

## Dairies and Daydreams - Extract ...

### CHAPTER THREE – THE EARLY DAYS

UNTIL the 1860s and the passing of appropriate legislation, there was no provision for permanent settlement of the south-east corner of Queensland. The cedar cutters were gangs of itinerant workers who roamed the hills, searching for the tall stands of timber. They were not permitted to settle or build permanent dwellings.

Following the Crown Lands Alienation Acts of 1860 and 1868, many timber getters became selectors. The area around Mudgeeraba became available for selection in April 1869, and they quickly took up the land to provide a base for their families and timber getting operations. As the supply of timber lessened, they established more profitable enterprises such as dairies.

Year	portion number	selector
1868	Gilston 7a	William Duckett White
1869	Mudgeeraba 1	John Ludwig Frederich
	Mudgeeraba 2, 3 & 4	Francis McIntyre
	Mudgeeraba 5	David Pfrunder
	Mudgeeraba 11	William Simpson
	Mudgeeraba 15	William Dolan
1870	Mudgeeraba 7	David Pfrunder
	Mudgeeraba 9	Frederick Fowler
	Mudgeeraba 14	Samuel Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 12a	Edward Moss
	Gilston 2a, 3b, 5b & 6a	Francis McIntyre
1871	Mudgeeraba 21	John Dowson
	Mudgeeraba 22a	Wilhelm Schmish
1872	Gilston 55	John Veivers
	Gilston 53	David Veivers
	Mudgeeraba 26	John Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 27	Thomas Rourke
1873	Mudgeeraba 28	Isaac Rankin Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 28a	David Veivers
	Gilston 29, 66, 67 & 68	Thomas Blackett Stephens
	Mudgeeraba 24	Wilhelm Schmish
1874	Mudgeeraba 23	John Dowson
	Gilston 1b	Robert Andrews
	Gilston 69	Pierce Berigan
	Mudgeeraba 30	Wilhelm Schmish
	Mudgeeraba 24a	Walter Veivers
	Mudgeeraba 25	John Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 28	Patrick Leonard
1876	Gilston 51	David Pfrunder
	Mudgeeraba 8	Johann Kropp
	Mudgeeraba 20	Robert Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 34	James Griffith Anderson

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	Mudgeeraba 33	Wilhelm Schmish
	Mudgeeraba 50	William Laver
	Mudgeeraba 38a	William Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 37	Samuel Andrews
	Mudgeeraba 35 & 39	James Griffith Anderson
1878	Gilston 74	August Abraheim
	Mudgeeraba 41	William Laver
	Mudgeeraba 40 & 44	Samuel Andrews
	Numinbah 77	William Henry Laver
	Mudgeeraba 43	William Schmish
1879	Mudgeeraba 46	Samuel Andrews
	Gilston 83	August Abraheim
	Mudgeeraba 29 & 47	Richard Davenport
1881	Mudgeeraba 6 & 42	Isaac Andrews
1882	Mudgeeraba 52a	John Veivers
	Mudgeeraba 53	Edward Robinson Starkey
	Mudgeeraba 56a	Frederick William Starkey
1883	Mudgeeraba 16	Helena Davenport
1884	Gilston 9	Pierce Berigan
	Gilston 34	August Abraheim
	Mudgeeraba 18	Richard Davenport
	Gilston 18	Albert Abraheim
1888	Gilston 102	Richard Rathbone
	Mudgeeraba 54	Joseph Schneid
1891	Mudgeeraba 24	Carl Schmidt

The state was divided into Land Agent districts. A central town in each district boasted a Lands Office, which was run by the local Land Agent. He provided plans and information concerning the quality, rent and purchase price of viable selections. The *Government Gazette* notified intending selectors up to four weeks in advance of the availability of the land. Mudgeeraba was incorporated into the Beenleigh Land Agent's district.

The blocks were taken up under the selection scheme. The intending selector applied for the land and, after the application was accepted, he moved onto the property. Paying a minimum amount of rent, he worked hard to meet the various conditions imposed by the Crown. The selector, or his manager, was required to occupy the land and build a permanent residence.

The property had to be fenced, or improvements to the equal value of a fence carried out, during the next five years. A lease was then issued and the selector could at any time during the following five years purchase the freehold title to the land. The purchase price was determined by the quantity and quality of the land, and set accordingly. On the land, the rent was deducted from the purchase price of the block.



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Whilst blocks of land seemed amazingly cheap, most selectors were poor, and it took many years of hard work before they had sufficient funds to purchase the land. In many cases, the settlers were unable to afford the required improvements to their properties. They forfeited their land and simply walked away from the life that had promised so much, but had delivered so little. Their dreams were shattered. Precious years had been wasted on the fruitless pursuit of a piece of earth that they desired to call 'home'.

The first permanent settlers in the surrounding area were Robert Veivers and his wife, Eliza. They took up land on Boowaggan (Boobigan) Creek, a tributary of the Barrow (Nerang) River in 1861. The Manchester Cotton Company, in 1863, was the first agricultural enterprise in the area, followed by the sugar plantations in the mid 1860s.

German settlers comprised a large proportion of the first local farmers. They originally came to the Lutheran Missions that were established around Brisbane in the 1840s. These missions were eventually closed, however the families involved remained in the nearby areas. They took up land and began farming as the opportunities arose. They were industrious, hard-working people, and often their names became anglicised over the years. "Johan" became "John", "Wilhelm" became "William", and so on, as their customs and culture assimilated into the general community.

The first homesteads were built from slabs of pitsawn timber, and large sheets of bark were used, Aboriginal fashion, for the roofs. The floor was either earthen, or constructed from sawn logs, their edges chiseled level so they lay snugly against one another. The kitchen was generally separated from the main house in case of fire.

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Razors were hard to get in those days, so beards were the fashion in the bush. Cockatoos were the curse of the farmers, as they destroyed the ripening crops. The bushman's diet of salted meat was supplemented by the occasional pot of boiled duck, cockatoo or king parrot.

The results of a government census in 1871 list Mudgeeraba under the heading of 'Stations, farms, etc.' The population of Mudgeeraba is listed at thirty three, Worongary Creek at four, and Tallebudgera Creek Farms at thirty nine.

In 1876, Mudgeeraba still does not appear to have been a community of great importance. *Bailliere's Queensland Gazetteer and Road Guide* includes mention of Mudgeeraba under the heading of 'Nerang'. It informs us that:

... there are several creeks S. of the township (Nerang) ... Their names are the Mudgeeraba, Tallebudgera and the Goirumbin (Currumbin) ... The Tallai Mountain is about five miles S of the township. Communication is by ... horse to Tallebudgera. Messrs. Cobb & Co. coaches run Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. By water it is about a hundred miles (to Brisbane) and a cutter leaves here about once a fortnight. Also listed is Worongary Creek - Co. Ward - a small stream and agricultural settlement lying about five miles S. of the township of Nerang in the Parish of Gilston.

Mudgeeraba, as a township, did not begin until around the 1890s. The *Queensland Postal Directory -1889-* describes Mudgeeraba as:  
Postal district only, no township, WARD CO. Moreton district; 55 miles S.E. from Brisbane; rail to Beenleigh, thence coach 31 miles; Provisional school (at Upper Mudgeeraba); agriculture.

The first commercial building was the Mudgeeraba Hotel which was built for William Laver circa 1885. Situated near the present Uniting Church, it became the nucleus for the first small township that grew on the outskirts of the present village. A blacksmith shop operated near the hotel and the first blacksmith was H. Carmichael. Over the years, Frederick Rosin, William Berigan and J. Spillane were tenants of the shop. J.W. Daisey operated the Mudgeeraba Saw Mill, and by 1889 Isaac Andrews conducted a butchery from his "Somerset" property. The remainder of the population regarded themselves as farmers or selectors.

The Presbyterian Church was built in 1890 near the hotel. In 1892, due to a lack of any other suitable premises, a provisional school was started in the church building. The hotel was re-named the "Hampshire Terrace Hotel" in 1897 by W.H. Laver, who inherited the pub after William Laver's death. Post office facilities were established at the pub around 1895, and the Nerang Divisional Board moved their headquarters to a small shire office opposite the hotel around the same time.

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The Federation of Australia, at the turn of the century, probably had little impact on the community of Mudgeeraba. Life continued as usual. The greatest local event was the opening of the railway through to Tweed Heads in September 1903. This opened up a new route through the hinterland, and railway workers and their families boosted the population of Mudgeeraba, somewhat. Those turn-of-the-century children delighted in activities that children today still enjoy. The Bond children often ...

... walked from the railway station to Mudgeeraba Creek. We owned a small boat which was kept tied up under the bridge, and we caught catfish and eels in the creek. We watched the bullock teams as they passed through "the cutting", near the railway station. Two of the drivers were Starkey and Berigan. The railway station and the station house were surrounded by bush, and the 'road' was just a rough bush track. They hunted for possums in the bush around the railway station; they caught them in wire snares. The possums were skinned and the skins were pegged out with nails to dry. When they had collected a few, they were sold to a skin buyer, and the skins were sent to Brisbane. We went to Burleigh to the beach about once a month for a picnic. Mrs Blandford took us. She had a buggy and a grey horse. (Harry Bond).

Provisions were brought by carrier from Nerang until Jas. Herbert opened a store in the rear of the newly-built nearby hall in 1902. This was replaced in 1907 by a larger store started by Isaac Andrews and his family in a small house. A Government census reveals that, in 1911, the population of Mudgeeraba stood at 166, and the town contained the services of a store, hotel and railway trucking yards for sheep, cattle and pigs.

A local midwife delivered babies and Doctor Berry came from Southport to attend to those too ill to travel. He changed horses at Nerang and rode on to Mudgeeraba with two fresh mounts. *Doctor ... Berry was the right man for the bush. He always kept two good horses ready stabled, fed and groomed, and went at full speed, hail, rain or sunshine, day or night.* (Carl Lentz).

Alfred William Compigne, the first pastoralist in the area, held the position of Beenleigh Police Magistrate. He visited Nerang once a month to prosecute offenders against law and order.

## **THE BUNYIP**

(extracts from Carl Lentz – *Memoirs and Some History*)

There was a great swamp in that valley (Merrimac) with several big lagoons in it. There were strange animals, sometimes two could be heard to roar at the same time about half a mile apart, in those long weeds, but could not be seen. It was a mystery. When the natives were asked, they said "Bunyip debil debil," which meant 'dangerous'.

Matt Heeb was duck shooting in lagoons there in 1886 and saw a monster with a very big rough mane coat and an enormous big rough long bushy tail. It dived in

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amongst the water weeds near the bank. When he told Mr Cox, a Pimpama squatter who also had a big tract of land adjoining the swamp in the Nerang Valley, Cox said it was the Bunyip, known by the Blacks, an animal not yet on natural history records. He made a verbal offer of £1,000 to anyone who could get it dead or alive. Stephens was the owner of the greatest part of great swamp in the Nerang River valley, called The Merry Mac Estate.

Needless to say, Mr Cox's £1,000 remained intact as the Bunyip was never found. Many men combed the swamp, the generous reward was no doubt a great initiative in the search for the elusive animal.

We explored those lagoons and part of the swamp. We had double shot guns loaded with swoon drops, we tried to find out its habits so we could try to catch it alive...Towards evening as we were getting ready to go home, William Laver called. When he saw the ducks he asked if we were the chaps shooting at the big lagoon, I said we were, and he asked how we got the ducks out. I told him I swam in and got them out. He said he would not go in there for a fiver, no, he would not go in there for any money...if that fellow got you it would be the end of you...He said that Jack Stanfield was mysteriously losing foals about the big lagoon...Jack was manager of the Merry Mac Estate, they had a horse stud, mares and foals running around that big lagoon. As time went on the swamps were gradually drained off, except eastwards towards Burleigh Heads. Some returned soldiers from the Boer War were trying to get the monster, but with no success...There were also Bunyip hunters up the Little Tallebudgera Creek swamp, No.1 War veterans with the same results as the previous ones. It was too cunning and wary to be caught in those labyrinths there.

There was various speculation as to the actual identity of the animal that issued the strange night-time noises. Carl Lentz concludes his story with the theory that a crocodile was the culprit; however, the mystery of the Bunyip remains unsolved, to this day.

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This book is now out of print, but you may be lucky enough to pick one up on e-Bay.

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