

# Commercial Life

Esk, Lowood and Toogoolawah have always been the main commercial centres in the Brisbane Valley. Other small centres — Tarampa, Fernvale, Coominya, Prenzlau, Dundas, Northbrook, Crossdale, Moore (Stanley Gates), Harlin, Linville, and Colinton — have served in turn the selectors, dairymen, and timbergetters. Esk was established in 1873 as a mining town serving the Eskdale and Upper Cressbrook Creek copper mines. Lowood was established in 1884 as a railway town. Toogoolawah eclipsed both after 1904 when the railway arrived and large estates were cut up for dairymen. The population of each has boomed and waned according to the industries. Today Lowood has the largest population.

All are conservative rural towns founded on the class traditions of their German and Scandinavian founders and British pastoralists. All were developed to serve stable populations of dairymen and fluctuating groups of railwaymen and timbergetters who patronized hotels and cafes, minting wealth for their owners. Today the towns serve a highly mobile population, as Australia goes through a period of localized boom but over all high unemployment and greater physical mobility.

From the 1840s to the 1860s the pastoralists at Cressbrook, Mount Brisbane, Colinton, Eskdale, and Buaraba all ran station stores and their loyal workmen stayed for years. Cressbrook, in particular, had a private town with school and chapel. However, the Main North Road from Ipswich to the Burnett provided the artery of commerce, mostly sly-grog selling, until a hotel was established near Sandy Creek in 1872 and the camping spot developed into Esk town, known officially as Gallanani for several years.<sup>1</sup>

Esk highlights its central gardens established in 1936 and tended for many years by council gardener, 'Khaki' Drew. He was ever mindful of those who used it as a shortcut from the hotel to the butcher shop so he erected wire to deter them. When Johnny Loughran found his way impeded he snipped the barrier with the farm wire cutters and proceeded to the shop.

The townscape features numerous Queenslanders, notably Lars Andersen's house, the Club Hotel on the northern end of town and listed by the National Trust, the *Esk Record* newspaper

building, recently used as a real estate agent's office. Martin's double story timber shops, formerly a newsagency, has run through a miscellany of purposes in recent years. Other fine timber buildings remaining include the Staging Post Inn, formerly the impressive Metropole Hotel, the Anglican church and rectory, part of Sturgess's garage which still sells petrol, and Johnny Monson the lamplighter's house in Ann Street. The street scenes have changed markedly. When once farmers cantered into town carrying a cut-down kerosene tin for the salt meat, today the Saturday morning scene comprises city highway travellers, the weekenders and hobby farm enthusiasts up from the city and local retired people. In years gone by farmers came into town regularly on Saturday; each man's particular laughter was instantly recognizable and remembered by his friends after his passing. Men leaned against hitching posts, in the early 1950s damming the state government, advocating butter subsidies and arguing over butterfat levels while their wives flitted from shop to shop buying food. Today the cafes are filled at lunch-time with leisure seekers coming to the Valley of the Lakes.

When the mines opened in 1872 during the world-wide copper boom there was only one accommodation house on the eastern side of Sandy Creek. It had been opened by Michael O'Sullivan in 1872 and was called The Travellers' Home. That encouraged the government to have a town survey done. Surveyor H.E. Blake was instructed on 2 October 1872 to survey a town site in one acre lots near Sandy Creek, out of the three hundred acre Camping Reserve on Mount Esk run. The commercial and administrative area of the town began on the eastern side of Sandy Creek and remained there until well after the railway arrived in 1886. One of the first storekeepers to operate from the western side of Sandy Creek, near where the Shire Council Chambers currently are, was Patrick Clifford who came from Goodna to the mines but quickly saw that a store would be a more secure income. Many Cressbrook people quickly bought land there and by 1873 there were about six buildings in the town.<sup>2</sup>

James George Percy took over the licence of Glenrock Accommodation House as the Travellers' Home Hotel became known, in 1873. He was also



Broad and East's shops in Esk. 1905.

John Oxley Library

Post Master and provided free accommodation to the Burnett mailman. In 1875 the licence was transferred to John Moore whose wife, Mary, eventually transferred the licence back to Percy on 22 May 1877. Percy installed a relative, Mrs Caroline Lucy Pitt, formerly of the Star and Garter Hotel, St Kilda, as manager. She really improved the hotel but dispensed with the garden. The Glenrock hotel was seventy by thirty feet, with bar, dining room, private parlour, ten bedrooms and a large room suitable for public meetings and dances. Closer to the bank of Sandy Creek was the Royal Hotel, opened in 1878 by licensee, Edward McDonald, who had worked for the McConnells for many years. It was forty-eight by twenty-eight feet, well built with large bar with billiard and bagatelle tables, dining and parlour rooms and six bedrooms.<sup>3</sup>

In 1875 there was enormous controversy over the provision of a decent bridge over Sandy Creek. The Roads Engineer had organized that a foot of pitched stone and two seventy feet logs be placed across the creek as a causeway in July 1875. Some fifty local residents immediately petitioned the government requesting a pile bridge above known flood levels. They were successful in 1878.

By then Esk, known variously as Gallanani, Mount Esk, Sandy Creek, and Glenrock, was growing steadily. The name which prevailed was Esk, after the pastoral run on which the copper was discovered, Eskdale, itself named after the Esk River and Esk Dale in Scotland. The long uneven

main street was studded with horse teams like a mining town; there was the unfenced lockup and police station, the Post and Telegraph office run by Mr Warrener, Mrs Moore's temperance hotel (forty by thirty feet with six rooms) and store opposite, Tills and Tinsley's butcher shops, school, McDonald's Royal Hotel, and Presbyterian Church. There was a visiting doctor and Robert Henderson was the local agent for the *Queensland Times*, a newspaper published in Ipswich. Although there were many selectors developing their farms there was still little agriculture underway. Mount Esk station supplied the town with chaff and hay for horses.<sup>4</sup>

A new hotel was erected in 1884 by Thomas Welsh and McDonald extended the Royal in the wake of the railway construction and the opening of sawmills by Blank and Lars Andersen. Residents held a local poll in 1886 over the issue of new hotels; both sides canvassed energetically. Banners like 'Vote Against the Drink', 'Save the Children' and 'Dare to do the Right' were paraded. Some ratepayers travelled long distances to vote and 120 people voted out of 500 enrolled ratepayers. The hotel lobby was defeated 65 to 55.<sup>5</sup>

During the nineties town growth was slow as a result of the flood and the depression. Town allotments were expensive, there was no housebuilding and some families shared accommodation. The number of passing mobs of cattle declined so cattle sales ceased. There were three hotels — T. Webb's Commercial, J. Vernon's

Central and E. McDonald's Royal, three stores belonging respectively to the Chaille Brothers, Thompson and Francis, and P. Clifford.<sup>6</sup>

In 1902 most businesses moved over to the western side of Sandy Creek near the railway. Cafes and bakers sprang up. The Carew sisters, Edith and Ethel, were two who worked energetically serving meals to railwaymen and coining the pounds in Whitehouse's recently erected Central Cafe. Their brother was the baker for Whitehouse and Sam Porter the pastry cook. The prospering timber industry, the expansion of dairying, the proposed Esk butter factory and the construction of the railway beyond Toogoolawah attracted workers. Thompson and Francis closed down their store and moved on to Toogoolawah. They later returned and opened a huge shop near the Post Office. Callaghans opened a store beside the Royal Hotel which was still on the eastern side of Sandy Creek. A bootmaker, a cordial manufacturer, a confectioner and a dressmaker opened in new buildings in Ipswich Street. The Blank Brothers also opened a butcher shop in April 1903. E.J. Douglas Mackay B.A., barrister-at-law, commenced practice in November 1903 as did W.J. Merry the hairdresser. E. Broad opened as a fruiterer in October 1904, Lutvey opened a draper's shop in July 1905 and Lars Andersen constructed a large amusement hall in September 1905.<sup>7</sup>

In 1907 the focus of commercial life was the butter factory and sawmill at the northern end of town. Maurice Dalton, the licensee of the Central Hotel, down near the bridge over Redbank Creek, decided to move the building up to the northern end of town. Two bullock teams owned by Adam Dunlop and James Barbour pulled the hotel up to its new location; the move was a town spectacle. It was relocated near the sawmill and later renamed the Club Hotel. Dalton's daughter and a Mr Fox used to play piano and violin for the dancing entertainment in the hotel. In June 1907 Dalton sold out to H.C. Vincent. At that time Jardines had the Royal Hotel, George Cooper, formerly of Laidley, the Grand in Ipswich Street, Elizabeth J. Gray sold the Commercial Hotel, which served Empire beer and had the adjacent Olympic Hall for entertainment, to Thomas W. Boody, tobacconist of Ipswich. All the hotel licensees met passengers at the railway station in waggonettes. The well-known double storied sawn timber Metropole Hotel was built on the corner of Highland and Ipswich Streets in 1907 with timber supplied by Blank Brothers sawmill, and opened by J. Williams.<sup>8</sup>

The town population doubled between 1905 and

1907 to six hundred. It was the hub of the Brisbane Valley cattle industry and centre of the prosperous dairying, agricultural and timber industries. Sawn timber came from outside mills at Mount Byron and Mount Brisbane and was dressed at Esk's two mills. There were two hundred buildings in the town, twenty new ones in 1907. There were four churches, two banks (the Queensland National and the Royal), four hotels, two doctors, two solicitors, court house, police station, post office, and the *Esk Record* newspaper. T.C. Pryde and Company, stock and station agents, had just converted their premises into shops with plate glass windows, occupied by A.R. Brown, watchmaker, and E.H. Miller, solicitor. In October 1907 a whole set of shops was built for W.A. Gillmeister, a grocer, downstairs, and H.B. Bushnell, solicitor, F.A. Afflick, dentist, and Judd and Maconachie, building contractors, upstairs. By 1909 there was a wide range of business people in Esk — auctioneers (T.C. Pryde and T. Macdonald), bakers (F. Carew, James Neill and the Federal bakery), blacksmiths (J.T. Barr, Andersen Brothers and W.E. Broad), bootmakers (P. Macnamara and F. Kohler), grocers, drapers and hardware merchants (Thompson and Francis, W. Gillmeister), butcher (F. Thompson), jeweller (W. East and Company), tailors (D.J. and Joe Caesar), Joiner and cabinet maker (A.B. Eastwick), chemist and druggist (Rawlinson), billiard saloonists and hairdressers (Bill Merry and Fred Wilson). Thompson and Francis's large two story store, managed by Mr Allan, was beside today's TAB gambling shop and the BP petrol outlet, once Sturgess's garage which opened on 8 June 1931.<sup>9</sup>

The hotels were rationalized after the population declined during the war. The Royal Hotel, near the Presbyterian Church, burnt down on 16 March 1917. The premises were managed by A. McNeven and owned by M. Callaghan who also owned the Grand Hotel. The sale of the lease of the Commercial Hotel was the subject of civil litigation between John McDonald, hotelkeeper of Esk, and William T. Gray, of Toowong, over an agreement in 1916 regarding the hotel's takings. The hotel continued until 1926 when it also burnt down.<sup>10</sup>

The 1920s in Esk brought numerous economic changes with the decline in the timber industry. Joe Martin sold his Kipper Creek sawmill and moved into Esk as the newsagent in 1919 before the slump. He took over from Mrs E. Drake. He and his son operated it in Martin's double storey wooden building for fifty years. At first they collected their papers from the train in a wheelbarrow. They serviced the country areas through the sawmill and the cream lorries from the

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butter factory. They never delivered, preferring town people to collect their papers. That was good business practice and cash was the norm.

Sam Shambrook had the cordial factory across the creek from the Showgrounds in the 1920s. Leo Blank later bought it and shifted it the Elizabeth Street. Caesar Brothers were still the tailors. They employed W. McCormack as cutter and fitter and Misses K. Parsons and Clarice Tumbridge as machinists. Joe died early and D. J. Caesar died aged fifty-six in April 1931. They had come from Gympie in 1905, and once employed sixteen people in the business. They were keen musicians and advocated development for the region especially the construction of the Somerset Dam. Charles Martin and W. Wratten had a menswear store near the *Grand Hotel*. The Carews had the tea rooms and employed Elsie and Phyllis Tumbridge and M. Parsons. Peter Flaskas bought the cafe later. Bill Pratt and Jack Linnane were butchers in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>11</sup>

The 1930s were a watershed for the townscape, with the passing of the pioneering generation and the change wrought by bankruptcies and fires. The fire which destroyed the magnificent Metropole Hotel in November 1932 was the most spectacular ever in Esk. The glow could be seen for miles and the flames rose to one hundred feet. It happened late on a Saturday afternoon when most of the townspeople were out playing sport and there were only a few men in the hotel. Thought to have been started by a 'dumper' (cigarette butt) upstairs on a mat, the fire caused £5,000 worth of damage. Budd and Sons butchery, McCorkell's general store, J.G. Sturgess's garage, R.J. Slight's boot repair shop, J.W. Hurford's cafe and W.R. Dodd's pharmacy were saved by firemen. Windows in the Grand Hotel and the Lyceum Hall were broken. The Grand Hotel provided a free keg of beer to the fire fighters afterwards.

A new hotel was built immediately. The Esk Shire Council approved the plans in July 1933 and construction of the £3,000 double storey building commenced in September 1933. Ruby E. Beath was the licensee and she sold it to the Blank family in March 1934.<sup>12</sup>

Rents were cheaper in country towns so there was an influx of Brisbane people. J. Sturgess commenced his garage in June 1931. Geoffrey Bright started as a boot repair shop next to Dodd's chemist shop in August 1931. M. Vogler became the hairdresser in the Commercial Hotel. Armstrong and Marson, stock and station agents of Toogoolawah, opened a branch in Esk from 1 December 1931 with W.H. Tapsall, a farmer, as

manager. H.N.C. Bandidt, B.A., solicitor of Lowood began visiting Esk at the Grand Hotel every fortnight as the other solicitors had left. In 1932 John L. Pickitt secured the local Golden Casket agency. Miss Burnes, formerly of Allan and Stark in Brisbane, commenced business in the winter of 1932 at Miss Leggett's shop, dressmaking for 7s. 6d. per dress.<sup>13</sup>

People like Alex Smith who came in 1873 when there were only six buildings in Esk retired. Hotel licensees changed rapidly. Pat Goddard, the hairdresser and billiard table manager at the Commercial, moved to the Grand Hotel in August 1933. Pat Quinlan was the ladies and gents hairdresser at the Club Hotel. Economics gradually took its toll and on 25 March 1935 L. McCorkell commenced a huge clearing out sale of his grocery, drapery and hardware lines. Hotels, however, did very well because of the influx of workers to the Somerset Dam construction site. The well-known Chaille family had large commercial buildings in Ipswich Street which they let out for dress and variety shops like the Blue-Belle salon. Hurfords sold their bakery and cafe to W.F. Heck in December 1937, commencing a long association of the family with Esk business including the Metropole Hotel. The Pooles took over Drynan and Sons' butchery in November 1940. Joseph Bailey, who previously ran a service car to Brisbane, started a milk run in October 1936, selling milk at 6d. per quart and cream at 1s. per pint. He sold out in 1941 to George Smith and in later years 'Khaki' Drew had the run; their daily work commenced at 2am out on Drynan's farm where they bought the milk.<sup>14</sup>

The war presented new opportunities. New businesses opened. Wilfred Hawken, Councillor and English immigrant nominated by sawmiller, Edwin Broad in the 1920s, was one of the first electrical and radio dealers. Previously he had been advertising Silent Night kerosene refrigerators. D. North sold Simplex machinery, milking machines, radios and bicycles. The Club Hotel was taken over by the authorities under the *Public Safety Act of 1940* for accommodation for the Woolloowin orphanage children. In March 1942 Mrs M. McGrath, the licensee, used the old billiard room adjoining the hotel as a temporary bar. In 1947 G.N. Peters was auctioneer and commission agent, produce merchant and valuer in Esk. The butchers were R.E. Budd and E.N. Poole; R.D. Munro and C.J. Sturgess operated motor garages. Jim Strathis and Alcorns operated bakeries and cafes and McCormack and Lawrence the drapery store. Rob Rashford was the hairdresser and casket agent.<sup>15</sup>

The 1950s were slow for business, even the



Mr and Mrs E. Schmidt's home in Fernvale, a typical architectural style in the Brisbane Valley.

hotels. At the Commercial hotel, opposite Sturgess's garage, Bill Massie still served beer off the wood. The Commercial Hotel burnt down in November 1960 soon after its purchase from the Main family by Castlemaine Brewery. The fire started in the bar. The Club Hotel had both Castlemaine and Bulimba beer on tap, served by Barney Frickman, popular local sportsman. Mrs M. Frickman was the proprietress and Ann Bunker was hostess of the lounge in 1958.

The Metropole Hotel lasted until October 1974 when Mrs Violet Heck hosted a party marking the surrender of the licence. The building had been sold to J. Samios of Sydney in 1971 who planned to erect a motel and restaurant on the site. During the mid 1970s the new owner, Russell Dore, spent \$50,000 on renovations, opening the Staging Post Inn restaurant and planning a crafts market area upstairs; success grew from his ideas. He sold the enterprise to John and Marilyn Gott; Dianne Compton bought the Inn in August 1981, converted it to a guest house and restaurant, complete with hotel ghost.<sup>16</sup>

The Esk streetscape today is service and food oriented — Rod Weir's newsagency, the veterinary and agricultural supplies and electrical appliances outlet, two hotels, three motels, new bakery, two

cafes, chemist, the Co-Op store, the Staging Post Inn, post office, TAB, three petrol outlets, a Devonshire teas cosy spot by Sandy Creek, RSL and CWA halls, artist's gallery, milk depot, craft shop, four churches, Lyceum hall, and caravan park. It is all timber-fronted except for the Grand Hotel, newsagency, bakery, and brand new under-utilized brick shops. The motor car has taken the supermarket trade to Ipswich and Gatton and the fresh fields of opportunity offered by the Wivenhoe Dam have faded with the completion of construction. The business community depends on cattlemen, hobby farmers, retired people, Council employees and water sports enthusiasts travelling to the dams.

By contrast **Fernvale** started before Esk, boomed on cotton, declined in favour of the more fertile northern parts of the shire, and survives on its hotel and real estate, general store and post office. It has had numerous town characters, including staunch community workers like Ted and Mary Schmidt, Secretary of the Hall Committee for thirty-three years. The town is now growing through subdivision and proximity to Brisbane.

Stinking Gully separated Fernvale from Harrisborough in 1873. Before 1900 the town had a

range of shops, the Royal Exchange Hotel, churches, bootmaker, plumber, cotton gin, and a co-operative store. The floods ultimately ruined the cotton industry, set back agriculture, and determined the location of house sites on the hills and ridges surrounding the town for almost eighty years. Dairying became the stable industry but as farmers retired land developers bought farms for as little as \$20,000.

The town has always been along one side of the street with the public buildings, railway and park, and real estate office on the opposite side. A quiet conservative town it has slumbered economically since the railway arrived in 1884 and was used as the dividing line between Esk and Walloon (now Moreton) Shires. In the quiet fifties F. Varley was the Council representative and everyone knew everyone. Lucile Draper was the Post Mistress; as the train passed her house she walked to the railway station and wheeled the mail over the road in the dooley cart. There were two trains a day then but now the mail comes by road. The mail service out of Fernvale to the farming districts was always by road. The Leo brothers used to do it in war-time and then their sister, Rosie, aged sixteen, started. Three times a week she rode out through Vernor and round to Dundas and Bryden and stayed overnight. There was an honesty shop run by Paddy Gardiner at Dundas for bread, papers, and mail in flood-time or to camp in. The Leos had horses on all the reserves and they also grazed the 'long paddock' (road way). Later Lucile Draper went through five cars in five years and seven windscreens in one year; she took all her children with her in the car. When Mrs Barbara Parslow took over she took the dog, Bruce, in the Volkswagen and he knew where the rock wallabies were. Bill Dunning used to always check that Mrs Parslow came back out of Sim Jue road; she had an Austin A30 that did seventy miles of gravel road for seventy-three cents. Now an FC Holden is used making four cars in nineteen years. Before her the Smallwoods had an International Utility in which they used to collect calves for the saleyards. Women have been doing the mail run for thirty years now. The telephone also operated on a personalized basis; when you wanted to make a telephone call the Phelps ladies downed their knitting to assist.

The Fernvale Hall opened in 1934. The Hall Committee of Andrew Herbert Denning, sawmill owner, Thomas Phillip Smith, licensed victualler, and Alfred William Ehrick were the trustees. They bought the thirty-seven and a half perches of land from Alfred Ehrick for £20. The hall was built by Hogan and mortgaged to the National Bank of

Australia. August Stumer used to run dances during the depression. In recent years it has been used for guides, church services, play groups, discos and dances. Mary Schmidt has been Secretary since 1953. When it was extended Ted Schmidt provided logs from his farm and Dennings sawed them up at no cost to the Hall Committee. The Fernvale school centenary ball in 1974 was one of the highlights in the hall's history, with \$330 in takings and paying \$60 to the band. The Lions have since stumped and painted the hall out of funds raised in the hotel.'

Colourful citizens were the spice of Fernvale life. Ivy Burns and Frances Walsh came from a Brisbane orphanage early this century to work as maids for the Doyles at Fairney Lawn. Frances died in the early 1950s. Ivy was a super cook and cooked for the men at the Wivenhoe Dam construction site. The recipes were in her head and she turned out perfect cakes on her wood stove. Some schoolgirls even entered Ivy's cooking in the Lowood show and won prizes. Ivy loved green, everything was green. She spent her leisure time at the hotel with her numerous friends. After her death in the early 1980s, Fernvale people subscribed to put plaques on Ivy and Frances' graves.

There were real gentlemen in Fernvale like August Rubeck, the blacksmith, and well dressed English ladies like Mrs Fanny Hines. She regularly lunched with her friend, Ada Hurt, a long-time widow and a 'real dear' who loved cold refreshments in hot weather. Fanny Hines dressed well, chose fine jewellery, always had a ring of her powder puff, carried an umbrella, and enjoyed soda water at the cafe.

Other women worked hard. Bertha Fuchs (nee Stumer) ran the farm when her husband, Dick, was interned; Dick, said to have been 'interned at Alice Springs', could tell anyone anything. German women were noted for their steadfastness and energetic attitudes to agricultural production. As well many women were fine horsewomen. Sarah Schmidt rode side-saddle and could jump the horse over the Fernvale railway gates. Out at Mount Byron, Mamie Bowman was a highly-respected farm manager and horsewoman; she rode side saddle often. Highly skilled in mustering cattle she could work the cattle in the yards, and taught these skills to her nieces and nephews.

Katie Hallon lived on Muckerts Road and worked in the town. Single and grey from a young age she assisted the Austin, Prain, Parslow and Smallwood families for years. Peripatetic, she knew the whole



Part of Cressbrook Street, Toogoolawah. 1987.

*Terry Conway*

district and never accepted Social Security until well past retiring age.

The generation of Hallons, Hines, Burns, Bowmans, and the effervescent Dicks have given way to the new bred of 'selectors' braving mortgages on subdivisions without power or water, where elderly dairyfarmers were pleased to sell. The train now serves workers in Ipswich, and brick veneer houses form a patchwork landscape surrounding Fernvale.

**Toogoolawah** has developed through several cycles, all based on land values. There was a private town from the 1840s at Cressbrook, named after the district in Derbyshire, England, where the McConnells had a family home. The main town named Toogoolawah after the McConnel's Bulimba home was established with the arrival of the railway and the sale of Cressbrook estate. Situated on a gravelly ridge beside the railway the principal street, Cressbrook Street, runs from the Alexandra Hall and McConnel Park to the sawmill. The prosperity of the Nestle Company and the dairying industry laid the foundations of the town economy. At its peak in 1929 there were fifteen hundred people living in the town and five thousand within a three mile radius; when Nestle's factory closed down with the onset of the depression nineteen houses burnt down in Toogoolawah in the following twelve months.

Government Relief provided subsistence funding to unemployed factory workers who landscaped the school ground and fenced it, did drainage work in the town streets and railway yards, and road works. The dairying industry in the Toogoolawah area was able to revive by railing cream to the Esk factory; the cattle fattening industry remained vibrant and cattle sales were run by local auctioneers like Shepherdson and Boyd from the 1950s.<sup>18</sup>

When Nestle took over the factory in 1909 a number of businesses moved from Esk to Toogoolawah, notably W.C. Schank, the plumber, who obtained plenty of work from the factory. W.G. Daly came as the shoemaker and W. McCallum opened a billiard saloon in October 1907. Herbert G. Daly, auctioneer, opened for business in June 1912. Thompson and Francis opened their Toogoolawah store in 1904 when the Cressbrook estate was sold for dairy farms. As the railway provided a good time-table for shopping, people came to the Thompson and Francis store from as far away as Yarraman. Shopping hours were 8am to 6pm, with late night shopping on Friday and a half day on Saturday. Brothers Stan and Eric Baisden and manager Allan each worked there for nearly thirty years. Marcia McDonald worked there in the booming twenties. On Nestle's factory pay nights there was such a rush to the Thompson and Francis store that not all the

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customers could be served by closing time. The doors were closed and shop assistants did their best to serve customers left inside as quickly as possible. A dressmaker was employed by the store to make up materials to the desire of customers.<sup>19</sup>

Plumbers, W.C. Schank and Son, served Toogoolawah from 1909 to 1973 when they sold out to Jacaranda Hill Enterprises, Roy and Georgina Robins and sons, Chris and Paul, of Esk. The plumbing and blacksmiths shop had been in Cressbrook first and the blacksmiths shop had to close at the beginning of World War 1 because of lack of business and staff. W.C. Schank reopened the plumbing business in Fulham Street in late 1914; his son Ed became a partner in 1942. In 1941 he married Miss C. Wells of Rosewood, a teacher on the Toogoolawah Rural School staff. He served in the AIF and was a staunch supporter of the Ambulance as well as local sports. W.C. Schank died in 1956 and Ed sold the business on his retirement.<sup>20</sup>

The opening of the Toogoolawah District Co-operative Society on 9 October 1922 must have depressed Thompson and Francis's business, although the closure of the Colinton Condensed Milk factory would have helped Toogoolawah. E.C. McConnel was Chairman of Directors of the new Co-operative. There were 220 local shares bought at the initial public meeting in November 1921 and Esk Co-operative Dairy Association bought ten shares also.<sup>21</sup>

In 1924 Toogoolawah had three banks (Australasia, Queensland National and a branch of the Primary Producers Bank), two doctors and Dr Fox's private hospital. The Ambulance station had recently opened under the control of Superintendent Julian. The prosperity of the town was indicated by the 120 telephone subscribers at the local exchange and the Toogoolawah park was one of the most spacious in southeast Queensland, with tennis court, bandstand, public showers, and a well.<sup>22</sup>

1926 was a disastrous year for the town. A whole line of shops and businesses in Cressbrook street went up in flames — Flaskas's cafe, D.A. Menzies, R. Dalton and J.S. Francis's buildings, B.J. Edmunds' clothing store J.L. Campbell's newsagency and hairdresser's, and the Bank of Australasia. Contracts for reconstruction were all let by the end of the year and most were rebuilt in brick and reinforced concrete. J.L. Campbell opened a billiard room as well. Flaskas Brothers opened their Rosery Cafe in late August 1926. The Nestle company supplied electricity to the town as well. Ireland Brothers, trained by Healy's Ltd in

Newcastle, opened a cordial manufacturing business in Toogoolawah. Young and Wilson, solicitors, had been practising in Cressbrook Street since 1921 and were also solicitors to the Esk Shire Council from 1923.<sup>23</sup>

During the depression many businesses closed or changed owners quickly but prices were generally cheap for those who had a job. A hot dinner at Flaskas' Rosery Cafe was just a shilling. The Excelsior Jewellery closed at the end of April 1931. P. Countjohn's bakehouse in the Flaskas building burnt out on the night of 17 October 1931, when Countjohn was out at a Murrumba dance. He had come to the country to reduce costs while his wife ran a business at Stones Corner in Brisbane. Business had been hard for him as he had been forced into insolvency at Lowood in 1923. Unwin ran Ireland's cordial factory in 1931. W.J. Seymour was blacksmith. J. Milner and T.G. Owen were butchers, Malcolm J. Martin, the chemist who bought out Evan P. Evans and employed Cecil A. Nicholls as manager. A.B. Dillaway and later W.M. Dick operated the garages and hire cars; it was 1937 before the garage introduced a high pressure greasing hoist. Armstrong and Marson held the agency for milking machines in 1931. The A.C.B. store was substantially altered in March 1932 to a brick building with plate glass windows and panelled lining. J.L. Campbell had a new shop built by H.A. Teske between Young and Wilson, solicitors, and the Exchange Hotel in 1932. It included a reading room (48 by 28 feet) and hairdressing saloon (13 by 12 feet) with plate glass windows. Irelands introduced an ice service in November 1932 using a Ruston Hornsby 9HP engine driving the high speed Lightfoot compressor forcing the ammonia to the condenser.<sup>24</sup>

Bayards Limited opened a drapery store in 1933 and Miss M. Dalton a fruit and confections business in Cressbrook Street in July 1934. R.B. Cavaye had the newsagency in 1935. Local people put strong pressure on both Thompson and Francis and the Co-operative Society shop. Eric A. Gorrie, formerly of the Co-operative shop, opened his own cash and carry grocery on Saturday 1 May 1937 in premises between W.M. Gorrie's auctioneering rooms and Bayards. There was a whole row of new shops in the Fulham and Cressbrook streets block in 1938 — James Henderson, W.J. Seymour, W.C. Schank, P. Teske, J.A. Menzies, Baker, Co-operative, C.J. Ryan (fruit), Riddle and Brown (small goods), W.M. Gorrie (auctioneer), Bob Jessop (mechanic), Rosery Cafe, A.E. Kaddatz (mechanic), Miss Charlotte Sherlock and M. Dalton. The Smith sisters ran a boarding house in Cairnscroft Street, which amply provided for the



Nestle's staff in the twenties. The newspaper, *Brisbane Valley Advertiser and Toogoolawah Times*, closed in 1941 and in June 1945 A.B. Dillaway bought the land and premises in Fulham Street and remodelled them for his garage.<sup>25</sup>

Clarrie W. Matskows, chemist, came in 1946, buying out M.J. Martin. Born in Maryborough and apprenticed under J.G. Beresford, Matskows stayed in Toogoolawah for almost twenty-five years, modernizing his shop several times. Seib and Gorrie took over the cordial factory during the war. In 1947 E.J. Devantier had the newsagency, F. Cottrell, F.A. Schubel, and R.E. Harnell the bakeries, M. Manthey the fruit and vegetable shop. P. Teske was the cash produce merchant and general carrier, M.A. Lohmann also a general carrier, and A.R. Jones an agent for farm machinery, fertilizers, and milking machines. Allen Cameron and D. Keith Pryce were auctioneers and commission agents, Neilsen and Howe upholsterers, trimmers, and spray painters, O.H. Granzien butcher, Harry Flaskas a leatherworker, C.N. Rosentreter ran the ice works, and Les Williams sold radios. Mab's Salon offered a beauty care service. The Gorries, Eric and W.G., were

well known businessmen and masons in Toogoolawah as well as being Councillors.

Theo Nathes was agent for Hillman, Humber and Talbot cars and A.B. Dillaway was the Ford Dealer. W.J. Seymour and Sons opened an International Trucks dealership in 1948 and were also electrical contractors. At Christmas 1949 they extended into Cressbrook Street with a new building (62 by 27 feet). Wilfred John Stanton Seymour trained as a striker at Wilfred Hawken's blacksmith shop in Esk. After World War 1 he moved to Toogoolawah as a striker in Wallace Broad's shop. After Broad's death Seymour purchased the business and worked it for forty-five years until 1949 when he extended the shop for the truck dealership. In May 1951 D.H. Graham purchased the co-operative butchery premises and opened a delicatessen. In 1957 the Rosery Cafe was bought by the Davorens of Brisbane; it continued to be the agency and bus-stop for the Glanville's Brisbane Valley and Burnett bus service for decades.<sup>26</sup>

The motor car and improved roads have reduced the profitability of local shops whilst the wealth of

C.H.D. Lindemann's shop and the refreshment rooms at Lowood. 1920s.

John Oxley Library



### *History of the Shire of Esk*

the town through the cattle industry and land values has improved. The town has also been bypassed by the highway. The Esk Co-operative Dairy Association took over Thompson and Francis's store on 1 May 1956 and, as the only supermarket, has expanded, spending \$150,000 on extensions in 1985.<sup>27</sup>

In the southern area of the shire the drive from Fernvale to Lowood is one of the finest sights of the Brisbane River. The first settlers to the **Lowood** area came via the river or along the Fernvale-Wivenhoe Pocket route and across the Brisbane River at Cameron's Crossing. The town site itself was chosen by the Railway Department as a terminus in 1884. The fertile land to the east, south, and north had been selected in the late 1860s and early 1870s by the Watsons, Noonans, and Patricks predominantly. The site of Lowood was known variously as 'The Scrub' and 'Cairnhill'. In 1885 there were only four or five buildings in the town — Mitchell Goos was erecting a hotel near the current police station site, Carl Beutel had a butchery — a timber shack where carcasses hung outside, selling mainly salt meat to the selectors. Bradys had a store and there was a school. The Marburg baker used to come through Lowood twice a week delivering to selectors. H. Bruns was one of the earliest carriers working in the Lowood area. In 1887 the Tarampa Divisional Board sent a gang to clear the main street and to improve the track to the railway station. H. Lindeman subdivided his land to give a frontage to Railway Street.<sup>28</sup>

By 1890 there were a number of prosperous English and German farmers. Most farmers grew corn. Suchting had a very heavy orchard. Adermann's farm was thriving and he also invested in wheelwright's tools to capitalize on the increasing number of waggons and carts being made to take produce to the Lowood railway station. The Lutherans had established their church in the town. By 1890 there were two hotels — run by Vernor and Jessops. Cribb and Foote and J. Schureck had shops, Jensen was the saddler, Beutel operated the butchery, and Blank Brothers' the timber yard. The railway yard was constantly choked by waggons bringing in produce and timber.<sup>29</sup>

The 1893 flood rationalized businesses in Lowood and Fernvale. As the town recovered and many homes were moved to higher ground there was ample work for carpenters like Joseph Irwin and Joseph Emmelbaing. The Fernvale baker, Gray, quickly built an oven. J. Michel managed Cribb and Foote's bulk store. J. Kindley and Schureck had small stores and G. Spresser hawked

goods to farmers. W.J. Gracie owned the bakery, and a soft drinks and fruit shop. Blank Brothers of Esk owned the Royal Hotel and C.F. Arndt managed it. S. Jessop owned the opposition, the Lowood Hotel. Blacksmiths M. Mulcare and F. Kamp did a good trade, as did the town wheelwrights, W. Vellebrecht and C. Klatt. H. Jensen had saddlery businesses in both Fernvale and Lowood, and F. Ziske was the bootmaker.<sup>30</sup>

The timber industry brought prosperity to Lowood in the 1890s, through Blank's and Hancock's sawmills and widespread building. A new police station was erected, as well as Anglican and Wesleyan Churches. Irwin extended Handley Brothers' store and Smythe opened a boot and shoemaking shop in 1894. The following year Jensen, the saddler, had a residence built by Lars Andersen. Four other houses were also being built. E. Michel saw an opportunity and broke away from Cribb and Foote and established his own store and produce business. Businesses changed hands regularly in the late nineties with the onset of the drought. Diekeman bought Spresser's shop, William Smith took over Irwin's carpentry business in Helen Street, Kennett started as a plumber and tinsmith, and Mulcare extended his blacksmithing premises in 1897. A School of Arts, Draughts Club, and Turf Club were all established in the town that year.<sup>31</sup>

Both the Queensland National and Royal Banks were built in 1902. Lars Andersen also started building a hotel for Barlow in Railway Street. Recovery from the 1902 drought produced more businesses all in Park Street — Stuckey and Gillingwater's drapery and tailors in Aderman's buildings and a pork butcher opened. In 1906 three thousand tons of agricultural produce was sent from Lowood railway station so farmers were indeed prosperous. The bacon factory and condensed milk factory were also established. Lowood was also on the best road from Ipswich and Toowoomba towards the Burnett; by the twenties it was bitumenized, whereas the Fernvale to Esk road was rough and narrow.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1920s the main stores in Main Street were J. Walters, J. Watson, H. Lindeman on Cribb and Foote's land, Royal Hotel and hall, and the Royal Bank; Michel Street had J.D. Handley and E. Michel's stores; Railway Street contained Lindeman's store, the hall, and Lowood Hotel. Walters and Sons, general storekeepers, had extensive additions done to their Railway Street premises in mid-1926 by F. Bergman and W. Klatt. The Commercial Bank of Australia Limited opened a branch at Lowood on 14 November 1919 with Roy Sedden as the first permanent manager, in the



Staging Post Inn formerly Hotel Metropole and Ipswich Street flower gardens, Esk. 1987.

Terry Conway



Walters' building and the Jubilee Theatre, Lowood. 1987.

Terry Conway

old School of Arts in Railway Street. After the disastrous fire on 12 January 1931 it was moved temporarily to the old hall near the Club Hotel then back to the School of Arts. They stayed there until 12 July 1960, when new premises owned by Walters were opened in Main Street but have now been taken over by National Australia Bank.<sup>33</sup>

F.F. Kamp started a blacksmith's shop in Park Street in November 1926 and Julius Manz a hardware and fuel agency in 1926 which has continued in the family through son, Walter to Merv, Des, and Clive Manz and their families to the present day. In October 1930 an up-to-date billiard saloon and hairdressing rooms were completed by John Walters for Jack Josefski who bought out Ernie J. Brock's business. At the same time Walters also constructed a shop for A. Waddley, the chemist, in Main Street, a cash and carry business, and a new house in Walter Street. The Wadleys stayed until 1946; Mrs Wadley was the Optometrist in Lowood. They went to Atherton to open a chemist shop and are still wellknown in the North.<sup>34</sup>

Fires also rationalized businesses. Lowood had four disastrous fires — in 1925, 1931, 1933, and 1938. In February 1925 six businesses were burnt down. Hudson and Berndt immediately had a new

store erected by F. Gutzke at the corner of Railway and Station Streets where their old store had been. L.H. Burgdorf, tinsmith, immediately also erected new buildings in April 1925 at the corner of Michel and Park Streets. In 1931 when four businesses including Walters, Watson and Sons A.C.B. stores, office, and residence of Alfred Lilley, solicitor, the Commercial Bank of Australasia, and Retchlag's butcher shop were burnt. Keith Alexander at the Bank premises saved only his personal effects. In 1933 part of the main business centre in Railway Street was burnt out but new buildings immediately replaced them. Luther Brothers and Arndt of Coolana built a large shop (80 by 34 feet) with a thirteen foot front awning and a plate glass front for C.H.D. Lindeman. The fire of May 1938 burnt out the Stanley Pascoe family's grocery and cycle shop at the corner of Park and Walters Streets. It was only a two year old building insured for £1,450 and apparently the fire was related to the refrigerator.<sup>35</sup>

After the war returning soldiers quickly set up new businesses. J.A. (Billy) Dunn set up an electrical business and Jim Pointing established a radio agency and repair shop. P. Band started a tailoring shop in Park Street, Cliff Jensen took over the shop of his uncle, C.H.D. Lindeman, and W. Lyons started produce buying for a Brisbane firm.

Wadleys sold out to Major A.N.C. Munro, who had come to Lowood when his father took over the butter factory. Neil Munro appointed C.F. Threfall to manage the shop for a few months. In mid 1946 three new shops were constructed — a cafe in Railway Street for Peter George, a modern tailor shop for L. Muller in Michel Street, and a machinery and hardware business for A.W. Engler at the corner of Park and Walter Streets, where the grocery store had been burnt out several years before. V. Comino, a returned soldier, bought George's cafe in October 1946.<sup>36</sup>

Agricultural and produce merchants characterized the Lowood railway scene until road transport in the 1960s took produce directly to the Rocklea markets. In the 1920s Walters, Smith, and Schunck were the local produce agents. In 1946 ornamental trees — bauhinias, oleanders, and an Illawarra flame tree — were planted in Walters and Park Streets. The Lowood CWA conducted a dance inside Edward G. Profke's new produce shed and store to mark its opening in May 1951.<sup>37</sup>

Town stores were generally repaired or spruced up in the late 1950s without making any real changes in the townscape. It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that substantial changes occurred. Whole shop blocks were demolished and the model brick veneer, plastic, and glass front appeared with huge advertising hoardings to match and catch the eye of the new generation of residents. The townspeople remain traditionally conservative in outlook. The new rural subdivision residents have made a permanent presence in the area — a cautious group guided by their own financial capabilities. They are a much younger population interested in home-making, commuting and sport. Accordingly the new Sports Complex fills an economic niche. Alternatively women's groups seek to dispose of their crafts locally through the crafts shops which they staff for long hours. Perhaps the economy has turned full circle in the century of settlement at Lowood.

## ENDNOTES

1. MBC 30 October 1847.
2. M.M. McConnel, "Memories of Days Gone By" *op.cit.*; QGG 1871 p1,443; QT 24 August 1872 p3, 13 March 1873 p3 and 18 June 1971; ER 22 July 1933.
3. QT 14 February 1874 p3, 22 April 1875 p3, 22 and 24 May 1877 p2 and 8 January 1878.
4. QT 16 October 1877 p3, 23 October 1877 p3, 8 January 1878 and 27 June 1878; Queensland Place Names Board Cards.
5. QT 4 December 1884; BC 24 August 1886 p6 c5 and 26 August 1886 p5.
6. QT 29 August 1893 and 20 February 1896.
7. QT 28 January 1902, 2 and 27 September 1902, 2 May 1903, 26 November 1903, 29 October 1904, 15 July 1905 and 9 September 1905; BVR 19 November 1971; personal reminiscences of Edith Carew in 1971 (Esk Shire Library Local History Collection).
8. ESKM 19 December 1907; QT 25 June 1907 and 18 June 1971; ER 9 February 1907.
9. QT 29 December 1906 and 17 October 1907; BC 4 June 1927; ER 30 September 1933; Robert Fraser's articles in *Esk Record* 1909 (Esk Shire Library Local History Collection); interview with Mr Les Allan, Esk, 24 May 1986.
10. QT 19 March p3 and 17 May 1917 p5 and 25 May 1928 p10.
11. ESKM 5 July 1933 p167; ER 5 November and 24 December 1932, 30 September 1933 and 24 March 1934.
12. ER 6 June 1931, 15 August 1931, 14 November 1931, 28 November 1931, 12 December 1931, 9 July 1932.
13. ER 4 April 1931; interview with Mr Joe Martin, Esk, 19 July 1986; reminiscences of Ann Ryan and E. Hendry in 1971 (Esk Shire Library Local History Collection).
14. ER 13 August 1932, 26 August 1933, 16 March 1935, 2 May 1936 and 4 December 1937; reminiscences of Ann Ryan in 1971 (Esk Shire Library Local History Collection); interview with 'Khaki' Drew, Esk, 19 July 1986.
15. ER 6 March 1942; *Stanley Bulletin* 21 November 1947.
16. ESKM 15 July 1971 p9423; BVS 2 August 1957, 5 September 1958 and 25 November 1960 p1; QT 29 October 1974 p15, 29 September 1979 p7 and 4 December 1981 p7.
17. The Fernvale Hall land is Resub 5 of Sub.2 of Portion 61, being land described on Certificate of Title No 144317, Vol 895 folio 57; interview with Mr & Mrs Schmidt and Mrs B. Parslow, Fernvale, 14 September 1986; BVKS 1 August 1986 p6.
18. Queensland Place Names Board Cards; Q 26 April 1924 p11; ER 16 April 1932.
19. QT 31 October 1907 and 15 June 1912; *Sunday Mail Magazine* (Brisbane) 4 November 1973.
20. BVS 30 September 1960 p1 c4-5; QT 22 August 1973 p24.
21. QT 23 November 1921 p3, 17 October 1922 p3; ECDA Minutes 12 April 1923 p27.
22. Q 26 April 1924 p11.
23. QT 21 June 1926 p3, 17 December 1926 p5; *Brisbane Valley and Toogoolawah Times* [Toogoolawah] 1 September 1926; ESKM 7 February 1923 p294.
24. BVA 14 January, 4 March, 1 and 22 April, 13 May, 14 and 21 October, 11 November, 16 December 1931, 3 and 10 February and 30 November 1932, 25 August 1937 and 26 July 1939; ER 28 November 1931 and 20 February 1932.
25. BVA 23 August 1933, 11 July 1934, 28 April 1937, 26 July 1938 and 20 March 1940; QT 7 June 1945 p4.
26. *Bulletin* 17 October 1947 and 2 January 1948; QT 20 December 1949 p5, 26 May 1951 p9 and 12 January 1972 p32; BVS 5 July 1957 and 14 October 1960.
27. QT 8 October 1985 p10.
28. QT 17 May 1888, 8 January 1938; BVS 28 June 1957; Queensland Place Names Board Cards; *Esk Shire Directory* Vol 1 No 1 (July 1985).
29. QT 29 April 1890.
30. QT 5 October 1893.
31. QT 11 March 1893, 26 June 1894, 6 August 1895, 2 September 1897 and 5 February 1898.
32. QT 6 March 1902, 17 July 1902 and 26 July 1904; DM 13 June 1929; ER 21 October 1933.
33. QT July 1926; Miss Grace Nunn's Notes on Lowood Town, 1919-1960 — provided by Cr R. Nunn.
34. QT July 1926, 14 October 1930, 22 November 1930 and 6 March 1946; *Esk Shire Directory* 1986 p9.
35. QT April 1925, 25 May 1934 and 8 January 1938; ER 17 January 1931 and 14 May 1938.
36. QT 15 January, 6 March, 23 August, and 19 September 1946.
37. QT April 1924, 8 October 1946 and 7 May 1951.



Cressbrook House showing the original 1840s section and the first extension. 1987.

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