AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF WESTERN QUEENSLAND

[By A. C. TOWNER]
(Read by Mrs. Peter Bell at the meeting of the Society on 22 February, 1962)

To give a rough sketch of the development of Western Queensland beyond the Great Dividing Range, it is necessary to start from 1846 when Queensland was still part of New South Wales.

On 15 September, 1846, the famous explorer Major Mitchell led a party seeking a route from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Good rains had fallen and Mitchell saw the country in its best clothes. There is a marked rock at the head of what is now known as the Barcoo River which the party climbed. From here they saw the whole extensive view of open downs covered with a heavy growth of grass and
herbage, with two lines of trees converging in the distance, marking a river flowing to the North West. Mitchell himself described the country as a wonderland, the most beautiful he had ever beheld.

The party travelled across the Downs to the watercourse, following it down, and camping at a spot which he named Graham’s Ponds after one of his men; this spot is about a mile east of Tambo station of today.

This party was the “Flying Gang” of the main exploration party. It had been decided previously to leave two supply camps behind; the one under the command of Edmund Kennedy was at the head of the Maranoa River and the other, under Sergeant W. Stephenson, a few miles above Lake Salvator on the Nogoa River.

**MitchellFollows the Barcoo**

Mitchell and his small party, mounted on horses and carrying their immediate supplies on pack horses, followed this new river (the Barcoo) they had found, and named Douglas Ponds after another of the party. These ponds are a little north-west of the North-
ampton Down wool shed of to-day. Following the river, they came to another watercourse which Mitchell named The Alice after his daughter. At this point, the Barcoo runs South, but, as Major Mitchell thought this would only be a temporary direction, he and his party continued to travel West. However, striking a creek—Wild Horse Creek—they followed it south and came on a very noisy and hostile party of natives, one of whom was flourishing an iron axe head on a long handle. This surprised the party very much, but, on the advice of Guranigh, their native guide, they made no attempt to parley with the aborigines and kept travelling.

Soon afterwards, they came on the Barcoo River again, crossing it at the lower end of Kilman water-hole, and after passing through several channels, they followed the river up again on its southern bank. Their camp that night was named Guranigh's Ponds after their guide, who was apparently most trustworthy and faithful. The Isisford Shire Council has erected a cairn on the spot where Major Mitchell crossed the Barcoo to mark the furthest point of his travel on the river.

By now the “tucker” bags were nearly empty, and they had to ration food for the return journey. They saved a day by short cutting across the Downs and by so doing, discovered and named the Gowan Range and a great deal of fine country.

Mitchell was so impressed with this fine noble river, flowing as he thought to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the beautiful country that it watered, that he called it the Victoria River after “Our noble Queen.”

However, in the following year when Edmund Kennedy, who you will remember was in charge of the camp at the head of the Maranoa River, was sent to follow the river through to the Gulf, he had a very different impression. The year was a dry one and Kennedy was only able to travel about 200 miles. There was no feed for the horses and water was scarce. However, he discovered a river which he named after the Colonial Secretary, The Hon. E. Deas-Thomson. He maintained that this Thomson River would combine with the Victoria River to flow into Cooper's Creek which had been discovered and named by Sturt. Here he was ultimately proved correct; it is
a saying in Western Queensland that it takes two rivers to make a creek. Cooper's Creek, of course, flows into Lake Eyre in a very good season, but usually the waters dissipate in the sands of the South West of Queensland and South Australia.

On his return, Kennedy met with a party of natives who told him the aboriginal name for the river was the Barcoo and thus it remains to this day.

**Leichhardt Disappears into the Unknown**

The next party through this part of the country was led by Dr. Leichhardt. He may have reached the junction of the Thomson as there is a tree marked L. on the south side of the Barcoo, a few miles east of that point, but as he was never heard of again, there is no actual record of his journey. In 1858, A. C. Gregory was sent to look for Leichhardt. He followed the route set by Mitchell and Kennedy on the Barcoo and found a tree marked with an L. near the river, where it passes between Mt. Northampton and Mt. Eniskillen.
Although Gregory followed up the Barcoo to its junction with the Thomson and the Thomson to the spot where the town of Arralala once stood, no further trace was found of the Leichhardt party; but a tree marked by the Kennedy expedition was seen. Once again it was a bad year and Gregory described the country as worthless. From the Alice River to Cooper’s Creek the country was drought-stricken and the horses suffered from the lack of grass. However, rain fell while they were travelling. The rivers filled with water and the plains flooded making conditions even more difficult and Gregory returned very discouraged from a fruitless and distressing journey.

William Landsborough and Nat Buchanan

In 1859 William Landsborough with a party including Nat Buchanan struck out into the Central West of the new Colony—Queensland. This year the season was good and they struck the open downs on the northern side of the Alice River. Then, travelling north-west, they crossed a large creek that Landsborough named Aramac after his friend R. R. Mackenzie. He was in the habit of coining names in
this manner. The Aramac Creek was in thick scrub, but after passing through it, they rode for thirty miles over open plains before coming to another large creek, which obviously had large permanent water holes. Here they camped and then continued in the same north-westerly direction. They reached the foothills of tablelands which they skirted by going due west until they met another fine creek flowing south. This they followed till they came to a remarkable round hill on its west side. Landsborough and Buchanan climbed to the top and were rewarded by a magnificent view. Beyond the range of vision to the south and south-west stretched the open downs covered with lush green grass and herbage. Buchanan, who was carrying an axe, marked a tree on the summit of the hill with an L. and they descended, deciding they had seen enough. This hill which Landsborough named Tower Hill, would be about 300 feet above the surrounding plain.

Travelling south-south-west, they came to a creek flowing south which they called the Landsborough, and followed it down till it became a large water-course, having received the waters of the other creeks they had seen on the way north. They left it at the place where the Aramac Creek joined from the east and were quite convinced that they were on the Barcoo of earlier explorations.

When they returned to civilization they applied at once for some of the country they had discovered, and called this run Bowen Downs, after the town of Bowen on the coast which had been named for Queensland's first Governor.

The First Mob of Cattle

In October 1862, the first mob of cattle, 3,500, arrived on Bowen Downs from Fort Cooper. Another 1,500 head were left behind as unfit for a dry stage of the route. These cattle came by way of Suttor Creek with Mr. R. Kerr in charge. Mr. Kerr had with him four white men, one black boy, and three gins. One of the white men, Morris Donohue, died shortly after arriving, and was doubtless the first white man buried on Bowen Downs.

The year 1863 was dry, and water became short and grass scarce. When another mob of 3,000 head of cows was sent up from New South Wales, 1,000
perished on the road. These latter had come via the Barcoo River. Although brands were not registered in those days, the Bowen Downs cattle carried the brand L.C. and the horses B.D., now L.C.5.

Other settlers quickly followed the reports of good country, and in the same year, 1863, Messrs. Rule and Lacey took up Aramac Station on Aramac Creek and stocked it with sheep. Mr. Raven also took up land to the north of Aramac and stocked it with sheep, but when the waterholes failed, he forfeited it and took up Stainburn Downs as here he found permanent water.

Then heavy rains fell in June and with all the creeks in flood, it was found that both Aramac and Bowen Downs homesteads were too close to channels and likely to become flooded. Aramac merely moved to higher ground, but Bowen Downs moved to its present site on Cornish Creek. Thus, 1863 which started so dry had most useful winter rains which seemed a good omen for those early settlers.

However, life was very hard for our pioneers, and few reaped the harvest of their labours. Lacey, who, with Mr. Rule, had taken up Aramac station was speared by the blacks with one of his shepherds, while Landsborough, W. Glen Walker, N. Buchanan and another partner, Cornish, were ruined by the fall in wool prices and the impossibility of selling their cattle.

Nat Buchanan and his wife were the first white manager and his wife on the Thomson River.

**Losses from Poison Bush**

Drought was not the only enemy with which the early stockholders had to contend. Sheep coming to the West suffered heavy losses crossing the range from a poison bush named Heartleaf. Mr. Hodgson, of Rodney Downs, lost 6,000 sheep to the east of Aramac at a spot known as Monkey's Grave to this day. This heartleaf bush grows along the top of the range from the Barcoo River to the headwaters of the Flinders. At first, no one realised the cause of the trouble and it was not until 9,000 sheep belonging to Kirk, Sutherland and Rankin had been poisoned that tests were made with the suspected plant and it was found to be the cause of death of so many sheep, cattle and horses.
Enniskillen Taken Up

Mr. J. T. Allan was the first man to bring stock to the Barcoo. In 1861 he took up Mt. Enniskillen run and stocked it with cattle the next year. The cattle travelled up from St. George, Boney Pont, a well-known drover, being in charge of the cattle. They apparently arrived in good condition as there is no record of losses from drought, Heartleaf poisoning or the blacks. The cattle were branded 202 on the near side, using the whole length of the side. The first 2 was on the shoulder, the 0 was on the ribs and the other 2 on the thigh. This would certainly be a deterrent to "paddy dodgers," but would be frowned on today by the tanneries.

At the same time Allan made friends with the blacks, especially with their king, whom he called King Dingo. King Dingo, in turn, called him Allanin. From the blacks Allan learnt that the Barcoo River where it passed through his holding Enniskillen was called Barinchilla by them, and the country itself Bingenehilla.

Mr. J. T. Allan held Mt. Enniskillen until 1907 when it was bought by Messrs. Clarke and Tate, and it is of interest to know that Mr. Allan was one of the three original pioneers who took up country and was not ruined.

Tambo Station, Terrick Terrick, and Others

Other properties taken up between 1861 and 1865 were Tambo Station by Bell and Dutton; Terrick Terrick by Govett and Parsons; Ravensburn, by Galdwyn; and Moorsland—now called Lorne—by Moore and Reid; Malvern by Henry Edwards. The Ellis brothers settled at Portland, and Mr. C. Lumley Hill with Mr. Allan and Holberton took up Isis Downs. After 1865 no further country was taken up on the Barcoo until 1869; but the properties as mentioned were all heavily stocked with sheep, and although there were no boundaries and the sheep had to be shepherded, they had few troubles and the owners temporarily proposed.

At this time the country watered by the Flinders River was attracting much attention, due most probably to the route via the Barcoo and Thomson Rivers which Landsborough had discovered in 1862. Over this way he had brought cattle to Bowen Downs, losing
1,000 en route due to the drought, but other stock followed more successfully and land right up to the Barkly Tableland was taken up and stocked. However, the first cattle on the Albert River were at The Brook, which was taken up by the owners of Bowen Downs, Landsborough, Buchanan and Cornish. It was stocked from Bowen Downs, and thus carried the famous L.C. brand. (Later L.C.5).

**Shape of the New Colony**

When the western border of Queensland was first laid down it was a straight line across the continent of Australia running along the 141st parallel of longitude. However, the first Queensland Government recognised the future value of the Gulf Rivers, especially for cheaper transport; Parker Point was thought to be a good anchorage. Queensland petitioned the British Government that the western boundary be moved to longitude 138. This request was granted and the survey which was already started had to be changed. This alteration cut deep into South Australia and the Northern Territory, the latter losing valuable mineral fields, which have since been discovered; and an oil potential which has still to be proved.

This alteration of survey which increased Queensland by some 100,000 square miles accounts for the kink in the boundary of Western Queensland. It is interesting to note that in the following year, 1860, the Burke and Wills expedition on its trek from Melbourne to the Gulf entered Queensland at a spot somewhere near to Thargomindah. They struck west along the Wilson River to Cooper’s Creek and on through the South Australian corner back into Queensland, which they entered near Birdsville on the Diamantina River.

**Dalgonally Taken Up**

About 1863, Duncan and Donald McIntyre took up Dalgonally on Julia Creek and they stocked it from New South Wales with cattle which travelled along this route set by the Burke and Wills party, along the Paroo to Cooper’s Creek, to the Diamantina, down the McKinlay and on to Julia Creek, showing how closely history depends on geography!
Donald McIntyre discovered two trees on the Flinders River marked with an L. Thinking these could have been marked by Leichhardt, he reported the find and, on the advice of Von Muller, he was furnished with an outfit, including camels, to go and continue investigations. Unfortunately, he contracted gulf fever and died at a water hole on Julia Creek near its junction with the Cloncurry River. That is how that waterhole received the unhappy name of The Grave Hole.

The ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition on their way to the Gulf had passed to the west of Cloncurry and on north to the tidal waters of the Gulf, thus becoming the first white men to cross the continent from south to north. It was on the return trip that Gray, Burke, and Wills died of starvation with only King alive, to be found by Alfred Howitt’s search party. This party named the surrounding country after Lord Cloncurry, head of the Royal Geographical Society, and this is the world-famous mining field of today, embracing Mt. Isa and Mary Kathleen, and producing silver, lead, copper, and many other minerals.
MOUNT ISA MINES

URANIUM MINING, MARY KATHLEEN
It was in 1865 that a pioneer pastoralist, Ernest Henry, discovered copper on the Cloncurry River. He packed some of it into pack bags and set off to Clermont, 460 miles S.E., to have it assayed. The analysis said it was iron ore, but that other minerals could quite likely be found in the same region. Henry returned and continued his search till he succeeded in finding a rich payable copper field in the Cloncurry Ranges. Henry had as a partner R. K. Sheefe who managed Fort Constantine, North of Cloncurry. It was Henry who named so many of the local features after places in the Crimea, having served at the Seige of Sevastopol as an ensign.

The Land Laws

The importance that the pastoral industry has always occupied in the history of Queensland was early demonstrated. The first session of the first Parliament passed no fewer than four Land Bills, and laid the basis of the Land Code which we have today. The first was The Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act. This repealed the 1858 Pastoral Leasing Law of New South Wales and the Orders in Council then in force. Under the new act, any person was permitted to apply for an occupation licence for one year for a run of 100 square miles. If there were more than one applicant for the same run, then preference was to be given to any person who had occupied it for the previous two months. Further, in nine months after the granting of licence, application might be made by the occupier for a fourteen years' lease conditional on the run having been stocked to one-fourth its assumed carrying capacity of 100 sheep or 20 head of cattle per square mile. An absolute power of resumption at any time during the lease was given on a twelve months' notice.

The second Bill was The Tenders for Crown Lands Acts. This authorised the issue of fourteen years' leases, of runs liable for rent. It also authorised the acceptance of tenders (which had been held over waiting legislation) for runs occupied since 1 January, 1860; and the granting to the tenders of fourteen years' leases.

The third measure was the Alienation of Crown Lands Act, which fixed the minimum upset price at auction or otherwise at £1 per acre: and which pro-
vided for the setting apart, within six months of the Bill becoming law, of not less than 100,000 acres on the shores of the navigable waters of Moreton Bay, Wide Bay, Port Curtis, and Keppel Bay, and also within five miles of all towns with upwards of 500 inhabitants, such areas to be reserved for agricultural purposes only. It was under this Act that the first bounty was paid for the production of cotton, to be £10 per bale for the first three years and £5 per bale for the next two years.

The fourth Bill was the Occupied Crown Lands Leasing Act. This enabled the lessee of Crown Land, held under previously existing regulations, a five year renewal of lease at the end of his term. The principle of compensation was recognised, but no provision was made for any continuance of the “preemptive right to purchase” hitherto existing.

Thus we got our “kick off” into the tangle of Lands Laws and Land Administration, with which the industry has been battling ever since.

Years of Development

These laws heralded in a period of tremendous development for the Queensland pastoral industry. The rush for new pastoral country not only attracted the most adventurous bushmen in Australia to the new Colony, but also sent up the prices of sheep and cattle by fabulous rates, as country tendered for could not be held unless stocked to the prescribed minimum number. Until the disastrous drought and the slump in values in 1869, 70 and 71, the country made phenomenal progress.

However, even before 1869, it was seen that there was need for reform of the Land Laws. The upset price of £1 was far too high, and many young men who had taken up land with high hopes saw these hopes dwindle into disaster. Land Law reform was soon an active agitation in the colony and in the forefront of the movement was a Rockhampton man, Archibald Archer, of Gracemere. The Archers had taken up Gracemere in 1855, at the same time as Barmundoo had been taken up by Henry Hort Brown and Milton by W. H. Walsh, later Speaker of the State Parliament in the Macalister Ministry.

The outcome of the land law agitation was the Act of 1868 under which the following classifications were adopted:
Agricultural Land not exceeding 640 acres at 15/- per acre; First class Pastoral Land, not exceeding 2,560 acres at 10/- per acre; Second class Pastoral Land, not exceeding 7,680 acres at 5/- per acre.

Easy terms were arranged for payment, and a tremendous rush for land followed. As a result of faulty classification, trouble arose and the Government Commissioners were held responsible. In 1869, the Lilley Government passed an act giving lessees in the unsettled districts a better tenure than they had enjoyed before, but it again led to troubles of distinction, and in 1884 the Griffith Government passed the Dutton Act which sought to correct anomalies. It abolished the preemptive right of lessees and set up the Land Board as we know it to-day.

Thus, a brief summary of the introduction of stock into Western Queensland, by the fathers of our Pastoral Industry. It was always the same pattern—the explorer and then the land-hungry adventurers. The Leslies were the first, following in the steps of Alan Cunningham, on to the magnificent Darling Downs. Soon the movement was in progress, North and West with that wonderful influx of Victorian capital and management that gave such a marked impetus. The wealth that fortified New South Wales and Victoria overflowed into Queensland and with it came improved methods. In came the wire fence and out went the shepherds. The price of wool rose and very gradually the railways revolutionised the weary bullock dray transport. Some day the existing railway systems may be linked up and help with the removal of stock in drought times. Droughts still remain to scourge man and beast, but the discovery of the Artesian Basin was the greatest stroke ever struck against the drought fiend.

Discovery of Artesian Water

New South Wales and Victorian squatters had by 1880 proved that an Artesian Basin did exist in Australia. The Artesian Basin takes its name from the French Province of Artois where water-bearing beds are tapped and used extensively. Water-bearing beds are made possible by a bed of permeable rock lying between two impermeable layers of rock. The water from the original source has flowed along this bed unable to escape from it. By boring through the impermeable bed above, the water may be tapped at any
part of its course, provided that the mouth of the well is below the level of the original source. As water will find its own level a gush of water rises to the surface without the aid of artificial pumping. It may be interesting to note here that the fountains in Trafalgar Square were formerly artesian wells, the water from the Chiltern Hills on one side and from the north downs of Surrey on the other flowing along the chalk and collecting in a basin under London.

**Dr. R. L. Jack**

As has been stated, it had been confirmed that such favourable conditions did exist in Australia, but although Dr. R. L. Jack, the then Government Geologist of Queensland, had as early as 1882, urged that Artesian Water could be found on the Western Plains of Queensland, nothing was done to prove his claim until the drought of 1885. In that year, Dr. Jack and Mr. J. B. Henderson, the hydraulic engineer to the Queensland Government, were sent out to re-examine the Western Districts and, if possible, select a site for a deep bore. The town of Blackall was selected and on 3 December, 1885, boring operations commenced. How-
ever, it was not until 1888 that the well tapped the basin, the well by this time being 1,660 feet deep. However, it was well worth the time, anxiety and expense as the water flowed out at a rate of 291,000 gallons a day, and watered a large area of valuable country. The success of this venture encouraged others to try for a flow and, by June, 1904, there were 973 wells which had been sunk in Queensland at a cost of £1,485,264, and with a total depth of 225 miles. Of these wells, 596 were flowing bores yielding nearly 400 million gallons a day, through thousands of miles of bore drains. 

Sub-artesian bores which do not strike a flow may be pumped by windmills and the water stored in tanks and troughing. Apart from the quite costly upkeep of such systems, there is the additional worry of the watering sites becoming eaten out and exceedingly dusty. This dust is picked up by the sheep when they gather to drink, to the detriment of the wool. Flowing bore drain water therefore which enables the sheep to drink all through the paddocks is vastly preferable, especially in the case of ewes with young lambs. It can be a most distressing sight to see many, 

1. The major part of the Great Artesian Basin of Australia, which is the largest so far discovered in the world, is in Queensland, extending roughly westward from the Great Dividing Range. The importance to the development of Western Queensland of the discovery and use of this underground water basin cannot be over-emphasised. It is the basis of the development of the vast grazing and wool-growing industry in that area. Records show that three artesian bores had been drilled in Queensland by 1884. These bores were shallow and only one, drilled into a spring on Manfred Downs in the Julia Creek district, within the main basin area. The first deep bore in the artesian basin in Queensland was commenced at Blackall in 1885 and this bore is still flowing. However, while drilling at Blackall was in progress, a bore was commenced on Thurrulgoomia Station in the Cunnamulla district and a flow was obtained in advance of the Blackall bore. 

By the end of 1899, 524 bores had been sunk of which 505 were successful and were delivering 224 million gallons of water every twenty-four hours. At the end of 1919, 1,174 flowing bores had been sunk delivering 341 million gallons per day. By 1938, 1,948 bores had been drilled but daily flow had fallen to 262 million gallons per day. By June 1958, 2,565 artesian bores had been registered with estimated total flow of 205 million gallons per day. 

The Government appointed a committee to enquire into the problem of diminishing supply and the Committee produced an interim report in 1945 followed by a final report in 1954. It set out its conclusions that the continued diminution of pressure and of flow had been due to the withdrawal of portion of the flow from the elastic storage, but that ultimately a steady rate of flow would be reached when the amount of re-charge would equal what was being withdrawn from the basin. It recommended that the policy of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in regard to applications presently being followed should be continued; that applications for licences to sink artesian bores be investigated to determine in what manner the land might be most effectively and economically watered, and the licence to stipulate volume of water that might be tapped and the volume that might be used; preference to be given to distribution of the water by pipeline and short drain systems; and surface flows from bores to be controlled and regulated to actual requirements.—Ed.
many young lambs left behind and lost when their mothers have to walk long distances to water.

I have mentioned these facts to emphasise that it is not only in drought years that the Artesian Basin has benefited our Western areas, nor have I mentioned the many towns which enjoy the comfort of hot bore water piped into their homes. The water at the Bore Head is clear and extremely blue, depending on the depth of the hole. However, it is during Australia's prevailing droughts that the real value of the bores can be appreciated. It is interesting to note that, in the 1902 drought, 12 million sheep were lost, while in the 1926 drought, this number fell to 4 million. Water could not mean the whole difference, but it played a major part, especially in keeping open the stock routes so that stock could be moved to agistment. It has been agreed that surface water in Queensland evaporates at the rate of one foot per month or ten feet a year allowing for the winter months; with some creeks drying up and not being full enough to run for two years, three years and, at times, five years. It can be imagined at what impossible depth the building of dams on station properties would be necessary in order to obtain permanent water.

However, there are some western rivers that have permanent waterholes, particularly the Barcoo River. In the early part of 1865, Mr. John Costello examined the western country beyond the Barcoo and, finding several stretches of permanent water, recommended many runs for occupation. He himself occupied Kyabra, and Farrar's Creek was named for his head stockman, John Farrar.

**First Sheep on Cooper's Creek**

Ten years later in 1875, Mr. John Collins brought the first sheep to Cooper's Creek. The sheep were brought down the Barcoo and placed at Whitula Station and had to be carefully shepherded. Mr. Collins, in partnership with his sons, occupied and sold various properties in this area and on the Diamantina. Morney Plains was one such and Springfield another. Selling out, they pushed further west, taking up Mt. Merlin on the Mort River and also Warendra, which they sold to Mr. Edward Wienholt in 1881. This was a large area on the Burke River near Boulia. Some twenty years later they bought Chatsworth Station
and acquired Noranside. These two runs with Mt. Merlin occupied an area of 2,000 square miles.

In 1878 the North Australian Pastoral Company had been formed with Sir Thomas McIlwraith and the Hon. W. Forrest, but the 1900-1902 period proved a disastrous time for even such great holdings because of the lack of water, and the company failed. Other well-known Queensland names to make their appearance at this time were the Flood family who came from New South Wales and took up Gowrie Station on the banks of the Warrego River. They occupied all the country between Wyandra and Augathella. The town of Charleville stands to-day on the site of the original Gowrie head station. Some years later the head station was moved to the Ward River, but now it is again back on the Warrego about fourteen miles to the north of Charleville and boasts a fine garden of grapes and citrus fruits.

Difficulties of Transport

The lack of water was not the only burden these early squatters had to bear. Transport also was extremely difficult. When James Sutherland and his brother took their 8,000 sheep from slightly north of Rockhampton to the Barkly Tableland in 1863, they had to cut a trail for the sheep by dragging a log between two drays driven abreast in order to flatten the long, rank grass so that the sheep would be able to progress. It was impossible for most of the way to travel the drays with the stock as the sheep followed the river beds for water while the drays kept well away from them. James Sutherland was in charge of the sheep, leaving the drays to his brother. It was a long and difficult trip, but they travelled via the Connor Range and Nebo. The sheep were shorn at Sutor Creek Station and the wool shipped from the new port of Mackay. By moving on via the Cape River, they were able to cross the poison belt without loss, then followed it right across the peninsula to the head of the Flinders River. They moved down that river to the newly occupied stations. When near the Gulf they went west to the Albert River where they camped on a large waterhole. The party moved slowly on, cutting a track for the sheep through the high rank grasses until they reached the junction of the O'Shannassy and Gregory Rivers where they split up, joining again.
at the Tablelands. Covering a dry stage they reached Lake Mary. Camooweal is on this site on the Herbert River. Landsborough had named both the lake and the river while he named the Tableland itself after Sir Henry Barkly. The river was later called the Georgina after Governor Kennedy’s daughter. Here, on Lake Mary, the Sutherlands stayed and formed Rocklands Station. There are large limestone rocks covering the plains in this locality which prompted the name of Rocklands.

After such an epic journey, fate should have smiled on the brothers, but once again transport beat them. Wool at 4d. a lb. on the world’s markets could not be moved from Rocklands which is west of Camooweal and as there was no prospect of making it a paying proposition, the station was abandoned in 1866 and the brothers sought employment inside. The only communication these stations had with the outside world in those early days was the bullock team. As they had to follow the watercourses for the sake of the animals, the distances were increased accordingly and the going was always slow. W. H. Corfield owned eight bullock teams on the track from Townsville to the Flinders and helped to open the country.

When Burketown was formed, it proved a great assistance to the Gulf settlers, but even with easier transport by water, the wool was still not bringing a price that made shipping it overseas profitable and most sheep were boiled down for their tallow. In those days, before the development of coal gas, the demand for tallow candles was good. The tallow was also used to keep the wheels of the bullock wagons turning.

Mr. Harry Edkins, a name well known and respected in Western Queensland, once owned the boiling down works on the Albert River. He had come to Queensland in 1859 with cattle.

**Origin of Western Towns**

The first town formed on the Barcoo watershed was Tambo which is a native name for the Yam. Yams play a very big part in the diet of the aboriginal, being a tuber plant not unlike a sweet potato. They grow around trees and the gins tap the soil with their yams sticks until they find them, usually by sound.

Tambo is 1,300 feet above sea level with a population of 480.
The second town in the west was Blackall, named after Colonel Samuel Wensley Blackall, who was Governor of Queensland from 1868-1871. It was first known as the Barcoo township. In the early days the mails came from Rockhampton to Tambo by pack horse. Northampton Downs used to collect all the mail at Tambo for the stations as far north and west as Aramac. Until the Cobb and Co. coaches ran the mails in this area, each station had to pick up its own mail at Northampton Downs. When in 1907 the rail reached Blackall, it was a great comfort for all these widely separated properties.

As has already been told, Aramac was formed in the 1860's and had direct communication with the coast via Clermont.

Jundah is situated on the Thomson River, about thirty-five miles above the junction with the Barcoo which forms the Cooper’s Creek, the two rivers which make a creek! Jundah, pronounced Joonda, is aboriginal for “woman.” There are opal mines in this district.

Windorah, situated on Cooper's Creek was first known as Stoney Point. The explorer, Edmund Kennedy, camped in the neighbourhood of the town site both going out and returning in 1847. Sir Thomas Mitchell in 1846 had discovered a river which he named the Victoria, and which, as I said in the beginning of this paper, he hoped would prove to flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria. Later Kennedy was to prove that this was the Barcoo River which flowed into Cooper’s Creek and ultimately into the interior of Australia.

Isisford on the Barcoo, was first called Whittown after the Whitman Brothers who started the settlement by erecting a store and a hotel. Later when this was surveyed as a town, the name was changed to Isisford. There are many who claim that Banjo Paterson was referring to Isisford when he wrote the “Bush Christening.”

However, the trees around Isisford are all stunted gidyea and it is very doubtful if the howling young cub could have found a hollow log large enough to run into and offer shelter.

Charleville was named by the surveyor Tully who called it Charleville after his native town in the county of Cork, Ireland. The town is situated on the
banks of the Warrego River, which was discovered by Sir Thomas Mitchell, who gave it the native name. The railway which connects Charleville to Brisbane was opened in 1888.

During the Second World War a first class airport was established. This has been maintained and carries a very heavy traffic to-day. The town is supplied by artesian water, while the river contains many fine permanent water holes, where fine Murray cod, some weighing up to 100 lbs., can be caught.

Cunnamulla which is also on the eastern bank of the Warrego River is connected to Brisbane by the railway running through Charleville. This town also is supplied with artesian water.

Thargomindah is westward of Cunnamulla by 135 miles. The town stands on high ground on the western side of the Bulloo River. Thargomindah was the first established camp of the native police and the name is aboriginal word meaning "porcupine." Some years ago it printed its own newspaper. The town is supplied by a bore discharging water at a high temperature and at such great pressure that it was used to give the town an electric supply—the first in the West. Although Thargomindah boasts only one hotel it is found to be sufficient for the district and with the stores supplying a wide range of commodities and, with banking and other business premises, it is a most satisfactory little township.

Birdsville, about 300 miles westward of Windorah, is almost 1,000 miles from Brisbane and seven miles from the South Australian border with a population of less than fifty. The man who surveyed Birdsville called it Birdsvale, but merchants in Adelaide misread the address and painted Birds-ville on all boxes, and other supplies going out and the local people liked the name and adopted it. Although the town has only the one hotel it is the centre of the Flying Doctor service with a staffed hospital and air terminal, and is thus of great importance to the people of the Inland.

Adavale is on the headwaters of the Bulloo River. It was named after Ada, the wife of E. J. Stevens an early owner of Tinchinchilla, now known as Milo. It is in thick mulga country 116 miles from Charleville, which is its nearest railhead.

Boulia is on a waterhole in the Bourke River. The blacks called the hole Bulzoo-Bulzoo. Paterson who
took up Goodwood Station, erected the first building, a hut. Ernest Henry erected a canvas store, Harry Westenfelt erected a hotel and this was the foundation of Boulia in 1877. The Burke and Wills expedition passed along the eastern bank of the waterhole in 1861 on their way to the Gulf of Carpentaria and were the first white men in that area.

**The Foundation of Cloncurry**

Ernest Henry was also the founder of Cloncurry. Burke named a river in that locality Cloncurry, but it is quite wrong to confuse this with the Cloncurry River of to-day. Henry was one of the first pastoralists of the Flinders River, taking up Hughenden Station only to lose it when the bad times came. By prospecting in the Cloncurry Ranges and discovering copper, Henry was responsible for forming the town of Cloncurry. It is now one of the greatest mineral areas in the world, being 15,000 square miles of gold, copper, silver and lead. Mt. Isa and Mary Kathleen with its added uranium are in this mineral belt. It is 481 miles west of Townsville and 200 miles from the Gulf of Carpentaria. Two huge lakes have been constructed in this area which is 670 feet above sea level. One lake is near the head of the Corella River and the other on the Leichhardt River. This mineral belt must play a very important part in world affairs for many years to come. One copper mine alone in this area produced above £20,000 worth of copper in the first five years it was in operation. The native name for Cloncurry was Pi-mur-ra.

**Normanton, Croydon and Burketown**

Burketown is the oldest town on the Gulf of Carpentaria. It stands on the Albert River thirty miles from its mouth and is 1,500 miles from Brisbane by sea. It was formed in the 1860's, but, during an epidemic of Gulf fever, so many people died that William Landsborough, the explorer who had charge of this area, transferred the remaining population to a site he had chosen on the Norman River and thus formed the township of Normanton. The Norman River was called after Commander Norman who was in charge of the northern expedition parties who were sent out to search for Burke and Wills in 1861-2. Transport in the early days, as everywhere else, was
by bullock team and the district kept 300 teams busy
carting supplies for the mines and neighbouring
stations. There is a current tale that many of the
neighbouring cattle stations were started from the
progeny of these bullock teams. At least that was in
the days before the "poddy dodger" became respect­
able. There were hopes that the railway would push
through from Cloncurry to Normanton. A survey was
taken and a quantity of material was shipped to Nor­
manton for railway construction. However, the
material was used to take the railway to Croydon, 97
miles to the east of Normanton, where it ended and
the link with Cloncurry never eventuated.

Croydon in those days had a population of 6,500,
but to-day there would be fewer than 400 people in the
district. With the price of cartage as high as £35 per
 ton, the district found the railway a very expensive
improvement.

It is sad to see how these once prosperous mining
towns have almost disappeared. Ellis Read, trading
for R. Towns and Co. had a fine store established in
Normanton and carried on a thriving business with
the stations and diggings. George Trimble, from
Saxby, drove the first team into the town. The large
store that Ellis Read built still stands to-day. It is
used now by Burns Philp, but only one small corner of
its massive shelves is used for business. There is also
a stone safe deposit with a steel door weighing about
30 hundredweight. The gold was stored here while
waiting to be shipped to the south. Some miles west
of Normanton on the Bynoe River is Burke's last
marked camp 119. They had failed to actually reach
the sea, but were near enough to note the rise and
fall of the tide in the river.

Beginning of Camooweal

Camooweal had its foundations laid in 1882 when
J. J. Crownan, a travelling hawker, pitched his camp
on the bank of Francis L. Lake. He started a store
which later was carried on by his son.

A year later, in 1883, a man named Kennedy
built a hotel, and by then the town was well under
wav. Paddy Synnott built a second hotel in 1890. It
will be remembered that the Sutherland brothers took
up Rocklands, west of Camooweal, and as Camooweal

2. The town of Croydon has a population of 127.
itself is only nine miles from the borders of the Northern Territory, they had great trouble getting supplies for the station and, in turn, selling their wool. Sutherland wrote at that time that their supplies were loaded in Sydney and then conveyed to the mouth of the Albert River on the Gulf in an almost unseaworthy ship. “So old and decayed, in fact, was the vessel that more often than not the cargo was seriously damaged. Our flour often arrived half rotten and full of long maggots; the sugar packed in casks was black and tarry; the tea no better than gum leaves. Notwithstanding such drawbacks, we were very glad to get it.”

It was some time before anyone tried to bring a wheeled vehicle into Camooweal from Cloncurry; the first men to do so were Alexander Kennedy and F. C. Urquhart, who drove a buggy along Cameron Creek, passing the Argylla mine, and they found the going very tough. This journey was undertaken because of trouble with the blacks. The blacks in this district were the fierce Kalkadoons who had carried on sporadic warfare with the early white settlers for a number of years, even to being credited with cannibalism when they killed and ate a Chinese shepherd on lonely Granada Station. In March 1884, Inspector F. C. Urquhart set up a police outpost at Corella Creek near Cloncurry to try to control the situation. Soon after he arrived, a black boy limped into the post and announced that there had been a raid on Carlton Hills Station sixty miles west; cattle had been stolen and Mr. J. W. Powell, the owner, had been killed. Urquhart, with Alexander Kennedy, Mr. Powell’s partner, at once set out with his native troopers to track the murderers. The Kalkadoons had stopped in a gorge to rest and had killed some of the Carlton Hills’ stolen cattle for food. The police party caught up with them and, in a bitter battle, most of the blacks were killed.

However, this was no peaceful solution to the problem and whenever the tribes felt sufficiently strong, they would swoop down and attack again, and it was only after the shepherd-eating incident at Granada Station that Inspector Urquhart, with Mr. H. Hopkins (who later managed Wellshot), the owner of Granada, followed the tribe and almost wiped them out at what is now known as Battle Hill. Urquhart was nearly killed in this battle and Hopkins lost an arm.
Hometown of “Waltzing Matilda”

Winton is the hometown of “Waltzing Matilda” and also of Qantas.

In the early 1870’s Bob Allen, a former policeman from Aramac, started a store and a hotel on what is known as the Pelican Hole, which is a short distance west from the present site of Winton. In 1876, heavy flooding in the river compelled him to spend two days on the wall plate of his building. When the floods went down, he moved the premises to the present, far safer site, and set up business on the spot where the present National Bank operates.

Shortly afterwards W. H. Corfield and Fitzmaurice arrived with teams intending to start a store. They considered that Allen’s site was still likely to be subjected to river flooding and tried to persuade him to move to higher ground. They even offered to move all buildings and do all the work without cost, but Allen had done with moving and Corfield had to give in. He built his store in line with Allen’s and the town was established. Later surveyor Jopp surveyed it, but each big “wet” sees much of Winton under water and it seems a pity that the surveyor could not persuade the stores that this would definitely be so.

The nearest bank to Winton then was at Aramac 250 miles away. When the store had done £600 worth of business, Corfield headed for Aramac with his bag of cheques. He passed through Muttaburra, but as the hotel was only a grass hut and filled with drovers going through with mobs of sheep in search of agistment, as it was a bad year, Corfield preferred to sleep on the sandhills outside the town. He reached Aramac after banking hours and had to wait another day before he had the satisfaction of having all his £600 worth of cheques honoured except for about £30.

About this time a track was marked out by a Government party from Charters Towers to the western rivers which led later to all traffic moving via Hughenden to Winton.

The Origin of Longreach

Longreach takes its name from a long reach or waterhole in the Thomson River. This “long reach”...
of water was an outstation of the famous Mt. Cornish Station, and a mail change on an inland mail.

Here I quote Mrs. Wedgwood, who was a daughter of Mr. E. R. Edkins who managed Mr. Cornish's property, Beamesbrook Station, on the Albert River in the 1860's. When the Gulf fever broke out at Burketown, wiping out most of the residents, Mr. and Mrs. Edkins lost their two eldest children and Mr. Edkins' brother who had owned the boiling down works, Mr. Harry Edkins. Landsborough, who moved the population to Normanton, persuaded Mr. and Mrs. Edkins to join him in forming a station on the Thomson River. This was to take portion of the vast Bowen Downs property which had been taken up by Nat Buchanan, Boyd Morehead, Glen Walker, and Cornish. This had been found impractical to handle and was to be divided. With Mr. Edkins droving the cattle and Mrs. Edkins the wagonette, with a baby in her arms, Mt. Cornish was formed at the head of the Thomson River. They lived in a mud hut with a bark roof and for the next five or six years, seldom saw another white woman. Bowen was the nearest town and all groceries and supplies came by bullock team twice a year with a pack horse mail run every three months. With no means of shopping, sugar bags were used to make overalls; and furniture, beds and chairs were made from hides stretched over saplings or from the casks in which the station luxury, dried apples, came. These casks Mrs. Edkins would cut into bucket chairs, covering them with bagging ornamented with bright wools. Shoes were made from calf and kangaroo skins and the station was very soon able to supply its own meat, milk and vegetables. By 1876 when a new house was built, the Mt. Cornish Shorthorns, bearing the L.C. 5 brand numbered about 78,000, but much good country was resumed in 1889. This, with the 1900/2 drought, brought down the numbers to an extent that only 1,260 beasts were mustered at the end of the drought and the property was sold and became a sheep property.

At this time, Muttaburra was the thriving little township of the district; it had been formed in 1878. All traffic from Bowen passed through on its way west and the mails went by Cobb and Co. from Muttaburra to Hughenden, Richmond, Cloncurry, Winton and Torrens Creek, as did the telegraph, coming from Tambo.
However, when the railway, which was twenty-five years in construction from Rockhampton, arrived in the Central West, it was decided to make Longreach the railhead. It arrived in 1892 and, from that time, Longreach has continued to grow in size and importance, to the great detriment of its older neighbouring towns, Arrillala and Muttaburra. The selectors on the Thomson River, who had previously bought their supplies in the other towns, now transferred to Longreach and the Q.N. Bank and other business establishments moved to that town also.

Longreach, 420 miles from Rockhampton, stands on the Tropic of Capricorn and is well in the artesian basin. It is a flourishing township now known as the centre of the Golden Fleece. It has both A and B class wireless transmission stations, an excellently equipped hospital, an all-weather aerodrome built by the American forces during the second World War. Before that it was the headquarters of Qantas, which had commenced business in Winton, but found it more practical to move its head office to Longreach. The Longreach of to-day has come a long way in 70 years from the coaching change on the mail run from Aramac to Windorah which was all it was. Such is the power of the railway in opening up a country.

Garden City of the West

Barcaldine, named from the Barcaldine in Devon, England, is 360 miles due west from Rockhampton on the Tropic of Capricorn. It was connected by the railway six years before Longreach in 1886 and was previously known as Lagoon Creek. It is known as the Garden City of the West, being situated on sandy loam just on the edge of the black soil plains. It is 900 feet above sea level and four miles from the Alice River, which Sir Thomas Mitchell discovered. With its two artesian bores and the water from the weir in the Alice River, Barcaldine is particularly well-watered and can literally grow anything. It is very proud of its citrus and mango trees and small crops and other fruits flourish. While it is not as important a shopping centre as Longreach, it has an excellent hospital and is one of the show and racing centres of the west.

The Western Champion newspaper, one of the first newspapers in the west, was once printed there, but the Longreach Leader took its place and now
Barcaldine’s editorial efforts are in the enthusiastic and extraordinarily capable hands of some school boys.

**Early Transport Problems**

No history of this great part of Queensland would be either useful or sympathetic without some mention of the difficulties of transport which had to be overcome by the early settlers. With no navigable rivers, everything coming into the country and everything going out to market had to be transported overland. It would be an anachronism to say “By road” as of roads there were none.

In the early days, it was found that the horse and bullock drays were unsuitable for transporting wool and supplies from and to the stations and towns. Four wheel wagons were introduced, but in the beginning they were fitted with narrow wheels. These were very hard to pull when the ground was either dry or very wet. Later, these wheels were fitted with 11 inch tyres and the wagons could carry more than 80 bales of wool or a load of 14 tons.

These large wagons were often drawn by twenty-eight horses yoked four abreast, and in wet weather, it was quite usual for teams to be doubled or trebled to pull the heavy loads out of boggy country. It was understood that the limit was about fifty-six horses. Any more hooked to a wagon could seriously damage or break the draw rods. Carriers took great pride in their teams; many of the leaders wore dress harness covered with horse brasses, brass ornaments which are very popular now for house decorations.

Usually their wives and families travelled along with their husbands in a covered wagonette. This was done, one of the carrier’s wives told me, so that the wife could look after the money, as there was a shanty about every twenty miles along the road to entice the thirsty carriers to part with their cheques. The wives who lived in one of the towns would often find to their sorrow that there was little of the cheque left when the teams came through.

**Camel Strings Used**

In the driest areas of the west, camel strings were used extensively. It was remarkable just what could be packed on to these animals. Not only bales of wool were carried, but short (up to four feet) lengths
of bore casing and forty gallon petrol drums were also part of the "cargo." The loading of a camel is very important as, should the load be unevenly distributed, the camel would suffer a sore back and have to be rested, though stories of pieces of sheep skin sewn over the raw area were quite common. Wool bales were, of course, the happiest loading as they could be chosen of even weight and thus ensure a balanced load. A cow camel could carry six hundredweight, while a bull camel could lift ten. A bull camel lifted twenty coils of wire tied to his back to win a £50 wager for his Afghan owner, but the wire had to be removed while the camel was standing; his owner would not put him down so overloaded as there was great danger of his being injured.

There was always great jealousy between horse and bullock teamsters and there were many side wagers as to which were the stronger. The horses most often won, incidentally.

About 1914, motor lorries appeared on the roads. These so-called roads were still only tracks beaten hard by the hoofs of thousands of horse and bullock teams, but possible at least for more progressive transport. These lorries had solid tyres and the teamsters saw in them a great threat to their living. They did everything in their power to prevent the lorries getting through to their destination. They criss-crossed the road in boggy patches. They plugged the pipes beneath the roads at bore drain sections, so that the bore water would flood the road, and they tried every trick to drive the lorries off the roads.

However, as the lorries did not use grass or water, they were popular with the station owners who saw their first chance of receiving perishable goods in good order with these lorries, which could travel fairly fast by day and by night.

F. Lawson and the Avery Brothers were amongst the first to use motor trucks in Central Queensland, with J. Hetherington and others operating in the North West of the State, but pictures of their trucks look strange and small when compared with the huge road trains which are helping with the ever pressing work of opening up a still young country.

These small lorries, however, played a big part in improving the health of the Central Queenslanders. With the fresh food becoming available the scourge of beri-beri became far less prevalent.
The Aborigines

With the sudden occupation and stocking of the country, especially as it took place along the permanent water ways, the ways of the Aborigine were very upset. As the sheep and the cattle disturbed the natural game of the area, the natives naturally retaliated by finding beef and mutton a very good substitute. The white settlers, not recognising the reason for these incursions on to their precious flocks, used punitive measures to protect them and the relations between blacks and whites grew from bad to worse. Killings took place on both sides with the natives suffering the greatest.

At this time, the Native Police were extended to Western Queensland and stations were set up as far out as Thargomindah in the South West. Muchlandama Creek, near Boulia in the Cloncurry District, was the next outpost to the North and there were others in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

These outposts were manned by two white men and five or six native policemen. They were well mounted and armed with the best rifles of the time. The native troopers, coming from different districts, did not hesitate to shoot their sable brothers down when ordered to do so by their white officers. It is on record that some of these parties of police were killed in camp at night raids. One such killing occurred close to Selwyn, in the Cloncurry district, and another party was killed on the Dolga gold field north of Richmond.

Several men prominent in Queensland police history served in these outposts. Among them were William Edward Parry-Okeden, I.S.O., who began his career as an officer with the native police; Frederick Charles Urquhart, (4) who served with the native police

4. Frederic Charles Urquhart (1858-1935), police officer and administrator, was the son of Major F. D. Urquhart of the Royal Artillery. In 1875 he migrated to Queensland. In April 1882 he became a cadet officer of the Native Mounted Police. In the same year he was appointed sub-inspector and for the next eight years was in charge of a district embracing the Gulf country, Cape York Peninsula, and Thursday Island. In 1885 he led the punitive expedition of native mounted police against the Kalkadoons. Urquhart was twice wounded in affrays with aborigines. Once he was speared in the groin and rode 200 miles to have the wound treated and on another occasion he was pursuing natives on horseback when one of them rose up from behind an antbed and hurled a stone tomahawk, striking him on the thigh. In December 1898 he took charge of the Criminal Investigation Branch, Brisbane, and twice visited New Guinea on police duty for the Queensland Government. He was seconded to the charge of the special police district of Gatton, which was created after a triple murder there which has never been solved. In 1905 he became chief inspector at the Criminal Investigation Branch, and he held that position until he succeeded W. G. Cahill as Police Commissioner on 1 January 1917. Upon Urquhart’s retirement, in January 1921, he was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to be Administrator of the Northern Territory, and he held that position until 1926.—Ed.

When the Queensland Government decided to constitute a border patrol in south-western Queensland, Parry-Okeden was appointed officer-in-charge, and established his headquarters at Cunnamulla. He was appointed Under Colonial Secretary in 1889, and subsequently Principal Under Secretary. In 1895 he was made Commissioner of Police, a post he held until his retirement in 1905.
White Officer (sub-inspector O'Connor) and five native police troopers (sent from Queensland to assist to track Ned Kelly and his gang; 1867).
in the Cloncurry area and in the Cape York Peninsula; Inspector Johnstone, famous in North Queensland history after whom the Johnstone River is named.\(^5\)

The native Police Force was established by Frederick Walker, the explorer.\(^6\) Later he was commissioned by the Queensland Government and patrolled the Condamine and Burnett districts.

**Doctors in the Outback**

Strange as it may seem to-day, most of the outback townships in the early times had doctors and also many of the squatters were M.D.s. Nearly all the Western hospitals were started by public subscriptions and, while the equipment was at times crude, those pioneers were tough and the service seemed adequate. Six outstanding men come to mind for their selfless work for the people of the Inland: Dr. Harvison of Blackall, Dr. Arratta, O.B.E., of Muttaburra, Dr. Hill of Isisford, Dr. Wallace, Dr. Watson Brown of Longreach, and the late Dr. Fox of Charleville. But there were many, many others and such names as Shand of Charleville and Michod of Longreach will long be remembered affectionately by those

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5. Robert Arthur Johnstone (1843-1905), explorer and police inspector, a Victorian by birth, joined the Queensland Native Police in 1871, and rose to the rank of sub-inspector. He did a considerable amount of exploration in North Queensland, and it was on his advice that James Tyson and others occupied the rich land in the vicinity of the Tully and Murray Rivers. In 1872 he explored the Johnstone River, which was named after him in 1873 by G. E. Dalrymple, when, accompanied by Johnstone and a party of native troopers, he led an expedition by sea to explore the coast north of Cardwell. In 1876, in company with Alexander Douglas, Johnstone discovered and named the Barron River. Johnstone took part in 1876 in the founding of Cairns. He discovered the fresh water crocodile of North Queensland to which the scientific name *Crocodilus johnstoni* was given.

6. Frederick Walker (1807-66), explorer and officer of native police, was appointed to the Police Establishment in New South Wales in 1847 as a clerk. In 1848 he was made commandant of the Corps of Native Police on its formation. Walker was a good bushman, and he believed the troop would be valuable in tracking down criminals. In fact, it was used largely to control aborigines and in this connection, "Filibuster" Walker, as he was called, and his men acquired a reputation for ruthlessness. In 1854 Walker was suspended from the Native Police pending an inquiry into charges against him. The board of inquiry found him guilty, and he was dismissed as commandant in January 1855. However, he was subsequently employed by a group of Queensland squatters as commander of a small force of his own, comprising disbanded ex-troopers. This body was reported in 1858 to be interfering with the work of the official Native Constabulary and the government ordered it to be broken up. Walker was leader of one of the many expeditions which searched in 1861 for the lost explorers, Burke and Wills. The expedition made known a considerable area of valuable country. In 1864, Walker located, on behalf of the Queensland Government, a route for telegraph lines from the east coast westwards to the Norman and Albert Rivers. He died of fever at Floraville, near the Leichhardt River on 15 November, 1866. He is commemorated by Walker Creek, a name given by Landsborough to a stream in the north-west of Queensland.—Ed.
who were outback in their days. There were also a number of women doctors in those times and recently a woman joined the service of the Flying Doctor based in the North West. Just recently the Government appointed a flying surgeon who is in great demand throughout the West.

The Merino Sheep

It may be interesting to give an account of how the Merino Sheep came into the possession of King George III. A small lot of merino ewes was presented to a British Admiral by a Spanish Admiral when their ships met at sea. The export of merino sheep was prohibited by the Spanish Government and these merinos were supplied to the Spanish Fleet purely for rations. When the sheep reached England, Sir Joseph Banks recognised them as superior to the British breeds of sheep and secured them for the King. The King then was anxious to acquire rams of the same strain. When approached, the Spanish Ambassador stated that there was absolutely no chance of changing the Spanish law regarding the embargo and that was that. However, the Ambassador’s wife was very fond of a pair of cream horses that drew the Royal carriage and eventually she received a gift of a very beautiful pair, which were valued at £8,000, landed in Spain. Anxious to do something in return for such a handsome gift she approached the King of Spain and asked for a gift of rams for the King of England. How she got them remains a mystery, but it is thought she had to resort to a little sheep stealing and smuggling. The sheep were driven through Spain and France and shipped at Hamburg.

This is the account of the origin of the Royal British Merino Flock as told in the very early days by the New South Wales magazines.

By 1820, Macarthur had a flock of 2,000 sheep and a stud of 300 pure merinos. At that time, the total sheep in Eastern Australia amounted to about 100,000.

The Pastoral Industry has been one of great hardships and great courage. There have been three major financial depressions. Sheep, cattle and wool became valueless in the last century; sheep were boiled down for their tallow, for which there was a great demand before the days of gas lighting, while the wool was left to rot in the Gulf of Carpentaria and at Boulia.
This wool lay in the sheds where it had been shorn as it would not have paid the carriage to the world's markets.

In many cases cattle sent from the West in Queensland had to have cheques sent after them to pay for the droving, for, on being sold, they did not clear expenses.

Drought is always a foe to be reckoned with and, although it is the dry conditions which have made the Australian merino fleece so valuable, these same conditions take a great toll of the sheep.

Fires are a horror and follow good seasons with dreadful effects on the stock, on the precious trees and the grass and, at times, on human life. The worst of these fires was at Saltern Creek Station near the town of Barcaldine. Mr. Jones, the manager, and several of his men were burned to death. This was in 1918. Some years later, a number of men were caught in a fire near Boulia. The only survivor told the story to the Cobb and Co. coach driver who tried to help him, but he also collapsed and died.

It must not be taken from these pages that there is no credit side to the early life or to the present-day life on the western plains of Queensland. There is a fascination that men who have known it and left it hunger for. There is the comradeship that comes from loneliness. Men are very important to each other when they have to travel long miles to meet. The courage of women is appreciated and families grow up as families.

In fact, I should like to end with Paterson's words:

"The Bush has moods and changes as the season rise and fall and the men that love the Bushland are loyal through it all."

"Encyclopaedia of Life in West"

Points of interest covered in the paper were illustrated by a large map of the State.

The President, opening the discussion, expressed the gratitude of the Society for the extremely valuable paper by Mr. Towner which had been so capably read with appropriate expression and emphasis by Mrs. Bell. The story of the West, he said, was the least known story of all Queensland history. and the paper
would enable them to fill in many of the blanks that previously existed in the knowledge of the history of Western Queensland. The paper contained so much that in a special sense it was a little encyclopaedia of life in the West. He thought as he listened of all the trials and perils, the fevers and the sicknesses the pioneers of the West and North-West had endured. Some of the agents of these fevers which had plagued the pioneers were only now in the process of being investigated and elucidated, among them mosquitoes which carried the so-called malaria, encephalitis, and other diseases misnamed in the past. In this important work their own member Dr. Elizabeth Marks was prominent.

The President said he had thought also of the great boon of artesian water which had made possible the pastoral industry of the West; of the gradually awakened awareness in Australia and overseas of 15,000 miles of the richest mineral country in the world, including fissionable material that had made Australia potentially great. On the other side of the picture there was the history of the bad years, the droughts of 1869 and 1871, when people quite seriously talked about the "stupidity" of developing this type of country, and the "utter stupidity" of trying to grow wheat from New South Wales and elsewhere when it could be imported so easily from Chile and other South American countries. All these handicaps had been overcome and the story of the Western lands was a continual source of inspiration and a record of achievement.

Pioneers of the West

Mr. K. T. Cameron (hon. secretary), in moving a vote of thanks to the author of the paper and to Mrs. Bell, said the paper had taken his mind back to the days when Nat Buchanan and William Landsborough were riding over this beautiful country of the West where the Mitchell grass grew almost like wheat. Mr. Towner's father had arrived in the Barcoo district in 1878 with one of the early flocks of sheep from New South Wales, and the speaker's father had arrived in 1881, having brought Mr. J. W. Raven's horse stud from Dubbo, New South Wales. These horses travelled to Sydney by train and thence by ship to Gladstone, thence to Mr. Raven's property Albilbah, then called Talundilly. Albilbah was situated on the Barcoo River
thirty miles from Isisford. Talundilly, the first homestead, was some miles nearer Isisford. The horses travelled from Gladstone to Springsure and via the head of the Nogoa River and Blackall, then the main racing centre of the Central West.

Mr. Cameron said his father remained with the company for over fifty years, eventually becoming pastoral inspector. He kept until his death in 1938 diaries of his pastoral experiences with the company’s properties in North, Central-West, and South-West Queensland, and, in Western Australia. The trustee company who handled his father’s estate had these diaries pulped as so much waste material. He reported that when he arrived in the West in 1881 the district was prosperous. The local business people were handling plenty of money as the pastoralists were commencing to erect wire fences to hold their sheep instead of employing shepherds. Big 20,000 cubic yard tanks and dams were being constructed to provide permanent water for country distant from the main rivers. Cost of living was high in those days. One thing that was impressed on his memory was that a pair of spur rowellers, which even in these days sold for 1/6, cost at Isisford in the ’80s 10/6.

Mr. Cameron expressed regret that Mr. Towner, the author of the paper, could not be present that night. “He could” said Mr. Cameron, “have entertained us with the history of every gidyea tree in the West.”

Seconding the vote of thanks, Mr. J. W. Collinson described the settlement of the West as one of the epic stories of Queensland history.

Mrs. Mary G. A. Dickson said that her maternal grandfather had been a member of the 1858 expedition of A. C. Gregory and she had at her home maps and other records relating to that expedition.

Mr. Clem Lack said the Kalkadoons, to which reference had been made in the paper, were possibly the most aggressive and warlike of the aboriginal tribes of Queensland, not excepting the ferocious myalls of the Palmer Valley. They were practically the last of the tribes to submit to the white invaders of their territory, and were one of the few aboriginal tribes which stood up to the whites in what were more or less pitched battles between the spear and the Snider.
Place of Bowen Downs in Western History

Mr. C. G. Austin described the paper as the best for many years so far as the story of the pastoral industry in Queensland was concerned. It could be said that the history of Bowen Downs was also the history of the pastoral industry. It must never be forgotten, he said, that it was the Scottish-Australian Investment Company which supplied the money that enabled Bowen Downs to be taken up by Morehead, William Landsborough, Cornish, and Nat Buchanan, as partners with the Scottish Investment Company, in the Landsborough River Company. Landsborough had gone to London and convinced the directors of the Scottish Investment Company that they should invest in Queensland. Most of the people who put capital into this pastoral undertaking were small investors in Edinburgh. They were the same people who established the first station on the Albert River in the Gulf country, in the region called the Plains of Promise. Referring to the Kalkadoons, Mr. Austin said Snider bullets were still to be found in the neighbourhood of a creek, below Gregory Downs, where the Kalkadoons fought one of their battles with the white man. This creek was adjacent to a gibber ridge where the Kalkadoons split stones for flint heads for spears. Thousands of discarded flint heads were seen, evidently caused by the stone splitting unevenly.

Potent Powers of Rainstone

Relating how the aboriginal rainstone on display at Newstead House came into possession of the Society Mr. Austin said it had been brought to him one night in a sugar bag by a terrified aboriginal. He had paid the native 10/- for the wonderful stone which, when one sang over it, had the power to produce rain. Mr. Austin said he had tried the potency of the stone with success that was somewhat overwhelming. Rain started to fall at 3 a.m. on a Monday and continued incessantly for three weeks.

The entire paper, said Mr. Austin, was a Cook's tour of West and North-Western Queensland and much of the data on the origin of western towns would enable the Society to fill several big gaps in its records.

Mr. Arthur Laurie (Senior Vice President) recalled that the late Sub-inspector F. C. Urquhart who had led the punitive expedition against the Kalka-
doons, had been a member of the Society. The expedition was the sequel to the killing in ambush of Marcus de la Poer Beresford, officer in charge of Native Police at Cloncurry, and four of his black troopers, and the murder shortly afterwards of J. W. Powell, part owner of Calton Hills station, and some prospectors and cattlemen. Urquhart was saved from death on this expedition by one of his native troopers who intercepted and shot a Kalkadoon warrior as he was about to kill Urquhart with a spear thrust.

The vote of thanks was unanimously carried.

**Presentation to Junior Members**

A pleasant duty which fell to the lot of the President was the presentation on behalf of the Council and members of the Society of the volume *Science as History* by Heinz Gartman to two junior members of the Society, the Misses Elizabeth Howard Gill and Roisin Ann Hirschfeld who had achieved highly meritorious passes in the Senior University examination. Miss Gill obtained 9 A's, and Miss Hirschfeld 8 A's.

In his remarks the President said that one of the outstanding things the Society had done was the establishment of the Junior Group of members, in the formation of which the honorary secretary (Mr. Cameron) and two or three other members of the Council had been the leading figures. The Council of the Society had decided to honour two members of the group, the Misses Gill and Hirschfeld, for the scholastic success they had achieved. Members of the Council had considered Gartman's book as the most useful and appropriate gift with which to express their appreciation of these two young ladies. The Society wished them every success in their future careers.

The Misses Gill and Hirschfeld expressed their gratitude and thanks to the Society in appropriate and graceful terms.