

Confidence and Tradition

A HISTORY OF THE ESK SHIRE

Ruth S. Kerr



Council of the Shire of Esk
1988

Other books by the same author:

John Moffat's Empire; A Mining History of the Cairns Hinterland 1880-1918
Irvinebank: Mining Community and Centre of an Empire
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Conversion Table

Currency 12 pence = 1 shilling, 20 shillings = 1 pound (£1)
£1 = \$2 Australian at time of conversion, 1966.

Metric Measures have been used predominantly in the book except where there is significance in the Imperial Units.

Distance: 36 inches = 3 feet = 1 yard = 0.914 metre; 1 mile = 1.609 kilometre

Area: 1 acre = 0.405 hectare; 1 square mile = 2.590 sq. km.

Volume: 1 gallon = 4.536 litres

Weight: 1 pound = 454 gram; 1 ton = 1.016 tonne

Power: 1 horsepower = 0.746 kilowatt

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Kerr, Ruth, 1948-

Confidence and Tradition: a History of the Esk Shire.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 7316 1232 9. [H]

ISBN 0 7316 1568 9. [P]

1. Esk (Qld. : Shire) — History. I. Esk (Qld. : Shire).

Council. II. Title.

994.3'2

Published by Council of the Shire of Esk
2 Redbank Street, Esk, Q. 4312.

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Produced by Press Etching (Qld.) Pty. Ltd., Brisbane.

Printed by Poly-Graphics Pty. Ltd., Brisbane.



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Preface

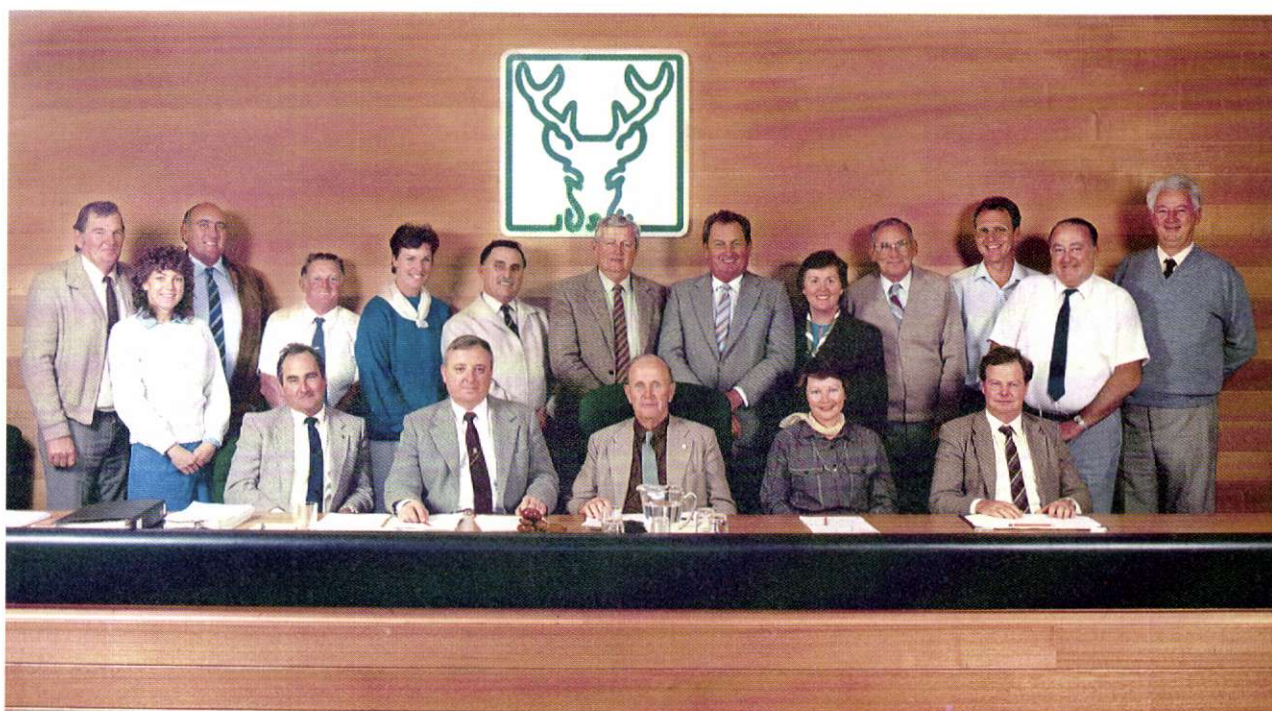
The Council of the Shire of Esk first considered commissioning the writing of an authoritative history of the Esk Shire in 1978. In making it our major Bicentennial project we diligently sought the person most capable of achieving this. The opportunity provided the person, and Council commissioned Ruth Kerr in December 1985. The completed book is testimony to the dedication and professional skills of the Council's History Committee and the author.

The Esk Shire, which originally encompassed the whole of the Brisbane and Stanley River watersheds, has developed its own regional character. Two outstanding aspects have moulded the lifestyle of Esk Shire residents — the rich

physical environment and the close proximity to the capital city. From the original white settlement in the Brisbane Valley in 1841 to the present day two outstanding characteristics have been evident — confidence and tradition. These are the immortal symbols of achievement of many proud families in the Esk Shire.

This regional history is a human story — not of saints, but of cattlemen, agriculturalists, and business people, men and women who managed farms, families, community and church organizations, and formed sporting clubs to relax. The Council of the Shire of Esk has provided the framework for the protection of that lifestyle.

L.J. Williams



Council of the Shire of Esk. 1987.

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Author's Note

The Council of the Shire of Esk approached me in November 1985 to write a substantial regional history of the Esk Shire for the shire's major Bicentennial project. The Council appointed me as author in December 1985 and research commenced immediately.

The task to research the history of the Brisbane Valley, to write the manuscript and pilot it through to publication by Christmas 1987 was a major exercise in co-ordination and discipline. That it has been achieved in such a short time is a tribute to my three Research Assistants, the assistance provided by the Shire Council, and my own vision. The professional approach of the Council's History Committee of Crs E.R. Nunn and C.J. Conroy, Shire Clerk, Mr G.P. Sorensen, and Senior Administrative Officer, Mr J.D. Carter, ensured an excellent framework and backing for the project.

I wish to thank my Research Assistants - Mrs Desley Cullen and Mr Peter Prideaux, of Brisbane, and Miss Lesley Bennett of Sydney, whose work at libraries and archives in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne from January to August 1986 provided the foundation for the book. I gratefully acknowledge the particular assistance of Mr Colin Sheehan, Principal Librarian, John Oxley Library. Mrs Pat Jenkins of Esk, the artist who created the

painting for the cover and Mr Terry Conway who did the major photography work played outstanding roles in the presentation and appeal of the book. My husband, John, did considerable research of the Council Minutes with me, as well as researching railway records and reading newspapers.

I also wish to acknowledge the ready help with information, and photographs provided by numerous shire residents and people associated with the shire. All are mentioned individually throughout the Endnotes to each chapter. The contribution of the editor, Ms Sue Pechey, was of great assistance. Several state government departments have also assisted with information and photographs - Premier's Department (Mr J. Mulheron and Mr P. Phillips), Main Roads Department Photography Section, and the History Unit of the Education Department.

The result is a major history of the Brisbane Valley distilling the themes of the economy and lifestyle in a region which has maintained its considerable influence in the Moreton region for 147 years. Innumerable names of past and present shire residents appear throughout the text but because of constraints of space not all of them appear in the index.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB Australian Dictionary of Biography
BC Brisbane Courier
BVA Brisbane Valley Advertiser
BVKS Brisbane Valley and Kilcoy Star
BVR Brisbane Valley Rag
BVS Brisbane Valley Star
CHTBA Toowoomba Chronicle
CLO Crown Lands Office
CM Courier Mail
DM Daily Mail
ECDA Esk Co-operative Dairy Association Annual Report
ECM Esk Co-operative Dairy Association Minutes
ER Esk Record
ESKM Esk Divisional Board and Shire Council Minutes
Fryer, UQ Fryer Library, University of Queensland
HRA Historical Records of Australia
JLC Journals of the Legislative Council
JOL John Oxley Library
LAN Lands Department

LWDM Lowood Shire Council Minutes
MBC Moreton Bay Courier
NA North Australian
NSW AO New South Wales Archives Office
NSW GG New South Wales Government Gazette
NSW V&P New South Wales Votes and Proceedings
Q Queenslander
QCL Queensland Country Life
QDF Queensland Dairy Farmer
QEC Queensland Electricity Commission
QGG Queensland Government Gazette
QGMJ Queensland Government Mining Journal
QPD Queensland Parliamentary Debates
QPP Queensland Parliamentary Papers
QSA Queensland State Archives
QT Queensland Times
QV&P Queensland Votes and Proceedings
RAHSJ Royal Australian Historical Society Journal
RHSQJ Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal
SEA Southern Electric Authority.