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PART THREE

— QUEENSLAND —

PIVOT OF AUSTRALIA’S FORTUNES IN THE AGE OF AVIATION AND ATOMIC POWER

Sit thou no more inert of fame
But let the wide world hear thy name;
See where thy realms spread, line on line—
Thy empty realms that cry in shame
For hands to make them doubly thine!
Fill up thy frontiers: man the gate
Before too late!

Prepare, ere falls the hour of Fate
When death shells rain their iron hate
And, all in vain, thy blood is poured—
For, dark aslant the Northern Gate
I see the Shadow of the Sword.
I hear the stormclouds break in wrath—
Queen of the North!

(1909) (Essex Evans)
FACTORY PRODUCTION, QUEENSLAND, 1956-57

(a)

(b)

Text Figure 16.
CIVIC, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
CHAPTER XXVII

THE STORY OF THE CITIES, TOWNS, AND SHIRES

The Dominant South-east Corner of the State

Wool, sugar, cattle, dairy produce, wheat, gold, and coal; the rich harvests of orchard and field; manufacturing enterprises; and (the newcomers) uranium and bauxite, have all helped to mould the economic, political and civic pattern of Queensland.

Each of these has created its camps, towns, and cities, with a tale to tell of pioneering endeavour and growing contemporary achievement. With a population (at 30 June 1957) of 1,396,740 Queensland has a larger percentage outside the capital city in the provincial cities, towns and country areas than is the case in any other mainland State. Indeed the contrast in decentralization is most striking in comparison with the more populous States (New South Wales and Victoria), where the swollen capital cities utterly dwarf the rest of their areas. (It has, for example, been said that “N.S.W.” might well stand for “Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong!”)

Of the twenty-five largest cities and towns in Australia, Queensland has eight; New South Wales, six; Victoria, four; West Australia, three; Tasmania, two; South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory, one each.

DIVISIONS

Queensland is divided statistically into thirteen divisions.

MORETON DIVISION, which includes the cities of Brisbane, Ipswich, and Gold Coast (and soon will add Redcliffe), has an area of 7,884 $\frac{3}{4}$ square miles, and occupies the south-eastern corner of the State.

THE CITY OF GREATER BRISBANE

In point of time, Brisbane, it will be remembered, is much older than the State of which it is the capital, for it celebrated its centenary of discovery in 1924. It was proclaimed a municipality in September 1859—three months before the Northern District of “New South Wales” was officially established as the separate Colony of Queensland.
It is (1959) the third city of the Commonwealth in population, and the largest river port in Australia. Its annual revenue is greater than that of the State of Tasmania.

The oldest part of the city is the roadway leading from the northern end of Victoria Bridge to (old) Queen's Wharf. Embedded in the southern gable of the Government Stores is a plaque on which is engraved a Crown with the letters "G.R." and the date "1829"; beneath it over the door in old English lettering are the words: "Government Stores." The basement and first floor are practically in their original state and the roof, although lifted to take the additional story, still retains much of its original lines and materials. The foundations and walls have base courses and corner stones of porphyry, freestone. These remains of the original Commissariat Store make the earliest link with the first settlement. Construction, begun in 1824, was completed in 1829 by convict gangs, under Commandant P. Logan.

Brisbane was so named in honour of the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane (1773-1860), who despatched Oxley on the expedition of 1823, which directly led to the foundation of "Brisbane" became official in 1834. The native name was "Meantjin" or "Miganchin" (meaning a long finger-like point) and referred to what is now Kangaroo Point.

Much of the history of Brisbane in the early convict period has been outlined in Part I (Chapters X, XI and XIV), with that of "Moreton Bay." The first Commandant (Lieut. S. Millar) was succeeded by seven others, of whom perhaps Captain Logan was the most energetic and spectacular figure. They held office in the following order:

- Capt. S. Miller (or Millar) (40th Reg.), 1824; Capt. —, Bishop, (—), 1825; Capt. P. Logan (57th Reg.), 1825-1830; Capt. J. D. Clunie (17th Reg.), 1830-1835; Capt. Foster Fyans (4th Reg.), 1835-1837; Maj. S. Cotton (28th Reg.), 1837-1839; Lieut. George Gravett (or Gravatt) (28th Reg.), 1839; Lieut. Owen Gorman (80th Reg.), 1839-1842.

Administrative Officers in the Post-Penal Period prior to Separation: Dr. S. Simpson: Acting Police Magistrate (formerly Surgeon, 14th Light Dragoons) of Brisbane, and Commissioner of Crown Lands (residence Wolston, Woogaroo, Wacol), and Capt. J. C. Wickham, R.N.: Police Magistrate, Nov. 1842 to 7 April 1857; Government Resident: 1853-1859 (in office till Separation), succeeded the military authorities when they withdrew.

The settlement began as a small cluster of stone and wooden buildings, near the present site of Victoria Bridge, and along each side of William Street. Queen Street, the main thoroughfare of present-day Brisbane, was a rough track extending from the same point to a little beyond Edward Street (and ultimately to the Customs House, built opposite the spot selected by Andrew Petrie to build his house). Petrie's house was on the east corner of present-day Queen and Wharf Streets, and his garden ran from the river edge as far as Jas. Campbell and Sons' stores at the top of Eagle Street. The "Creek" ran from the Roma and Turbot street waterholes past the site of the Town Hall swamp and across Isla's Lane under the Gresham Hotel and the bank at the corner of "Creek Street," to empty into the river behind Thomas Brown's and other stores in Eagle Street. It was crossed by a bridge in "Creek Street."

On the spot where the General Post Office now stands was the prison for female convicts, known as the "Female Factory." The male convicts were quartered in barracks of rubble and stone with iron-barred windows, and a frontage from close to the Old Town Hall (now Town Hall Arcade, Queen Street) to beyond the north end of the present frontage of Allan and Stark's Store. The barracks were flanked by a general store on one side and a drug store on the other and opposite was the first northside hotel (the "Sovereign") facing on Queen Street. The soldiers' barracks, housing the garrison troops and convict guards, were located on the site of the present Treasury block; and the hospital, and doctor's quarters, were upon the site of the present Supreme Court. The "Government House" of the day, where Captain Logan and his successors lived, occupied part of the land on which the Government Printing Office is now situated; and from there, its garden of tropical fruit trees and trellised vines extended towards the intersection of the present Margaret and William Streets. On the west corner of the present Queen Street and North Quay, where the Prudential Building was erected in 1958, was the "lumber yard," enclosed by a high wall. Here the convicts made boots and clothing, soap and candles. They also engaged in carpentry, coopering, blacksmithing, and boot-repairing. (The lucky ones, as a favour, were allowed to catch fish and crabs in "the Creek.")

After the convict period, the former carpenter's shop became the first Church of England and was dedicated in 1843 to St. John the Evangelist by the Rev. John Gregor. (Mrs. Richard Jones, assisted by Mrs. J. C. Wickham, of "Newstead," taught in the first Sunday School in Brisbane in that church.)

The First Free Settlers

Andrew Petrie, although a Government employee, may be considered the first free settler (1837), closely followed by the German missionaries (1838) at Zion's Hill—Nundah. In 1841, John Williams opened the first general store in Brisbane, and subsequently made a trip in the schooner "Edward" to Sydney and brought back sawn flooring for a slab hut he built at the present intersection of Grey and Russell Streets, South Brisbane. He opened it as an inn which he called the Captain Piper, after the inn of that name in early Sydney.

In December 1842 the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company opened up communication with Brisbane by the steamer Shamrock, the largest of three new iron steamers just arrived from England. The coal used by the steamer came from Sydney, and the coalmining industry in Queensland may be said to have been started by John Williams, who came forward as a supplier of coal for the steamer. His first coal mine was situated on the south bank of the river above Goodna; early in 1843 he worked a seam at Moggill.

Captain John Clements Wickham, R.N., was, as previously mentioned, police magistrate and, later, Government Resident for the

(156) The "Captain Piper" of South Brisbane, then a separate hamlet, probably predated it.
“Moreton Bay District of New South Wales” from 1843 to 1859. The first part of “Newstead,” the oldest residence in Brisbane, and now the home of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, was built about 1846 as a town house for Patrick Leslie. William Leslie, a younger brother of Patrick and George, purchased 35 acres at Breakfast Creek for £51 on 19 July 1845 and, on the same day, at the same sale, Wickham bought 25 acres in the same locality for £35. In 1847, as the Leslies (who thought Cleveland would become the capital and Brisbane would be by-passed) desired to sell, Captain Wickham bought Leslie’s block and improvements, including the house, for £1,000. Until Separation, “Newstead” was, in effect, Government House.

In his early rides, on horseback, to and from the settlement the Government Resident established a track in the early ’Fifties, which has become Wickham Street. (The whole district was called by the aborigines “Burudabin,” meaning “place of oaks,” continued with the earlier transliteration as Booroodabin.)

In 1867 George Harris, a rich merchant, made “Newstead” the recognised centre of Brisbane’s social life.

Until the “Fortitude” migrants settled at the Valley in 1849 there were only three or four families located beyond Petrie’s Bight. On the hill, where All Hallows’ Convent now stands, was Skyring’s residence and pinery. There was no cutting there and drays took the lower road, along the near end of what is now Wickham Street. Massey Brothers conducted a brickworks in the hollow now known as Barry Parade.

**Colourful Frontier Town**

Following the “Hungry ‘Forties,” Brisbane, in the ’Fifties, had the colour and vitality of a frontier town. Horsemen, bullock drivers, and pedestrians made their way through streets rutted into dust or mud-filled hollows by the bullock drays and their teams. Teamsters camped at Humber’s Forge, now the corner of Turbot and George Streets. Whiskered centaurs came and went from outback stations, chewing the cud, perfectly indifferent to the requirements of traffic.

There were bora grounds for the Kippa ceremonies of initiation into manhood at Samford (for the Ipswich, Mt. Cressbrook, and Mount Brisbane blacks); at North Pine (for the Logan, Amity Point, Pine, Moreton, and Bribie blacks); and near Redcliffe (for the Maroochy, Noosa, Kileoy, Durundur, and Baraatbah blacks) according to Tom Petrie. This may seem a curious distribution but the first was the border between the Jagara tribes round Brisbane and the Ngera and Wakawaka people further north; the second took in the Moreton Bay tribes of the Jukambe, Koepnel, Nunukel and Nggi (Meston’s Coobenpi, Noonuceal and Ngoongee) and Meston’s Jindoo-barrie of Bribie, at their boundary with the Dal’a people from the north; and the last was another border spot of the Brisbane tribes with the Dal’a and their northern relatives the Kabi (Meston’s Cabbie) who extended far up Hervey Bay, and inland along the Burnett. The last two were the tribes that sheltered almost all the “wild white men” (see Chapter XVI).

West of the river end of Queen Street, George Street was marked by several buildings until it lost itself near the cemetery; waterhole, and grassy “common” where bullock teams grazed. Teams frequently stood in Queen Street itself while the teamsters received loading for up country. Many of the bullocks would lie down in their yokes chewing the cud, perfectly indifferent to the requirements of traffic. The largest waterhole extended from the present Tank Street into the present Roma Street and thinned out near the site of the present

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(157) Captain Wickham was appointed police magistrate for the district of Moreton Bay on 14 November 1842, at a salary of £300. He arrived in Brisbane by steamer Shamrock in January 1843, accompanied by his first wife, who was the second daughter of Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur, eldest son of James Macarthur, of Stoke Damerel, Devon (elder brother of Captain John Macarthur, a name famous in the pastoral annals of Australia). Captain and Mrs. Wickham occupied the rather dilapidated quarters of the Commandant on the corner of Stephens Lane and William Street until they moved into “Newstead,” which he furnished lavishly. His son passed the first sixteen years of his life in Brisbane before going to England to study for the Army. In 1933, a grandson of Captain Wickham, Lieut.-Colonel John Clements Wickham, of the Indian Army, made a visit to Brisbane specially to see the birthplace of his father, and his grandfather’s home. While in Brisbane, Lieut.-Colonel Wickham presented to the Historical Society a brass tablet recording the residence of Captain Wickham. Affixed to the wall of the house, it was unveiled by the (then) Governor of Queensland, the late Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, on 23 September 1933. Wickham’s first wife died in 1852 leaving two sons and a daughter; in 1857 he married Ellen Deering, daughter of an Irish Q.C., by whom he had two sons.

(158) The tribal alliances, however, varied from time to time, owing to various incidents, the Bribie blacks being sometimes friends and sometimes foes to the Brisbane or the Caloundra and Maroochy blacks; and Ipswich blacks similarly. (See Tom Petrie’s account of a fight he saw as a boy, involving some 700 warriors ranged in three groups—the Brisbane, Logan, and Strand tribes—broke group on Green Hills, overlooking the present Roma St. Station; the Ipswich, Rosewood and Wivenhoe group massed on what is now Petrie Terrace and the Victoria Barracks; and the northern tribes grouped on the site of the present Normanby Hotel. The fight lasted several days. Doomben (Dunum), York Hollow (the Exhibition grounds), and Wooloongabba (Wulungur-bah—present railway yards) were other recognized fighting grounds and camping spots. All the tribes mentioned have been extinct for many years. Early writers, e.g., Plushers, Unlacke, Leichhardt, Bunce, and Lang, describe the Moreton Bay blacks as “the gentlest, most peaceful, powerful, and men.” Leichhardt described the Turrabool (or Turrbul) and Bribie tribes as “a fine race of men, tall and well made, and they, and the groups they formed, would have delighted the eye of an artist.”
City Hall into a chain of waterholes, which supplied water for domestic needs. There was no enclosure of any kind or any convenience for raising water; the watermen simply backed their drays into the water, and with rope and buckets filled their casks, usually three for a load, and sold the water at 9d. a cask. At the other end of George Street the whole of the present Botanic Gardens was grazing ground in common for all who owned a horse or cow. Goats were plentiful.

The cottage of Captain Coley stood on the site of the present Belle Vue Hotel.

The foundation-stone of the first block of Parliament House was not laid until 14 July 1865 and Parliament was first summoned to meet in the new building on 4 August 1866. So far as other cross streets were concerned, in the 'Fifties, apart from some small cottages on high stumps, which placed them beyond the reach of flood waters from the creek which flowed between Queen and Adelaide Streets, there were no buildings near the Edward Street corner of Queen Street. On the south-east corner was a small banana plantation. Later, in 1858, E. B. Southerden established a combined brick house and shop there. The site of the old Courier corner was occupied by the Sportsmen's Arms Hotel in after years. Heavy scrub extended up to Wickham Terrace beyond the Adelaide-Edward Street corner, and at high tidewater the "creek" rose as far as the site of the present City Hall. Thomas Hayes had a stockyard at the corner of Albert and Adelaide Street junction Robert Little had his house and office as a solicitor.

The "South Side"

Across the river settlement progressed as slowly.

In 1823, when Oxley saw it, Kangaroo Point was a "jungle fringed with mangroves, with the higher land open forest covered with grass." In the 'Fifties Main Street was a track cut through a tangled wilderness of wattle and tea-tree by bullock teams plodding along the "main south road" leading to Sydney via Nerang. The bullock teamsters used this road in preference to the route through South Brisbane, which was swampy. The teams clung to the high land on the road from Limestone (Ipswich), crossed from Rocklea, and after travelling down Main Street, reached the Customs House landing by ferry.

In 1846, apart from a few slab huts and shanties, the only establishment on Kangaroo Point was the boiling-down works of John Campbell, who employed a large number of men. Woolloongabba and the Fiveways were uninhabited and the "One Mile Swamp" occupied what are now the Railway Yards there.

In 1849 there was only one road outward from the town of South Brisbane, past the One Mile Swamp—the Logan Road; while the old track to Limestone (Ipswich) branched off and crossed Oxley Creek at a spot known afterwards as Elijah Stubbins's farm. It carried heavier and heavier traffic as time went on. On the river and cliff-side a grove of wattle trees extended the length of River Terrace to Kangaroo Point, and occasionally, as late as 1857, the skull of some black who had fallen in tribal fights years before could be picked up there.
North Quay and William Street area.


Old 'Female Factory' on site of present rear block of G.P.O. (Elizabeth St.). (Old St. Stephen's in background.)

Old Military Barracks (later Immigration Depot) and, at left, oldest 'Treasury' (later first Savings Bank); on site of present Treasury Building.
In 1875 Bartley could still speak of “sylvan Shafston,” “rural Norman Creek,” “beautiful River Terrace with its unrivalled coup d’oeil of the great city,” of “grassy Coorparoo” and “the aspiring crest of lofty Highgate Hill,” but transport was crowding the few roads.

The first ferry across the river to South Brisbane was opened about 1843, and plied between the present site of Russell Street and a point on the north bank near the old Queen’s Wharf. It provided transit for horse vehicles and pedestrians, and continued in commission until Victoria Bridge was opened for traffic. A ferry in 1859 ran to Peel Street. About 1860 the Edward Street ferry was inaugurated, and in 1866 the mail coaches crossed the river to Main Street by means of a punt worked from the Customs House to the end of the Point.

In the ‘Fifties and ’Sixties in South Brisbane shrewd innkeepers had chosen strategic positions to cater for the road traffic that streamed in from the outlying districts of Northern New South Wales. The windows of McCabe’s Hotel, situated close to the present Stanley Wharf, almost overhung the river bank; nearby was Thomas Grenier’s popular hostelry; the Plough Inn stood in Stanley Street (one of the same name stands there still).

The Great Fire of Brisbane broke out a little before 8 o’clock on the night of 1 December 1864, and swept away practically everything between Queen, George, Elizabeth and Albert Streets. Brisbane’s primitive water supply (consisting of the “reservoir,” the big lagoon lying in that wedge of land between what are now Roma, Ann and George Streets; small quantities stored in casks and tubs by householders; and an underground well in an occasional backyard) proved quite unequal, of course, to the occasion.

The only fire-fighting organisation in the town was a volunteer fire brigade, which possessed a manual engine. (159)

The Great Fire of 1864 began in the drapery store of Stewart and Hemmatt, at the corner of Queen and Albert Streets and quickly spread to the Elizabeth Street frontage as well. Flimsy cottages and outbuildings, many of them constructed of packing-cases, fed the flames like so much kindling wood. All efforts to save the block between Albert and George Streets proved in vain. Among the premises destroyed were many of the earliest buildings in Brisbane, including McAdam’s famous “Sovereign Hotel.” In a little more than two hours the entire block formed by Queen, George, Elizabeth and Albert Streets was a huge heap of smouldering ruins. The loss was estimated at between £100,000 and £150,000, and for several days afterwards Queen Street was closed to all traffic.

(159) On 14 September 1874, the A.M.P. Society purchased for £11,000 “Refuge Row,” a row of temporary structures (tenanted by people who had lost their homes in the Great Fire) on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets; the A.M.P. building stands on the site to-day. Brisbane’s first permanent fire station was not erected until 1868; it stood at the corner of Edward and Ann Streets facing the site of the present Canberra Hotel. It was a small wooden shed, at the side of which stood a tower with four wooden legs; it had a wooden staging, with a railing, for look-out purposes. At the top of the tower was a large bell, and its call could be heard all over the town.
Writing in 1871, an "eight years' resident of Queensland"(160) commented that a great many improvements had been effected in Brisbane since 1863. None was of greater value to the citizens than the construction of the Enoggera Creek waterworks:

"by means of which the water of this creek is brought into the city, a distance of about six miles. Before these works were completed, the water supply for the whole city had to be carried in barrels from a waterhole dignified by the name of 'reservoir,' but which was usually of a rich yellow colour."

EARLY TRANSPORT

In the 'Seventies Brisbane was a busy, thriving, overgrown noisy town of spring carts, buggies, hansom cabs, and "Molly Maguires."

"Mollie Maguires" were two-wheeled equipages with a seat set axle-wise, in which the smart young men-about-town of the day, adorned with "Piccadilly weepers," or "mutton-chop whiskers," and wearing bell-bottomed trousers and high-heeled boots with elastic sides known as "Sarah Janes," drove about the streets of the town. "Jingles," which looked like high-sprung dogcarts, were upholstered in "carpet." They held five passengers and the drivers. There was no room for luggage, but they were very popular because they were cheaper than hansom cabs; one could drive from George Street to Wickham Terrace for 6d. Cab stands occupied the centre of the roadway between Albert and George Streets; hansom cabs carried a minimum of two passengers.(161)

Cobb and Co.'s stables were in Albert Street, not far from the hotel at the Elizabeth Street corner. Cobb and Co.'s coach was the first vehicle to cross the "new" Victoria Bridge, opened on 15 June 1874.

Royal Interlude

On 16 August 1831 H.R.H. Prince Albert Victor of Wales and H.R.H. Prince George (later King George V) arrived in Brisbane. The squadron of warships which steamed into Moreton Bay were five in number, including H.M.S. Bacchante, on which the Princes travelled as midshipmen. Cheering crowds greeted them.(162)

Transport Diversified

On 10 May 1882 the railway to Sandgate was opened by the Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy. It was built by George Bashford for £38,634. Sandgate, then Brisbane's only bayside resort, was en fête. The age of the coaches was coming to an end. With Ipswich, Cleveland, and Sandgate all connected to Brisbane by rail, there was less work for the Cobb and Co.'s ostlers to do, and more and more stalls became empty in the stables at Petrie Bight.

Brisbane was growing up. By January 1888 the first through passenger trains were running between Brisbane and Sydney. Telegraphic communication had been established between the two capitals in November 1861.

Tramways

Construction work for the Brisbane tramways was begun in Queen Street on 15 January 1885. The trams were horse-drawn. The first spike for the rails was driven by Brisbane's Mayor, John McMaster. The tramway was opened for general traffic on 12 August 1885. The citizens of Brisbane were proud of the splendid teams of horses drawing the trams which had "knifeboards" on the top deck. The horse-drawn trams lasted until 1897, in which year there were more than six miles of track. Electric trams made their appearance in 1897; to-day (1959) there are 369 electric trams operating on 66.25 miles of track; and 214 diesel buses and 30 trolley buses operating over 340.935 miles.

The boom period of the 'Nineties was the prelude to disaster. The bubble of speculation burst in 1893 when banks closed their doors all over Australia. In Queensland the financial crisis was preceded by the worst floods in the history of the State. Torrential rain recorded at Crohamhurst in 27 days was 107 inches (February 1893). Flood waters in the Brisbane River in the city area rose to a height of eight feet in Edward Street at the old Courier corner.


(162) On 19 August, on their way to a picnic at Enoggera, the Princes called at the Brisbane Grammar School, and each planted a Moreton Bay fig tree in the school grounds in commemoration of their visit to Queensland. These trees are still flourishing (1959).

(163) The bridge had been opened for traffic in 1874. It was 1,080 feet in length, and the length between the abutment on shore measured 1,013 feet. There were thirteen spans, nine of 82 feet, two of 52 feet 6 inches and a double arm centre-span of 170 feet. The deck rested on cast-iron cylinders and provided a roadway (30 feet wide) and two footways (one on either side six feet broad). When opened, the swing span afforded two passages for vessels, each 60 feet clear.
Brisbane, as far as a point opposite the Regatta Hotel, was one vast sheet of water; and silent and dirty backwaters stretched everywhere.

The basement square of the old Town Hall in Queen Street was occupied by flood refugees. Subscription lists were opened for flood relief and money poured in from everywhere. More than £83,000 was raised in cash, goods and clothing. New Zealand sent a steamer with a full cargo of goods valued at £14,000.

The bank smashes followed the floods. Eight out of eleven banks trading in Queensland closed their doors. Business was paralysed and much public and private hardship resulted.

Another flood in the Brisbane River in 1896 was the primary cause of the worst river tragedy in Australian history. At 5 p.m. on 13 February 1896 the wooden steamship Pearl (which was being employed as a ferry pending the construction of a new Victoria Bridge), while crossing the river with seventy passengers, was carried by the strong current towards the Government steam yacht Lucinda, fouled the anchor chains of the Lucinda, and capsized. Twenty-eight bodies were recovered.

City Bridges

The first bridge across the Brisbane River was opened on 24 June 1865; it was washed away by a flood in 1869. The second bridge was opened for traffic in 1874. In 1897 the present Victoria Bridge, 1,021 feet in length, oldest of the four traffic bridges now spanning the Brisbane River, was built at a cost of £110,000. The William Jolly (Grey Street) Bridge was opened in 1932, and the Story Bridge (named in honour of J. D. Story, a distinguished public servant for many years, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland) was opened in 1940. The fourth bridge at Indooroopilly is a toll bridge, built by private enterprise.

The University

An important event was the founding of the Queensland University in 1909.

The General Strike of 1912

Possibly the darkest and most bitter period of Brisbane’s history was in the first quarter of 1912, when the general strike which gripped the capital city and other centres produced a situation, on occasions, perilously close to civil war.

The Denham Government was in power. The general strike had developed from a “lockout” of unionist tramwaymen by the Brisbane Tramways Company which refused to allow its employees to wear their union badges. When, on 18 January, members of the Brisbane branch wore their union badges to work they were dismissed. On Tuesday, 30 January, over 20,000 unionists “downed tools.” Parades were held daily by the strikers through the streets and amazing scenes were witnessed on what came to be called “Black Friday” by unionists.

Large numbers of mounted and foot police, armed with batons and bayonets, lined up in Albert Square that day to prevent a pre-arranged demonstration. There were also hundreds of special constables, armed with batons, who had been sworn in by the Government. Mounted police charged the crowd. Many innocent bystanders, caught among thousands of strikers, were batoned; many police were injured by flying stones. The most serious casualty occurred in Albert Square. A woman who had taken a prominent part by making inflammatory speeches, stuck a hatpin in the horse ridden by the Commissioner of Police (Major Cahill). The animal reared, throwing Major Cahill, who was lamed for life.

The general strike continued until 6 March 1912, when it was declared off by the Strike Committee, after an assurance of “no victimisation” had been secured from the Employers’ Federation.

There was another serious demonstration on 23 March 1919 (a Sunday), when police clashed with a procession of unionists and others, who attempted to hold a meeting in the Domain to protest against the continuance of the War Precautions Act.

Next day, Monday, 24 March 1919, hundreds of returned soldiers attempted to raid the Russian Club in Merivale Street, South Brisbane, and windows and furnishings were smashed. While Mr. H. L. Archdall (Chief Police Magistrate), backed by constables armed with bayonets, was reading the Riot Act at the South Brisbane disturbance he was pressed by the crowd onto the rank of fixed bayonets, and received an ugly flesh wound in the left groin. Mr. F. C. Urquhart (Commissioner of Police) also received a bayonet wound (in the shoulder), and several policemen suffered lacerations and bruises from stones. A mass meeting was held in Albert Square on the following night (25 March) under the auspices of the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League. Several thousand citizens carried a resolution pledging themselves to “stamp out Bolshevism.”

Competition ends in Merger

The twin towns of Brisbane and South Brisbane vied with one another in development until they became twin cities. South Brisbane had set up its own local governing body in 1888. The municipality of Brisbane was created a city in 1902, and the Brisbane we know to-day finally emerged from a congeries of cities, towns, and shire councils, each with its own administrators and utilities.

Under the bold experiment of Greater Brisbane, unique in the Commonwealth, the present City of Brisbane came into being on 1 October 1925, increasing by absorption its original area of 5½ square miles to 375 square miles, or more than half the area of Greater London. It includes the former cities of Brisbane and South Brisbane; the former towns of Hamilton, Ithaca, Toowong, Windsor, Sandgate and Wynnum; and the former shires of Balmoral, Belmont, Coorparoo, Enoggera, Kedron, Moggill, Sherwood, Stephens,
Taringa and Toombul, and parts of the shires of Tingalpa and Yeerongpilly.

Brisbane was one of the first cities in the world to attempt to unify and rationalise civic control by placing the whole of its local government under one administration. To-day, the Brisbane City Council's activities include construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and parks; and among utilities that it conducts and controls are electricity supply (including power houses), tramways and bus services, water supply, sewerage, ferries, city health services, and cemeteries.

Where formerly 205 aldermen grouped in 19 councils controlled municipal government in the metropolitan area, at present (1958) a Lord Mayor (Ald. T. R. Groom) and 24 aldermen officiate.

The Brisbane City Hall is the finest in Australia, covering two acres. The foundation-stone was laid by the Duke of Windsor (then the Prince of Wales) on 29 July 1920. It cost just under £1 million, and was opened in 1931. From its unfinished facade, the late King George VI and the Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth (then the Duke and Duchess of York) watched the march past of troops, and acknowledged the city's welcome, in April 1927.

A modern, thriving and ever-expanding centre of trade and commerce, Brisbane is linked by road, rail, sea, and air traffic with the other States of the Commonwealth, and conducts a brisk trade with oversea countries. The total of cheques and bills presented for payment through the banks here in 1958 was £3,580,853,000—a reliable pointer to the volume of business transacted; while, each year, about 800 ships load and discharge in the ever-busy port—the largest river port in Australia.

THE CITY OF IPSWICH

Ipswich, twenty-four miles south-west of Brisbane, is the oldest provincial city in Queensland, and one of the most important. It has a population of more than 42,000, and is situated mainly on the Bremer River, with three easterly suburbs at the southern end on the Brisbane River.

For the first fourteen years of its existence, Ipswich was called "Limestone." It will be recalled that Captain Patrick Logan, of the 57th Regiment, who had been appointed Commandant of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement in 1825, after exploring the Brisbane and the Bremer in 1827, established a convict camp under an overseer to develop deposits of lime found on the south bank of the Bremer.

The little outpost at Limestone was subject to frequent attack from the blacks, and a tiny garrison (a corporal and three privates) was stationed there for protection. At Redbank and at Limestone early farm stations were also established.

The first free resident of Limestone was George Thorn, a non-commissioned officer of the 4th (Queen's Own) Regiment, who resigned from the Army in Sydney, and came to Moreton Bay as a surveyor, with his wife and baby son, in 1838. (The son, also named George, subsequently became Premier of Queensland. Thorn was appointed Superintendent of the settlement at Limestone.

Tobacco was cultivated, and a shearing shed erected on the banks of the Bremer for the shearing of the flocks. Thorn established the "Ploughed Station" at what is now Raceview, and here wheat and other crops were grown (not very successfully).

In 1842 the Governor of "New South Wales," Sir George Gipps, journeyed from Sydney to examine plans for the towns of Brisbane and Ipswich on the spot. Accompanied by Mr. Andrew Petrie, Superintendent of Government Works, Sir George rode from Brisbane to Ipswich on horseback, and returned by boat. "Limestone" was renamed Ipswich, after the town of the same name in Suffolk, England, the birthplace of Captain the Hon. John Rous.

Ipswich developed into a busy centre in the 'Forties and 'Fifties, becoming the headquarters not only for the squatters of the Darling Downs, but also for more distant stations as far north as the Upper Burnett and the Dawson. For many years Ipswich was "the Squatters' Capital," and a serious rival to Brisbane as the capital of the new colony, when it was established in 1859.

From the 'Fifties to the 'Seventies (until the opening of the Indooroopilly railway bridge in 1876) was the golden age of Ipswich because of the river steamers.* A fleet of stern-wheelers, paddle-wheelers, and lighters plying between Brisbane and the "head of navigation" at Ipswich made optimists see the Brisbane River as a "miniature Mississippi."

Before 1846 flat-bottomed punts had been employed to carry produce, wool, and stores to and from the Ipswich and Brisbane wharves, but early that year James Canning Pearce, owner of Helidon Station, who had arrived in Moreton Bay from Sydney in 1842, pioneered steam communication between the two centres. He purchased the steamer Experiment, which had been engaged in the Parramatta River trade.

Practically every man, woman and child in Brisbane gathered to witness the first voyage of the "Experiment" on 25 June 1846. She "had a select party on board," but their pleasure was fated to be...
marred. Commanded by Captain Aylmeer Campbell, she reached Goodna safely, but soon afterwards ran aground, remaining hard and fast until daylight next morning, when she floated off with the tide.

Almost all the residents of Ipswich awaited her arrival at the appointed hour, but were disappointed; however, when she did at last reach Ipswich, she was greeted with enthusiastic cheers, a Scotsman in kilts playing a spirited air on the bagpipes, amid the howls of a mob of aboriginals terrified by this smoking monster.

In addition to the “Experiment” several other steamers plied between Brisbane and Ipswich, including the “Raven,” “Hawk,” “Swallow,” “Ballarat,” “Samson,” “Breadalbane,” “Brisbane” (Capt. G. West), “Ipswich,” “Emu,” “Kate” (Capt. J. Coleman), “Enterprise,” and “Settler” (Capt. E. Mellor).

The old “Settler” was probably the most famous of all the river steamers; she was of the Mississippi type, with a stern wheel. The “Kate” was built in England and sailed to Queensland as a three-masted schooner. She was taken over by the Government for service in the Bay as a pilot steamer. The “Ipswich” and “Emu” were both double-decked steamers with paddle-wheels.

The material for the first bridge over the Bremer River was carried from Brisbane by the “Enterprise,” and all the railway rolling-stock and construction material also came by steamer to Ipswich.

The peak year of water-borne traffic was 1866, when the railway reached Toowoomba from Ipswich; freight valued at £40,000 was carried in that year, exclusive of coal and timber.

Rail and Coach Services

On 25 February 1864, the first sod was turned on the first railway line in Queensland by Lady Bowen. This line, which was opened in the following year, ran from Ipswich to Bigge’s Camp (now Grandchester). In 1865, Cobb and Company extended their coach services to Queensland, the pioneer service running from Brisbane to Ipswich twice a day; later three times a day.

Ipswich: a municipality

On 3 December 1904, Ipswich was declared a city and its area was increased to its present 47 square miles in 1949. The city is on the direct route to Toowoomba and many other rich south-western districts. An eight-mile bypass will shorten the road this year.

It is the economic centre of the extensive primary producing area known as West Moreton. In this region the bulk of the 1,722,000 acres is devoted to livestock production, carrying 168,000 head of dairy cattle, 103,000 beef cattle, and 61,000 pigs. Approximately 151,000 acres are under crop, and irrigation is widely used for lucerne, vegetables, and pastures.

Ipswich is also notable as an industrial, mining, and manufacturing centre. It has the largest railway workshops in Queensland; and the only three woollen mills in the State. A good quality fire-clay at Dinmore is responsible for brick-making industries, including various vitreous earthenware goods, such as toilet-ware and glazed pipes. The Dinmore meatworks treat “custom” cattle, and also supplies the export trade and canning factories. There are also timber mills and joinery establishments. The construction of a £1 1/2 million works for the production of Burnie Board (hardboard) is in process of completion; and reforestation will be associated with this large undertaking.

Known coal deposits are spread over an area of 90 square miles, and the area worked is approximately 50 square miles. Steam coals are found at Ipswich, Bundamba, Dinmore and Walloon-Rosewood, and coking coals in the North Ipswich fields.

Ipswich is the home of many fine schools, both secular and denominational. The Ipswich Boys’ Grammar School, established in 1863, was the first Grammar School in the State, and has produced some of Queensland’s finest sons.

THE CITY OF GOLD COAST

The third city in the Moreton Division is Gold Coast which reached that eminence in 1959. It covers an area of 47 1/2 square miles and has a population of 22,000.

The area embraced includes the towns of Southport, Surfers’ Paradise, Burleigh, Currumbin, and other South Coast resorts as far as Coolangatta.

As early as 1842 cedar cutters from the Tweed River explored the area. One of them, Edmund Harper, made his home at Harper’s Wharf, between Surfers’ Paradise and Broadbeach. In 1865 James Beattie, another timber-getter, built a cottage, and his estate of 80 acres extended from the Nerang River to the ocean front. Beattie erected a jetty for the use of the cedar-cutters, who rafted logs down the Nerang and Tallebudgera Rivers. In July 1875, J. H. C. Meyer built his home in the same locality, and started a ferry across the Nerang River; the place which afterwards became Surfers’ Paradise was then known as Meyer’s Ferry. Meyer grew sugar in the late ’Seventies, and built a sugar mill. He erected a hotel opposite the site of the present Surfers’ Paradise Hotel, and in 1889 a post office was established under the name of Elston. In December 1925, Surfers’ Paradise Hotel was opened by the late James Cavill.

Southport, fifty miles from Brisbane, was constituted a town in 1875. At that time allotments were sold at from £5 to £15. Since then land values on the South Coast (especially at Surfers’ Paradise) have risen to phenomenal heights.

In 1884 Cobb and Co.’s coaches travelled three times a week to Nerang, Southport, and Tweed Heads. The railway to Southport was opened in 1889. In 1933, the name Elston was changed to Surfers’ Paradise. South Coast and Southport owe much to the late Hon.
THE TOWN* OF REDCLIFFE

REDCLIFFE, twenty-two miles from Brisbane, and situated on a peninsula washed by the waters of Moreton Bay, Bramble Bay, and Deception Bay, now has a population of 16,200, and ranks among Queensland's ten most important towns. A popular holiday resort, it has in addition become semi-suburban in character; many persons employed in Brisbane live in Redcliffe and travel daily to and from the metropolis.

Redcliffe is the site of Queensland's first white settlement. The peninsula was gazetted as the Town of Redcliffe on 28 May 1921. Its present area is 13½ square miles. The Hornibrook Highway, which connects Redcliffe with Sandgate, spans a mile and two-thirds of water, and is the longest bridge in Australia.

COOLANGATTA, sixty-nine miles by rail from Brisbane, takes its name from a small coastal ship, the Coolangatta, owned by Alexander Berry of New South Wales, which was wrecked there on 18 August 1846. Coolangatta Cabong ("Splendid View") was also the name of Berry's estate. Cedar cutting extended to the Tweed from the Richmond River and was a flourishing industry in the 'sixties. Tweed Heads, in New South Wales, and Coolangatta are known as the "Twin Towns." A double-fenced buffer area constituting the boundary between the two States in the colonial days of custom barriers, etc., is in process of removal as this book goes to press.

In the southerly section of the Moreton Division, general agricultural and dairy products, pigs and timber are produced in the districts surrounding Beaudesert, Beenleigh and Boonah. The secondary industries of these towns are dependent upon the country—Boonah having its butter factory and sawmill, Beaudesert its butter factory and meatworks, and Beenleigh its sugar mill, rum distillery, arrowroot mill and sawmill.

A similar pattern is followed in the other rural areas, where Caboolture (butter factory), Cleveland, Nambour (sugar mill), Laidley (butter factory) and Gatton all participate as commercial centres for the agriculture, dairying, pig-raising and timber production of their districts. Caloundra and Maroochydore, however, with neighbouring villages depend on tourist trade as seaside resorts.

* In 1959 it became the fourth city in the Moreton Division.
as the centre of the shire. It is named after William Landsborough, the explorer and pastoralist, who lived at Caloundra from 1882 to 1886.

Late in 1863 or early in 1864 Richard and William H. Westaway established a cattle station on Moolooloo Plains (now Meridan Plains). In 1864 William Grigor established a sawmill near Peach Trees (now Peachester). By 1870 Cobb and Co.'s coaches were running to Gympie twice a week, calling for change of horses and for refreshments at Grigor's and later at Coochin Creek Station where John Simpson had established an inn; and at Moolooloo Plains, where Isaac Burgess conducted a temperance hotel. Timber-getting (cedar and pine) was the pioneer industry. Sugar was grown on the eastern part of Moolooloo Plains by the Society of Friends, Charles Ballinger among them; they constructed a crushing mill in 1871. Timber-getters dog-spiked their logs together and rafted them down nearby Pumicestone Channel to Brisbane. Campbell township sprang up at Coochin Creek in 1880, when James Campbell and Sons established their first sawmill there. Bullock teams brought the logs to the mill where they were sawn into timber and taken to Brisbane in the company's small steamers, "Mavis," "Bribie," and others, which also brought passengers and merchandise for settlers as far away as Kenilworth until the opening of the railway to Landsborough in 1890.

Dairying became established at the turn of the century; a butter factory was built at Maleny in 1905. After the First World War banana and pineapple growing became established. Caloundra, extending over seven miles of coastline, is to-day a popular seaside resort.

MAROOCHY (445 sq. miles; pop. 21,000) has as its principal town Nambour (pop. 5,000), seventy-five miles north of Brisbane. The Near North Coast and Maroochy River districts produce sugar, butter, fruit and timber. Dairying is the most highly developed industry; there are nine co-operative butter factories in the area. The Near North Coast is also the wealthiest fruit-growing district in the State. Bananas, pineapples, and papaws flourish within a few miles of the ranges where citrus and strawberries grow profusely. The Near North Coast produces about three-fourths of Queensland's total crop of pineapples. Woombye and Palmwoods are important townships.

The Near North Coast district represents the southernmost portion of the State in which sugar cane is grown to any large extent. The crop is confined to a narrow strip along the coast extending from Landsborough to the vicinity of Gympie. The greater portion is grown on the rich flats in the valley of the Maroochy River and its tributaries. The Moreton Sugar Mill, erected in 1896, was built under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. It is now operated as a proprietary mill.

Maroochydore and Mooloolaba are rapidly developing tourist resorts established on a picturesque coast. The area extends north and is in process of connection by road, and by means of an aerodrome.

Maroochydore was so named by Andrew Petrie in 1842 from two words of the Brisbane dialect (not the local language) meaning "black swans"; Mooloolaba is derived from "Mulinya-ba," "black-snake place," though others hold it to mean "snapper" place.