

# Education

The first schools in the Brisbane Valley were the private ones in slab huts with shingle roofs for the children on Cressbrook and Colinton stations. Otherwise schools in the region have been predominantly one-teacher schools to serve country children of immigrant selectors. Most of them began as Provisional Schools with female head teachers. The Brisbane Valley had the distinction of having the youngest ever female teacher in charge, Joy Watt at Louisavale in 1936. With the change in government education policy in the late 1950s and the decline in the dairy industry the one teacher schools rapidly closed and bussing became the norm. The first school bus ran in 1946 from Mt Stanley to Linville. High Schools and Secondary Departments were opened in the early 1960s bringing greater opportunities for education to country areas. Previously Brisbane Valley students of promise went to Ipswich Grammar or St Edmund's and St Mary's in Ipswich, or The Southport School and on to Universities of Queensland, Sydney, Melbourne, and Cambridge; some went to Gatton Agricultural College. The Brisbane Valley also produced a Lilley medal winner, George Copeman of Toogoolawah, in the Scholarship examination in 1934.

After World War I, the Education system in the Brisbane Valley reflected the policies of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, and its Under Secretaries, J.D. Story and B. McKenna. The education philosophy in the 1920s was rooted in egalitarianism and agrarianism. Good, socially-proficient citizens were the aim of the system. In the 1930s depression this policy changed somewhat to that of aiming for sturdy and intelligent rural farming communities. This was to be achieved by having less academic syllabuses. Class activities and nature studies, such as school and home project clubs, and calf clubs were encouraged. The education system also reflected the economy of the region through the standard of the buildings, the social activities enjoyed by the children and their educational expectations and achievements. As a farming area with strong German elements, education was not naturally a high priority. The conservative Germans reasoned that basic English language skills and a strong grounding in arithmetic mixed with a strong dash of native cunning would equip their farmers and mothers to profit from their land and expand.

Meanwhile harvesting, milking, and transporting the crop to the railhead took precedence over regular attendances.<sup>1</sup>

A typical day for a young school child early this century involved milking in the morning, walking or riding to school, classes all day, return home to milk or feed the calves. Children of timbergetters and sawmill hands seldom saw their fathers except for weekends for they went to work often at three in the morning to be there by daybreak. Other children lived in the timber camps and travelled long distances to school. Tiny children walked to school through the dark, towering forest ringing to the sounds of swinging axes and bullockies persuading their teams onward with loud chants. Some sat on the back of slides, or German waggons, or waggons hauled behind traction engines on the way to school. The lucky ones rode horses.

Some children did correspondence lessons because the timber camps were too transient or they were too far from a school; consequently numbers attending schools in timber areas often fluctuated. Life was rough for children in these circumstances and so were the games they played at school. It was bitterly cold in winter in slab or pit sawn huts. The lifestyle was lonely and dangerous and the school building was often far warmer and more hospitable than their homes. Deeply cut fingers and toes, bandaged in clean white rag were part of the apprenticeship for children in timber areas. They certainly knew that the timber industry was profitable and that their fathers did well, providing they didn't spend it in the Crossdale Hotel, the local Royal Hostelry, or on wine supplies.

Dairymen were more conservative but equally demanding of a rough country-life apprenticeship by the children. Hunting calves out to their day paddock through the frost in bare feet was a chore in winter before going off to school through the scrub. The amount of scrub decreased as selectors felled the cedar or pine and burnt or sold it to make way for cow paddocks. On weekends the children broadcast seed on the 'new burn', helped set the insects on the prickly pear, or followed their father through the Bathurst Burr where he was cutting it and loading it onto the slide.

## *History of the Shire of Esk*

Several generations remember that the school was always on the hill, usually affording a good breeze, and with a view over surrounding farms. The School Committee and the Inspector selected the site on a piece of crown land or on land donated by a prominent farmer anxious to secure an equal education for his children as was available to city children. A strong post and rail fence separated the schoolyard from the horse paddock and a wire netting fence encircled the school and head teacher's residence. The standard school was a rectangular timber structure on high stumps, with glass windows at each end, gable roof, and verandah with steps straight down to the parade ground, also used for drill and maypole dancing.

Most parents in country areas served on the School Committee or assisted with school working bees. First there was the Building Committee who canvassed the community to raise one fifth of the cost of the school and to supervise the contractor's work. Certain conditions had to be met before government assistance was forthcoming. Most of the small country schools in the Brisbane Valley were Provisional Schools. They had to be at least 21 by 14 feet and with 9 feet high walls, a pitched roof, two or more windows, timber floor, seven foot verandah, two closets, and a 500 gallon tank.

The requisite furniture was four seven foot long desks, six forms, cupboard, table, chair, easel, blackboard, and clock. The value of the Committee was in the skills and resources they might provide, such as timber, wire, galvanized iron. Farmers had little time for raising money or working on weekends but the contractor's price could be considerably reduced by donations of materials. H.P. Somerset, MLA, and his wife, Eleanor (nee McConnell), assisted at every opportunity. So did the Conroys. A strong committee was essential for advancement of the school, and school picnics and prize givings were the culmination of the year's activities. Shire Councillors, the McConnells, Moores, or Henry Somerset, Kellett, R. Bell, and the tall Scotsman, McDonald, were there to hand out the books and deliver a homily to the children. Afterwards they discussed agricultural and cattle problems with farmers during a fancy dress parade or as the children played sports.

The teacher, more often than not, was a young woman who was paid £90 per year. The role of female teachers in schools has been so familiar to generations of Queenslanders, especially students of the ubiquitous one-teacher schools of the Brisbane Valley, that an assessment of their career history is warranted. Up to the early 1920s most head teachers in one-teacher schools in the Brisbane Valley were likely to be women, because

they were more likely to accept the meagre wages, and later hundreds of men enlisted for World War I. In 1909 a large number of provisional schools became unclassified state schools, still staffed by female teachers. Few reached the higher classifications although they were better teachers than many men. Inspectors attributed this to their being such energetic teachers that they were too tired to study at night. During the war Under Secretary J.D. Story organized physical education camps for women teachers so that they could instruct junior military cadets in schools. He described 'country girl-teachers' as pioneers, roughing it in the bush, enduring hardships, doing the work of the department 'nobly well', and carrying forth 'the torch of education' in the defence programme. As Public Service Commissioner in the 1920s Story reduced the number of women teachers in one teacher country schools and encouraged returned soldiers back to teaching and to study for improved classification.

During the depression women teachers tended to do better in classification exams than men. The Queensland Teachers' Union however was more intent on maintaining salary standards for all than pursuing the equal pay campaign which had been started by women members in 1919. In the 1940s more and more women came back into teaching to take up the slack when male teachers enlisted in the armed forces. They were squeezed out of the classrooms again in the 1950s as Labor government policy. Two income families were widely shunned throughout the Queensland country communities. It was not until 13 February 1969 that women were permitted to continue teaching after marriage providing their proficiency was commensurate with their experience. This barrier of superior efficiency was removed in 1973, paving the way for a shared profession.<sup>2</sup>

Where the teacher boarded was always a vital question for local communities. If the teacher, especially a young lady, was dissatisfied and attendances were below the required average of twelve, there could be little hope of keeping the school open. The teacher's room was usually ten feet by ten feet, in a settler's house, and no more than two miles from the school. Closed-in verandahs made the extra room. This was even done at the schools themselves where settlements were so itinerant in nature. Unbleached calico had manifold uses on these occasions. The prevailing rate of board was £1 per week. Usually a committee member or respected community person boarded the teacher. Hotels were the last resort but were often utilized. Many a teacher recalls a period in hotel accommodation while the

Committee procrastinated over where the teacher should reside. There were numerous retired or widowed women who took in employees especially teachers as a community deed and for the extra income. Until the 1940s, only the central schools had separate teacher's residences.

Repairs on the school were a constant problem. School Committees arranged through the Department for maintenance to be carried out by local contractors or Public Works day-labour staff. Storm damage was the greatest hazard in the Brisbane Valley, in contrast to the ravages of white ants in north and western Queensland. In later years unused horse paddocks became overgrown with burr and were sold off by the Department or converted to ovals where finances permitted and student numbers warranted. Painting in government yellow and red prevailed as on the railway.

Later, in the 1960s, secondary students watched the day labour force build the traditional long rectangular school rooms around them. Noise was a constant companion at high schools and the Teachers Union complained incessantly throughout this period. Despite the problems, a new school was preferable to temporary accommodation. School football and softball was more like cross-country running on the primitive ovals. Next came the fund raising programmes for assembly halls and gymnasiums and then libraries. All these enveloped the community in balls,

walkathons, swimathons, spellathons, and barbecues to raise targets to obtain Education Department dollar-for-dollar subsidies.

In both primary and secondary schools the syllabus was standard throughout Queensland until 1973 when the Radford Scheme was introduced. The former Scholarship Examination encouraged excellence among teachers. George Copeman of Toogoolawah won the Lilley medal in 1934 for the highest pass in the Scholarship in Queensland. Until the late 1950s parents and students were generally disinterested in education for the professions beyond primary school even though they encouraged their children in their daily studies. Traditionally girls were discouraged from academic pursuits, although teaching before marriage was commended. However Toogoolawah had a Rural School from March 1928 with a high reputation, offering industrial, commercial, and domestic science subjects.

Students remember the cantankerous teachers of their primary school days. At one Brisbane Valley school, between 1906 and 1916, a male teacher was in constant conflict with the parents. He really should never have taught in one-teacher bush schools, because, as one inspector remarked, 'he has allowed his temper to master him'. In 1910 one mother complained that 'three days running my little boy aged 7 came home with black marks from the cane around his back and thighs'. Other mothers complained in the same vein. An official

Moombra State School. 1923.

Back Row (L to R): Miss Stour, Muriel Patrick, Audrey Patrick (centre), Lily steele.

Front Row (L to R): Ethel Smith, Elizabeth Sinnamon, James A. Neilsen, Archibald Groff, Beu Sinnamon, John Steele, Cyril Smith.

Jim Neilsen, Esk



inquiry found the teacher guilty and he was warned that repetition would bring serious consequences for him. At the subsequent official inquiry following further complaints the teacher pleaded guilty and was admonished. Two years later another group of children suffered similar punishment. More complaints ensued and while some children were kept home out of fear, another official inquiry found him guilty. He was fined £3 — a week's salary — and warned that further complaints would lead to a Public Service Board disciplinary action. The teacher's condemned his critics:

'All the members with the exception of the Chairman are illiterate, knowing them intimately as I do . . . I rate them as arrant frauds and humbugs undeserving the name of Committee, and I . . . beg protection from the machinations of this band of bovine, and medical and educational experts.'

Strangely this teacher continued to teach for another five years until his retirement.<sup>3</sup>

### **History of Schools**

The first local public school in the Brisbane Valley region was the Pine Mountain church and school opened on 6 December 1863 by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. S. Wilson.<sup>4</sup>

When the Esk State School celebrated its centenary on 1 November 1975, 3884 students had passed through the school. On 4 October 1873 parents gathered in John Taylor's residence, Sandy Creek, Mt Esk to discuss the establishment of a school. A ten acre site was approved on the southern side of Redbank Creek on 25 June 1874. £70 had already been collected towards the cost of the school and teacher's residence. The school was designed by R. George Suter, architect in the Works Department, and comprised of a school building thirty by sixteen feet with a six foot verandah at either end and a four room cottage, both with hardwood shingle roofs. The Committee preferred pine shingles because they lasted longer and the water running off them was more drinkable. However the Department overruled the Committee. William Forde's tender of £380 for the erection of the school and residence was accepted and the contract signed on 16 November 1874. The work was completed by 13 August 1875 but this was over-time, because the wet weather had prevented bullock teams hauling the building materials; Forde was fined £20. The teacher, J.V. Waller, arrived in October 1875 but could neither enter the buildings nor commence teaching, and had to stay at the expensive hotel with nowhere to store his personal possessions or school requisites.

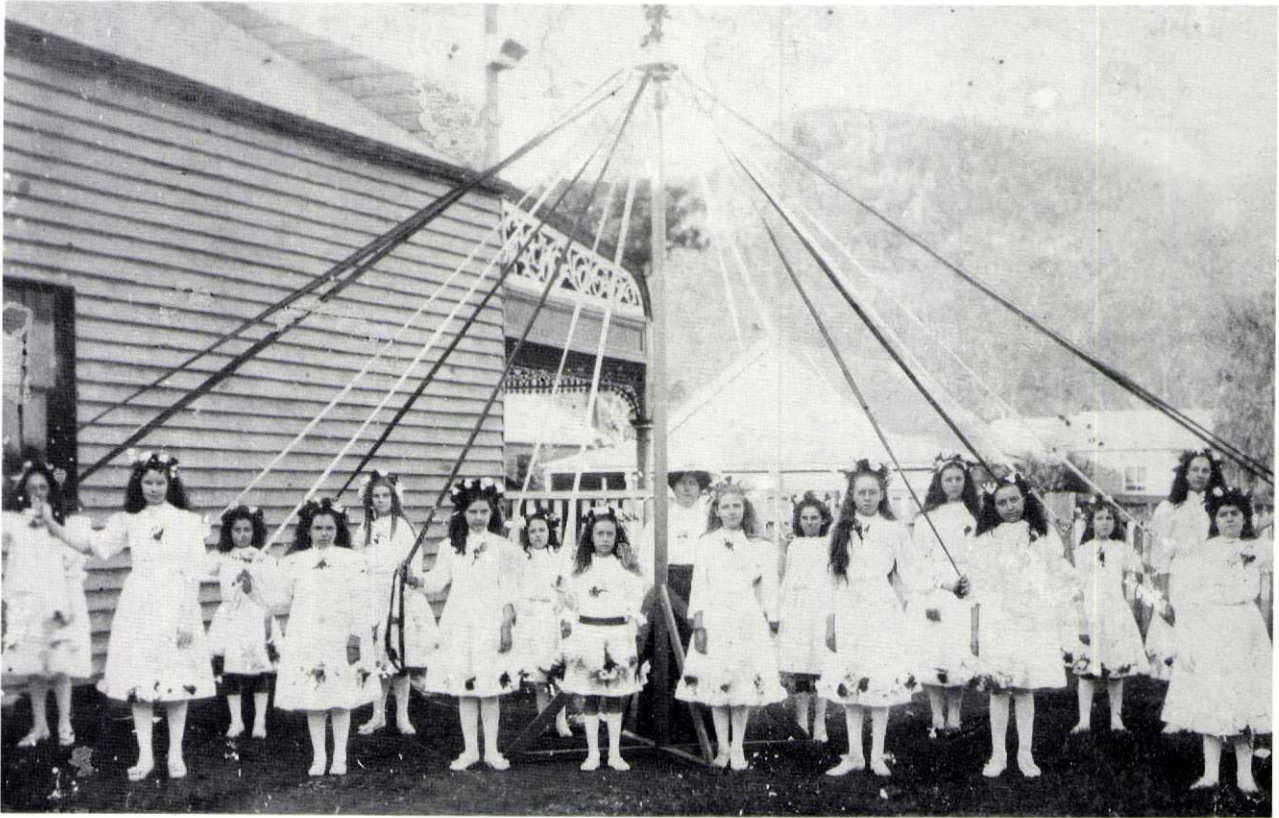
Forde refused to hand over the keys until the difficulty over the fine was resolved. Unpleasant arguments occurred between the Secretary of the Building Committee, James Jones and Forde. When the fine was reduced to £10 Forde allowed the Esk people to enter the buildings and the school opened on 1 November 1875.<sup>5</sup>

The first School Committee after the school opened comprised: James Jones (Secretary), Donald Smith (Treasurer), Thomas Peters, John Thomas, Hugh Mackie, William Patrick, and Christopher Hempstead. The hardwood shingle meant that the teacher had to obtain his own water, carted from Sandy Creek by Aborigines for rations, tobacco, and clothes. There evidently were difficulties with J.V. Waller's teaching methods as there were complaints by parents from the beginning of 1877 until his resignation early in 1878. The school grounds were fenced in 1878 after the differences between the Committee and the Department were resolved about costs amounting to £53.<sup>6</sup>

The arrival of the railway and the increasing number of selectors close to the town doubled the school attendance in 1888 but they still had Suter's shingle roof building. The Department quickly obliged by extending the school in March 1888 at a cost of £168. More extensions were added in 1907. Also a new school residence was built in 1911 by D.A. Menzies at a cost of £548. The school attendance had risen dramatically to 246 in 1910 and two assistant teachers and a pupil teacher assisted the head teacher. New school furniture was bought from Blank Brothers sawmill in 1900. A night school was commenced in 1902 when there were forty odd railway construction workers camped near the school.<sup>7</sup>

After the arrival of the railway the population of Esk and the businesses shifted over Sandy Creek to the new township site. In fact the school was the only government building not to move across the bridge. Removal was investigated in 1935 but not proceeded with because of lack of government funds. The highest enrolment was 260 in 1912, when the timber industry was at its peak. A convent school was opened in Esk in 1923 in the old Murrumba Hotel building. Coming at a time of decline in the timber industry, this halved the enrolment. In 1938 the Department rejected a proposal to close the Glen Esk, Murrumba, Coal Creek, and Mount Esk Pocket schools and bus the children into Esk.<sup>8</sup>

New state school buildings were erected in 1946 at a cost of £3,316 and were opened by Duncan MacDonald MLA in April 1948. On opening day the parents ran a fete and sports for the children.



Esk State School maypole dancing, c. 1900.

*R.C. McKee*

Since then one of the old buildings has been used as a recreational room. The school has continued to consolidate. One of the school's longest serving teachers was Miss 'Buddy' Norma F. Coulson who taught at Esk for forty-two years and was remembered as a stern respected teacher who obtained good results.<sup>10</sup>

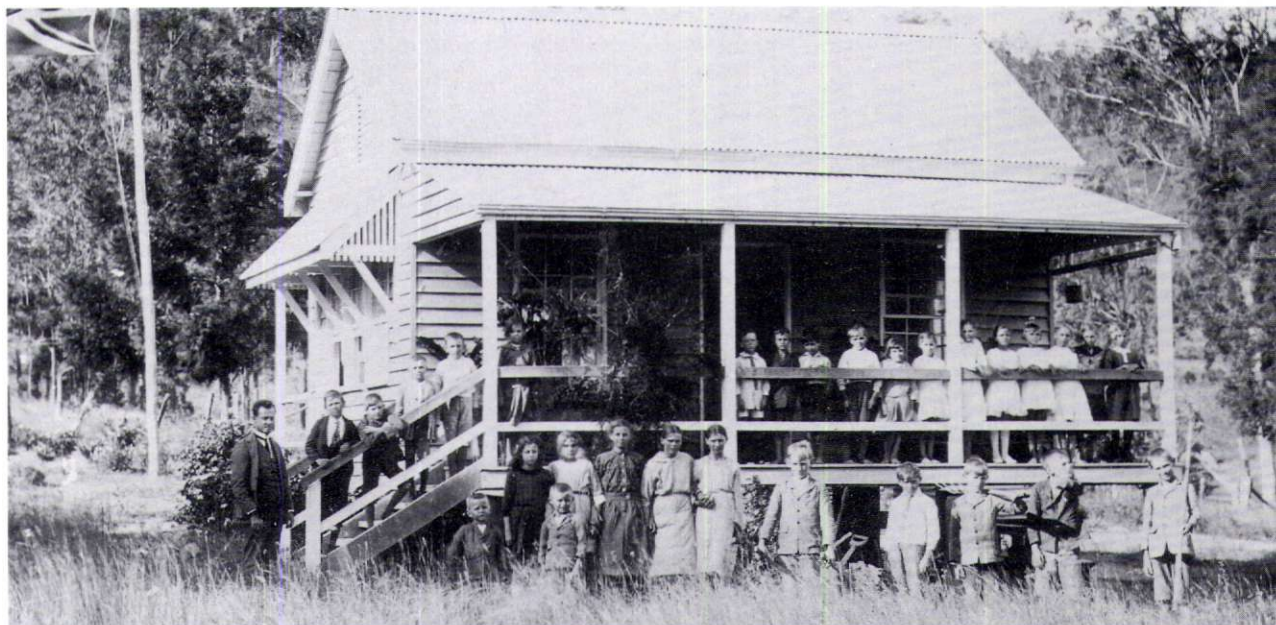
**Fernvale** school was first advocated in 1871 and opened in 1874. Parents met in J.S. Poole's cotton shed on 7 October 1871; another meeting was held on 28 October 1871 in John Reid's cotton shed. Peter Thomson was chairman and a canvassing committee was formed. The group obtained promises of two thousand hardwood shingles, use of bullock and horse teams and drays, skilled labour, and £27; but the Board of Education required a further £15 to be raised to build a school for the forty-seven children.

On 21 July 1873 a public meeting was held in North's Pocket which residents from both sides of the river attended. The Harrisborough residents on the north side of the river comprised a large number of German settlers who indicated that they preferred to make independent provision for the education of their children. The final decision of the meeting was to have one teacher who would take turns about at both schools, one each side of the river. A small Wesleyan chapel already erected

on the north side of the river would serve as a temporary school until another building could be erected to serve both as a school and public hall.

On the south side J. & G. Harris offered to sell the residents two blocks, each of forty acres, only one of which was fenced, but with two buildings erected at Christmas 1872 after they purchased the land from Geigler. There was a twenty by twenty foot hardwood four-roomed building with verandah in front. It had pine floor and pine shingles, with a detached kitchen. The store was eighty by twenty feet, hardwood frame, pine cladding, and pine shingled roof. Both buildings were painted and were offered at £400 with the land. Harris Brothers had run into strong competition with Cribb and Foote at Stinking Gully (later named Fernvale) and so were keen to sell.

Inspector J.G. Anderson agreed that a school could not be erected for that sum. If the committee could raise £70 then the Board of Education would entertain the purchase of the buildings and land at £350; J. & G. Harris agreed to accept. However, Poole found that the German residents were totally opposed to education under the English system and would not contribute. The Board realized that this was a rare occasion where it would have to open a state school without the parents contributing. Accordingly they appointed Thomas Barrett



Coal Creek State School 1920s.

The Late Lillian Wolff, Coal Creek

Guppy, newly arrived in Queensland on the *Alexandra* on 14 April 1874; he went straight to Harrisborough and hired a carpenter to make school furniture, dismantling the counters, and converting the hides shed to closets.

Guppy opened the school on 11 May 1874 but immediately found that all of the children were picking cotton and those on the other side of the river could not cross because there was no bridge or punt. There was also no Committee because all were too busy with their agriculture. A brick underground 7,000 gallon tank was constructed with hardwood top and hand pump. Fifty-four students were enrolled after the cotton was picked and progressed well considering that English was the second language for most of the students.

The list of families whose children attended in the first year were the Poole family, Denman, Tilly, Dickens, Cronau, Redmond, Michel, Boyce, Browning, Falkehagen, Muckert, Ihle, Damro, Litzow, Stumer, Feldhan, Schroder, Pieper, Neuendorf, Kickbush, Bulow, Lancaster, Nolan, Walsh, Little, Dwyer, Otto, Nosworthy, Adermann, Schmidt, Smith, Anderson, Frieberg, Reid, Steppey, Kassulke, Noonan, and Dobe. Many of these families stayed in the district for decades. John Poole was an Esk Shire Councillor for thirty-three years. Charles Litzow was School Committee Secretary for thirty years and Chairman of Lowood Show Society.

The first School Committee at Harrisborough was appointed on 12 July 1874 and comprised John Charles Ihle (Chairman and Treasurer), William

Henry Webb (Secretary), Edward Boland, William Litzow, Joseph Boyce, Angus Ayres, and John Bishop. These selectors were also interested in mixed farming. They made butter by hand and took it to Ipswich along with corn sold at 9d. per bushel. Adermann established a creamery in Wivenhoe Pocket as did Howes Brothers later. The opening of schools at Glamorgan Vale and Wivenhoe Pocket to cater for the children of these selectors reduced attendance at Harrisborough (Fernvale).

As drovers camped on the school reserve and regularly left fires burning, teacher Frederick Baker, who had taken over in January 1877, requested that the school reserve be fenced. The School Committee had to raise one fifth of the cost in May 1877 to achieve this. Frederick Baker was too highly qualified for a small school and so was transferred. On 30 September 1878 Mary Jane Roulston took over; she was only the second woman appointed as a head teacher in a Queensland school.

The school residence was originally a second-hand building brought from Ipswich by J. & G. Harris. In January 1888 when teacher, George Henry Cooper, arrived with a wife and seven children, he found that the residence was completely inadequate. He had to rent a cottage opposite for 5s. per week. In May 1888 the Department approved a new residence, which was built for £270 and completed by December 1889, the Committee raising one-fifth of the cost. Around 1884 John Poole planted the bunya pine tree which still overlooks the tennis court.

The name of the school was changed on 1 December 1889 to Fernvale in line with the naming of the railway station, about a mile away. In 1893 the flood waters came right up to the school steps but did not cause any damage to the school compared to the disastrous damage farmers suffered from the ten mile wide river waters which backed up the gully into Fernvale. In 1895 parents advocated the removal of the school to a more central spot. The Department agreed and selected a site in Fernvale town but the Committee could not raise the £74 the required one-fifth of the cost of the new school. In May-June 1897 the pine shingle roof on the school was replaced and school was temporarily held in the Oddfellows Hall. In the following years the Committee raised money by letting the eight acres of land to drovers; the school was repaired and provided with a school prize fund.

The question of moving the school was raised again in 1907. The Lands Department resumed seventy acres of the land in 1908. By 1963 the old building was in disrepair and the Department called tenders for a new school. The new building 31 by 21 feet with a nine foot verandah was built by M. Mack, although his contract work was considered unsatisfactory. The school was completed and opened on 28 May 1915. The old school, J. & G. Harris's 1860s store, was sold to F.T. Heers for £40 on 1 September 1915 and he removed it from the site on 11 October 1915. In spite of the various attempts, the school still remains on the 1874 site, having been enlarged again in 1971. The closure of Wivenhoe Pocket and Fairney View schools in 1962 and 1967 has stabilized the Fernvale enrolment by bussing the students. The Wivenhoe Dam construction in the early 1980s further enlarged the school enrolment but that has passed.

### Lowood

Parents first met to advocate a school in the Upper Tarampa and Lowood area on 20 January 1881 at Tarampa. A Building Committee of Ferdinand Weise (Secretary), Eberhard Reinhardt, Henry Link and Henry Lindemann was formed. There were twenty-eight children of the Weise, Lindemann, Dohms, Bernhagen, Bick, Rainboth, Link, Klaka, Christenson, Tochwitz, Tessen, Reinhardt, Brurs, and Seiler families ready to attend school. They chose a site half a mile from the Brisbane River. A substantial weatherboard shingle-roofed and timber-floored building, erected by A.F.O. Zerneke, was already on the site and it only needed a window. As the Committee had obtained furniture the Department approved the arrangements. The Committee supported P.

Weehrenquist, private tutor on Bolden's Northbrook station as the teacher. He opened the Upper Tarampa school on 29 June 1881 with nineteen students, a good average considering that the corn picking season was at its height. There was obvious confusion with Tarampa school so the teacher suggested Cairnhill as a name, which the Department accepted. Perhaps it was the fact that twenty-six out of the thirty children could not speak English that persuaded Weehrenquist to resign and new teacher, J. Reardon commenced on 16 October 1881. William Jackson arrived on 7 November 1884 as teacher for two years.

When Jackson left in 1886 the windowless school was in disrepair and without a water tank. There were fifty-two children on the roll and on 17 May 1887 a public meeting was held to advocate the erection of a new school building. A new two-acre site was selected. Tenders for a new school, 30 by 18 feet with seven foot verandah, were called on 11 June 1888; J.G. Schlecht's tender for £589 was accepted. The new building was ready for occupancy by March 1889. Schlecht fenced the grounds for £45 and bought the old school building for £8. The Committee raised one-fifth of the total costs. The new school opened on 1 April 1889 with Henry Lawson (not the poet) as the teacher of the forty-seven students. The name of the school was changed to Lowood in October 1891.

The Lowood butter factory opened in 1895 stimulating district prosperity and the school was always overcrowded. The building was insufficient for the eighty students by 1891. Additions to the school building, a kitchen and covered way, were constructed in 1892 and the Committee raised £101 as their contribution. There were two teachers and ninety-three students. The recovery from the flood also increased the attendance. A play shed was built and the teacher's residence was extended for £42. This shed was considered for lessons in 1900 as the enrolment was up to 140 in a school built for a hundred and pupil teachers taught children on the verandahs. However, extensions were not done for another twenty years, and cost £603 in 1919.

The first head teacher, Henry Lawson stayed in Lowood for twenty-five years. The second teacher, William Henry Chappell nine years, then B. McGinley for thirteen years. In 1924 another two acres were purchased for the school reserve and in the 1930s relief workers improved the grounds tremendously. F.M. Birt was head teacher for eighteen months after the Rural School opened in 1936, then J.A. Glazebrook for two years and W.E. Bytheway until 1949. The Rural School was first held two days per week in the old teacher's residence while a new one was built. It became



Lowood State High School. 1987.

*Terry Conway*

full-time in 1938. After the war there were three other primary teachers, one domestic science, and one manual training teacher. Dressmaking, cake icing, and manual training classes were held in the evenings, as was common in country towns with Rural and High Schools. A new primary school, built at a cost of £34,070, was occupied in January 1962; it was officially opened by H. Richter, MLA, Minister for Public Works and Local Government, on 27 October 1962.

Provision of country High Schools (or Secondary Departments) was a popular government policy in the early 1960s and Lowood High School was opened in 1963 in World War II buildings. They only had to be endured for six years since in 1969 a larger secondary school was opened. Crs Haslingden, Beaumont and Williams met the Land Administration Commission in November 1981 regarding the proposed acquisition of Council land for the new High School. The government resumed land from the Council and H. and L. Schroeder, who received financial compensation for the land. Myola Contracting Company constructed the first stage buildings, comprising offices, science laboratory, teaching areas, library, art room, and staff room at a cost of \$624,000. The new High School on the enlarged site higher up the hill was opened in January 1983. At the official opening in May 1983, Principal Peter Whitelaw was in charge of 380 students up to Grade 12. The second stage buildings comprise a triple classroom block and games area. Throughout the whole existence of the Lowood Secondary School Cr Neil L. Zabel has been President of the Parents and Citizens Association.<sup>12</sup>

Toogoolawah school was similar in many respects to Lowood school — German speaking children and parents, similar size, prosperous agricultural farmer parents, and established soon after the railway reached the town.

Railwayman and town stalwart, George Launder, was the first Secretary of Toogoolawah School Building Committee. T.J. Coleman was its treasurer. Led by James H. McConnel who donated the necessary land, the first meeting was held in August 1904 and the committee applied for a school on 1 December 1904. The building, measuring 24 by 16 feet with seven foot front verandah and set on low stumps, was completed by Harry Judd of Esk in April 1905 for £111. The school opened on 30 May 1905 with Ann Scott, who had previously taught at Cressbrook and Ottaba, as teacher. The first pupils were Alice Dolby, Robert and Mary Coleman, John and Levi Tompkins, Myrtle Smith, Percy Hodges, Wilbraham and Dawson Launder, Ronald Teske, Sol Ireland, Bertha, Hilda, and Dallas Arnold, Sadie, William, and James Spencer, Ernest, Violet, and Daisy Smith, Ruby, Hermoine, and Edi Hodges, Ada, Ernest, Albert and Alfred Wruck and Lovie and Miriam James. Forty children were attending by September 1905 and a play shed was erected in December that year. Mrs J.H. McConnel and Mrs T. Coleman were on the first permanent School Committee.

The district population increased rapidly when Nestle took over the Condensed Milk factory in 1907. Miss Scott taught through the growth period at Toogoolawah when the school was



overcrowded, with ninety children in a building built for forty-eight. She resigned at the end of 1908 to marry J. Butler and Charles E. Daniels took her place. By February 1909 Nestle had bought the condensary, another section of Cressbrook estate was ready for auction to selectors, a sawmill employing forty labourers was ready for opening, and fifteen cottages were being built in the town. The school enrolment was 87 and an Assistant Teacher, W. Butler was appointed. At the same time a teacher's residence and additions to the school measuring 49 by 20 feet with a nine foot verandah front and back, were approved. During construction, classes were held in the Undenominational Church. A. Menzies, Toogoolawah builder and undertaker, built the new school and converted the old one to a teacher's residence for £956. The buildings were ready for occupation at the beginning of the 1911 school year. The school was overcrowded again by 1919 when further additions were approved, costing £1141 and occupied on 19 April 1920.

The Rural School opened in 1928 after a progressive Ladies Committee collected £200. In 1929 school enrolment reached 260 with seven teachers — Messrs E.J. Gillies, C.A. Barrett, Misses J.S. Thomson, V.A. Baker, E.A. Gledson, E.S. Quinn, and J.N. Munro — in the primary school; Miss G. Ranson and M. Cormack (domestic science) and Messrs F.A. Krause (woodwork instructor), G. McMullen (sheet metal work) and J. Henderson (leather work) and Head Teacher, C.W. Munro in the upper school. Students came by train from Coominya, Esk, Linville, Harlin, Colinton, and Moore to study Rural School subjects. Boys could learn tinsmithing and also repair their farm harnesses in leatherwork lessons. They established a forestry plot of pines (*pinus caribea*) in 1931 and a fernery of fifty different ferns under a section of the school soon after; within five years it presented an imposing site to visitors. The grounds were further improved by government relief works. Enrolments fell during the depression as the timber industry contracted locally and Nestle's condensed milk factory closed.

C.W. Munro was transferred to West Ipswich at the beginning of 1934 and he was replaced by A.B. Copeman from Clifton Rural School with an enviable record as a Rural School head teacher. During his career at Toogoolawah the school obtained its greatest ever number of scholarships to high school, nine. Eldest son, George Copeman won the Lilley Medal for the top Scholarship pass in the state in 1934. His uncle, William Briggs, had won the same prize in 1906 at Mount Morgan Boys School and in the following year his brother

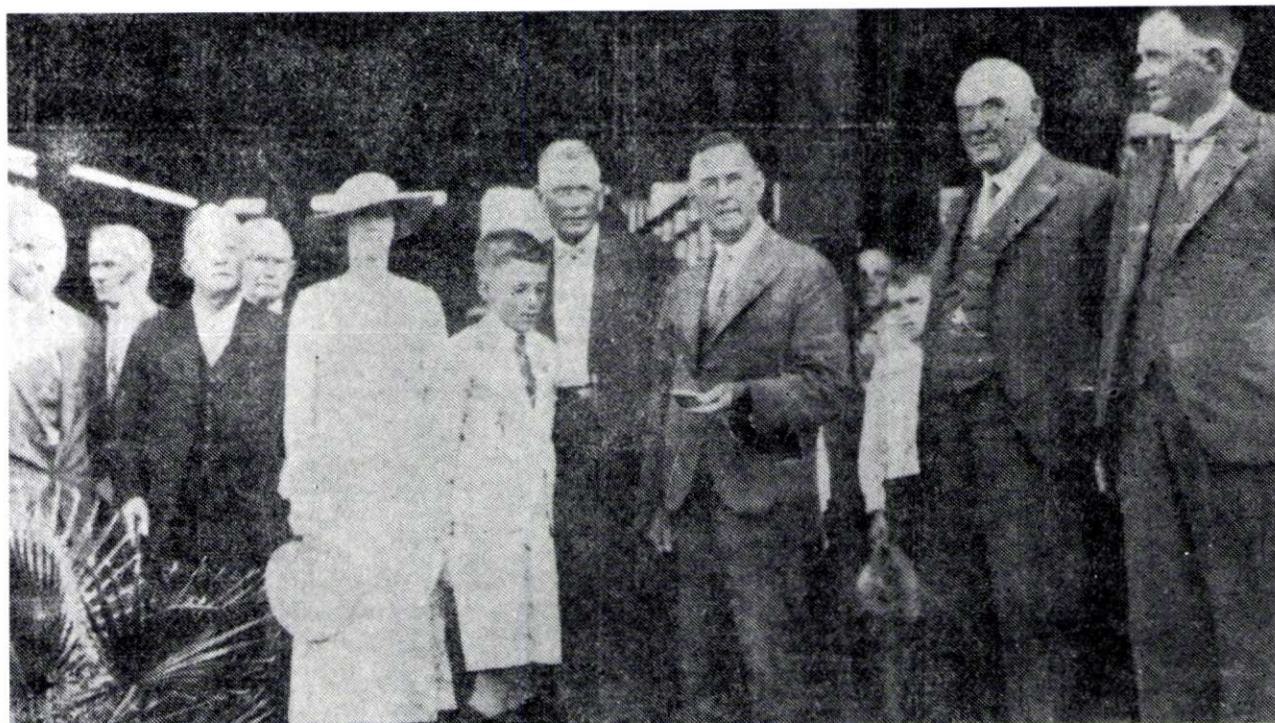
Herbert obtained third place in the Queensland Scholarship examination. During his two years at Toogoolawah Arthur Copeman completed his Bachelor of Arts from University of Queensland. He had travelled extensively overseas and while at Toogoolawah he was president of the Brisbane Valley Teachers' Association and on the Queensland Teachers' Union Executive, President of the Toogoolawah RACQ Branch and of the Queensland School of Arts Association. He was a member of the Toogoolawah Church of England Parish Council and a member of the Queensland Synod.

Although it was depression the 1930s were exciting years at Toogoolawah school. It was a self-help community where townspeople raised funds for school children's excursions and sports activities. The choir conducted by Miss A. Gray gained third place in the country schools section of the Queensland Eisteddfod in Brisbane. The most wonderful event of the school year was the specially organized excursion train to Ipswich and Brisbane to inspect factories and public buildings. One night in 1937 when they were visiting Somerset Dam the children travelled back home in an open truck with the driver using a torch after the lights failed.

The Copemans were always busy with community activities. They were conscious of good health and strong family relationships as a basis for stimulating achievements in life. They had five children who, like other Toogoolawah children, were always very neatly dressed. Birthday presents were only kept about a week and then given to children of the relief workers. Mrs Copeman was active in CWA and community affairs. While they were at Toogoolawah they bought a motor car out of money received from a relative's will. This enabled them to spend their holidays at Redcliffe and Brisbane, and to travel up the Hampton road to Toowoomba.

In 1954 Toogoolawah became an area school for students bussed in when Fulham, Lower Cressbrook, and Cooeimbardi schools closed. This was extended when the Scrubby Creek, Sandy Gully, Mt Beppo, and Mt Esk Pocket schools also closed. During the floods in February 1955 school bus driver, C. Cowley, made numerous extra trips to take children to and from school when the Cressbrook Creek was flooded at Stewart's Crossing.

The Secondary Department opened in May 1955 and the state Premier, V.C. Gair, MLA, visited the school in the last week of April 1955, the first time that a Queensland Premier had ever visited the



Presentation of Lilley Medal to George Copeman at Toogoolawah on 6 February 1935.  
(L to R): H.A. Teske, R.M. Bell MLA, W.C. Schank, D.A. Menzies, W. Lewis (Chairman of Esk Shire Council), Mrs A.B. Copeman, George Copeman, D.C. Pryce (Chairman of School Committee), Hon. F.A. Cooper MLA (Minister for Public Instruction), B.J. McKenna (Director General of Education), A.B. Copeman (Head Teacher of Toogoolawah School).  
*John Oxley Library*

Toogoolawah school. On the night of 25 July 1956, around 8pm the continuous sounding of the horn by a passing motorist alerted the head teacher to a disastrous fire in the school. A total of £15,000 damage was done, destroying the whole of the primary school and severely damaging to the High School. The Rural School buildings were untouched. School resumed, after a day without classes, in the Methodist Church and the RSSAILA Hall. A new school was built on site and four demountable buildings, a temporary solution often used in fast-growing or overcrowded city schools in the 1950s and 1960s, were added.

By 1964 six buses were bringing 162 children to Toogoolawah school — Esk (41), Linville (24), Somerset Dam and Mt Beppo (18), Biarra (28), Cressbrook (28), and Scrub Creek (23). There was continued growth in following years. The new Manual Arts centre was built in 1966 and in 1975 the library and pre-school were added; the home economics and science buildings were built in 1980 by which time there were 400 students. The new senior school is currently being constructed along the Old Mt Beppo Road.<sup>13</sup>

The pattern of education and school life in the Brisbane Valley is illustrated by such schools as Anduramaba and Atkinson's Lagoon, being farming areas, Biarra, a farming and mining area, and Benarkin and Blackbutt as timber towns.

Little is known of the beginning of Atkinson's Lagoon school as the first school was privately funded; government funding began in May 1885. There were less than twenty students and W.E. Dunwoody took over as teacher on 12 June 1891. There were difficulties when Buaraba Creek flooded as three-quarters of the children lived on the northern side of the creek. The school was virtually closed during the June 1891 flood.

Cattle camped under the school as there was no fence round it and the original school building was sold in September 1909 when the Department built a new school. During November 1920 this building was removed to Wattle Glen, two miles away for Anne Newman to re-open the school on 20 November 1920. Women teachers kept the school open after 1917 including Moya Riddell who married Ron De Jersey of Patrick Estate School; Anne Newman taught there in the mid-1930s. School attendance were always only about twenty and fell to eight and thirteen by the 1940s.

**Anduramba** school served a typical dairyfarming area in the western part of the shire. Parents wrote to H.P. Somerset, MLA, on 20 April 1910 requesting his assistance in obtaining a school. A public meeting on 25 April 1910 formed a School Building Committee of Samuel Kidman (Chairman), James Edward McGreevy (Secretary), Alfred Richter (Treasurer), James D. Booth, and

R.W. Leeman who had already raised £15 towards a school building for their eighteen children. Most of the parents had land selections over three hundred acres running cattle. However a stalemate developed because two of the parents, J. Cooper and S. Fuller, with four children, were opposed to the school site selected by the Committee and would not send their children to the school if it opened there. With only fourteen other children available to attend, the Department refused the application.

A new School Building Committee of J. Burrell, J. Barnes, R.W. Leeman, G.D. Booth, Alfred Richter, Stephen A. Fuller, Samuel Kidman, and John Hodgson Jr. was formed at another meeting on 28 April 1911. By then parents had agreed on a more central site and there were fourteen children available to attend, plus four more of parents who were constructing houses near the school site. Teamster, John McGreevy and his wife who had no children of their own and lived close to the school site, were happy to board the teacher, setting aside two rooms 10 by 12 feet. The Committee decided on a building 21 by 14 feet with a seven foot verandah. The tender for £195 of J.C. Brough of Crow's Nest was accepted and he had the school completed on 17 April 1912. It was unlined and faced the west on top of a hill. In winter the verandah was ineffectual and westerly winds annoyed teacher and students alike.

Amelia Oliver was the first teacher and remained there until 1918. Twenty-eight chains of fencing were erected around the school ground in September 1914 at a cost of £16. In 1916 a verandah on the eastern side was built by Mr Pearson for £45. The school was lined for £38 in December 1920.

Anduramba school was an illustration of difficulties of teacher accommodation. When Amelia Oliver left in 1918 the McGreevys were unable to offer teacher accommodation again. Misses Maria Elder and Mary Quinlan both left because of these difficulties in 1918. A local girl, Miss Bailey, who lived within a few miles of the school, was appointed in June 1919. She continued until the end of 1920 and Louisa Elizabeth Scott took over on 1 January 1921 at £170 per year. Maria Gooderham took over in 1923, teaching twenty students.<sup>14</sup>

**Biarra** school in the farming and timber district of Biarra (not the surveyed town of Biarra) was opened in 1888. Albert A. Henderson, Charles Gill, Charles Langton, James Dunlop, Donald McPherson, William Rosentrater, and Charles Cain comprised the School Committee, formed at a

public meeting on 19 February 1887. £80 had been promised towards a school site on a ridge along the main Eskdale Road. The district comprised a number of scattered selections engaged in cattle rearing and dairy farming and had only a general store. The thirty children of selectors C.S. Langton, D.B. McPherson, C.Cain, W. Rosentrater, Ephraim Henshall, Frederick Seib, Elizabeth Worley (guardian for the two Saunders children), J. Dunlop, Robert Noonan, C. Gill, Ellen McLean, W.S. Langton, and A.A. Henderson, were available to attend the school. By May 1887 the Committee had, with great effort, raised the £110 required for the school building and furniture, but the disastrous flood that year severely retarded the small settlement. Bullock teams hauled the timber to the site and H. Day of Esk completed the school for £538 on 27 April 1888. Even though the ground was gravelly and bare of trees the School Committee could not obtain a playshed. Ernest Cook of Dundas fenced the school ground for £66. In 1899 a library, funded by H.P. Somerset, MLA, and a friend in Brisbane, was purchased for the school of fifty children.

Henry John Ferguson was the first teacher. Other teachers in the early years were W.W. Perrett who came from Cardwell in 1902, and Louis Lewis who came from Urangan in June 1908 and stayed for thirteen years. There were only eight children when teacher Arthur Percival Theodore completed the 1927 school year so the Department decided to close the school. However, by March five more children were available and the Department reopened the school on 8 March 1928 with Walter Norman Gordon as teacher. Gordon remained there until December 1929 with only ten students, two of whom were his own. The Department closed the school from 27 January 1930 and the children were enrolled in Primary Correspondence Classes. Gordon was transferred to Ropeley and the building was offered for purchase in February 1934.<sup>15</sup>

**Benarkin** school illustrates the vulnerability of school buildings and educational facilities in fast developing areas. The school began as McNamara's Camp Provisional School in 1910, established to serve the children of day labour railway workers and timber workers.

In February 1910 there were sixty children of railway workers on the construction four miles north of Linville. The Railway Department recommended that the Education Department approve a tent school similar to other tent schools opened on other day-labour railway construction sites in Queensland. McNamara's Camp was selected because it was a central and level site. The

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school was to be a strong canvas tent supplied by the Railway Department with a floor space of 340 square feet and the rest of expenditure would be born by the Education Department and School Committee, consisting of George Preston (Chairman), Mary McGarvey (Secretary), Mrs Casey (Treasurer), and Mrs Casey and Thomas Casey. Inspector J.A. Canny considered that a steady married male teacher was required to control the wily children unaccustomed to schooling. Herbert E. Ryan, in charge of the tent school on the Herberton Range, was appointed teacher of McNamara's Camp school which opened on 4 July 1910 at 79 miles on the railway.

On 10 October 1910 George Preston requested the removal of the school from McNamara's Camp to Well Holes near 85 miles where forty children were living as all the railway gangs had moved on. In mid-November 1910 the Railway Department moved the school to Well Holes and located it on Crown Land opposite the road from the town allotments; attendance varied between thirty and forty. In May 1912 the name was changed from Well Holes Tent School to Benarkin Provisional School, after the town and railway station.

In March 1912 the Railway Department recommended that the tent school be moved further along the railway line to 93 miles but the Education Department refused, since the majority of children attending the Benarkin school were children of timber workers who had formed a committee to raise money for a State School there. When Herbert Ryan was transferred and N.S. Griffiths took over in May 1912 the tent was wearing thin and had been damaged in a recent hail storm. There was insufficient room for the forty-five children and no verandah, so children's bags had to be hung inside the classroom. There wasn't even room for all the children to sit down at the same time. The Department called tenders on 10 October 1912 for a school (24 by 16 feet with two seven foot verandahs) on high stumps, two sets of steps, and a 1,000 gallon tank. The committee was lucky in that the amendments to the *Education Act* did away with the need for committees to raise one fifth of the cost of schools. D.A. Menzies' tender of £244 was accepted and the building was completed by March 1913. The new school was occupied on 18 April 1913 and the old tent sold for 30s.

The timber trade had declined and the Department of Public Lands controlled the timber reserves in the region. The extension of the railway to Blackbutt reduced the school attendance and by mid 1920 the Benarkin school could neither obtain a committee nor retain more than eight children; it

closed in September 1920. By 1923 it was the home of swagmen, windows were left open, books scattered and the local tennis club used the forms. The Education Department removed the building to Patrick Estate and surrendered the school reserve.

When the timber industry was revitalized in 1935 under a new Act and the Forestry Department was employing twenty men at Benarkin a new School Committee was formed and regained the old school reserve. The new school was built by W.J. Bell for £333 and completed on 14 August 1935. Only fourteen days later it was burnt down one evening. Teacher, G.H. Knight taught the twenty-six students in September 1935 on the front verandah of the house he was renting. A.H. Haughton built a new school for £283 and it was occupied on 14 April 1936. Many improvements were carried out in the fifties and sixties but enrolments fell to thirteen in the early 1970s. It was through the efforts of Inspector J. Thistlewaite and W.A.M. Gunn, MLA for Somerset, that the school was kept open and enrolments increased again to nearly forty, allowing the employment of two teachers.<sup>16</sup>

While Blackbutt was still within the Esk Shire boundaries selectors and timbergetters obtained a school for their children. In 1892 they offered their labour and timber free to build a 24 by 14 feet school with seven foot verandahs for the sixteen children of John Dreghorn, Edward Jones, Jesse Crompton, William Gibson, Thomas Coulson, George Roginson, John Hart, John Douglas, and James Miller. Their application was rejected and they tried again in 1894. The track to their proposed school site led off about 3.5 miles south of Taromeo station and was seven miles north of Ivory Creek. The selectors had all worked extremely hard to survive in the depression, building comfortable timber houses, fencing paddocks, and commencing cultivation. They had chosen part of a forfeited selection as the school site. Because of the isolation and the selectors' proven record in the area the Education Department approved their application and waived the one fifth contribution condition, allowing the selectors to construct the school with their own timber.

The sixteen children of the Hart, Douglas, Gibson, Edward Jones, Crompton, Coulson, Towson, Ogilvie, and Dreghorn families were ready to attend school. The construction of their school was truly a co-operative effort with each family giving his labour under the supervision of W.E. Tunley of Nanango. Messrs Hart and Roger cleared the ground. Messrs Hart, Douglas,



Moore State School. 1987.

Terry Conway

Crompton and Coulson gave their labour erecting the building. Mrs Ogilvie, a widow, boarded W.E. Tunley at no expense for three weeks, and he only charged 3s. 4d. per day for supervision of the building work. They only put two windows in the gables but the schoolroom was still well lit. In all the building with a shingle roof only cost £79.

The school opened in 1896 with Isabella Douglas as teacher, when the only transport to Blackbutt was by coach from Esk via Taromeo pastoral station. This was a far cry from the site in 1908 when there were two sawmills, two hotels, several stores, and a railway imminent. By then there were fifty students attending, agriculture and dairying were also prosperous, and the school was being considerably enlarged.<sup>17</sup>

Down the road at **Colinton** there had been a school in 1879–80. The families were all associated with Colinton station and small selections surrounding it. The first School Building Committee comprised Charles Findlay, James Millis, and Charles Williams of the 'Stone House', a post office and coach house. Fourteen children were available to attend. They had a building 16 by

12 by 9 feet of split hardwood with one window. They had two desks and forms, a press, and a blackboard, all of red cedar. Water was obtained from the Brisbane River nearby and the ground was fenced in hardwood. They had a teacher working in a private capacity.

In 1900 local farmer and shire councillor from 1914 to 1921, George Bishop called a meeting of parents to apply for a government school. They met in the Nine Mile Receiving Office, later known as Linville, and formed a School Building Committee of Colin Ross Lewin Cameron (Secretary), William Carseldine, Thomas Leo, J. Carseldine, William McPherson, William and Frederick Kassulke, and G. Brown. On 17 May 1901 the Department approved the establishment of a school on a block in the Colinton township reserve on the Mount Stanley Road. A tender of £123 from C.R.L. Cameron was accepted and the work was completed by 20 July 1901. The first teacher of the new school, named Colinton, was Thomas P. Keys. However within a year the enrolment was down to eleven and Keys was transferred on 11 September 1902. The Department reduced the teacher's pay to

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£80 per year so it was difficult to obtain another teacher. However, William Wells, later storekeeper and Esk Shire Chairman, took charge of the school in January 1903.

There was a brief change of name to Oakleigh in 1905. The name was unknown to residents, the local name of Linville having been adopted at the post office previously named the Nine Mile. The name of the school was changed to Linville in September 1906.

Within a year the name Colinton was adopted for a school at Colinton township. By 1919 there were fifty children attending it but the Department refused to make additions until eight years later when an extra unlined room was added at a cost of £187. The school continued until closed on 12 December 1969 when there were seventeen children. The land has since been repurchased by John Colinton Moore, MP.<sup>18</sup>

Further south **Coominya** school illustrates the provision of school facilities in a small town living on hopes of expansion in the timber and agricultural industries. In 1911 there were a sawmill, store, hotel, Mrs Pilben's boarding house, two wheelwright's shops (C.G. Schiewe's and Kopelke's), and two humble cottages for sawmill employees (Gillow and Curry). H. Scott was Mrs Lumley Hill's chauffeur and his daughter would board in town to attend school. Mrs Philben's

husband, James, and William Hickey were railway lengthsmen. The children previously attended Lockyer school, three miles away, travelling on the train in the morning and walking home in the afternoon over the Lockyer Creek bridge, fifty-six feet above water level. On 20 October 1909 the Coominya Progress Association applied for a school and the first School Building Committee comprised Robert Hanrahan, J. Ward, R. Thomas (Secretary), W. Hickey, and J. Herman; they collected £37 towards a building for their twenty-five children.

The Department approved a school at Coominya on 9 September 1911. H.A. Teske's tender of £244 was accepted and it was ready for occupation on 12 August 1912. Miss Constance Annie Flanagan was appointed as teacher on 30 August 1912 at a salary of £90 per year. By 1920 the school had an enrolment of thirty-nine and the Committee requested the school be lined and additions made. At the commencement of the 1921 school year there were forty-six children attending because of the opening of the Coominya Soldier Settlement set up for fruit-growing purposes. The Inspector reported that there would likely be sixty children as the settlement grew.

Conditions there were primitive. Only one or two good homes had been built and other families lived in tents or crude shelters. Very little land had been cleared and roads were not properly formed. At

Linville State School. 1916. William Wells, Head Teacher.

*John Oxley Library*



least twenty children lived within two miles of the school but were not yet on the roll. The Inspector recommended enclosing underneath the school with galvanized iron, purchasing two more desks and forms, and sending another teacher. The parents refused to send their children to be taught in such primitive circumstances as it would be too cold in winter and boiling hot in summer. The children would also have to sit on packing cases. The Committee were further incensed by the arrival of 'century old' desks and forms from Pine Mountain and Fernvale schools.

Plans were drawn up during November 1921 for extensions but the Department could not afford the £610 required. By then 119 of the Soldier Settlement blocks had been occupied and there were sixty-six children attending. Attendance had been down because of scarlet fever and outbreaks of other contagious diseases, attributed in part to overcrowding at school. Conditions at school were as harsh as they were at home on the farms. Head Teacher, Robert Fulham, wrote in 1922 that:

only one verandah may be used at a time, trying hard to accommodate sixty children in this small space. There is not one decent blackboard in the school, so perished it is hard to write on and harder to read. Miss Rankin's blackboard half the size of mine is even worse.

Children were reportedly fainting daily at school because of overcrowding. Extensions were then done in the 1923-1924 Christmas holidays at a cost of £460, after many of the soldier settlers had abandoned their properties.

Albert Bunney, sawmiller, was Chairman of the School Committee on which there also John W. Heers (Secretary), William F. Cornhill (Treasurer), Samuel J. Fox, Roger Hanrahan, Arthur A. Muckert, and Edward C. A. Wilson in 1926. A teacher's residence was built in 1934 by R. Schiesser for £499. Electricity was connected to the house in 1936. There were then thirty-four children on the roll.

Coominya school was threatened with closure during the 1960s because of the ageing local community. However, enrolments grew dramatically in the late 1970s because of the Atkinson's Dam construction work and the large numbers of families moving to the new subdivisions (especially 'Wallaura Downs' west of Coominya). A four-classroom block, second toilet block, sports store, janitor's room, and covered playshed have all been added. By 1985 the enrolment had risen to 210 compared to thirty-eight in 1972 and eighty in 1980.<sup>19</sup>

Education in the timber and dairying areas in the

eastern part of the shire at Crossdale and Dundas have progressed in a radically different manner.

On 22 July 1893 Thomas Brennan, James Copely, Malachi Murphy, Jesse Keen and Phillip Bigge requested a school in the Crossdale area. They intended naming the school Mount Eric Provisional School. There were twenty-five children available and the nearest school, Fairview, five miles away, had been closed. The School Inspector recommended a school at Mount Eric, being at the cross roads near Mount Brisbane station but there was little progress because of opposition to the school site.

Eric McConnel called a public meeting on 2 May 1896 at the Mount Brisbane hotel to petition F. Lord, MLA for a school. The Inspector recommended a school again on 21 September 1896. All the parents were farmers whose selections were separated by Mount Brisbane station. The Cross and Dennehy families lived on the Esk road, Keen and Copley families on the Kilcoy road, the Parfitts on the Deep Creek road, the Murphys between Reedy Creek and the Kilcoy road, Brennans along the Stanley River, and the Daniels family were employees on Mount Brisbane station. The **Cross Roads Provisional School** opened on a three acre reserve at the fiveways at Mount Brisbane on 11 July 1897 with Miss Gertrude King as the first teacher. The school building was built by Baker of Deep Creek for £83 and Gannon fenced the reserve for £10.

Gertrude King taught there until September 1910 and was succeeded by Mary Ann Nolan who remained the teacher until 1923. Miss Jesse Smith taught until 1926. The school closed in 1926 with an enrolment of eight because of the decline in the timber industry. The building was removed to Cooeimbardi in 1927.<sup>20</sup>

Advocacy for a school at **Dundas** began on 22 June 1886 when a public meeting was held at Richard Varley's home and a Committee of Edwin Hine (Chairman), William Spann (Treasurer) and Richard Varley (Secretary) was formed. However the Hines and Varleys children were already attending a private school 2.5 miles away at Mount Brisbane run by William Seely. So the Committee was obliged to select a site further away and closer to Northbrook and this suited Ralph Stewart, George Hay and James Brown of Northbrook. Two years later the residents agreed on a central location near Northbrook Creek.

The Department recommended that the slab hut (19 by 14 by 8 feet) with pine floor and shingle roof, offered by R. Stewart, be accepted. The residents also built the school furniture; the selectors had all

been affected by drought and, as their country was quite mountainous, there was little agriculture and the families were timbergetters. The school opened in January 1889 with Miss G.B. Brightwell as teacher. After the 1893 flood attendance fell rapidly and the school was closed on 30 September 1893.

It reopened on 19 September 1898 with James, Sydney, and Eunice Gardiner, Carl, Minnie, Christian and William Degen, Violet, Johana, and John O'Reilly, Bertha, Elsie, Edward and Minnie Schultz, William, Elizabeth, and James Francis, and Edward Ihle attending. As Ralph Stewart had sold his property to Richard O'Reilly there was no longer any female teacher accommodation and the new teacher, Miss Jessie Hunter, had to ride over ten miles a day to and from extremely trying teaching conditions. The building did not have a verandah and had wooden shutters only for windows. Water had to be carried to the school from the creek. By holding socials and collecting local subscriptions Miss Hunter raised money for a tank and verandah in March 1906. In addition the school was on private land and there was no public road so the children had to walk through Fluck's herd of cattle each day to get to school.

A new Building Committee was formed in 1910. They were able to raise the one-fifth necessary for construction of a new school on a government reserve made out of a corner of Mr Fluck's farm. Charles Baker built the school for £165. The twenty-two children occupied the school in December 1912. Miss Magdalen Watson took over from Jessie Hunter after January 1911. Miss Catherine Smith taught from 1913 to 1918, Miss Kindness until 1919, Miss Cash until 1920, Miss Edna Ross until 1921, Miss Catherine Lucia Mulcare until 1929 and Miss O.M.M. Knudsen until 1931. The enrolments dropped in the 1920s with the decline in the timber industry and the school closed from 31 December 1928. However numbers increased in 1929 and **Dundas** and **Bryden** were operated as part-time schools from 19 August 1929 until 31 December 1932. Dundas re-opened as a fulltime school in 1933 with Lily Margaret Wilson as teacher.<sup>21</sup>

A number of the closed one-teacher country school buildings were used as kindergartens. Toogoolawah has had a kindergarten in the old Sandy Gully school building since 1962. The Esk Shire Council assisted in the establishment of Esk Kindergarten in the old Mount Esk Pocket school in June 1970. Lowood kindergarten also commenced in the 1970s with Cr Jean Bray as teacher. They held classes in the Bethel Lutheran Hall in Park Street. In 1983 the Lowood and District

Kindergarten Association obtained a block of land in Lowood for their own building.<sup>22</sup>

### **Libraries**

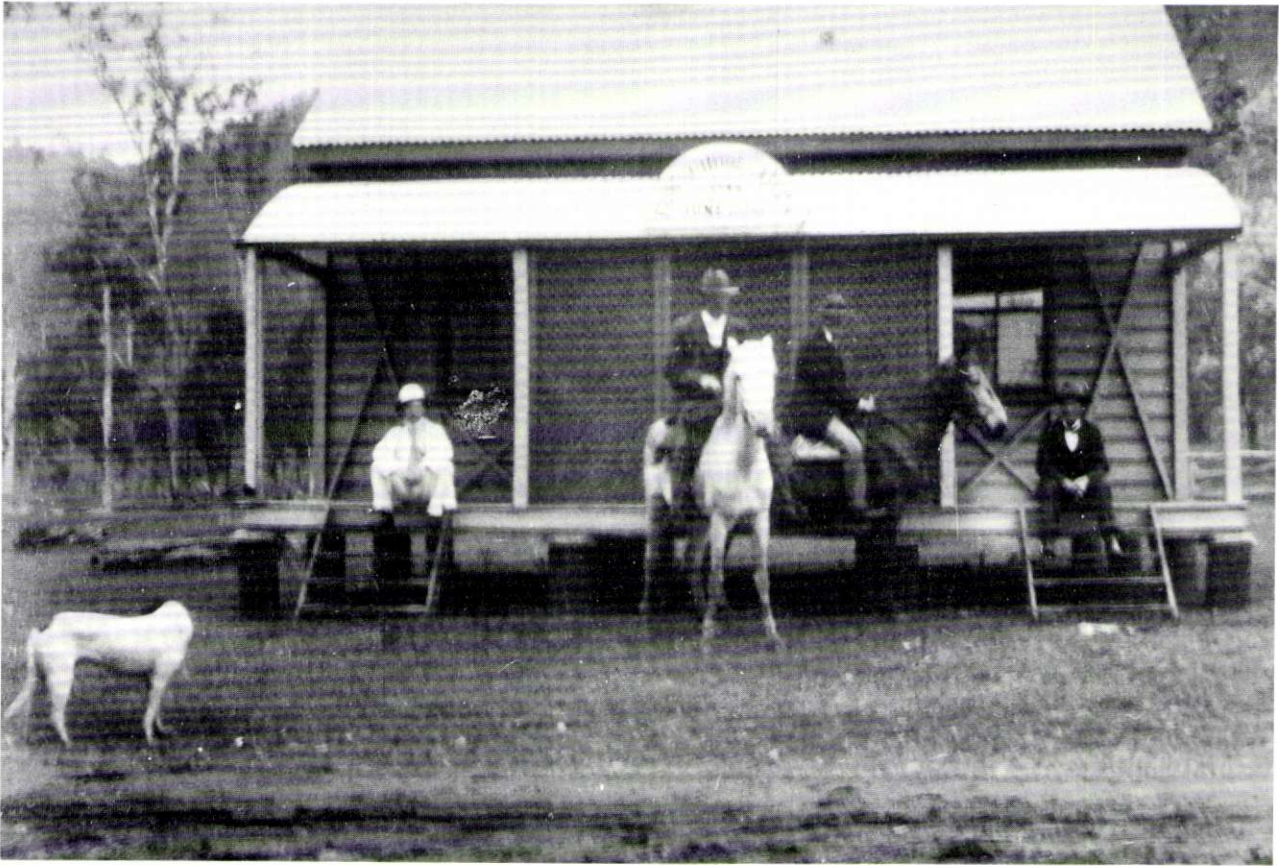
Libraries were first established within the shire in the form of Schools of Arts. Esk had a School of Arts Committee from 1888 until the building was taken over by the Shire Council in 1974. Fernvale residents first considered the idea in 1886. Lowood's School of Arts existed from 1898 until 1959. Colinton established a School of Arts Committee in 1909. Toogoolawah instituted the idea of a School of Arts in association with Alexandra Hall in 1926 and it was this library which was recommended to be the first free library in the Brisbane Valley in 1954; this idea was not, however, implemented immediately.

The State Library of Queensland first became involved in Brisbane Valley libraries in 1954 with the management and finance of Toogoolawah library. Since the mid-1970s the Shire Council has taken a much more active role in fostering and publicizing libraries so that they are much more visible than shire roads and are subsidized by the Library Board of Queensland.

The Fernvale School of Arts started with a meeting in February 1886. R. North and G. Brightwell moved that three or four acres be reserved for a School of Arts and Farmers' Club between Stinking Gully and the Wesleyan Church fronting Cribb and Foote's store. Captain Vernor, F.C.A. Heers and R. North were elected as trustees of the School of Arts. However it only operated energetically into the 1890s.<sup>23</sup>

The Esk School of Arts was always a focal point of Esk culture and entertainment. It served the district from 1886 until 1974 when the Esk Shire Council took over control of the building and the State Library of Queensland took over the library. The first meeting forming the School of Arts was held on 18 June 1886 and from then on it provided magnificent community service through social activities, educational functions, and as a picture theatre. The first building erected for the School of Arts was one built by Lars Andersen in 1891 for £56 near the Presbyterian Church. In 1904 the building was removed to a new site near the railway in the centre of town. The Committee decided in 1909 to construct a new building and J. Rohweder's tender of £1,080 14s. 0d. was successful for the building which became the Lyceum Hall. Local residents, W. Hawken, the Chaille family, Miss E. McCarthy, J.T. Barr, T.C. Pryde and D. Harris gave sterling service to the organization.<sup>24</sup>





Esk School of Arts. c. 1900.

John Oxley Library

One characteristic of Brisbane Valley education, just as in other country centres in Queensland has been its domination by women teachers of one-teacher schools, as Scholarship teachers, and in the School of Arts. By contrast, committees of these institutions were male-dominated, as in other social structures.

The achievements of the Toogoolawah State and Rural Schools in the 1930s and 1940s are enviable, although they have now been superseded by the State High Schools at Lowood and Toogoolawah.

#### ENDNOTES

1. For an assessment of B.J. McKenna's career see *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1986) Vol 10 pp300-301.
2. E. Clarke, *Female Teachers in Queensland State Schools: A History 1860-1983* (Brisbane, Department of Education, 1985).
3. The description of the violent teacher is derived from one of the Brisbane Valley school files held at Queensland State Archives and anonymity has been preserved.
4. QT 15 December 1863.
5. QT 27 September 1873 and 3 November 1975 p13.
6. QT 18 January 1877 p3 and 8 January 1878.
7. QT 12 April 1900 and 11 March 1902.
8. Details about the school Committee, teachers, enrolments and building come from EDU/Z905, QSA.
9. EDU/AB199, QSA; ER 9 November 1935.
10. Public Works Department *Annual Report* 1945-1946 p13; QT 12 April 1948.
11. *North Queensland Register* 28 July 1973 p14; QT 11 July 1896; Assistance of Mrs N.A. Bell, New Farm; *Souvenir Programme 75th Anniversary Fernvale State School 1874-1949; Fernvale State School: Centenary 1874-1974 Souvenir Booklet*.
12. EDU/Z1625, QSA; QT 3 November 1891, 8 January 1938, 18 April 1949, 31 October 1962, 6 May 1983 p15 and 17 February 1983 p20; ER 2 July 1938; ESKM 24 November 1981 p2155, 10 December 1981 p2193, and 14 January 1982 p2205; *Esk Shire Directory* Vol 1 No 1 p5 [July 1985].
13. *Toogoolawah State School* 1980; BC 12 October 1922 p11; QT 7 August 1926 p11; ER 5 April and 22 August 1931, 9 February 1935, 28 April 1955 p3, 1 May 1956 p5 and 26 July 1956 p1; BVA 24 January 1934, 6 February 1935, 1 April and 19 August 1936 and 24 April 1937; BVS 13 March 1964; EDU/Z2697-8, QSA.
14. EDU/Z48, QSA.
15. EDU/Z182, QSA; ER 26 March 1932 and 17 February 1934; QT 31 January 1899 and 10 February 1930 p9.
16. EDU/Z169, QSA; *South Burnett Times* 11 September 1985 p4 and 28 September 1985 p23.
17. EDU/Z209, QSA.
18. EDU/Z1596, QSA; QT 7 February 1913 p2; BVR 12 December 1969.
19. EDU/Z653, QSA; QT 17 September 1983 p15 and 18 June 1985 pp6-7.
20. EDU/Z696, QSA.
21. EDU/Z362, QSA; QT 3 April 1906; ER 29 August 1931.
22. *Esk Shire Directory* Vol 1 No 1 [July 1985] p5; ESKM 22 September 1983 and 4 October 1985 p3,208; *Toogoolawah State School Centenary Booklet* 1980 p28; QT 22 February 1973 p19, 28 May 1979 p7 and 3 November 1979 p17.
23. Q 6 March 1886 p389; QT 17 May 1888 and 7 January 1890.
24. For a full history of the Esk School of Arts see the article, 'The Esk School of Arts 1886-1974' in BVKS July 1986.