Lectures on North Queensland History

No. 5

James Cook University
LECTURES ON NORTH QUEENSLAND HISTORY

NO.5
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noel Loos</td>
<td>Koiki Mabo: Mastering Two Cultures: A Personal Perspective</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.J. Dalton</td>
<td>The Death of John Gilbert</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Hunt</td>
<td>Industrial Conflict at Mount Coolon, 1935</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Gray</td>
<td>Bumping Against the Ceiling: Female Teachers in Queensland State Primary Schools 1920-1970</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Bianco</td>
<td>From Linen to Embroidered Hessian - Italian Women Migrants in the Mossman District between the Two World Wars</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Smith</td>
<td>The Aramac Tramway</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Smith</td>
<td>&quot;Money will force a Railway anywhere...&quot;: Construction of the Cairns-Kuranda railway line, 1886-1892</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Thompson</td>
<td>Struggling for Relevance at Lockhart River</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon J. Warby</td>
<td>The Lockhart Catalyst: Building St James Church at the Old Site, 1953</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neville Green</td>
<td>The Mission as a Total Institution: Forrest River Mission under Ernest Gribble</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Halse</td>
<td>The Reverend Ernest Gribble: a Successful Missionary?</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on the Contributors</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illustrations

1. Koiki Mabo teaching students about Torres Strait Islander culture at James Cook University, c.1975 8
2. Ample Opportunities for Ambush 26
3. Heads of Mitchell River Spears 26
4. The Lock of an 1843 Muzzleloader 33
5. Official Opening, Aramac Tramway, July 1913 114
6. The first train crossing Aramac Creek to enter Aramac, September 1913 114
7. Reception for the Governor, April 1888 125
8. "Material to spoil" 130
9. Blasting of overhanging rock at Stoney Creek 132
10. Plan for proposed timber bridge spanning Stoney Creek 132
11. Interior of a tunnel 133
12. Relocation of the Stoney Creek bridge 135
13. Workers at a tunnel opening 138
14. Ross Keith Matthews 172
15. St James Church, Lockhart River Mission N.Q. 188
16. Women stripping and rolling pandanus leaves while others weave the pandanus mat which covered the sanctuary ceiling above the altar 188
17. St James Church, Lockhart River Mission N.Q. 1955 192
18. St James Church 1996 192
19. People awaiting transport to the New Site after clearing the grass around the church, 1978 192
20. St James Church 1976 192
21. Yarrabah Mission 222
22. Murragun Settlement, Yarrabah 224
23. The staff of Yarrabah Mission, c.1907 224
24. Rev. Gribble with a newly wed couple at Forrest River Mission 246
25. Rev. Gribble at the Rectory of St George's Mission Palm Island 246

Maps

1. The Central and North-West Queensland Railway System 106
Foreword

The first volume of *Lectures in North Queensland History* appeared some 22 years ago: the first publication undertaken by the Department of History (as it was then). All papers in that volume had been given initially as lectures by research students and staff members on the basis of their own research. They appealed strongly to undergraduates enrolled in a course on Australian history which included a discrete component on North Queensland history. A second volume of a like nature and origin appeared in 1975 to capitalise on the success of 1974. Before the next two were issued (in 1978 and 1984) teaching programs had been reorganised. Most of the papers in those two had never been delivered literally as lectures, but had an earlier life as conference or seminar papers. In other respects all four have similar characteristics, particularly in ranging over a diversity of subjects.

Within the period during which the first four volumes of *Lectures* were published, three volumes appeared consisting of papers by different authors on more specialised subjects. In 1978 Henry Reynolds edited *Race Relations in North Queensland*. K.H. Kennedy edited two volumes of *Readings in North Queensland Mining History* in 1980 and 1982.

In the twelve years since the fourth volume of *Lectures* appeared, four other volumes of collected papers have been published. In 1991 Roy Macleod and Donald Denoon edited *Health & Healing in Tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea*. A new substantially changed edition of *Race Relations in North Queensland* came out in 1993, and so too did *Discovering Australasia: essays on Philippine-Australian Interactions*, edited by Reynaldo C. Ileto and Rodney Sullivan. A fifth volume came closer to the *Lectures* pattern in the diversity of its subject matter, but over a third of its contents were on regions other than North Queensland: *Peripheral Visions: essays on Australian Regional and Local History*, edited by B.J. Dalton.

In common with the four previous volumes in the Lectures series, the present work comprises papers on diverse subjects. They differ greatly in scale: from an analysis of an encounter which lasted perhaps "three or four minutes" to a critique of a career extending over sixty years and more than half of the 20th century. In time they are equally diverse: from 1845 to 1992. Two of the eleven papers deal with women; two with railways; one
with industrial conflict; six with aspects of Aboriginal-European relations to the present day. Of these, four are on the history of missions to the Aborigines. This has been an area scarcely touched by academic historians until very recently. It is symptomatic of this neglect that, of fifty-four papers in the first four volumes of *Lectures*, only three are on missions: fortuitously, one in each of volumes II, III and IV. N.A. Loos, "A Conflict of Faiths: Aboriginal Reactions to Christian Missions in North Queensland" (No.II (1975) pp.47-56), Paul Smith, "'He Who Pays the Piper...': the Crisis of Authority during Yarrabah's Foundation Era" (No.III (1978) pp.215-32), John Maguire, "Catholic Missions to the Aborigines in North Queensland" (No.IV pp.54-72).

It is still more striking in theses completed in the Department. Of 32 PhD theses, 9 MA and 99 BA Honours theses, one only has studied a mission station: Paul Smith, *Like a Watered Garden. Yarrabah, 1892-1909: the foundation era* (BA Hons 1980).

This volume is the 49th to be published by the Department. Like our previous publications, it was typeset by the office staff and printed and bound by the University Printery. Relatively swift and inexpensive, this method of production makes it feasible to publish works which commercial publishers think too limited in appeal to be profitable to them, and to offer them to readers at attractive prices. All our previous publications have reached hundreds of readers throughout Australia, as well as some in other countries. It is hoped that this one will also be widely read.

B.J. Dalton
General Editor

Brian Dalton, MA (Canterbury), DPhil (Oxford), DLitt (JCU): 1924-1996
Preface

Brian Dalton hand-drafted this Foreword only days before his sudden death on 9 September 1996. He was only 72, and his colleagues always insisted that his characteristic editorial squiggles would perplex the most adept word-processor keyboard operators for twenty years to come. He would have refined the text before publication, if only because he was proud of the research emanating from his former Department, always conscientious that the Foreword had to do justice to the products of a research school in which he had been so influential and in which he had given generously a guiding hand and constructive criticism.

Just as Emeritus Professor Dalton counted the volumes he produced after his retirement as Foundation Professor of History in 1989 - this was the forty-ninth - twenty-seven appearing in less than seven years, his colleagues detected in his urgency to record North Queensland History, a style which characterised his Forewords. It was a reflection of the man: give credit to the authors; tell the reader in advance what is in the volume; urge greater inquiry about the richness of our regions, its history and heritage.

Brian Dalton's use and respect for the English language is demonstrated in his Forewords and his own writings. He had a passion for the punctuation marks of colon and semi-colon. Sometimes the style seemed terse and read rather abruptly. But he never wasted words, and accordingly employed this vehicle. When one re-reads Brian Dalton's prose and works, one will gain an appreciation of his talents and gifts of which so many students have been beneficiaries.

The fiftieth volume from the Department of History and Politics will appear in 1997, thirty years after Brian Dalton committed himself to North Queensland, almost twenty-five years after he conceived a publication's program. It will contain as a Foreword an obituary and eulogy, succinct and appropriate, for which I make no apology.

Dr Anne Smith
Assistant Editor and Friend