

THE NORTH COAST



ON THE MAP, regional unity seems clear. Boundaries are sharp, enclosing the interlocking basins of the mighty Burdekin and half a dozen other rivers, all discharging into the Coral Sea. On close examination, however, unity dissolves into variety and contrast. Relief, mean rainfall and natural vegetation all vary greatly. Whether on the basis of natural vegetation or of European settlement several distinct subregions can be recognised. Yet there is a complex of shared features which has given the region a measure of distinctiveness and unity.

The region furnished abundant and varied resources to the Aborigines. As a result it was relatively densely populated by people whose robust physique was remarked upon by early European observers. During an occupation lasting thousands of years Aborigines experienced pronounced changes in the environment, notably a shrinking of rainforest areas as the climate became drier. This process was hastened by their use of fire to improve hunting.

Europeans have wrought much greater changes within a period of less than two lifespans. Most of the rainforest has been removed; none remains that is free from threat. The irreplaceable loss of an ecosystem unique, delicate and complex can only be deplored. Yet the canefields that replaced so much of it constitute a manmade landscape as beautiful and a productive system as efficient as any in Australia. In smaller, widely scattered areas mining has been even more destructive. Tin dredging on the upper Herbert River devastated the landscape as comprehensively as modern warfare: areas of long-term reef mining can remain devoid of native trees for more than 60 years after mining ceases. The impact of pastoral settlement has usually been less drastic, for stocking rates are generally light. Over large inland areas one has at least the illusion of seeing the landscape as the European explorers first encountered it.

The first Europeans known to have visited the region came on the *Endeavour* and were not impressed. For the next seventy-odd years no European set foot there except from the sea, briefly, and penetrated no more than a kilometre or two from tidewater. Then two overland explorers came. In 1845 Ludwig Leichhardt traversed the region from south to north, travelling comfortably through open forest and along the courses of large rivers, about 120 kilometres from the coast. But Edmund Kennedy, in 1848, had excruciating difficulty struggling inland from Rockingham Bay (see Cardwell) and thence northward. This contrast reflects geographical features that have had enduring effects upon settlement and communications. Swamps, rainforest and flood-prone waterways impede travel along much of the coast and steep coastal ranges block transit to the interior at all but a few points; but once the ranges are crossed, there are few natural obstacles.

When the region was thrown open for settlement in 1861, pastoralists following in Leichhardt's footsteps swiftly carved the interior into runs. Settlements on the coast were initially established to service the pastoral interior, but flourished with the discovery and exploitation of minerals. Easy access through the ranges gave **Townsville** a primacy over its older rivals, **Bowen** and **Cardwell**, which it has never lost. **Cooktown**, **Port Douglas** and **Cairns** all arose to service mineral fields in an area to which pastoralists had not yet penetrated. Only the choice of Cairns as the terminus for a railway into the interior allowed it to dominate over the other two. Sugar planting was established in river valleys from the Herbert River northwards, isolated from the interior and from each other by rugged terrain and

rainforest. River transport and coastal shipping at first met transport needs in the sugar areas. Shipping indeed remained the only reliable link between coastal towns and 'the south' well into the twentieth century. A direct rail link between Townsville and Brisbane came only in the 1920s, a reliable highway not until after World War II.

The cattle industry (sheep having proved unsuitable within the first decade), mining and cane farming, established in swift succession in the first twenty years of European settlement, have remained its economic foundations. There were also early interactions between them. Mining settlement provided markets for pastoralists who had few alternatives until refrigeration made beef exports possible at the end of the century. Capital moved easily from pastoralism into mining and cane farming. When mining declined, labour moved into sugar mills and small farms and there might have been some transfer from mining to sugar milling of both steam technology and experience with light railways. But modern mining, with its enormous capital requirements and complex technology, has international rather than regional connections.

This triple economic base is one strand in the skein of features common to the region. Remoteness and isolation are others: remoteness from markets and from centres of economic and political power, isolation of each settlement from ready contact with others. Distance from markets adds greatly to production costs and is one reason why the cattle industry has always been economically marginal. Remoteness from the centres of power has helped to perpetuate land legislation discouraging capital investment that might make the industry more competitive. Sugar, on the other hand, has been actively fostered by governments favouring closer settlement. Land laws, labour codes, government research centres, government financed central mills, production bounties, import restrictions, state marketing and controls on production have accumulated, making the industry one of the



The canefields of Sarina, a few kilometres south of Mackay. Photograph, c1984.

WELDON TRANNIES

most comprehensively regulated in any democratic country. A new period of crisis in the industry has occurred in the 1980s due to a downturn in the world market. Mining has been sporadically the subject of government aid, which usually serves merely to prolong the dying stages of a field. An exception is the Greenvale nickel project, brought into existence and kept precariously afloat by massive government funding. Modern communications greatly reduce isolation, but can never overcome the economic burdens and political frustrations of remoteness.

The third strand is climate. Temperatures never exceed and rarely attain heights recorded every summer in mainland capitals; but mean levels are high and daily ranges small. The most striking feature is the seasonal dichotomy: a long dry season and a shorter wet — generally from late December to March — are shared by the whole region, regardless of mean rainfall levels. During the 'wet', flooded watercourses and saturated ground make overland travel impossible for long periods off and sometimes on main roads. Destructive tropical cyclones threaten every wet season, and on average happen during every second one. Every coastal town has suffered heavy damage several times; the names of cyclones are part of local folklore.

Finally, the region has been one of mixed ethnicity from the beginning of European settlement. Warfare, openly acknowledged, accompanied European seizure of the land as in other parts of Australia, but Aborigines who survived the slaughter were incorporated into the pastoral labour force. Pacific Islanders cultivated and cut nearly all the sugar cane until the early years of the twentieth century. Torres Strait Islanders, leaving their overcrowded home for work in the region, have become numerous since World War II. These three separate groups of coloured Australians are all increasing rapidly in numbers and in their sense of deprivation. Chinese dominated agriculture in the Cairns–Atherton–Innisfail region, producing bananas and maize on a scale that underpinned the district's economy during twenty-five years of depressed sugar prices. Italians, first introduced in the last years of the nineteenth century as possible replacements for Pacific Islanders, and regarded at first as hardly less alien, have long since won themselves a secure place in the sugar industry and the social life of the districts it dominates.

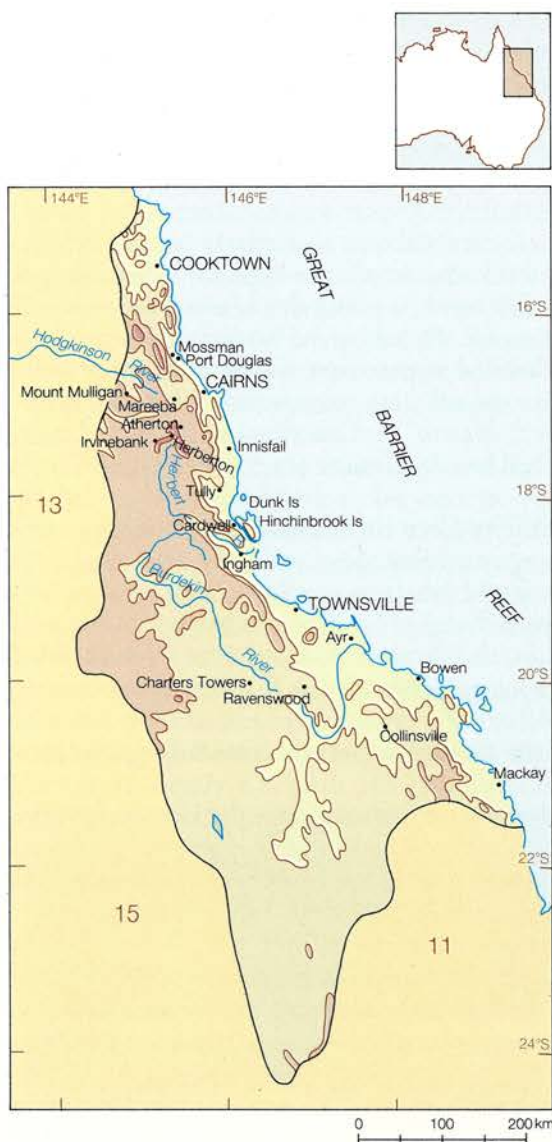
These shared characteristics continue to shape the character of the region. The same three industries are likely to go on dominating its economy. Their importance relative to one another may vary in the future as in the past, but the only clear sign of other economic change is the growing importance of tourism. Climate and remoteness will remain significant. Ethnic and cultural diversity will continue.

The regional identity shaped by these lasting influences is demonstrated most sharply in the face of a common threat, or in shared outrage over decisions of a distant authority. In the absence of external stimulus it is less evident for want of a focus of regional loyalty. Long-established traits that may be expected to persist include scepticism towards authority readily becoming militant defiance; stoical endurance of natural hardship; spontaneous co-operation in emergencies; suspicion of expertise not rooted in experience; friendliness, generosity and tolerance at a personal level; sensitivity to criticism; scorn of pretentiousness and indifference to intellectual fashion. All are recognisably Australian: it is the blend which is distinctive.

Brian J. Dalton

SUGGESTED READING

- A. Allingham, *Taming the wilderness: the first decade of pastoral settlement in the Kennedy District*. (Studies in North Queensland History no 1), Townsville 1977.
 P. Bell, *Timber and iron: houses in North Queensland mining settlements, 1861–1920*, St Lucia, 1984.
 G.C. Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Brisbane 1963.
 F. Reid, *The romance of the Great Barrier Reef*, Sydney 1954.

**ATHERTON**

[17°15'S 145°29'E]

Popn: 1186 (1911), 2527 (1954), 4196 (1981). Named after John Atherton, explorer and first settler in district in 1877. Formerly known as Prior's Pocket. Tablelands explored by James Mulligan in 1875, settled in the 1870s–80s. Atherton was first to bring stock in from **Rockhampton**. Meeting place of Divisional Board from 1881, though town lots first auctioned in 1885–86. Town grew out of cedarcutters' camps in 1881–82 and was on track from **Port Douglas** to **Herberton** tinfields. In 1897 Chinese dominated agriculture on district's rich volcanic soils until rlwy from **Cairns** opened in 1903. Joss house (RNE) built in 1900, only remnant of Chinatown. Chinese popn declined after 1907 as leases expired. Govt cleared 14 200 ha of scrub to south and east in 1907, resumed land formerly held by Chinese for soldier settlement after World War I. Dairy farmers freighted produce to

Cairns from 1904; first butter factory on tablelands opened in 1909, large co-operative factory at **Atherton** in 1914, others followed. Maize important from 1916. World War II military base with aerodrome for US Flying Fortress bombers.

AYR

[19°34'S 147°25'E]

Popn: 70 (1886), 1236 (1911), 4792 (1933), 8787 (1981). Named in 1882 after birthplace in Scotland of premier, Thomas McIlwraith. Although **Burdekin River** explored in the 1840s and upper river settled in the 1860s, lower section not occupied until the 1870s. R. W. Graham of Lilliesmere and A. C. Macmillan of Airdmillan, first European settlers on lower **Burdekin** in the 1870s, merged their estates in 1881–82 to form **Burdekin Delta Sugar Co.** Township proclaimed and named in 1882. Sugar mills opened at **Kalamia** (1883), **Drynie** and **Pioneer** (1884, former led to beginning of Qld condensed milk industry), and **Inkerman** (1914). **Ayr** outgrew **Brandon** once former had cane tramway from 1901. District pioneered commercial rice growing in Qld and now major area. Town seriously damaged by hurricane in 1959.

BOWEN

[20°00'S 148°14'E]

Popn: 765 (1864), 1144 (1868), 717 (1871), 1130 (1901), 2619 (1933), 5160 (1961), 7663 (1981). Named after George Bowen, first gov of Qld, when surveyed in 1863. Formerly known as **Port Denison**. Explored by Gordon, Poole and Sinclair in 1859: Sinclair's ship *Santa Barbara* became first pilot vessel at port. In 1860 became first North Coast port for landing of cattle and shipment of produce from hinterland: Kennedy district opened for cattle runs by Qld govt in 1861. Town founded in 1861 as first European settlement north of **Rockhampton** by Commissioner George Dalrymple. Customs house built in 1861, courthouse and police station in 1881. John McKinlay arrived here from **Adelaide** via Gulf of Carpentaria in 1862. North Australia Hotel opened in 1862, holds oldest licence in North Qld. Jetty built from 1865. Sugar growing began in 1865, 70 ha of cotton grown in 1870. Bowen's port virtually replaced when major coal loading facility opened at **Abbot Point** to north-east in 1984 and rlwy links to inland coalfields including **Collinsville** upgraded.

CAIRNS

[16°54'S 145°45'E]

Popn: 278 (1881), 3557 (1901), 11 993 (1933), 25 204 (1961), 46 557 (1981). Named in 1876 after William Cairns, gov of Qld; briefly known as **Thornton** earlier that year. Coast of **Trinity Bay** reached and named by Capt James Cook on **Trinity Sunday** 1770. District explored by George Dalrymple in 1873, settled by Europeans in that year. Settlement at **Cairns** estab in 1876 when port for **Hodgkinson River** goldfield needed and dray route from **Thornborough** to **Trinity Bay** opened. That year the *Porpoise* brought officials to survey and open a port in district and **Trinity Bay** declared as the site. Rivalry from **Port Douglas** after second dray route to that port opened from **Thornborough**. Further discovs of gold on the **Palmer River** (1876) and of tin at **Herberton** (1880)



Burns Philp's store in Abbott Street, Cairns. Photograph by Reverend Fred Greenwood, c1907.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

increased need for port. First banks opened in 1877 and first sawmill estab. Timber industry important in the 1880s. By 1882 Port Douglas much more important: in 1877 Cairns handled £25 108 of imports and £132 407 of gold exports; in 1879 £812 of imports and no gold exports. Buildings in Cairns began to be moved elsewhere. Smithfield at mouth of Barron R also rivalled Cairns from 1876 until washed away by flood in 1879. Chinatown from this period existed until condemned and demolished in 1936. After gold declined, timber and grazing became more important; beginnings of sugar industry in 1882 also important in Cairns' revival in the 1880s. First borough council elected in 1885. Rlwy from Myola opened in 1886; from Mareeba in 1893 and from Herberton in 1910: Cairns exported timber, tin and sugar from hinterland as result. Important group of late nineteenth-cent trade and shipping buildings survive in Barbary Coast precinct (RNE). Botanic gardens estab in 1886. Harbour Board estab in 1906. Became a town in 1903, a city in 1923. Rlwy from Brisbane opened in 1924. Important airfield and port in World War II, base for Z and M commando units: the House on the Hill (RNE), built in 1896, was family home of Charles Kingsford Smith as well as secret Z experimental station and base for operations including raid on Singapore harbour by *Krait* in 1942. Naval base during World War II: new naval establishment commissioned in 1974. International airport from 1984.

CARDWELL

[18°21'S 146°04'E]

Popn: 96 (1871), 1249 (1981). Named in 1864 by Gov Bowen after Edward Cardwell, MP and later

secretary of state for the colonies. Earlier known as Port Hinchinbrook. In 1862 HMS *Pioneer* with Bowen on board sought port for Valley of Lagoons pastoralists, impressed by Rockingham Bay. George Dalrymple explored from Valley of Lagoons towards site of Cardwell in 1863, but failed to reach coast. Settled by Europeans in 1864 when site surveyed and Dalrymple pioneered difficult track inland from Rockingham Bay. First port to develop north of Bowen, gave access to cattle in hinterland. Old Royal Hotel estab in 1864. First land sales in 1865. Overland telegraph to Burketown estab in 1869–70. Later suffered from competition with Townsville which had easier route to inland. Briefly boosted by trade with Etheridge Goldfield c1872, but gold went through Townsville after 1874–75. Repeated clashes occurred between Europeans and Aborigines in the 1870s. Track blazed to Hodgkinson River goldfield in 1876, but more direct outlet via Cairns. Sugar industry became estab in the 1870s. Logging industry developed in the 1880s and largest sawmill in North Qld operated here in 1886. New jetty built in 1892; meatworks opened in 1895. Cattle industry severely hit by tick infestation in the mid-1890s. Moves to re-estab timber industry in district from the 1920s to the 1940s.

CHARTERS TOWERS [20°04'S 146°16'E]

Popn: 943 (1876), 4597 (1891), 15 037 (1911), 6978 (1933), 7914 (1976), 6823 (1981). Named Charters Towers by gold discoverers after gold warden Charters of Cape River and Broughton and after geological formation where gold found. Nicknamed 'the world'. Gold first found in late 1871, leading to rush

in 1872 and to this becoming second largest city in Qld. Old Venus battery (Nat T, RNE) built in 1872, ceased operating in 1973. Goldfield popn of 4300 in 1873, 11 500 in 1886 and 26 780 in 1899. Never an alluvial field, over 150 mines working in the mid-1880s and shafts sunk to below 900 m. Beef cattle industry prospered with local demand in the 1870s. Rlwy opened in 1882. Large chlorination plant estab in the late 1880s and cyanide extraction introduced in 1892. Over 100 mining companies here in 1890, most profitable of Qld fields 1891–96. Miners' union set up in 1886 and town became centre of labour politics. World's first labor premier, Andrew Dawson (1899), elected as local member in 1893. Many fine late Victorian buildings including courthouse and govt offices (RNE, 1886), Royal Arcade (Nat T, RNE, built in 1887–88, became stock exchange in 1890), town hall (1891), school of mines (opened in 1901, closed in 1925). City proclaimed in 1909. Gold yields and popn fell from 1899. In 40 years more than £25m worth of gold (218m g) had been produced. US and Aust air force bases nearby in World War II. Restoration of historic buildings and growth of tourism important in the 1970s–80s: also an education centre.

COLLINSVILLE

[20°33'S 147°51'E]

Popn: 1134 (1933), 2756 (1981). Named after Charles Collins, member of legislative assembly for Bowen. Founded as village in 1918. Rlwy from **Brisbane** opened in 1922. Mount Isa Mines acquired Bowen Consolidated Coal Mines in 1952, other district mines in 1977 when Collinsville Coal Co formed. Expansion led to new town of Glenden and Newlands coking-coal mine 83 km to south. First homes in new town occupied in 1982, popn of 1400 by 1984–85, 400 of whom employed at mine. Expected to produce 2m tonnes of coal in first yr to be exported via new rlwy to Abbot Point (see Bowen). Graphite mined in area in World War II: 61 tonnes produced here in 1963 was only Aust production since 1956. Rlwy to **Bowen** upgraded in 1984.

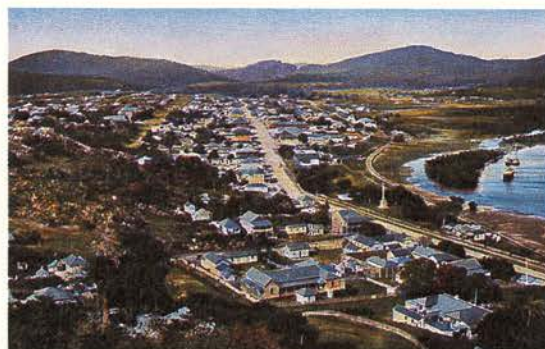
COOKTOWN

[15°28'S 145°15'E]

Popn: 2185 (1876), 2620 (1891), 397 (1947), 913 (1981). Named after Capt James Cook who set up camp here for 6 weeks in 1770 while the *Endeavour*, after which Endeavour R named, was repaired. Cook, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander (the latter two naturalists) had their main experience of Aust here. Phillip Parker King and Allan Cunningham visited area in 1819 and in 1820, climbing and naming Mt Cook.

Goldfield port Discovery of payable gold on **Palmer River** in 1872–73 led to George Dalrymple being sent by govt to find site for port. Almost simultaneously, the *Leichhardt* arrived with materials and 96 people to found Cook's Town, as it was known until 1874. An 1874 news report remarks on the 550 tents in Cook's Town and another 400–500 on Oakley Creek; but during that yr customs house, police station and barracks and numerous hotels were built. Popn was about 4000 within 6 months of foundation. Fire brigade and state school estab in 1875 and hotels num-

bered 65. Telegraph to **Brisbane** estab in 1876, already one to goldfields. Distinct Chinese quarter in goldrush days with about 3000 Chinese in Cooktown and another 20 000 moving between there and goldfields. Roman Catholic church estab in 1874, was diocesan headquarters 1877–82. Anglican church estab in 1875. Municipality from 1876. At one time Qld's third busiest port: 40 tonnes of gold exported in 1875, £1.33m worth in 1877, but only £0.33m worth in 1879. With decline of gold output of **Palmer River** fields many diggers went from here to New Guinea goldfields in 1878.



Cooktown in its heyday. Postcard, c1910.

MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Solid prosperity As gold production waned, tin mining to the south, port functions, fishing and agric prospered. Tinfields worked on creeks to the south from 1882, Annan R field discov in 1885, Cooktown tinfield proclaimed in 1889. Helenvale field still producing in the early 1980s. Nearest Aust port to New Guinea — later Burns Philp base for trade with the islands. In 1880 became first Aust port of call for British India mail steamers. *Bêche-de-mer* fishing port from 1878 with numerous boats and about 450 men employed. Quarantine camp in the 1870s, proper station built 1886, closed in 1915. Rlwy to Palmer Road via **Laura** opened in 1888, closed by govt in 1903, operated successfully by local council for short time, taken over again by govt in 1904, finally closed in 1961 after playing important role during World War II. First overland car journey to Cooktown in 1928. St Mary's Convent (RNE) built 1889, restored in 1969 as museum. Town largely destroyed by cyclone in 1907.

Slump and revival Town slumped in the 1920s–30s. First round Aust flight landed here in 1924, first from New Guinea in 1934. Tommy McDonald estab first airmail service to **Cairns** in 1934, then estab North Queensland Airways in 1936. Large number of troops in district during World War II. Second severe cyclone in 1949. Since then restoration of historic buildings and tourism have contributed to renewed prosperity.

GREAT BARRIER REEF [16°00'S 146°00'E]

Descriptive name, perhaps first used by Matthew Flinders. Referred to by early sailors as the Barrier.

Capt Luis de Torres explored northern sections in 1605, as did Willem Jansz in 1606. Capt James Cook sailed length of the Reef in 1770, striking Endeavour Reef. Matthew Flinders greatly increased knowledge of area in 1802. Surveys also undertaken by Phillip Parker King 1819–22; J.C. Wickham and John Lort Stokes in 1839; Blackwood and Yule in 1842; Owen Stanley in 1848. Thomas Huxley spent two weeks surveying Lizard Is and collecting specimens in 1848. First scientific account of the Reef was by J. Beete Jukes of HMS *Fly* in 1843. Great Barrier Reef Committee estab in 1922 to promote research, led to Royal Soc of London survey of 1928–29 and marine biology research station estab on Heron Is in 1951 (now run by Univ of Qld). Tourist development began in 1899 with resort on Magnetic Is, but concerted development waited until the 1930s with development of resorts on Brampton and Lindeman Is. Tours to Green Is began in 1928 and first glass-bottomed boats introduced in 1937. Green Is marine biological laboratory estab by Noel Monkman in 1956, island became marine park in 1974. Popn explosion of crown of thorns starfish in 1960 appeared to threaten reefs around Green Is. Such explosions have occurred since at various times and places resulting in debate and controversy as to the seriousness, cause and remedies. Environmental issues came to the fore with exploratory oil drilling halted by industrial action in the late 1960s and a calcium carbonate mining application rejected in 1967. A joint state and federal royal commission held 1970–72. Direct results were the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority estab in 1976; declaration of the Capricornia section of the park in 1979, and of the Cormorant Pass and Cairns sections in 1982; and the listing of the entire reef on the World Heritage List in 1981. The Aust Museum set up a research station on Lizard Is in the 1970s, and the Aust Institute of Marine Science was estab at Townsville in 1973.

HERBERTON

[17°22'S 145°23'E]

Popn: 268(1881), 1175(1891), 869(1933), 1101(1954), 577(1981). Named from **Herbert River**. James Mulligan discov alluvial tin in 1875, other discoveries followed and Chinese were attracted here from declining goldfields. Town permanently settled when Willie Jack and John Newell discov lode tin in 1880 and estab Great Northern tin mine (RNE). Town laid out in 1880. Both main lode mines mechanised by 1887. Mine battery hauled from **Port Douglas** by team of 81 bullocks in late 1880. Mine hit by depression yrs 1893–1900, revived in 1905, closed 1911–17, boomed 1917–21, finally closing in 1921. Jack and Newell used earnings from mine to set up store (RNE) as start of chain. School of Arts, built 1881, housed first local authority meeting on Atherton Tablelands. Rlwy from Cairns opened in 1910. Herberton and Chillagoe were Aust's only sources of tungsten 1904–18.

HODGKINSON RIVER

[16°36'S 144°32'E]

Reached by James Mulligan in 1874 and named after explorer W.O. Hodgkinson. Mulligan returned in 1875–76 and claimed to find gold, but reef gold rather

than alluvial and goldfield in decline by 1878 after initial rush. Many miners left in 1878 to join Coen rush. Many small townships estab on field including Beaconsfield and, the most important, Thornborough. Mulligan ran store at Thornborough in 1877 when popn about 1000. Telegraph opened in 1878. Wolfram and molybdenum discov 25 km south in 1891 and Wolfram Camp became largest Qld producer of these.

INGHAM

[18°39'S 146°09'E]

Popn: 16(1881), 373(1901), 3036(1947), 5868(1976), 5598(1981). Named in 1879, when town surveyed, after William Ingham who estab first sugar cane farm in district. Formerly known as Lower Herbert and as Palm Creek. George Dalrymple explored area in 1853. European settlement in lower Herbert River valley in 1865 when Henry Stone estab Vale of Herbert station near Abergowrie. Gairlock sugar mill estab in 1872 to process first sugar grown north of Mackay, crushed until 1875. First town allotments sold and local govt set up in 1879. Colonial Sugar Refining Co began to acquire interests in area from 1880. Sugar and pastoral industries led to growth of town of Ingham. First Italians came to canefields in 1891, individually sponsored friends and relatives 1900–19, major Italian immigration 1920–39. Rlwy opened in 1919. By 1931 Victoria and MacKnade mills each processed 10 000 tonnes of cane per annum: former now is largest in Southern Hemisphere; latter built in the early 1870s, bought by CSR in 1897, oldest operating in Aust (in the early 1980s). Major expansions of sugar industry in 1951–53 and 1963–65. Town boasts original 'pub with no beer' as American servicemen drank it dry celebrating Coral Sea victory in 1942.

INNISFAIL

[17°31'S 146°01'E]

Popn: 266(1886), 2621(1947), 6649(1954), 7933(1981). Known as Nind's Camp after early settler, then Geraldton after sugar pioneer Tom FitzGerald, but confusion with WA town led to change in 1911 to Innisfail after FitzGerald's property Innisfallen. George Dalrymple led expedition to area in 1873: Johnstone, Hill and Nind followed and camped at town site, exploring area including Johnstone River. FitzGerald arrived in 1880 to set up sugar industry on 10 000 ha on behalf of Bishop of Brisbane and Carmelite nuns. Mourilyan sugar mill and town built in 1882; Babinda mill built in 1914, acquired by local growers in 1924; South Johnstone mill built in 1915, operated by govt until bought by growers in 1927. Town devastated by cyclone with 28 deaths in 1918. Rlwy opened in 1924. Major boost from Italian migrants after World War II. Bulk sugar terminal built at Mourilyan in 1959. Joint Tropical Trials and Research Establishment built for defence forces in 1977.

IRVINEBANK

[17°25'S 145°12'E]

Popn: 164(1886), 1269(1911), 147(1933), 190(1966). Named by John Moffat after river in Ayrshire, Scotland, he knew as a child. Previously known as Gibb's Camp. Tin lode discov in 1880 and shown to Moffat



Main street of Mackay, c1950.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

who was from Tenterfield (NSW) tin-mining area; led to joint venture Great Northern tin mine. Vulcan mine (RNE, lode discov in 1888) was deepest tin mine in Aust, closed c1930. London battery and mill (RNE) built in 1884, still operating. Peak popn of about 3000 and peak of prosperity in 1906. Rlwy opened in 1907. World War I reduced labour force and govt took over mining company in 1919, smelters ceased operating in 1920, main batteries in mid-1920s, although town still depends on small-scale mining.

MACKAY [21°09'S 149°11'E]

Popn: 340 (1868), 4106 (1886), 3597 (1891), 6135 (1911), 14 762 (1954), 24 578 (1966), 35 361 (1981). Named after John Mackay who led expedition to area in 1860, returned with cattle in 1862. Town estab in late 1862. Sugar grown here from 1865, first production in North Qld in 1867, mills built from that year. Pacific Island (kanaka) labour imported from the mid-1860s to 1906. A number of other mills built in the late 19th century. In 1874 there were 16 mills in district, but many later closed or taken over: only 8 mills in 1984. Municipality estab in 1869, became a city in 1918. Commonwealth Bank (RNE) built c1880. Qld's first agric experimental station opened in 1889. Rlwy opened in 1922. Artificial deep-water harbour built in 1939 when large sugar terminal, first in Southern Hemisphere, built. Coalmines inland developed from 1969 and Hay Point coal terminal, world's largest, built to handle coal from **Blair Athol** and mines of **Moranbah** and **Dysart** districts. Grain from **Cler-**

mont area also exported. New Dalrymple Bay coal terminal adjacent to Hay Point opened in 1983, increasing port's capacity to 25m tonnes per yr with stockpiles of up to 2.5m tonnes and capable of handling ships of up to 150 000 tonnes. Aust's first power alcohol distillery built at Sarina to the south in 1927. TAA Fokker Friendship crashed into sea nearby in 1960, killing 29 in one of Aust's worst air disasters.

MAREEBA

[16°58'S 145°25'E]

Popn: 1067 (1911), 2504 (1947), 6309 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'meeting of the waters' or 'place to meet'. First known as Abbot Creek, then as Granite Creek until 1893. Prospector James Mulligan explored Barron R and camped at Granite Creek, site of town, in 1875. Pioneer John Atherton settled on Barron R in 1877 and town grew from inn he estab there in 1880 on route to tinfields. First town on Atherton Tablelands. Rlwy from **Cairns** opened in 1893, later extended to Ravenshoe. Private rlwy built to **Chillagoe** in 1900. Tobacco grown in district in 1928, now Aust's largest tobacco-producing area, largely on Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area watered from Tinaroo Dam, opened in 1958 as Qld's first major irrigation storage.

MOSSMAN

[16°27'S 145°22'E]

Popn: 829 (1911), 1614 (1981). Named in 1873 by explorer George Dalrymple after H.D. Mosman, minerals explorer: second 's' added later to avoid confusion with Sydney suburb. Cedarcutters in area in

the 1870s. Village founded in 1876. First cane grown in 1896, sugar mill opened in 1897. Major controversy when road built through Daintree Nat Pk rainforest (RNE) in 1984 to shorten route from Mossman to **Cooktown**. Road largely washed out in early 1985 with extensive ecological damage.

MOUNT MULLIGAN [16°51'S 144°41'E]

Popn: 286 (1933), 359 (1954). Explored by and named after prospector James Venture Mulligan in 1874. Edmund Kennedy in district in 1848. Coalmining in area developed from 1910: new town built and rlwy from Dimbulah opened in 1914. Qld's worst mining disaster here in 1921 when 75 miners killed by an explosion. Mine owned by **Chillagoe** company was closed and incident led to company's demise. Mine rehabilitated in 1922, bought by govt in 1923, closed on opening of Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme in 1957, although had been of doubtful economic viability for some years. Workers shifted to **Collinsville**, homes dismantled, buildings auctioned and removed.

PORT DOUGLAS [16°29'S 145°26'E]

Popn: 510 (1881), 640 (1886), 122 (1947), 675 (1981). Named after premier of Qld, John Douglas. Embryo port first called Salisbury, but name changed after visit by govt officials and announcement of establishment of road to inland and port to serve goldfields. Road, cut by Christy Palmer, known as Old Bump Road 1877–93. Official popn figures greatly exceeded in the early 1880s if temporary popn on their way to goldfields included: peak popn of about 8000 in 1882. Chief town in North Qld until gold production dwindled after 1886: had almost replaced **Cairns**. Competed for rlwy to inland areas, but lost out to Cairns when line built in 1891: Cairns prospered and Port Douglas continued to decline. Business largely shifted to **Mossman** after bad cyclone in 1911. Sugar from district shipped from Port Douglas until 1958. Began to develop as tourist resort in the 1970s.

RAVENSWOOD [20°05'S 146°53'E]

Popn: 1844 (1871), 1124 (1876), 2019 (1911), 232 (1933), 107 (1966). Town estab and named after cattle run in 1869. Gold discov in 1868. Field first known as Upper Diggings, canvas town as Top Camp. Small rush in 1869 when town estab and decline of other fields led to growth here: 42 hotels or grog shanties within 4.8 km radius. Crushing machinery arrived in 1870. Newspaper, *Ravenswood Miner*, estab in 1870. Many substantial buildings erected c1871 including courthouse and hospital. Became Qld's first large inland town in 1871 with 2000–3000 diggers on field, but diggers lured away by **Charters Towers** from 1872 and extraction problems found here as water table encountered and alluvial gold exhausted. Silver discov in area in 1880 and this sustained town through the 1880s. Mining revival in the late 1890s with new management and modernised mining and extraction methods. First deep mining venture in 1901. Popn peak of 4707 in 1903. Prolonged strike in 1912 damaged town, and World War I brought further decline. Town classified by Nat T in 1973 and listed on RNE

although many buildings had been moved elsewhere after mining declined.

TOWNSVILLE [19°17'S 146°48'E]

Popn: 1140 (1871), 7860 (1886), 25 876 (1933), 56 768 (1966), 86 112 (1981). Named after **Sydney** merchant Robert Towns.

Early history Capt James Cook reached and named Cleveland Bay in 1770. Phillip Parker King spent 3 days in Cleveland Bay in 1819; Capt John Wickham in the *Beagle* explored coast in 1839. In 1861–64 grazier J.M. Black acquired large landholdings in district: in 1864 he sent Andrew Ball to find a port site to serve the hinterland and its cattle stations. Ball recommended a site on Cleveland Bay and Black entered into a partnership with Towns to develop it and estab town with woolstore and wharf beginning in 1864.

Port and municipal development Proclaimed a port in 1865, yr of first land sales; became a municipality in 1866. Increase in port use in 1868–69 due to discov of Cape River, Gilbert and **Ravenswood** goldfields. Port improvements including a primitive breakwater built in 1872; plans for outer harbour drawn up in 1875–76; causeway built and eastern breakwater begun in 1875. First dredging in 1884. Further breakwaters built in 1887–88 after report by engineer John Coode. New harbour opened in 1892. Gold finds at **Charters Towers** and on the Etheridge River, together with development of sugar and pastoral industries, further enhanced role of port. Port increasingly important for passenger ships using Torres Strait route from the 1880s. Autonomous harbour board estab in 1895. Proclaimed a city in 1903. Wool trade through port very important from 1915–21, peak yr in 1941, important again in the 1970s. **Mount Isa** minerals shipped from port since 1925, became significant after smelting began in 1931. In 1936 Mount Isa Mines threat to build new port led to harbour improvements. Important port in World War II, hit by Japanese air raids in 1942–43. Frozen beef exports significant from 1892, chilled beef from 1955. Bulk loading facilities for sugar installed in 1959: serious but temporary setback after fire in bulk sugar terminal in 1963. Mount Isa zinc concentrates loaded from 1964. Construction of roll-on, roll-off terminal began in 1968. Phosphate shipments to Japan from 1975: regular container service to Japan from 1976. Harbour facilities for fishing fleet further developed in 1984; prawn fishing particularly important.

Town and district industry Boiling-down works estab in 1866 as commencement of important meat processing industry. Now two of Aust's largest meatworks at Ross R (estab in 1890) and at Stuart: in 1974 meatworks employed 25 per cent of all manufacturing employees in peak season. Burns Philp & Co, shipping and trading company operating in New Guinea and Pacific Islands, estab here in 1872. Though sugar introduced to district in 1866, never an important crop in immediate area: port has served as export centre for region's sugar production. Cement works estab in 1954. Mount Isa Mines copper refinery

opened in 1959. Nickel treatment works for Greenvale nickel ore opened at Yabula, 24 km north, in 1974: nickel sulphide and oxide shipments from 1975. Tourism increasingly important since c1960.

Services and buildings Hotel and bank opened in 1865. Notable expansion of shops and businesses in the late 1860s. Magistrate's courthouse (now museum) built in 1876. Rlwy to **Charters Towers** opened in 1882; to **Ravenswood** in 1884; to **Hughenden** in 1887; **Winton** in 1900; **Richmond** in 1904; **Cloncurry** in 1908; **Mount Isa** in the 1920s. Pastoral and mineral development along rlwys added to importance of Townsville. Victoria Bridge (RNE), a swing bridge, built by G.H. Royce & Co in 1889. Customs house (RNE, Nat T) built 1900–02. A number of hotels, banks and other buildings from 1880–1910 (RNE). Supreme court serving North Qld moved here from **Bowen** in 1890. Aust Institute of Tropical Medicine estab in 1908 as first organised research institute in Aust but transferred to **Sydney** in 1930. Clinic for polio victims set up by Sister Elizabeth Kenny in 1933 (see **Greenmount**). University College of Townsville opened in 1961, became the James Cook Univ of North Qld in 1970. Aust Institute of Marine Science estab in 1973. International airport from 1981.

Miscellaneous New Aust flag raised here for first time in Commonwealth in 1901. Aust Sugar Producers' Assoc formed here in 1907. Important US and Aust army and airforce bases in World War II: total popn (military and civilian) reached about 90 000 in

mid-1943. Japanese bombed city over three days in July 1942: many of popn left for the south after fall of **Lae** (PNG) later that year. Venue for practice raids on **Rabaul** and **Singapore** in 1943. Cyclone **Althea** badly damaged town in 1971: earlier serious cyclones had occurred in 1867, 1896, 1903 and 1959.

TULLY

[17°55'S 145°55'E]

Popn: 83 (1911), 2688 (1933), 2728 (1981). Tully R named in 1889 after surveyor in **George Dalrymple's** 1864 expedition; previously known as **Mackay R** as named by **Blackwood** in 1843. Settlement known as **Banyan** prior to survey in 1924. **Edmund Kennedy** led expedition in area in 1848. **James Tyson** took up land in district in the 1870s and planted sugar and ran cattle. Volunteer Land Orders of 1882 led to land being taken up as grants to Volunteer Army members, but **Tyson** had acquired all these grants by 1888. Township reserve of **Rockingham** estab in 1882, surveyed in 1883, first allotment sales in 1884, but town never built. Qld pineapple industry pioneered to the north by **Cullen** family in 1884, also coffee and many other crops. Cyclone destroyed enterprise in 1918. Soldier settlement area of **El Arish** estab in 1920–21. Co-operative group settlement on **Banyan Creek** 1906–09, blocks on upper creek opened for selection in 1912. Sugar mill estab at **Banyan Creek** in 1924: this and closer settlement by growers led to survey of town site in 1924, gazetted in 1925. **Tully Falls** hydro-electric scheme opened in 1935, enlarged station completed in 1959 to supply **Cairns** and **Townsville**.



Imperial Hotel, Flinders Street, Townsville in the 1890s. Photograph by Allum and Bailey.

NATIONAL LIBRARY