and supplied wooden casks for the meatworks at Ashby and Ramornie.

8.3 Logging

In the NSW Parliamentary Papers of 1908 after a Commission was held in the Shire Hall, Maclean it is recorded that witnesses Fred Stoy, William NR Waugh, Patrick Gallagher, Richard Benson, James Plater, Frank Essex, William Essex and Anton Kempnich were questioned. However, no reason has yet been found as to why the Commission was called, but it is presumed that it was about the possibility of more Crown Land near Clarence Peak being released to logging operations. Saw millers and teamsters needed more logging land but it was conceded that forests should be conserved. Grey gum, turpentine, mahogany, blackbutt, stringy bark and iron bark were some of the timbers in demand. No mention was made regarding the planting of trees, the consensus being if forests were left alone for 20 years, there would be natural regrowth to recut the forest. Today, tree plantations are a new growth industry where NSW State Forests have a number of joint ventures with landholders.

8.4 Bullock Teams

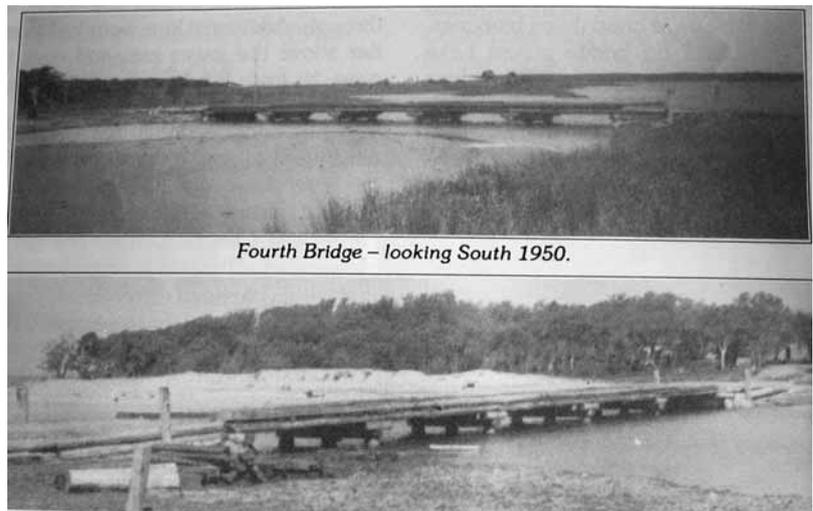
The Preston family used bullock teams to haul logs out of the forests where they owned 188 acres of bush land in the Sandon River area. Prestons worked in the forests, getting timber from the late 1930's to the late 1970's. In 1995, National Parks and Wildlife Service bought the Preston property thus taking over control of Candole and Redroot State Forests.

Prestons used to supply timber to George Forrester who owned a sawmill in Maclean (present site is the Maclean Bowling Club). Blackbutt, Brush Box, Iron Bark, White Mahogany and other hardwood species were cut for long lengths required for boat building and power poles. Some Iron Bark poles were 70' – 80' in length and many went to the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Similar timbers went to Middleton Harbour in New Zealand.

8.5 Chain Saws

Up to 1950, timber was felled and "cleaned" by hand using an axe or a two-man handsaw. In the 1950's, the Prestons purchased a chain saw, the first one on the Clarence River. This transformed the timber industry dramatically.

In 1945, Preston Brothers using their bullock teams, hauled logs into position to build the first Brooms Head Bridge.



Numerous people had camps in the bush usually near waterholes where water was available for the people and the bullock teams. Places such as "Bosches Waterhole", of

the 1920's; Plater Flat in the 1930's (Platers cut sleepers), Fishers Flat, Testament Flat, Fantail Flat, Hayleys Flat, owe their names to early timber getters and can be identified on recent topographical maps.

Government restrictions for environmental and commercial reasons have reduced the scope of the timber industry but some businesses still exist, such as Big River Timbers at Junction Hill, Notaras Bros at South Grafton, Mathers Sawmill (formerly Forresters) at Ashby and other small private mills, such as Brownings, one at Tucabia and one at Tyndale, still provide small specialised orders for locals.

CHAPTER 9 MINING

9.1 Sand mining

Mining in the Lower Clarence area is restricted in that its geological formation is sedimentary. Thus, sand mining became the most important but controversial activity, with some attempts at coal mining.

“Enter into a discussion on the merits and disadvantages of mining and sand dunes for rutile, zircon and allmenite” and the controversy begins.

The first inkling of what was to come appeared in the late 1960’s when Premier Lewis advised by the Simms Committee, recommended the mining of sand in coastal National Parks.

Before 1960, the sand mining activities commenced in 1934 on the North Coast at Yamba, Ballina, Byron Bay and New Brighton.

In 1925, HG Raggart, geologist, reported the existence of rutile in the black sand of the North Coast. These deposits derived from the older rock sand became concentrated by wave and wind action and sea level.

The Raggart Report was noted by the Titanium Alloy Manufacturing Company of America. Their principal interest was in zircon that was used in foundry facings.

9.2 Mining at Yamba and surrounds

Titles were taken up after the engagement of State Geologist from New York State had visited the area. Beaches around Yamba, Iluka and Angourie were targeted.

In 1934, mining started in the rich, heavy, black mineral sand deposits on a beach at Yamba, where loading was done by hand into a hand-drawn dray and taken to the plant in a shed near Yamba. The white silica sand was washed out on a Wilfrey table, and the heavy zircon, rutile and allmenite concentrate was dried, bagged and shipped overseas, first by steamer from Maclean to Sydney and then to America.

Expansion at Yamba occurred when a tramline was erected on the beach and hopper trucks were loaded by hand and taken to a separation plant.

Beaches at Angourie and Iluka were worked in a similar manner. By 1943, during the War, demand for rutile declined. This ended the sand mining activities.

In the late 1960’s, Cudgen RZ operated sand mining leases around Brooms Head, with a further plan for mining in the village adjacent to the houses as well as the southern beach terrace. There was strong opposition from the Brooms Head Trust to the Land Board and Government and the Mines Minister, Mr Fife. By March 1975, the Minister handed the decision ‘to mine or not to mine’ to the Maclean Shire.

By July 1975, the Council was under threat by the miners and reversed its decision. The new Mines Minister, Mr Hills, encouraged by Don Day MP, the village and the threatened terrace were withdrawn from the lease.

In the early 1980's, McGearys were looking at the remaining dune outside the village.

Cudgen RZ Limited also operated two dry mining plants between Brooms Head and Angourie. In addition, at Iluka during 1970-71, a large plant was in production. All concentrates from Yamba, Iluka and Brooms Head were taken to Cudgen for final processing.

Another company, Dillingham Mining Company, operated on the fore dunes at Yamba and southwards.

One sidelight to the mining operations was the covering of the Yamba cemetery with 20 feet of sand, in the area beyond the present-day golf club. Sandhills had already started this in the early 1900's.

Another sidelight was the use of bitou bush for the rehabilitation of the sand dunes, after mining. This bitou bush could now be classed as an environmental disaster. Land rehabilitation groups now spend many hours of their time removing Bitou Bush. Council has regular spraying activities to try to control its spread.

The Iluka Nature reserve became the subject of controversy 1962-1964 between sand mining interests and conservationists. The latter group prevailed owing to the importance of the Reserve for its tree, plant and bird life.

9.3 Coal Mining

Maclean once had a small experience with coal mining. In 1860, a seam of coal was found at Lawrence. In 1870, Robert Laird, licensee of the Maclean Hotel had a hobby of gold fossicking and came upon a seam of coal 'cropping out in the gully about a mile and a half east of Mr A Cameron's Store'—which was in River Street, Maclean.

With a sample taken and inspected, a lease was taken out and a company formed. Boring apparatus was obtained and in consequence, coal was found "84' down, with a thickness between 6-7'."

Coal fever developed and as reported, "The coalmines at Rocky Mouth give a promise of importance". Enthusiasm continued when another find was at Woombah.

A visit to the area by Mr McKenzie, Government Inspector of Coalfields, in 1874, dampened all enthusiasm and no seams were sufficient to be profitable.

In 1850, it was reported that interest was renewed for coalmining leases. In 1884, Rocky Mouth Coal Company was formed. Activity continued with shareholders paying to a fund for equipment to drill deeper into the ground. Hopes were dashed again.

However, in 1892, the company reformed to become the Maclean Coal Mining Company—where an attempt was made to remove coal. A wooden shadoof of lifting equipment was visible in the 1950's.

Seismic surveys in recent years show a good seam of coal on the Tyndale—Pillar Valley grid, but too deep to even consider mining. This seam is very narrow but lengthy—but too deep.

9.4 Gold Mining

Not within our locality, but should be mentioned was the alluvial gold extraction at McAulay's Lead, in Parish of Esk, well north of Iluka, in the precinct of the top of Esk River, west of the monument of the crash of the F111.

“The gold is very pure and realises as much as £ 4.5.6 **per ounce**”.

A payable working man's goldfield. Names such as Everson, Badcock, Smith, Drury, Moss, Wallbank, Hawker, Young and Jackson, Langer, Leeson, Eyles, Blanch **are** associated with this venture, the promoters being Angus and Alexander McAulay.

A boarding house, owned by Mr Smith, and a school were built within the vicinity of the mining area. These projects were very short-lived.

9.5 Quarries

The removal of the hard sandstone within our area was mainly for the building of the stone walls within the mouth of the Clarence River for improvement of navigations to the Clarence River. Large quarry sites can still be seen at Angourie, where the Blue Pool, the Green Pool and the quarry, out the front on the rock flats at Angourie, provide recreational activities.

Quarrying for the Harbour Works first took place on the northeast side of Pilot Hill, Yamba, in 1862. These works were then relocated to Angourie in the 1890's and then to Ilarwill on Woodford Island in the early 1900's.

Many detailed books and articles have been written detailing the Port Works Walls, their construction and statistics regarding these projects. Other quarries were also in the area. In Maclean, at the eastern end of Stanley Street, is the quarry, which was used for construction of many large historic buildings in Maclean, such as the Catholic Church, the Brewery, Stone Cottage and foundations of the Maclean Public School. This quarry in 2004 has the housing for pumps for the North Coast Water pipes.

Newmans Quarry on the Jackybulbin – Tullymorgan Road, is a large concern, supplying huge sandstone boulders for the recent upgrade of the breakwaters, north and south, at the river mouth. Another use of the stone from the quarries was the crushed stone used as foundations for many roads, and the stone used for riverbank protection and levee wall constructions.

Many farms have very small quarries; still evident and identified by drill holes in the remaining hole left from the quarrying.

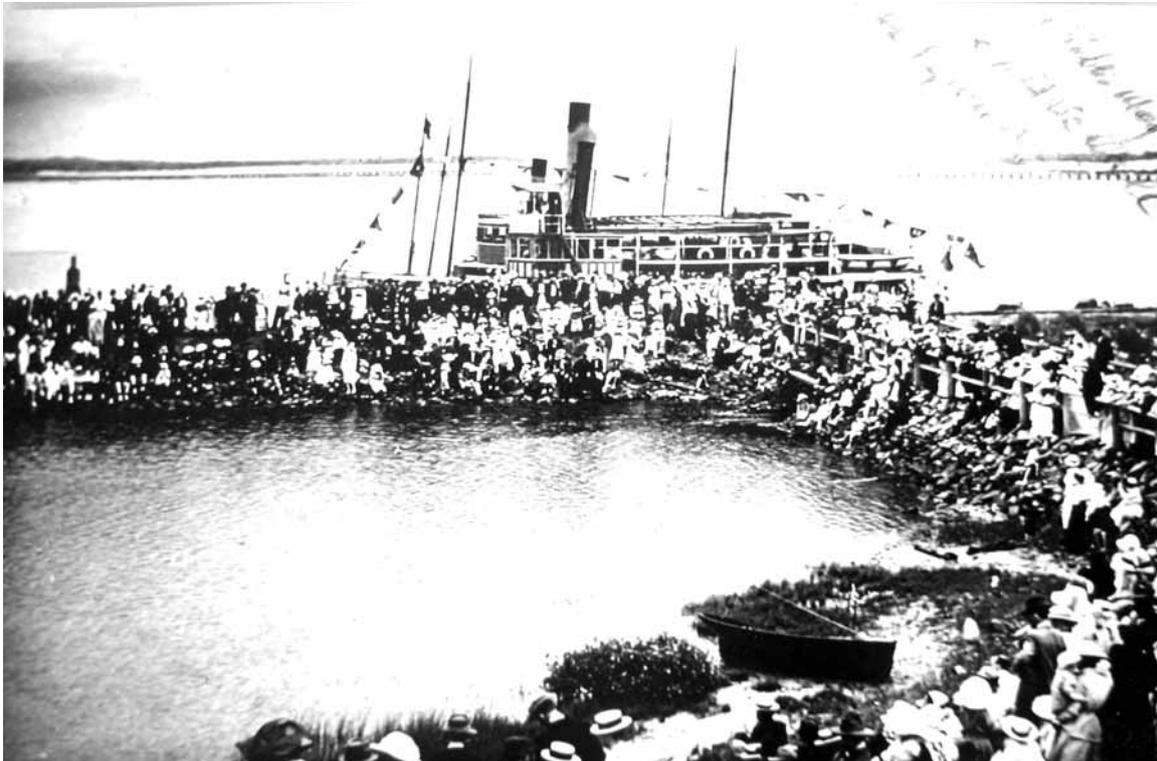
CHAPTER 10 TOURISM AND RECREATION

10.1 Beginnings of a major growth Industry

Tourism is a major growth industry of the Lower Clarence, and this growth makes it impossible to cover all areas. The main regions therefore, have been chosen to provide an overview of development.

The coastal strip and its beaches have been the dominant feature for growth in the whole valley, since the early beginning of settlement in our area.

The excursions to the coast, mainly Yamba and Iluka on riverboats on the Clarence River were the commencement of the tourism industry of the present. This was the first public transport system and provided hundreds of people with the opportunity to go on regular excursions.



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“Iolanthe”, “Favorite”, “Clarence”, “Osprey”, “Lorna” were the names of some of the river boats that plied the Clarence River, visiting Yamba, Iluka, following the many rowing regattas, visiting main events such as Highland Gatherings and Shows at Maclean. These riverboats were heavily involved in the social, recreational and entertainment activities for the people of the Clarence River.

Promoters, such as Grafton’s Clarence River stores, McKittricks, Gerards, Pullens, plus other small boat owners, provided many river excursions as well as berthing at small wharves along the river to pick up farm products. Wharves were dotted all along the banks of the Clarence River and its major tributaries such as the North Arm and to a lesser degree, the South Arm.

Yamba was the main disembarking area for hundreds of people going on excursions, particularly Christmas—New Year period. Iluka had many visitors coming into the small village by the riverboats.

In the 1870's, people were using bullock tracks from Maclean to Yamba, via Taloumbi.

The first real improvement came with the ferries being installed on many crossings.

Yamba was very isolated because of poor accessibility by road. In 1863, a road between Grafton and Yamba was proposed. Unbridged rivers, channels, and creeks were the barriers for road development. It was not until 1898 that embankments and bridges were built at Romiaka and Micalo Islands, and by 1911, the first Oyster Channel Bridge was completed. Roads developed, but were corrugated, boggy and sandy. Slowly, by the 1920's, service cars were starting to operate. It was not until 1957 that the whole road to Yamba was fully sealed. In the 1930's an extensive section of the Grafton—Yamba road had been sealed or concreted during the Depression. Yamba boomed once the roads were trafficable. Tourism became the major development, but Iluka, Brooms Head and Angourie were not developing at this time.

Access to Iluka Woody Head was via three vehicular ferries with the Iluka ferry often stranded on sand banks during low tide. With the opening of the Woombah Iluka road over Weiley Bridge on the Esk River in the 1960's, Iluka and Woody Head received many tourists. These places started to boom, and now are very popular and growing all the time. Facilities such as caravan parks, units, resort type homes, shops, and clubs are making them very popular holiday destinations.

10.2 Brooms Head

Brooms Head developed as a squatter settlement of tents and low cost beach front shacks were built, with the families travelling by a dray, with the food supplies. Holidays ceased once the food ran out. Rock pools, safe beaches, especially for young children, and fishing activities made Brooms Head an ideal family holiday resort. In 1897, a trust was formed to care for the reserve. The famous Norfolk Island Pines were planted. By 1942, there were 42 permanent permissive occupancy residences. In 1964, Brooms Head was proclaimed a village with Crown land excised from the reserve, subdivided and gradually released under freehold.

Development of Brooms Head was rapid once it was declared a village. Electricity 1964, sealed road 1973, water supply 1978, permanent caravan park 1987, are a few of the many developments that made Brooms Head the booming village it is now in 2006. Brooms Head is surrounded by Yuraygir National Park. Due to Brooms Head's popularity, there are no more land sites available and homes for sale at the Broom bring record prices.

In 1965, the 'huts', and 'shacks' along the beachfront had to go, by order from the Department of Lands. Six months was given to remove and tidy up the hut sites, and occupants of the unique dwellings were given a chance to build on a new subdivision in Ocean Road, or for the lucky ones, some only had to move across the road.

10.3 Angourie

Angowrie/Angourie was a very small settlement until the quarry opened in the 1890's. Angourie was a 'calico settlement'—tents mushroomed. The quarries closed but Angourie remained, with cabins being built there and a small general store provided supplies in the 1940's and 50's. The present Yamba Angourie road follows the old tramline or light rail line. This explains why the road is straight.

In 1969, a National Park was announced and this now surrounds the village of Angourie. Angourie also developed as a world renowned surfing area and this promotion saw the village develop into the present day exclusive destination for tourists. Modern surfing (Board riding) began in 1956 when American surfers brought so-called Malibu surfboards to Australia during the Melbourne Olympics. These Malibu boards were lighter, faster, more manoeuvrable and allowed people of all ages, especially the young, to surf. The development of surfing coincided with the development of youth and the pop culture. Pop music, Elvis, the Beatles, and surfing beach culture was predominantly Australian and Californian. The Beach Boys, surfing, movies, fashions etc., Angourie and this culture are intertwined.

Why Angourie is special in surfing legend:

1. Quality of its waves, and their unique shape
2. To have a perfect wave several factors have to converge. This only happens in few places in the world. For example, the right orientation (direction into the ocean), the right permanent as opposed to shifting, a sand bank bottom, with the right bottom contour to produce the perfect wave.

Add these factors to the mythology of the Angourie Crocodile, the natural environment, flora and fauna and its sense of isolation. It adds up to a truly unique piece of Australia's history.

10.4 The Coastal Strip

Places along the coastal strip such as Minnie Waters, and Woolli developed dramatically once bridges and roads were built. Now in all areas the influx of tourists along the coastal strip has increased and the building boom for provision of private homes and investment and rental properties, continues at a great pace. The lack of saleable land along the coastal strip is now seeing development and subdivisions, moving up along the Clarence River itself. Areas such as Woombah, Gulmarrad and Townsend, are ever expanding, but places like Minnie Waters, Woolli, Sandon River, Angourie, Brooms Head and Lake Wooloweyah are hemmed in by being surrounded by National Parks.

10.5 Recreation and Leisure

Our early pioneers had little leisure time and thus recreational activities were minimal. Gradually, by about 1890, there was more time and money to start to pursue activities and organisations started to develop.

Early in the 1890's, the Murray Brothers arrived on the Lower Clarence to engage in saw milling of hardwood timbers for contracts, mainly to New Zealand. The Murray Brothers were situated at 'Murrayville' on Cormicks Creek, the Ashby Side of Maclean. This

settlement had a school, a band, cricket and football teams, as well as the big sawmill and associated activities, for employment for many people.

Up river, around Grafton, the Clarence River Caledonian Society was active and Highland Gatherings were organised and actively sponsored by many Scottish people living on the Clarence River. Steamers would transport residents to Elizabeth Island from Yamba, Maclean, Coldstream, Chatsworth, Copmanhurst and Grafton.

By 1894, Lower Clarence members of the Grafton Caledonian Society decided to hold a Highland Gathering at the Maclean Showground. Tracks for running and Highland Games were laid down and a platform for dancing and piping events was built. Wrestling and wood chopping also took place. This was the birth of the Highland Gathering's annual event held in Maclean and now is an ever-growing tourist and recreational activity.

Samuel Macnaughtan built a drill hall in Maclean for use by the Scottish Rifles. Drill, musketry practices and parades, concerts, dances, as well as formation of football teams, and rifle shooting, evolved and added a new community dimension to life in the district.

When the Caledonian Hall was built, this became a meeting place for newly formed organisations. Burns Night Concerts and the first picture, 'Robbery under Arms' was shown in 1910. This popular meeting hall was moved to a more central part of River Street and became the Hollywood Picture Theatre.

10.6 Scottish Tradition

Scottish tradition continues with Maclean being proclaimed "Scottish Town in Australia" in 1988. Described as a 'town replete with tartan and other Scottish icons', visitors are amazed at the 'tartan' image being visible everywhere. Telegraph poles with their painted tartan bands, school uniforms displaying Maclean tartan, bright banners lining the main street, and the Scottish Cairn in Harwood Street all add to the encouragement made by social and civic activists to promote tourism and recreational development in this region.



10.7 Other Tourist Attractions

Another major tourist attraction within the area is the Annual Agricultural Show at the Maclean Showground. In 1892, the Lower Clarence Pastoral and Agricultural Society had the necessary piece of land to promote the development of a very scenic, natural amphitheatre, showground. By 1896, after years of development by voluntary

labour, the first Agricultural Show was held. This activity is an annual event, bringing in many tourists and travelling participants.

The Showground, now under the control of the Clarence Valley Council (Maclean Shire up until 2004), is used regularly for cricket, football, rodeos, pony clubs, arts & craft displays, meetings, play group, circus site, Relay for Life, farmers' markets and others.

It is impossible to examine all sports, sporting club activities and sporting amenities that have developed in Maclean and surrounding areas, but two very important activities, Yamba Surf Life Saving Club and the various Rowing Club developments will be briefly outlined

Rowing was the dominant sport in the early years and attracted thousands of spectators, many coming on the riverboats to view the activities. Chatsworth Island and Harwood Island were the main venues for regattas before the Lower Clarence Rowing Club, still in existence, was formed in 1885. In 1886, the first regatta was arranged for the local club. Rowing has been a very strong supportive activity for many, children in particular, with Iluka Rowing Club, Maclean High School Club and the Lower Clarence Rowing Club, all working in close liaison to provide and participate in many regattas. At present the South Arm course is the official course, named after Henry Searle, from Esk Island, who became a world champion sculler in 1889. Originally, many Maclean regattas were held at the Boulevard area of the Maclean CBD, where the second rowing club shed was built. This, of course, did not receive registration status because the river area was prone to unfavourable weather, particularly winds. Thus, the course was moved to the South Arm. In 1999, with the help from a grant from the Sports Commission for promotion of the Olympic Games 2000 Sydney, a modern rowing shed was built on land that was part of Maclean High School, on agreement that High School and Rowing Club boats could be stored there.

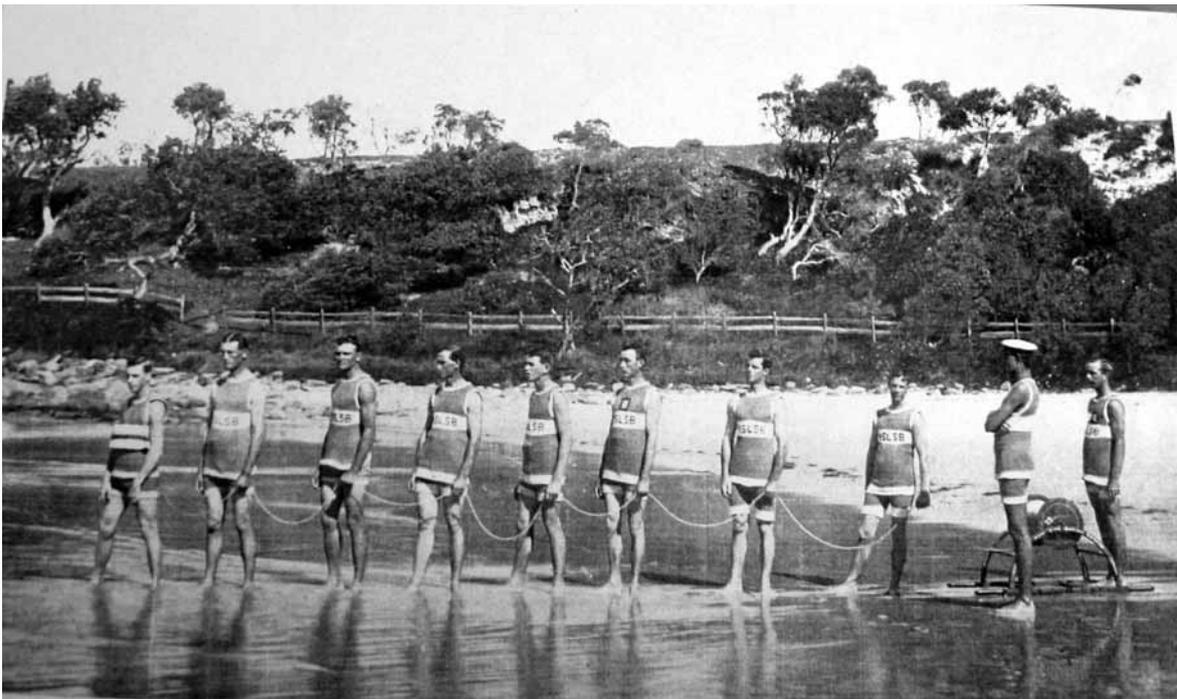
In 1881, the Lower Clarence Turf Club was formed and a Jockey Club came into existence in May 1892. Because the track was subject to flooding and was 2 ½ 'miles' out of town, this venture did not continue for long. Picnic Race meetings had been held in the 1980's but due to various safety requirements, these were also abandoned. Yamba, James Creek and Lawrence held Picnic Races occasionally.

Cricket is very strong on the Lower Clarence. A Lower Clarence Cricket Club was formed in 1878 with social matches being arranged with the Upper Clarence and throughout the Lower Clarence. Maclean matches were played in Macnaughtan's Paddock, now the site of Maclean Public School. Outdoor functions and picnics were often held on these grounds. Games were played between Clubs and picnics were often held. Games were played between Clubs from Ulmarra, Tyndale, Palmers Island, Brushgrove, Yamba, and Harwood with a major tournament between Upper Clarence and Lower Clarence. Today this trend continues and all senior Clubs promote junior cricket.

Football was being played in Maclean on a social basis in the 1880's. Maclean Rugby Football Club was formed in 1892 with the uniform being maroon jerseys, socks and cap and white pants. Macnaughtan's Paddock was the venue. Then for many years football teams competed on the "Oval", the present Centenary Drive, car park and nearby area. These matches were played on a Saturday afternoon. After a somewhat bitter controversy, they were also played on Sunday as well. In modern times, once the Maclean Shire took control of the Showground it became the venue for the 'Magpies' Lower Clarence team, to play matches against teams in the Group 2 Football Zone (Grafton, Casino, Lismore, Byron Bay, Kyogle, Ballina).

During the summer season, the Yamba Surf Life Saving Club, through the Maclean Shire Council initiatives, provides members for patrol of beaches at Yamba Main Beach, Turners Beach, Pippi Beach, Brooms Head, Iluka Bluff Beach. The Surf Club members are Clarence River wide residents, mainly being Grafton residents, who mostly are holidaying in Yamba. Maclean Shire residents are very strong patrol members too.

Yamba SLSC was formed in 1908, Yamba Surf Life Saving Brigade making it one of the oldest in the State. Coogee Surf Life Saving Brigade, then the champion club of NSW visited Yamba, giving instructional principles to the new Club and providing surf reels, life lines and surf belts to the Club to make Yamba operational.



The Shire of Harwood constructed two public dressing sheds. The first clubhouse was built in 1913. Before 1908, Harwood Shire provided life buoys and ropes for protection of surfers who may get into difficulties in the surf. Following a daring rescue of Samuel Dhu by two local identities, Walter Freeburn and Clarrie Redman, and with over 2000 visitors in the holiday resort, agitation for a surf club became a reality.

Yamba Club has produced some outstanding surfers and beach event contenders, some of whom have represented the Club at State, national and international levels. These include Rex (“Tiger”) Teece (a true legend), “Ginger” Moloney, John Blackadder, the Doughertys, (especially Bill and Jim), Geoff Sanders, Bob Zuill, George Mills, John Hassall, Barry Cribb, John Schwinghammer and Max Godbee. Budding champions of the surf currently include Alyce Bennett and Jacob Lollback so the fine record continues and the Club remains very strong. The junior “Nippers” Club was formed in 1966 and with great success. It is a source of future membership for the Club.

Perusing through local newspaper sporting columns and reports of sporting activities, the expansion of sporting activities available is so extensive this brief outline cannot cover all. Golf, lawn bowls, tennis, netball, shooting, surf board riding, yachting, canoeing, speed boat activities, swimming clubs, water polo, and the more passive activities such as walking and hiking are just a few that encompass recreational activities within Maclean Shire.

Our two National Parks, Bundjalung and Yuraygir, provide recreational activities such as surfing, swimming, bush walking, skin diving, rock platform discovery, night bush walks, exploring and other activities. Camping is permitted within confined areas of the National Parks, such as Woody Head, Redcliffe and the Sandon River. The Iluka Rainforest reserve—World Heritage listing, provides very exciting discovery walks to view the rich vegetation, and bird and animal life.

CONCLUSION

The most defining trend has undoubtedly been increased mobility and transport combined with communication, cars, roads, bridges, rail to the Internet, plane travel, telephone, electricity have all led to centralisation. Small settlements and their schools have gone as have their community halls in some cases. The river is no longer crucial to transport in Maclean Shire, the riverboats have gone.

Farming remains as a dominant activity but is greatly challenged due to a reliance on sugar cane and that product's parlous world price. Thus, globalisation (transport, communication) is directly impacting on the entire valley. What will happen if farming is no longer viable? Dairying was regulated out of existence! The life for everyone is easier, hand ploughing with draught horses to tractors, cane harvesting not cutting. Technological change in the home has facilitated women in the workforce.

The early farmer settler dependent on his own resources who was virtually self-supporting, no longer exists. Many shops at Bi-Lo. The general store has gone, as have the dealer boats.

We are now plugged into the World Wide Web. Communication, entertainment, and access to information are instantaneous. We no longer rely on our inventiveness, to entertain ourselves, but on the creativity of others. All aspects of science and medical care have improved. The tragic early deaths of many have been avoided. Undoubtedly every person is under greater control, permissive occupancies would never be allowed today. Big Brother is here (Orwell's that is!) regulation is ever increasing and knows no bounds.

Sport is highly diversified and linked to technology. Surf boards, hang gliding jet skis etc although traditional sports are still played.

The technological revolution has replaced many menial but also many worthwhile jobs. Is the call centre better than being on the sugar boat tugs?

Tourism is seen as the next major economic activity. This will provide jobs for room attendants, porters, waiters etc. Finally, we lost the very thing this study was meant to be about, Maclean Shire. The Latin, "Utinam patribus nostris digni simus", roughly translated means, "Let us follow in the footsteps of our forefathers and be worthy".

Have we been and are we?

Much of their work still remains I hope we can preserve it and not destroy what has been passed on to us.

Doug Mackenzie March 2006

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