The naming of roads, streets and parks gives a living history to the continuing life of the built environment. The erecting of plaques and memorials is a bridge which ensures a richness for the future from the legacy of the past; and the naming of plants, insects and other creatures is a form of living memorial to those who have contributed to the development of society. Such constitute enduring epitaphs in our every day language. For those who know the language, and its lexicon of memorials, life is indeed enriched.

Three generations of the Bancroft kindred have enriched not only life in Australia, but have made special contributions to Queensland in particular.

Dr Joseph Bancroft (1836-1894) emigrated as a young medical practitioner and amateur naturalist from Nottingham to Brisbane, arriving on 29 October 1864. At that time Brisbane had a population of approximately 12,000. In December, Bancroft bought five hectares of untouched bush on the banks of Enoggera Creek at the "Three Mile Scrub" (now the suburb of Kelvin Grove) where he established a home and an experimental garden. He subsequently became one of the pillars of the medical and scientific fraternity in Queensland. Known for his medical science, his entrepreneurial flair in horticultural experiments, and his undamped enthusiasm for new ventures, he has become one of the great role models for medicine and medical science in Australia.

His son, Thomas Lane Bancroft (1860-1933), also a medical practitioner, was not well known in the competitive and intense world of the medical profession of his day. In contrast to the dominant personality of his father, Thomas was a quiet meticulous scholar. He preferred the relative solitude of "the big laboratory" of the Australian bush, and his quiet specimen desk where he pursued many studies of observational and experimental biology.

The third member of this singular kindred was Josephine Bancroft, later Mrs Josephine Mackerras (1896-1971). The daughter of Thomas
Lane Bancroft, she made contributions to medical entomology which were of the greatest significance. She played a major role in drug research for the prevention of malaria amongst Australian troops in the Second World War.

Almost 100 insects, parasites, trees and plants bear, in their scientific names, the Bancroft patronymic. These constitute living memorials which remind scientists of the contributions of this singular family. Queensland society generally has also honoured the Bancroft name, and has erected a number of memorials to record their passing. The streets, parks and other physical structures of the built environment thus form part of the living history of Queensland. This short account lists these community memorials and describes the historical background of their naming.

THE AMA BANCROFT MEMORIAL

A memorial cairn of Ashgrove granite, stands at Deception Bay to record the contributions of both Joseph Bancroft and Thomas Lane Bancroft to medical science. In the late 1950's informal discussion among members of the Queensland Branch of the British Medical Association [later the Australian Medical Association] led to the suggestion that a permanent AMA memorial to Joseph Bancroft would be appropriate. Joseph had been Health Officer for Brisbane, an early member of the Queensland Medical Board, its President from 1882 to 1894 and the President of the Central Board of Health from 1884. He had represented Queensland at the Australasian Sanitary Conference in Sydney in 1884; and had been President of the Sections of Hygiene and Public Health at the Congress held by the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1888.

Bancroft was a founder (and first secretary) of the first Queensland Medical Society which was established in Brisbane in 1871. He was the first president of the resurrected (second) Medical Society of Queensland in 1886. It was that body which was absorbed as the Queensland Branch of the British Medical Association in 1894. It was thus as a founder of the concept of the Australian Medical Association in Queensland, that he was honoured with a second AMA memorial to him. The first — the Bancroft Oration with its Bancroft Medal — had been established in 1926.

There were several doctors in Brisbane who felt that a memorial cairn at the site of the old Bancroft Farm at Deception Bay would be an appropriate acknowledgment. Particular advocates were Stuart Patterson, Drury Clarke, Edward Oswald Marks, N.V. Youngman, Douglas Gordon and Percy Earnshaw. Deception Bay was finally chosen as the site of the AMA memorial to Bancroft because of his pioneering work in horticulture and biology there. He had bought 150 acres of land on Burpengary Creek in 1881, and subsequently
extended this by purchasing sea-front land at Deception Bay nearby. By 1890, he owned 3,780 acres of relatively fertile land which was a biologist’s dream. It was there that he established his pemmican meatworks (in 1890 and 1891), his cultured pearl enterprise, his experimental plots of sugarcane and rice, wheat and barley; and his vegetable gardens and orchids. It was there, at weekends and later when he lived at Deception Bay from 1895-1904, that Thomas Lane Bancroft collected mosquitoes and fish, lizards, snakes and birds, and pursued much of his pioneering work in parasitology.

The AMA Memorial Cairn was originally planned to commemorate Joseph Bancroft alone. However, Dr Edward Oswald Marks, a Brisbane ophthalmologist of great wisdom and scholarship, foresaw the perspective that history would also attribute to Thomas Lane Bancroft, the son. It was Marks’ advocacy that led to the memorial being established to include the two medical Bancrofts. Trustees were established, the Caboolture Shire Council approved the gazettal of the memorial land and its cairn, the Caboolture Historical Society co-operated enthusiastically, and the commemorative plaque was unveiled in 1963.

A small fragment of the cairn, of Ashgrove granite, was mounted and resides in the AMA Headquarters at Kelvin Grove, with a secondary plaque affixed.

Dr Edward Oswald Marks and Mrs Martha-Young, President, at the unveiling of the Queensland Women’s Historical Association plaque at Carlton, Wickham Terrace. Photo: Dr E.N. Marks
A BLUE PLAQUE

The Queensland Women’s Historical Association has done much to promote Queensland’s history. That body has also acknowledged the special role of Joseph Bancroft and his contributions to society. Joseph Bancroft had practised medicine in Eagle Street in Brisbane, after his arrival in the colony. He probably travelled each day from his home, Kelvin Grove, on Enoggera Creek in Brisbane. In 1868 he was appointed House Surgeon to the Brisbane Hospital and lived in the hospital cottage near The Quarries in the hospital grounds (now the Bowen Bridge Road site, near the Exhibition Grounds in Brisbane). In 1870, he moved to Carlton at 109 Wickham Terrace and practised there until 1877. To commemorate his service there, the Queensland Women’s Historical Association (with its President, Mrs Martha Young) decided to attach one of their blue circular plaques to the modern brick front which had been built onto Carlton. The plaque was unveiled by Edward Oswald Marks in 1961. Unlike the living Bancroft memorials — the names of plants and trees and animals — buildings are destined to be replaced. With the re-building surge which was the ethos of the 1980’s in Brisbane, the site and its plaque now exist only as images in historical photographs.

PARKS AND STREETS

A fine suburban park in Brisbane and several streets commemorate the Bancroft kindred. Bancroft Park is today a small 2 hectare park on the banks of Enoggera Creek, Brisbane. The park is the open space residuum of Dr Joseph Bancroft’s original property, Kelvin Grove. Joseph and his family lived there for a short but indeterminate time, and the property remained a base for experimental horticulture and natural history study until Joseph’s death in 1894. He had bought the property in December 1864, then consisting of some five hectares of bushland, five kilometres from the centre of the growing town of Brisbane. Joseph had called the property Kelvin Grove after the botanical gardens of that name in Glasgow. It was at Kelvin Grove that Joseph Bancroft tested ‘‘more than 100 varieties of wheat’’ many of which he had bred as hybrids himself. In 1919, twenty-five years after his death, the Ithaca Town Council bought the remainder of the property Kelvin Grove for £600, the residue being the Bancroft Park that is known today. Today Kelvin Grove is a fine inner Brisbane suburb, and the original Bancroft property is Bancroft Park, unfortunately contracting regularly as the predations of widened roads and other civic necessities dictate. It still retains its frontage along Enoggera Creek, where the present author collects native fish and other natural history specimens to this day.

Three streets in south-east Queensland commemorate Joseph Bancroft. Bancroft Street in Kelvin Grove records his passing, and
Bancroft Road is an important road on the north banks of the lower Brisbane River, at Pinkenba. Originally part of another of his properties, at Myrtletown, today it commemorates Bancroft's contributions to public health. Before his son (Thomas Lane) established that filariasis was transmitted by the bite of the mosquito, Joseph Bancroft believed that filariasis was a water-borne disease; and that the disease could be controlled by the provision of sanitary water supplies. It is thus particularly apposite that the road which bears his name leads to Brisbane's main sewage treatment plant at Luggage Point at the mouth of the Brisbane River.

Bancroft Terrace, Deception Bay, is a fine elevated Terrace, and borders the property which he established to pursue his horticultural and nutritional experiments. Joseph Crescent nearby, also commemorates him. It is particularly pleasing that the streets at Deception Bay which are contiguous with Bancroft Terrace commemorate other great doctor-botanists and medical scientists. Captain Cook Parade commemorates Cook who received the Copley Medal of the Royal Society for his work on scurvy prevention (not for discovering Australia). Solander Street commemorates the doctor-botanist, Dr Daniel Solander (1733-1782) who travelled with Cook in the South Pacific, and like Bancroft also has a species of Australian wattle named after him. Lobelia Street commemorates Dr Mathias
de L’obel (1538-1616), the French physician-botanist who gave his name to the beautiful genus of flowers, Lobelia, with native species growing in Australia. Thus in the memorials of death are the lives of the great so often inadvertently linked.

**THE BANCROFT AQUARIUM**

Both Joseph and Thomas Lane Bancroft had very close associations with the Queensland Museum. Joseph had been appointed as a Trustee to the Museum Board in 1876 to replace Charles Coxen who died. Joseph collected for the Museum, and was active on field excursions. As a foundation member in January 1884 of the Field Naturalists Section of the Royal Society of Queensland (a successor to the Philosophical Society of Queensland), he had done much to link the work and aspirations of the two sister learned bodies. He was a good friend of Henry Tryon, the former medical student and biologist who was the first secretary of the Royal Society of Queensland (1883-1887); and who (in spite of his stormy personality) was appointed to the staff of the Queensland Museum in September 1883.

Thomas Lane Bancroft made very significant contributions indeed to the life and vigour of the Queensland Museum. He sent thousands of specimens from throughout Queensland to the Museum, to form part of its nineteenth century and early twentieth century collections. Several hundred species of lizards and snakes alone bear his name

![Bancroft Terrace Sign](image)

*Five of the Trustees of the AMA Bancroft Memorial — from left Dr Elizabeth N. Marks, Mr Leonard Ware, Professor John Pearn, Dr David Mackerras and Dr Stuart Patterson — in 1991 at Deception Bay where two streets meet.*
on their provenance cards. Such records are becoming increasingly valuable as the significance of zoogeography and the extinction of habitats assume ever greater importance into the 21st century.

Thomas Lane Bancroft included a major study of fish in his wide-ranging biological interests. He identified fish parasites, maintained aquaria, and when he went to Eidsvold, developed one of the main scientific themes of his life — that of the lifecycle and husbandry of the Queensland lungfish, *Neoceratodus forsteri*. He established that the embryo fish needed a period of air breathing, during the developmental stage as fry, to survive and grow. His aquaria in the hospital grounds at Eidsvold were the site of his manipulative experiments on the lifecycle of the lungfish; and the Mary and Burnett Rivers of the region were the site of numerous collecting and field observation studies.

It was thus particularly appropriate when his family presented the Queensland Museum, at its Gregory Terrace site, with a large lungfish aquarium to honour his memory. It was formally named The T.L. Bancroft Memorial Aquarium, and for decades stood on the outside verandah of the old Queensland Museum, a source of fascination to many thousands of children who visited it regularly, including the author. Seemingly always filled with green slime, it formed a perfect habitat for the sluggish lungfish which one could discern in its green-glowing water.

When the Museum was shifted to its new site on the south bank of the Brisbane River in 1986, it was not possible to move the old hand-made glass-and-cement aquarium from the northern verandah of the old Exhibition Building. The brass plaque, almost indecipherable after decades of polishing, was transferred to adorn the less romantic glass and chrome aquarium which houses the somewhat luckless contemporary lungfish which can be seen today.

![The commemorative brass plaque from the original Bancroft Aquarium, old Queensland Museum building, Gregory Terrace.](image-url)
The township of Bancroft is another memorial to Thomas Lane Bancroft, and resulted from his influence and reputation as a doctor and naturalist whilst he was in Eidsvold, in Queensland. Then aged 50 years, he had settled in Eidsvold in 1910. He was the Government Medical Officer, Hospital Superintendent, and had right of private practice. He worked as the local doctor, but his primary activities were those of a biological scientist. His collecting, classifying, corresponding and experimenting were prodigious. It was at Eidsvold that his interest in the biology of the Queensland lungfish Neoceratodus forsteri, became a passion. He also became interested in hybridisation and cultivation of cotton, and his lifelong interests in botany and parasitology saw their greatest fruition in his Eidsvold work. He spent 20 years at Eidsvold, a town which became “the type locality for an astonishing number of terrestrial animals”.

Eidsvold is the centre of a region in south-east Queensland well suited for cotton and grain crops; and where in 1910 goldmines were still operating after the goldrush to the region of 1887. Amid much controversy, the railway line south from Gladstone to Many Peaks was extended to Monto in the early 1920’s to provide the horticulture and agricultural produce of the Monto-Eidsvold region with access.
to Gladstone. One railway camp, the 82 Mile Construction Camp (north-east of Monto) was established in April 1928, and a number of railway labourers working on the line had children of school-age. The Department of Public Instruction established there the 82 Mile [Railway] Construction Camp School No. 1784. Some 20 pupils attended the open tent School, on its six acre School Reserve. In January 1929 the railway siding was named Awring, but on 13 June that year, Executive Council altered the name to Bancroft, thus establishing Bancroft’s name for the hamlet which grew up about the railway camp. In April 1930, the name of the school was changed to Bancroft Provisional School. The township also boasted a corrugated-iron hall, two stores (one run by Frank and James Ganter), and a Post Office. It is best remembered for its sporting events and the annual cattle and calf show. Hard times and better roads took their toll, and the Post Office closed. Today, the hamlet exists as its roadsign, and several domestic buildings only.

THE BANCROFT CENTRE

Memorials have their greatest influence if they act as a catalyst for good, and if they outreach to produce secondary good in the wider community. The Bancroft Centre, built as the new home of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, was opened in October 1991. It is the greatest of all the Bancroft memorials.

The township of Bancroft in 1991. Originally the 82-Mile Railway Construction Camp, the name honours Dr Thomas Lane Bancroft. Photo: Mr Harold Ware.
Conceived in the 1980s, and funded by the Queensland State Government in 1988 and 1989, construction commenced at Herston Road in 1990. Its site almost exactly coincides with the original House Surgeon’s cottage which Joseph Bancroft himself occupied 120 years prior to the establishment of this, his greatest memorial. The Bancroft Centre is also a memorial to Dr Thomas Lane Bancroft and Dr Josephine MacKerras, nee Bancroft. Joseph was House Surgeon in the grounds of the Brisbane Hospital for three years (1868-1870), and had been a Visiting Surgeon at the Hospital from 1867 until his unexpected death in 1894 at the age of 58 years.

This finest Bancroft memorial is a custom-built eleven storey home for medical research, and houses some 350 scientific and support staff. It is a functional part of the extended Royal Brisbane Hospital complex, and its laboratories and lecture theatres both integrate with and complement the clinical activities of the three hospitals which surround it. Its administrative structure comprises three main divisions — cancer research, tropical health, and the division of clinical and population science.

The Bancroft Centre provides a fine home for a significant component of medical research in Australia. Its fabric houses the scientists who work in a wide spectrum of medical research. Joseph and Thomas Lane and Josephine Bancroft’s contributions were to pharmacology, entomology, zoonotic diseases, epidemiology, preventive medicine and clinical science. So too encompasses the outreach research of the Bancroft Centre today.

ENDNOTES

I thank especially Mr and Mrs Louis Bancroft, of Eidsvold; Miss B. Josephine Bancroft of Brisbane; Mr Harold J. Ware, Secretary of the Monto Historical Society, and Mr W.S. Brownbill and Mrs Beryl Bleys of Monto for their help and encouragement.