The Endeavour River and Cooktown

by

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The Endeavour River in Cape York Peninsula shares with Botany Bay in New South Wales the distinction of having had an extended visit by Captain James Cook in H.M.S. "Endeavour" during the year 1770. But whilst the pause of one week in Botany Bay was to permit the naturalists in the ship's company to go ashore each day to examine and collect natural history specimens, the stay in the Endeavour River occupied a period of seven weeks of encampment on the shore. The visit to the Endeavour River thus marked the establishment of the first English "settlement" on what later became Australian soil. Certainly the settlement had no part in the plans of Captain Cook but was forced upon him when his misadventure on the coral reef some forty miles to the south east on 11 June 1770 made it necessary to careen the ship for repairs.

Published works on Captain Cook's voyages contain a copy of his chart of the mouth of the Endeavour River. It shows the spots on the river bank where camps were set up, stores were stacked, and the ship was beached for repair. Creeks from which water supplies were procured are also marked. Notwithstanding the passage of two hundred years since Cook sketched his chart, and the rise and decline of a busy port and town over the area, it is still quite easy to pick, within a few yards, the spots he marked; while the watercourses he shows still flow in the same places, and still carry water.

Cook reports the harbour was somewhat small and had a rather shallow bar at the entrance, but otherwise was well adapted to his needs. He was, however, not greatly impressed by the surrounding country and thought only limited areas of arable land existed along the upper reaches of the river. The ship's company first named the inlet Charco Harbour because of the frequent use by the Aboriginal inhabitants of a ground like "charco"; this was thought to be an expression of their astonishment. The river was named Endeavour River by Captain Cook after his ship had successfully cleared the river and resumed its voyage northward on 5 August 1770.

Cook's experiences in the Barrier Reef waters around this latitude did not encourage early attempts to settle Cape York Peninsula when England decided to develop the Australian colony towards the close of the eighteenth century. However, by the second decade of the nineteenth century exploration and hydrographic survey of northern coastal waters were being systematically undertaken. Lieutenant Phillip Parker King in H.M. Cutter "Mermaid" was engaged in this work and is the next man after Cook to report officially on the Endeavour River. He was there from 28 June to 12 July 1819 and reported having "occupied the very place that Captain Cook used". He even found beside his tent a few coals Cook had left behind.

In 1865 Endeavour River was again investigated, this time by John Jardine, Police Magistrate and Government Resident at Somerset. On instruction from the Colonial Secretary of Queensland he made a detailed inspection of the surrounding country with a view to its suitability for settlement to support the establishment of a port at the river mouth. His inspection was made during September-October of 1865—the dry season of what had been an exceptionally dry year—and he reported lack of fresh water round the port site to be a serious handicap. However, he considered its location, about half way between Somerset and Cardwell and close to the inner steamer passage, to be an excellent reason for its development as a port on the Torres Strait shipping route to England. Furthermore he thought the headwaters of the river contained good pastoral country.

A few years later a much more urgent reason for a port at the Endeavour River developed. In 1872 William Hann carried out an overland exploration journey from Maryvale Station into Cape York Peninsula. During his travels he discovered and named the Palmer River after Sir Arthur Palmer, Premier of Queensland. In this river he found traces of gold. James Venture Mulligan with a party of prospectors followed up this hint and found payable gold on the Palmer early in 1873. A rush of prospectors from the Etheridge and Croydon Fields took place and the government realised it had an urgent problem of port development on its hands. G. E. Dalrymple was commissioned to investigate all the rivers and harbours on the coast between Cardwell and the Endeavour River.

He reached the Endeavour in his investigations on 24 October 1873. Hard on his heels, on 25 October, the S.S. "Leichhardt" arrived in the river with a Gold Commissioner and staff, a Roads Engineer, Mounted Police, and some ninety-six prospectors, all in a hurry to reach the new gold-field. The government had found itself in the position of being unable to wait for Dalrymple's report. It had to act on the information it already possessed concerning the Endeavour River.

When Dalrymple left Endeavour River aboard the S.S. "Leichhardt" on 31 October he was able to report "a lively little seaport gleaming with white tents and noisily busy with workmen, where a week before we had found a silent wilderness". Lieutenant Connor, R.N. was busy surveying the harbour, and A. C. MacMillan, the Roads Engineer, had already set out to blaze the track to the Palmer. The new port was already an established fact. So rapidly was work pushed forward that Howard St. George, the Gold Commissioner, was able to open his office on the Palmer River gold-field on 14 November 1873.

The new township at the port was named Cookstown. The name appears in the Registers of Births and Deaths at Cardwell, to which registry centre the new town was assigned. The name Cookstown was used up to 1 June 1874, but after that date the "s" was dropped. On 1 July 1874 a new registry office was set up at Cooktown and registrations of births, deaths and marriages were made at Cooktown.

In its early months the Palmer River produced many rich finds of alluvial gold. Reports of this attracted prospectors from all over the world. Many small ships arrived at Cooktown under charter with parties of prospectors. The Australian Steam Navigation Company's coastal service made Cooktown its northern terminal port. British India Steam Navigation Company and other shipping lines from Europe via Torres Straits made Cooktown a regular port of call. All the China boats called at close intervals. Every ship landed a capacity load of prospectors. Chinese were the largest racial group to be attracted; estimates have placed the number of Chinese at about 30,000 as against about 10,000 white prospectors. Not all the Chinese were prospectors; some were business people who indentured many Chinese coolies for their pack trains as well as to prospect for them. Others established gardens to supply the

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fruit and vegetables required by the white population of both Cooktown and the gold-field, and to grow rice for their compatriots. Wild rice still growing in many of the swamps and lagoons of the Cooktown district is a legacy of the Chinese gardeners.

With large numbers of people constantly moving through Cooktown on their way to and from the gold-field, the largest business activity in Cooktown was accommodation houses. At the peak of gold-field activity the town of Cooktown contained thirty-three licensed hotels in addition to boarding houses. More than this number of country hotels and road houses were strung out along the roads to the gold-field. Eight to ten miles was generally regarded as a day's travel for waggons and teams so the road houses sprang up over the whole length of the various roads. Two country hotels in the district—the Peninsula at Laura, and the Lions Den at Helenvale—are typical of these old-time pubs. They are the only existing representatives of the era. The many large hotels in the main street of Cooktown during its first two or three decades gave the town a stable and solid air of affluence, which was further enhanced by the large merchant premises of Burns Philp and Company built in brick; and the two-storied brick and concrete building erected by the Queensland National Bank in 1890 at a cost of about £25,000.

Cooktown was the first port of call for English shipping services on the north about route and so received many English migrants. This may be the reason behind its adoption of English customs. One of these was the appointment of town criers. Periodically the minutes of the Municipal Council record the granting of permission to some person “to act as bell-man” or “to ring”. At various times W. Williams, J. A. Daniels, W. Fane, and S. Palmer were granted permission to ring. Fane particularly seems to have taken the job seriously as he advertised regularly in the local newspapers—“Look out for Bill Fane, the bell-ringer and bill-poster. Address, West Coast Hotel.”. This was at a time when Cooktown had three newspapers. Stone pitching, curbing, and channelling have always been features of Cooktown streets—another English practice. In Cooktown this was mainly the work of a Cornishman, Tom Pascoe. The stones were split from local granite boulders, plentiful on the slopes of Grassy Hill and its spurs. Curbing and channelling laid with these granite slabs between 1885 and 1900 are still in perfect condition. The ruling price for laying this was 6 shillings per yard. And it is recorded in the Council minutes that two men cut 105 yards of curbing and 35 yards of pitching stones in three weeks at a total cost of £15.4.0.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Established at an early stage in the history of Queensland as an independent colony, Cooktown was among the largest and most influential of the provincial towns. It was created a municipality on 3 April 1876—one of the earliest country towns to be so designated. At this stage in its history the town had its own representative in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. Its resident population according to the 1876 Census was 2185.

A fine wooden building at the corner of Charlotte and Adelaide Streets was built by the municipality for its Council Chambers. This was burned down on 12 December 1892. Plans for its rebuilding in brick were prepared, but the general financial crisis of the period caused the Council to shelve the project. The new Chambers were never built. Instead, the Post and Telegraph building adjoining the burned-out Chambers was acquired for £600 and became the Council Chambers. It houses the present Council offices.
When rural local government legislation was introduced in Queensland in 1879, the Daintree Divisional Board, with headquarters in Cooktown, was set up to govern the country areas surrounding the town of Cooktown, while the Palmer gold-field area was incorporated in the Hann Divisional Board with headquarters at Maytown, principal town on the gold-field. Divisional boards were the fore-runners of the present shire councils throughout the State. These two boards were amalgamated in January 1919 into the Shire of Cook with headquarters at Cooktown.

The status of the municipal council was altered to town council in April 1903. It retained its independence from the divisional boards and the amalgamated shire until about 1930, when it united to bring town and country alike under one shire authority of Cook, with the town council's office becoming the Cook shire office. Financial difficulties in the shire in recent years have led to the replacement of shire management in 1958 by an elected council with administration by a Local Government Administrator.

COMMUNICATIONS

The track blazed by A. C. MacMillan in October 1873 between the Endeavour River and the Palmer River carried the early rush of prospectors. With few deviations it shortly became the waggon road over which all supplies of food, building materials, tools, machinery, and other requirements, were transported by bullock and horse teams hauling drays and wagons. The road distance between the seaport at Cooktown and Maytown on the gold-field was about 135 miles 10 although the direct distance was only about 76 miles 10. The extremely rugged nature of the country within a thirty-mile radius of Maytown necessitated a wide deviation to obtain gradients suited to wheeled traffic. Foot traffic was able to negotiate the rugged country with less deviation and used a track through a rough gorge known as Hell's Gate which shortened the route by almost fifty miles. This was the nearest point to the Palmer gold-field that the railway ever reached 11. The last fifty miles or so had to be travelled by coach or on horse-back, and goods still had to be transported over this stretch by dray or waggon up to the final closing of the Palmer field.

The railway was not a profitable one even though it had a monopoly of transportation business in the district. During the early years of operation, while gold-mining was still flourishing, it did show a small excess of income over expenditure. But as mining declined so did the profitability of the railway.
Unfortunately no large alternative industry existed. Much of the surrounding country appeared suitable only for grazing, with a limited carrying capacity, resulting in division into large properties with scanty development and sparse population. The remoteness of the district from centres of large population inhibited close settlement on the better land for small crop farming. And the same remoteness from markets prevented the profitable establishment of secondary industry. Under these circumstances the railway had no alternative to mining from which business could be expected on a scale necessary to make the line remunerative. It was therefore closed down in January 1903.

The Cooktown Municipal Council made efforts to save it. After a period of negotiation with the Government the line was leased to the Council on 14 September 1903. By exercising strict economies and increasing charges the Council was able to show a slight profit over the period of nine months during which it operated the line. The railway reverted to the Government on 30 June 1904 with the agreement that its active operation would be maintained. But progressively over the years the services had to be decreased, the steam engines and rolling stock reduced in number and finally abandoned altogether in favour of more economically operated rail motors. Rather appropriately the first rail motor to be put into operation on the line was named Captain Cook. It was a Napier motor car converted to a rail vehicle, and gave excellent service over the years 1916 to 1930, travelling some 80,000 miles during that period.

In 1883 J. W. Bradfield surveyed a route for a telegraph line from Cooktown to Cape York. This was to take off from the then existing Palmer Line at Blacksill (now known as Fairview) and follow as near as possible the main watersheds through the peninsula. The line was built over his survey for the first two hundred miles, but from there to Cape York moved some eight to ten miles west of his track. It was completed and opened for business in 1887. Connection was also continued southward from Palmerville into the State telegraph system. In 1913 a radio telegraph station in the Overseas Telecommunication system was opened at Cooktown on a seaward spur of Grassy Hill.

Cooktown thus had rapid communication with outside centres from comparatively early times. But strangely it was not until 1919 that residents of Cooktown could speak with one another by telephone. A trunk line service following the telegraph line route was instituted in 1920. This served until the demolition of the Cooktown railway in 1962 provided the Postmaster-General's Department with a convenient source of termite-proof poles—the rails from the permanent way. A new trunk line was built with these along the route of the Mulligan Highway and opened for use in 1964.

Air transportation came to Cooktown during the early 1930s. By 1935 Tom McDonald was operating a regular twice weekly service between Cairns and Cooktown. On 28 October in that year his service commenced carrying mails on a regular basis. The landing field used by him was the Cooktown race-course, and his aircraft on the service were Puss Moths. What became known as the town aerodrome was built on a saltpan beyond the race-course in 1937 and McDonald was then able to use larger Dragon aircraft carrying eight passengers. On 3 May 1938 W. R. Carpenter & Company commenced a passenger and air mail service between Sydney and Rabaul, with Cooktown as the night stop-over port. This service was operated with flying boats which set down in Cooktown Harbour. War time demands and incapable of the necessary expansion; so a new field was established about eight miles out of town on the northern side of the Endeavour River. It has since become Cooktown's civil field.

CULTURAL ASPECTS

From a comparatively early stage in Cooktown's life schools were established in the town and on the gold-field. The gold-field school at Maytown was the usual small country school, which was sufficient to cater for the comparatively small number of families in Maytown; in spite of the large population on the field it was essentially men's country.

In Cooktown the state school was divided into a girls and infants' school and a boys' school, with separate buildings staffed by separate teachers under individual head teachers. These functioned until the 1907 cyclone demolished the boys' school. The girls' school was then enlarged to accommodate both girls and boys. The old building served until 1969 when a modern style school building was erected to take its place.

The town also had a convent school. An order of teaching sisters migrated from Ireland to Cooktown and set up St. Mary's convent on 24 June 1886. Its headquarters was a large brick and granite building adjacent to the presbytery of the Bishop of Cooktown. The sisters set up their school within the same grounds, establishing both primary and secondary sections. It attracted pupils from all over North Queensland, from New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, and was well regarded as a seat of learning. Closed down when evacuation of Cooktown became desirable during the Second World War, the convent building became American troop headquarters for a period. After some twenty years of semi-abandonment the building has now been deeded to the National Trust of Queensland which is restoring it and converting it to a James Cook Memorial Museum in this Cook Bi-centenary Year. Cooktown's historical relics have been preserved over the years firstly at its School of Arts, then at its state school, and finally in its Historical Museum building which had been previously Cooktown's railway station.
THE ABORIGINES

Early explorers of the Endeavour River appear to have found the Aborigines of the area peaceable enough. During the period of Captain Cook's stay they were at first very shy, but as they were apparently not molested by Cook's men they did not show any hostile intentions, even though they had ample opportunities. The one incident that did occur just before the "Endeavour" departed seems to have been the result of a misunderstanding. However, the arrival of prospectors and native police in the district changed the situation rapidly. Many of these people had been used to dealing with more war-like tribes and felt the only good black was a dead one. They acted accordingly. Many too, were the dregs of civilization who practised murder as a pastime. So the Aborigines who escaped shooting soon started to retaliate. But their bush-craft and knowledge of the country were no match for the prospectors' rifles. They were soon reduced to a miserable remnant more or less forced to hang round the fringes of settlement to exist. They became starved and diseased, and attempts were made to have them moved from town to the northern side of the Endeavour River where they could be taught the rudiments of agriculture in the hope they could support themselves.

At this time a Moravian missionary brother, Fleirl, came along and established an Aboriginal mission station at Cape Bedford. This was in 1886. Rev. Schwartz came as his assistant shortly afterwards. He was a very young man but stayed for the remainder of his life with the mission as its superintendent. During his lifetime the mission headquarters was moved to four different sites on the large Aboriginal reserve. It is now situated at Hopevale.

MINERAL PRODUCTION

Gold was the source of Cooktown's rise to prosperity. The Palmer field was very rich while it lasted, both as an alluvial field and a reefing field. The recorded production of gold to the end of the year 1937 from the Cook Mining District was 1,471,701 ounces, 1,333,113 ounces of which came from the Palmer. Little has been won since. The estimated value of this gold was in excess of £6 million. However, this was only the production registered at the Gold Warden's office. The Chinese miners were notably reticent about the gold they recovered from their claims, and were expert at evading the regulations regarding the declaration of gold. A large additional amount must be added to these figures to obtain an approximation of the richness of the Palmer field.

In common with most mining fields in North Queensland the Palmer field is rumoured to have been abandoned with payable gold still in the bottom of the mines. It is claimed that the nature of the country and the inefficiency of the pumping machinery caused the mines to flood before they could be worked out. Several local companies spent large amounts of money attempting to test the truth of the belief, but they were unable to beat the water. However, Cedric Barnes, who made

Court house, Cooktown. (By courtesy of the Oxley Memorial Library)
the last attempt on the Louisa Mine in 1939, did pump it out and extended the bottom workings. He found gold there but not of sufficient value to offset the costs of obtaining it.

When the first flush of gold production began to wane tin was discovered in another part of the district, much nearer to Cooktown on the headwaters of the Annan River. This was in 1885 when tin-mining in the Herberton district was attracting much attention to the value of this metal. The Cooktown tin-field has been entirely alluvial and has been worked consistently from 1885 to the present time. A few claims taken up in 1885 and still producing the ore are still dredging and sluicing companies have operated on an extensive scale in addition to the numerous lone tin-miners working single-handed on small claims. Some £13 million to £2 million worth of tin has come from the Cooktown tin-field. In the world of tin-miners Rosville, Mount Povery, Mount Romeo, Big Tableland, Mount Amos, Shipton's Plat and others are well-known tin areas on the Cooktown field. The current upsurge in mining throughout Australia has brought mineral exploration parties from many of Australia's large mining companies into the district. Extensive exploration has taken place in the tin-field area and a lesser amount in the gold-field area, but no active development has yet followed.

MARINE INDUSTRIES

Cooktown was only on the fringe of the pearling industry. Pearlers used the port with some degree of regularity during its first thirty or forty years but the base of operations was centred more on Torres Strait. Much the same position applied with trochus shell, with only one or two operators making Cooktown their base.

Beche-de-mer gathering was an early marine industry in the area. In Dalrymple's report of October 1873 he records a call by the S.S. "Leichhardt" at Three Isles to pick up twenty tons of beche-de-mer from the fishing station established on one of these islands. In 1879-1881 Messrs Watson and Fuller had a beche-de-mer station operating from a headquarters on Lizard Island. During the later year, while Watson and Fuller were away at Night Island some distance to the northward in connection with their business, Lizard Island was invaded by Aborigines from the mainland. After they had killed one Chinese servant, wounded the second one, and threatened Mrs Watson, she felt it wise to leave the island. With her infant son, Ferrier, and the wounded Chinaman she escaped in a ship's boat. After some days drifting they landed on an island without water and eventually died of thirst on the island. When the bodies were found some months later and returned to Cooktown for burial every effort was made in Cooktown to participate in honouring the courageous woman who had died so tragically. Subsequently a fine memorial to her memory was erected by the people of Cooktown in the main street.

Fishing has operated spasmodically out of Cooktown but lack of refrigeration and market facilities in the port has prevented any serious development. Prawn fishing had a brief period of activity during 1968 and 1969, being catered for by refrigerated road transport which met the ships at the port. Whether this will develop into a permanent industry for Cooktown remains to be proved and depends on the permanency of prawn beds in the vicinity. On the whole marine industries have not proved very stable in the Cooktown area, nor very profitable in terms of support to a town in vital need of stable industry for its development.

AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL

The Jardine brothers' overland droving journey from Rockhampton to Somerset, at the tip of Cape York Peninsula, in 1864-1865 marked the beginning of grazing development in the peninsula. Over the following twenty-five years most of the suitable land throughout the peninsula, and particularly in the vicinity of Cooktown, was taken up on grazing tenure for the pasturage of cattle. Since minimal improvements were carried out the selections were large to permit cattle to survive on the natural pastures. Most were operated with a small indigenous Aboriginal labour force. Some did not have even a white owner or overseer in residence on the property. It is therefore no cause for wonder that the grazing industry did little to forward the development of Cooktown or the Cook District. However, current developments, such as the introduction of new and better pasture grasses and legumes, the development of water resources, and the introduction of new breeds of cattle better suited to tropical conditions, together with the infusion of large capital resources, are revolutionising the grazing industry in the Cook District.

Small crop growing and agricultural activity started early in the life of Cooktown. Land along the watercourses, even in suburban Cooktown itself, was cultivated by Chinese as market gardens. Agricultural crops for feed for the large number of horses and bullocks used in the transportation system of early Cooktown and district provided a use for the larger areas of arable land along the valleys of the Endeavour and Annan Rivers, providing a living for the people who settled this land. At this early time close settlement of land was provided for as far out as McIvor River, but was hampered very considerably by the hostility of the Aborigines.

The opening of rail communication between Cooktown and Laura in 1888 caused considerable reduction in the number of beasts needed for transportation, with corresponding reduction in demand for stock feed. Many farmers turned their attention to fruit growing and many excellent citrus orchards were established. Indeed, Cooktown citrus became known for its outstanding flavour. Coffee was grown by at least one enterprising farmer on an extensive basis. He processed and packed his produce for retail sale. Since about 1930 cotton and peanuts have been grown extensively, and tobacco on a smaller scale. In very recent times the production of pasture grass and legume seeds has given good results. The climate is ideal for seed growing and maturing, with the large scale trend to pasture improvement practices on grazing properties has opened up an extensive market for seed. But, although many agricultural and horticultural crops have been proved successful in growth and production in the Cooktown area, lack of local markets and high costs of exporting to distant markets have militated against economic success.

TIMBER

Rain-forest land in the Cooktown tin-field area has been noted for its red cedar. This beautiful timber was used very extensively as a building timber in Cooktown's old homes. The old hotel buildings were sheathed with red cedar walls. Stair-cases and all the furniture were constructed of red cedar by skilled cabinet-makers. Most buildings on the tin-fields were constructed of pit-sawn red cedar planks. And the same kind of timber was used to construct miles of fluming to carry water through the bush to tin claims.

This and other cabinet and building timbers have been harvested for milling at timber mills established at Shipton's Flat and in Cooktown itself. These have been closed for ten years or more but a plywood mill still operates at Bloomfield River some forty miles to the south. And Hopevale Mission still operates a timber mill for its own building needs.

Hardwood forest areas round Cooktown contain much iron-wood—a very durable and solid timber immune from termite attack. Railway sleepers of this timber were supplied from Cooktown to the Railway Department for use in some sections of the North Coast railway line. They were also used quite extensively in the permanent way of the Cooktown railway after softer timbers had been decimated by termites.

Sandalwood harvesting for export to Asian countries was carried on extensively round the turn of the century. This small tree used to grow plentifully in most parts of Cape York Peninsula extending to south of Cooktown. At the time it was in such demand stumps, roots, and even chips were valuable. Hugh Gillett and Harry Edmundson were the chief sandalwood dealers. They supplied agents in many parts of the peninsula.
with teams of pack-horses to gather and bring the wood to depots they set up at convenient shipping points. Aborigines were used extensively in locating the sandalwood stands and were provided with tomahawks to cut the timber and bring it in. Sandalwood gathering appears to have provided a living for many men who were unlucky in mineral prospecting. The whole area was combed thoroughly before 1920 and after that the industry lapsed for want of further supplies of sandalwood trees. Regeneration of the species has been slow.

WATER, FIRE, AND CYCLONE

As the port for the Palmer gold-field Cooktown developed into a comparatively large town. Strangely, for a town of its size it has never had a reticulated water supply. As early as 21 February 1884 the Municipal Council initiated moves to have the Government Hydraulic Engineer, Mr J. B. Henderson, investigate water supply schemes. In June of the same year his report was received and approved by Council. The scheme favoured was estimated to cost £21,000, but an application for a loan of that amount was refused by the Government, which made a counter offer of £10,500. As the Council could not raise the additional finance the scheme was dropped. But periodically over the following eighty-five years water supply proposals have again been put forward, without positive results. In the meantime town residents depend upon tanks and wells.

Lack of plentiful water has resulted in two serious fires in Cooktown. The first, on 7 August 1875, destroyed eight stores and a bank in the main section of the town, which at that period was close to the harbour. Since the gold-field and town were booming then rebuilding was effected rapidly. The second fire, in 1919, burned out the whole of the business block in the centre section of the main street. This included the large brick store of Burns Philp & Company and the large New Guinea Hotel, together with two halls and sundry business premises. The town at that period was suffering a recession, so rebuilding was not carried out.

Two severe cyclones have left their mark on Cooktown also. That on 18-19 January 1907 was estimated to have caused £20,000 damage. The second, on 10 February 1949, caused probably more damage because many buildings were weak from insufficient maintenance, and collapsed completely. Rebuilding of many was not attempted as the town was still in a serious decline. The sparse and scattered appearance of the town at the present time is the direct result of these fires and cyclones.

THE FUTURE

What is Cooktown’s future? It appears difficult to forecast. Certain it is that a spirit of optimism prevails amongst the residents. The town too has an air of activity that has been lacking for many years. New buildings are being erected and old ones renovated. Land is difficult to acquire, except at premium prices.

Activities in this bi-centenary year include a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Their Royal Highnesses Prince Philip and Princess Anne. Her Majesty will open the James Cook Historical Museum. Later in the year, on the actual bi-centenary date, Captain Cook and the “Endeavour” will again arrive in the river.

Will the occasion usher in a period of greater stability and progress for this historic port?
REFERENCES

1. J. C. Beaglehole, ed. — The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, (4 Vols.), The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771, Vol. I. Cambridge, Hakluyt Society, 1955. pp. 347-348. "...I went my self and buoy'd the Channel which I found very narrow and the harbour much smaller than I had been told but very convenient for our purpose".

2. Ibid. pp. 360-366. The only reference to "Charco" in this context is in footnote 1 on page 366, which quotes Hicks's journal "Moored in Charco Harbour".

3. Police Magistrate, Somerset to Colonial Secretary, 10 Oct 1865. Q.S.A. COL/A 73. In-letter No. 3221 of 1865.


6. These figures are difficult to verify. Other estimates seem to range from 10,000 Europeans to 15,000 Chinese in 1875, (H. Holthouse. — River of Gold. Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1967, p. 98), to 15,000 Europeans to 20,000 Chinese, figures quoted in:—
   or to 25,000 Europeans to 30,000 Chinese in:—
   The whole problem is what area one is considering when speaking of European/Chinese population, just Cooktown or the whole Palmer district.


