Douglas Heritage Study

Thematic History

for Cairns Regional Council
September 2011

converge
heritage + community

localbuy

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1.0 Background Information

1.1 Purpose

This contextual history is part of the 2011 Douglas Heritage Study for the Cairns Regional Council. The purpose of the study is to identify assess and document places of post contact cultural significance for the former Douglas Shire (DS) region.

Key tasks for this work included reviewing existing historical literature and material available this region. In previous heritage studies and report, there has been no supporting contextual history prepared specifically for this region, although a number of individual studies for Port Douglas have been compiled, as have site specific reports.

The review of relevant information for the region has also resulted in the preparation of a statement of historical significance for the former DS region.

1.2 Scope and Limitations

This contextual history of the former DS is not intended to be an exhaustive history. Rather, it is an overview of the key events and activities that have shaped the district's development since European settlement. Compiled principally from a range of secondary sources, it is designed to assist with the assessment of significant, extant built heritage places and sites within the region.

The focus on post contact history reflects the provisions of Part 11 under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1996 (2008)* and the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009,* both of which govern under which local heritage lists. Indigenous heritage is managed under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2003*.

1.3 Methodology

This history has adopted a thematic approach to understanding key development trends in the former DS region. The Queensland Historic Themes framework draws upon the Australian Historic Theme Framework developed by the Australian Heritage Commission (Australian Heritage Commission, 2001). An understanding of historical themes is central to determining whether a building or site should be included in a heritage register (using the framework provided under the 1992 (2008) *Queensland Heritage Act*).

Despite the advent of extreme weather events, other factors influencing the region's development can be categorised thematically and, in part, chronologically. The

following history, therefore, focuses on the following specific themes identified as significant to the former DS region by Blake (2005):

- Peopling places (migration)
- Using natural resources (exploring, timber, sugar, dairying, environment);
- Transportation and communication (tracks, shipping, roads, tramways);
- Building settlements and communities;
- Culture and community
- Tourism.

The history is divided into four chapters which each focus on particular development trends and historic themes during these periods:

- Introduction (climate and landscape, traditional owners and key towns)
- Chapter 1: 1876- 1893 (exploration, transportation and settlement);
- Chapter 2: 1894-1945 (administration, agriculture and migration); and
- Chapter 3: 1946-Present (agriculture, tourism and conservation).

1.4 Authorship

This report was prepared by Dr Joanna Wills, Converge Heritage + Community. Karen Townrow and Benjamin Gall provided advice throughout the project and on the report generally.

1.5 Acknowledgements

The production of this report was greatly assisted by input from the following individuals:

- Pam Willis Burden;
- Noel Weare;
- Dr Dawn May; and
- Dr Jan Wegner.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Landscape and climate

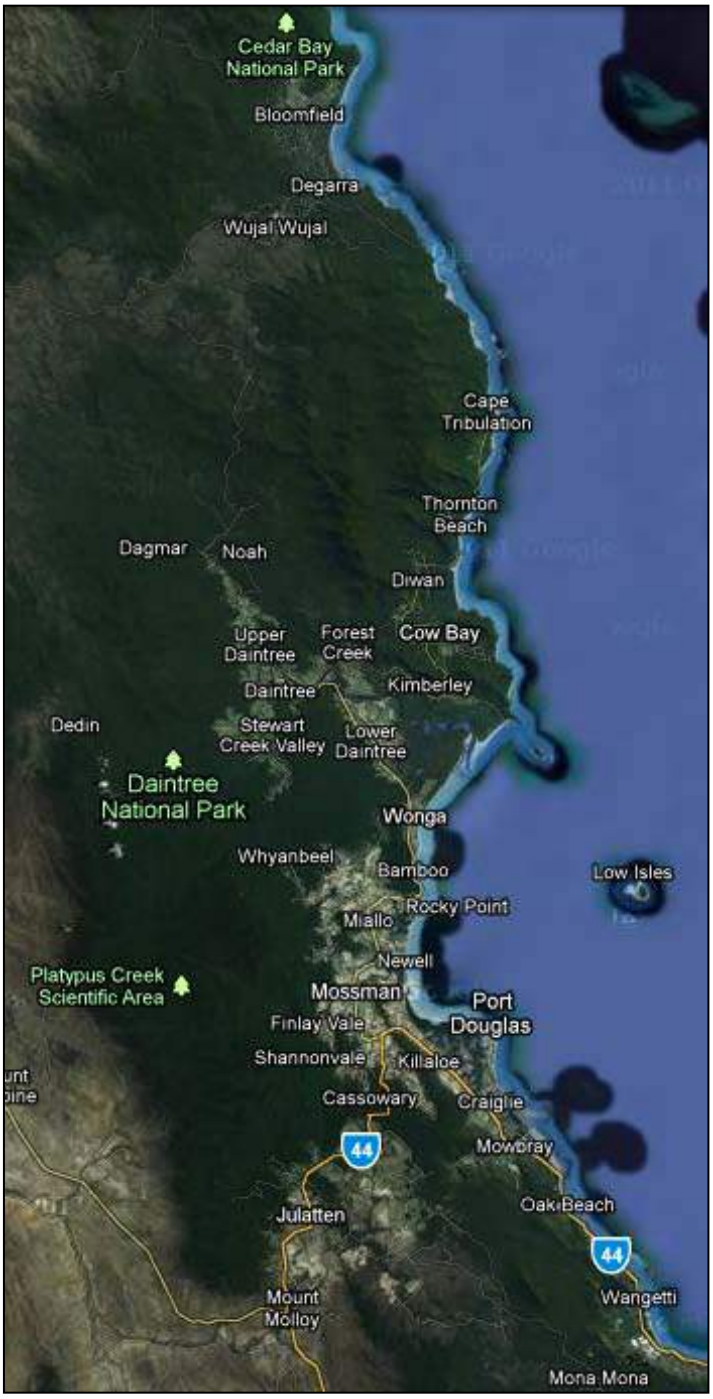

Figure 1: Map showing the thin, coastal strip of the former Douglas Shire region (Source: Google Maps).

The history of post contact settlement in the former Douglas Shire region is closely linked to its landscape and climate. Striking coastlines, tropical coastal lowlands, majestic rainforest-clad ranges and three major river systems (the Daintree, Mossman and Mowbray rivers) are all feature of this landscape. Together they form a distinctive environment, one that is home to cultural, natural and scientific diversity.

Despite the picturesque facade, this landscape can be at once inviting and hostile. The balmy dry season climate is replaced by an oppressive, and at times aggressive, wet season with its stifling humidity, tropical diseases, floods and cyclones. Since European settlement in the 1870s, three major cyclones have crossed the coast in the region and caused significant damage – 1911, 1920 and 1934. Numerous others have caused widespread flooding and minor damage. Such severe weather events impacted heavily on early settlers – some left the district while others sought to modify building materials and techniques to reduce damage and risk.

2.2 Recognition of traditional owners

Although in-depth research into Aboriginal history and culture in the region is outside the scope of

this report, it is important to acknowledge the history of the former DS district's traditional owners.

Prior to European settlement, the region was used by three principal Aboriginal groups. For more than 9000 years, Aboriginal people have resided in the area that extends from Port Douglas to Cooktown, and on the land from the coast west to the Palmer River (DERM, 2010: Mossman Gorge Daintree National Park website). Local Jungkurara Aborigines called Cape Tribulation Kurangee, meaning 'place of many cassowaries' and lived in the coastal area between Daintree and the Annan River. The richly timbered Daintree area between Bloomfield and Mossman was home to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people, while the Djabugay people traditionally used the slopes and coastal lowlands of between Kuranda and the Mowbray Valley as a hunting ground.

Clashes between indigenous owners and European settlers are reported in newspapers during the first years of settlement. Traditional lifestyles were changed irreversibly by the arrival of European settlers which resulted in many Aboriginal people being either dispersed from the region or assimilated into the system. Some worked as labourers on sugar plantations around Mossman. Others were removed into missions, beginning in 1885 at Bloomfield, 1916 at Mossman Gorge and Daintree River in 1940. (Wet Tropics Management Authority, undated: 1-9).

It was determined that the Eastern Yalanji people are the native title holders of part of the area by the Federal Court on 11 April 2007. This determination acknowledged Eastern Kuku Yalanji people are the traditional owners of 230,000 hectares of land including Daintree, Cape Tribulation and Black Mountain National Parks. Djabugay's native title determination area lies outside of the study area over Barron National Park.

2.3 Overview of key towns in region

The former Douglas Shire Council was established as the Douglas Divisional Board on 3 June 1880 under the Divisional Boards Act of 1879. After the introduction of the *Local Authorities Act* in 1902 it was renamed the Douglas Shire Council. It remained the Douglas Shire Council until the 2007 *Local Government Act* amalgamations required a merger with the Cairns City Council to form the Cairns Regional Council. There are four principle towns or settlements in the former DS region: Port Douglas, Mossman, Daintree and Cape Tribulation.

2.3.1 Port Douglas

Port Douglas, formerly known as White Island Point, Island Point, Port Owen, Owenville, Port Salisbury and Salisbury, was officially named in 1877 for Queensland Premier John Douglas. It was settled as the port of entry and supply for the Hodgkinson goldfield on the Hann Tableland which was proclaimed in 1876. It was the major port for the northern area

until Cairns was declared as the terminus for the railway in 1883. This heralded the end of the town's ascendancy, and it gradually declined to be a small fishing village. During the 1970s and 1980s, it regained its popularity with tourists and has become a premier destination for far north Queensland.

2.3.2 Mossman

Although cedar cutters worked around the Mossman area during the early 1870s, Mossman was not formally settled until 1877. The town was first known as "Hartsville, after the first settler Dan Hart, and then Thooleer after the property near the port on the river" (Willis Burden, 2007: 2). Land was primarily used for agriculture, with sugar emerging as the dominant crop, particularly after the Mossman Central Mill Co Ltd was established under the auspices of the 1893 *Sugar Works Guarantee Act*. The success of this industry drew new settlers, migrants and itinerant workers to the region and the town gradually gained ascendancy over Port Douglas in the early 20th century. Although Mossman remains a working sugar town, and remains the administrative centre for the region, the surrounding natural environment and close proximity to the Daintree rainforest means tourism also plays an important role in its economic prosperity.

2.3.3 Daintree Village

Prior to the official settlement at Daintree Village in 1879, cedar cutters had logged the area extensively. Timber operations ceased during the 1880s, but those who stayed used the land for agricultural purposes, running cattle, growing sugar and a range of horticultural crops. Dairying was also a principle activity in the Daintree district, and a butter factory was established in town in 1924. The town and surrounding rainforest, which was entered on the World Heritage list in 1988 as the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, now relies principally on tourism as its major industry.

2.3.4 Cape Tribulation

The settlement north of Daintree River was initially known as Bailey's Creek. Settlers did not officially occupy the region until much later than Mossman or Port Douglas – mostly due to inaccessibility and isolation. During the 1930s, the Mason family established a settlement near Cape Tribulation and gradually other settlers have taken advantage of the district's suitability for tropical horticulture. Access to the district has been both difficult and controversial, particularly during the 1980s when the fight to prevent the creation of the Bloomfield Track made international headlines. Activities in the region have included horticulture and dairying. Tourism has also played a major role in the region's development, particularly in relation to the natural environment.

3.0 1870s – 1892: Exploration, access and settlement

3.1 Introduction

Despite the continual land disputes with local Aborigines, there were two mineral discoveries during the 1870s that were pivotal to the settlement of the land around the former DS, and of far north Queensland in general. These discoveries, the reporting of them, and the associated exploring expeditions, had a direct impact on the development and settlement of the former DS region.

3.2 Exploration

Explorers and early settlers arrived in the 19th century to a land already occupied and steeped in local traditions. The land was considered unoccupied and proclaimed to be British land under the colony of NSW before becoming part of Queensland in 1859. Interactions between traditional owners and newcomers were frequently hostile, and at times fatal.

3.2.1 The discovery of gold on the Palmer River in 1872

During an era when the reports of gold triggered a rush of prospectors and settlers, and thus required associated infrastructure and administration, the Palmer and Hodgkinson finds prompted the Queensland Government to sponsor expeditions to north Queensland. William Hann, who was one of north Queensland's pioneer squatters, explored the interior of Cape York Peninsula in 1872 and reported gold on the Palmer River. James Venture Mulligan investigated this discovery a year later and received a reward of £1000 when the Palmer goldfield was proclaimed in 1875.

Access to the Palmer Goldfield was via the port of Cooktown. Prospectors would then make the long and, at times, treacherous overland journey to the goldfields. The first road to the Palmer was set out by Government Engineer for Roads, A MacMillian. At this time it was the only dray road to the goldfields. When this proved unsatisfactory, another route was investigated and the Hell's Gate track established as a pack track (but was not suitable as a dray road). In 1877, another road was laid out which took prospectors through Byerstown. Byerstown lies halfway between Cooktown and Maytown on the Palmer River.

3.2.2 Dalrymple's North-East Coast Exploring Expedition 1873

Following Mulligan's discovery of payable gold on the Palmer River in 1873, the Queensland Government commissioned George Elphinstone Dalrymple to lead the North-East Coast Exploring Expedition to explore the coast between Cardwell and the Endeavour River (Cooktown).

Travelling by boat from Cardwell, the party "noted all estuaries and promising looking valleys for

agricultural lands for exploration with more favorable weather" (The Queenslander, 15 November 1873: 6). In telegraphs back to Brisbane, they described the landscape features and attributes along the way:

> the Mossman and Daintree drain the Arthur Palmer Range, inside Schnapper Island. This range is nearly as lofty as the Bellenden Kerr, and is twenty five miles in length. New rivers have been discovered penetrating a jungle-clad country of thoroughly tropical character, covered with a new rich soil suitable for sugar and other tropical cultivation. The extent of this country is roughly estimated at in the aggregate half a million acres, thus at once placing Queensland on a par with other favoured tropical countries (*The Queenslander*, 27 December 1873: 3).

In April 1874 Dalrymple's report of the ranges and the Daintree and Mossman Rivers drew attention to the apparent fertility of the district and the intensity of the tropical climate:

> Between two lofty mountains, known as Palmer's Range and Thornton's Peaks … the rivers Mossman and Daintree were discovered, the Mossman being a small though beautiful stream, fully suitable for the carriage of the produce, stores, and machinery which will ultimately be needed for the cultivation of the rich lands on its banks. The vegetation is analogous to that of its corresponding rivers, cedar is plentiful, and the jungles were ablaze everywhere with the gorgeous scarlet clusters of "flame trees." The tropical season had now completely broken; deluges of rain, squalls, and violent thunderstorms were of daily occurrence, health was seriously affected, and return was inevitable (*The Queenslander*, 25 April 1874: 7).

Identifying and naming various landscape features was also part of Dalrymple's expedition, and his 1873 expedition map illustrates the early names given to particular places (see Figure 2). Island Point, for example, was the early name given for Port Douglas (although other names were used before Port Douglas was finally proclaimed). Daintree River was named after Government Geologist, Richard Daintree, while Mossman was named for Hugh Mossman MLA from Charters Towers. Dalrymple also named Mt Beaufort and Wyanbeel (sic) Point. According to local historians, Dalrymple also named "the low jungle range the Heights of Victory, and the Heights of Dagmar" (Dagmar Range) (Douglas Shire Historical Society, 2006: website).

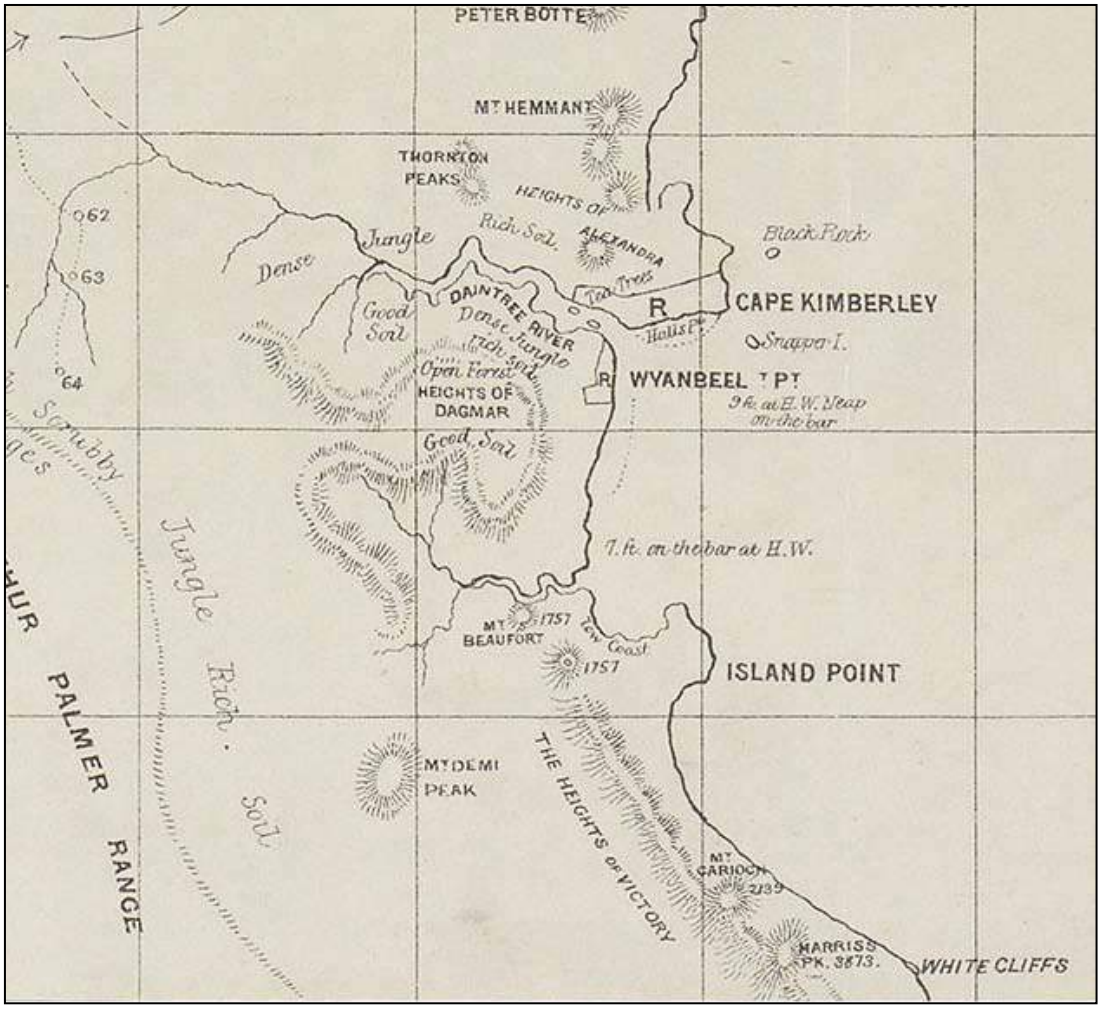

Figure 2: Section of Dalrymple's 1873 map of his North East Coast Expedition showing the Mossman and Daintree River areas (Source: State Library of NSW).

3.2.3 The Hodgkinson Goldfield

In 1876, hot on the heels of the Palmer River proclamation and the influx of European and Chinese prospectors, Mulligan also found the Hodgkinson goldfield. Proclaimed on 15 June 1876, the Hodgkinson goldfield was located south of the Palmer River district and to the west of the coast between Port Douglas and Cairns (see Figure 3).

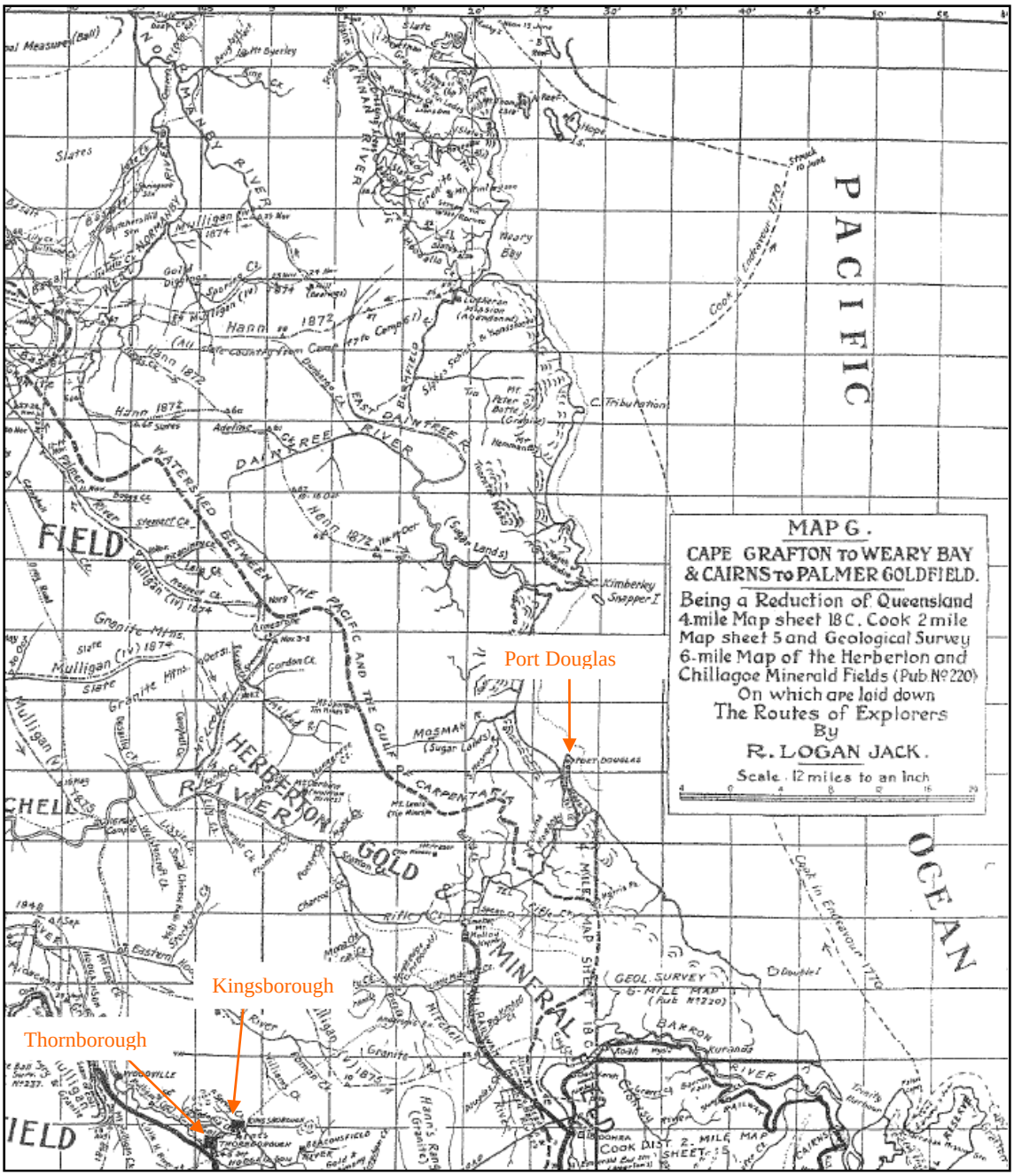

Figure 3: Map of Hodgkinson goldfield town's Thornborough and Kingsborough in relation to Port Douglas (Source: R Logan Jack, 1998).

Named after explorer and politician W.O. Hodgkinson (who also was the Mining Warden at Thornborough), the goldfields were initially accessed via Byerstown using Cooktown as the port. Reports of floods in April 1876, and clashes with traditional owners on the Normanby Range made the journey between the Hodgkinson and Cooktown difficult (*The Queenslander*, April 1876). Despite Government support for constructing a road between Cooktown and the Hodgkinson's main town Thornborough, residents of the new goldfield required a more direct, cost effective and reliable route to the coast. By August, buildings were being constructed at the new town of Thornborough and *The Queenslander* (12 August 1876) noted that a petition was being

prepared seeking funds for opening a new road to the field and a new port.

3.3 Access: the Hodgkinson goldfields and Port Douglas

Discoveries of gold and identification of access routes were critical to the development of the region. Although little gold was identified within the former DS region itself, the region's coast line provided the rationale for establishing settlements and selecting land as a means to access this potential inland wealth.

3.3.1 Christie Palmerston and the Bump Track

The Queensland Government, which had already designated Cairns as a port, sponsored the search for a route from Cairns to the Hodgkinson via Smithfield township (which lay on the Barron River further south). Cooktown merchants, wary about the development of a rival port, sponsored Christie Palmerston to identify a route inland from Island Point (Port Douglas) (Cook, M, 2008). Palmerston reported a track he had blazed "over the mountains to a possible port at White Cliffs, which is between Oak Beach and Pebbly Beach about 10 km south of today's Port Douglas" (Ford, L, 2009: 60). The track was inspected by wardens Mowbray (for whom Palmerston named the Mowbray River) and Hodgkinson in June 1877 and their associated report noted:

> Viewed in comparison with any route yet opened, this one claims the great advantage of saving in distance, cost of construction, and contingent prospects of the country to be opened, which if available would attract a valuable class of permanent residents, and aid largely in the development of the auriferous belts adjacent. Upon mature consideration of the outlay required to render this road practicable for dray traffic I consider £4000 sufficient. The site of the proposed township is a high, dry, and well supplied with pure water. Local attention is strongly directed to it, and the township allotments will be eagerly competed for (*The Queenslander*, June 1877: 7).

The Port Douglas – Hodgkinson Road, which became known as "the Bump" or "the Bump Track," was eventually inspected by the Government Deputy Surveyor General Davidson in July 1878. The first ascent was up a long straight ridge, along the spur south of the existing track (Douglas Shire Cobb & Co Committee, 1963). The track traversed the steep rainforest terrain of the ranges, extended through the dusty landscapes north west of Mareeba, and eventually arrived at the Hodgkinson goldfield towns of Thornborough and Kingsborough. Public meetings were held during the rest of the year and the government committed to spending more than £2500 to establish the road. In October 1878, a regular mail service was established, and the member for Salisbury "changed the name of the township to Douglas and the name of the port from Port Owen to Island Point, and announced it would be declared a 'port of entry' from 1 December" (Ford, L, 2009: 63). By 1878 a Road Board was established and began to investigate appropriate locations for the regions road transport.

The Bump Track required specific adaptation to enable teams to pass. A cooperative effort by teamsters, business people and Government bought about a new, easier route, however, this still required work to be accessible. The new route comprised additional deep side cuts and one direct cut through the ridge at a point known as 'Slatey Pinch'. 'Blackguard' was another steep pinch at which coach passengers generally had to walk both on the way up and down the range (Douglas Shire Cobb & Co Committee, 1963).

Alterations were made as late as 1882, when it was reported:

> The road at the Four-mile (Craiglie) is being attended to by a party under overseer Keogh. This is one of the results of the late visit of the Minister for Works. The divisional board are having this end of the same road (which nearly all the way to Craiglie is the unbroken stretch of sand) covered with gravel. This is a much-needed work, which will obviate the necessity of teams going along the beach and will shorten that route by about a mile (*The Queenslander*, 13 May 1882: 583).

Figure 4: Although this picture is from a later period, it demonstrates the steep terrain that early settlers had to traverse in order to get to the Hodgkinson Goldfields via the Bump Track. (Source: Prince, Keith & Valda in Willis-Burden, 2008: 29).

By 1880, 42 horse teamsters, 44 bullock teamsters and 29 packers were working the route. This continued until the Cairns to Mareeba railway opened in 1893 (Grimwade, G, 1991). Coach services also worked the track with Murphy & McDonald's Coach Service from Port Douglas to Herberton starting in July 1882. However by September, Cobb & Co had brought out Murphy & McDonald and was operating the service. The coach service was weekly until 1892 and twice weekly until 1904 (Grimwade, G, 1991).

3.3.2 Packers camps and the Mowbray Valley

Although the Bump Track established Port Douglas as the region's major port, with the settlement quickly growing into a bustling town, access from Port Douglas was not a direct route. Prospectors and passengers needing to make the journey from Port Douglas were taken through the coastal scrub, along the beach, past the teamster's village at Four Mile (Craiglie), through the Mowbray Valley, across the Mowbray River at Seven Mile (Mowbray) to the foot of the range and the start of the Bump Track ascent.

Craiglie was a packers' camp located approximately four miles from the business centre of Port Douglas. According to local historians, Craiglie:

was set up as a packers' and teamsters' [sic] village ... [where] the Ryan family owned one hotel and the other premises was known as Ruggs' Hotel. There was a blacksmith and farrier shop, a bakery, a butcher shop, a saddlery, a school near the tamarind tree and several homes. Land was also set aside for a police camp (Douglas Shire Historical Society: website)

Figure 5: Hotel at the bottom of the Bump Track, possibly Mullavey's (Source: Willis Burden ed., 2008: 29).

Facilities at Mowbray included "Gregory's pub, a blacksmith's shop, a butchers shop and homes of teamsters and packers" (Cairns Historical Society 1968 in Willis Burden, P, 2008: 26). A section of the Mowbray Valley was also used as a police camp, noted by local historians as being located on the eastern bank of the Mowbray River mouth (Pers. Comm. Noel Weare, 2011). This camp is mentioned in 1879 and 1881 in *The Queenslander* with reference to raids on farms by local Aborigines.

Figure 6: Mowbray School (Source: Severin Andreassen in Willis Burden, 2010: 5).

3.3.3 Port Douglas – the port for the Hodgkinson goldfields

Port Douglas quickly established itself as the major access port to the Hodgkinson. In doing so, it drew businessmen from Cooktown, Smithfield and Cairns, effectively putting the development of Cairns Port into decline. In June 1877, businessmen from Cooktown arrived on the SS Corea, captained by Daniel Owen, at Island Point and erected a wharf and timber stores. When Crown Ranger Morgan arrived on 16 June 1877 he "found a tent town of prospectors there and ... set out a street on the riverbank for a new township" (Allom Lovell, 2008: 10).

In October 1878, Surveyor Frederick Horatio Warner surveyed the township site:

> with a primary thoroughfare running beside the waterfront with secondary or cross streets flowing the contours of the land. Both Macrossan and Warner Streets extended beyond Warner Street to an esplanade along Dickson Inlet. This was clearly intended as a recreation reserve for the new town. Wharf Street ran toward the early wharf at the tip of Island Point and the landing area (Allom Lovell, 2008: 11).

It was officially named Port Douglas after Queensland Premier John Douglas in November of 1877, when Queensland Treasurer JR Dickson, Postmaster General CS Mein and John Macrossan MLA visited and proclaimed it as the Port of Entry for Dutiable Goods. There was a degree of relief in this, as the site had previously been known by at least five other names: Island Point, Port Owen, Owenville, Port Salisbury, and Salisbury. The survey of allotments allowed more permanent buildings to be erected. Key features were named after politicians, including Macrossan Street, Mowbray Street, and Dickson's Inlet, and Owen Street for Daniel Owen. Entrance to the port was initially via a stone pitched jetty on the coastline at the northern end of Wharf Street, which was later expanded.

Figure 7: Plan of Port Douglas, 1878 (Source: Douglas Shire Historical Society).

Government offices were transferred to the port and the gold escort was run between Thornborough and Port Douglas. This vote of confidence in the town by government meant that businesses were keen to establish in the town, with accommodation, hotels and trades being particularly prolific:

> Since the visit of the honorables the Treasurer and Postmaster-General, building operations

have received a fresh impetus. Mr. Jesse Turner's fine new building—intended for a family hotel—is nearly completed, and will be a grand affair. [Others] have both commenced the erection of extensive two-story buildings, which, when completed, will be ornaments to the town, as well as affording to lodgers fine airy bedrooms … Mr. John Walsh moved his large business establishment from Smithfield to this place, and Mr. G. L. Rutherford (of Rutherford and Crees, chemists), also from Smithfield, has established himself in business here (making the third chemist in town). Nearly all trades are represented except watch making and jewellery, saddlery, and boot and shoe making (*The Queenslander*, 15 December 1877: 7).

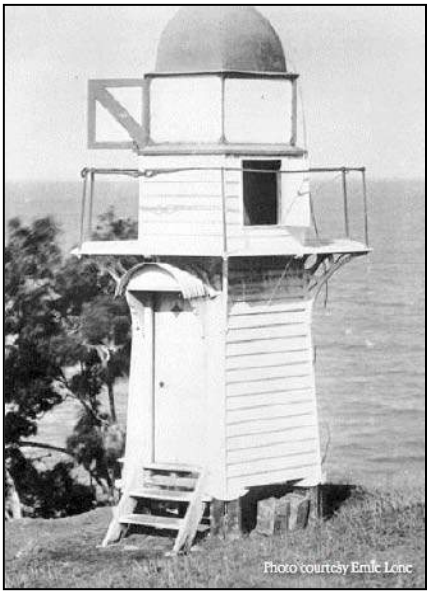

Figure 8: Port Douglas Lighthouse (Source: Ernie Lone, via Noel Weare).

In 1878 Port Douglas became the official administrative centre for the Cairns Divisional Board. The size of the area was quickly identified as too great, and the Douglas Divisional Board area was reduced to include the area between (approximately) what is currently known as Palm Cove and Cape Tribulation.

By 1878 the population of Port Douglas was reported to be approximately 400 (Walker, M, 1977). Key infrastructure completed in 1878 included the lighthouse on Low Isles, with the light first being illuminated on 16 November. A timber light house was also constructed at Island Point, Port Douglas c.1878.

Businesses constructed at this time included hotels, bakers, a butcher, blacksmith, chemists, news-vendors, timber merchants, billiard saloons, and auctioneers and land agents (Walker, M, 1977). Hotels were particularly numerous, with 18 licences and hotels listed in the 'North Queensland Almanac and Directory and Miners' and Settlers Companion' for 1878 (Douglas Shire Historical Society Bulletin 5, 1995). Many of the buildings were prefabricated in Maryborough and transported to the north, such as the Customs House and Post Office (*The Queenslander*, 19 January 1878: 29). This trend for prefabrication was not new: indeed Cooktown had a prefabricated post office during the early years of the settlement.

Port Douglas police barracks and court house were also erected at the intersection of Macrossan and Wharf Streets during this period, after the initial use of tents and temporary lock up cells. The court house was built by Thomas Waton in September 1879 and completed in November 1879. These early years also saw the construction of the cemetery, the Port Douglas hospital and a school house on Murphy Street, part of which is still extant.

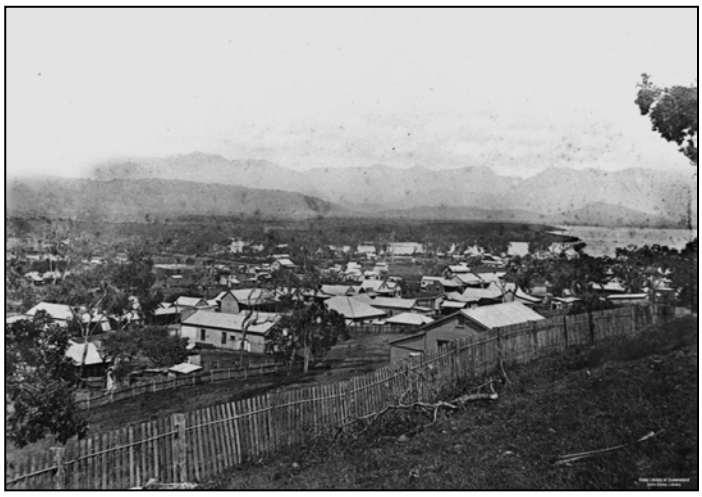

Figure 9: Aerial view of the township of Port Douglas, c.1885 (Source: State Library Queensland).

In addition to these land based improvements, the landing area at Port Douglas was also improved. This included the appointment of a pilot, a harbour master and boatmen. Further work was proposed in 1880. The creek was dredged but proposals for a jetty to be erected at the end of Macrossan Street adjoining the Customs house never eventuated (Allom Lovell, 2008).

In 1880 the discovery of tin at the Wild River in Herberton further enhanced the importance of Port Douglas as a transport hub. Additional links from the Tablelands to the port were created when a "branch from the existing Hodgkinson Road was constructed between Granite Creek [Mareeba] and Herberton to connect the new tin field to the Port" (Prince, K & V (ed), 1977: 8). However, the discovery also contributed to Port Douglas' demise. The relentless wet season of 1882 made the Bump Track almost impassable, and miners in Herberton suffered severe food storages. Their complaints to the Queensland Government resulted in a move to identify a suitable passage over the range for a railway. Palmerston was hired to scour the ranges to identify suitable spurs for consideration by railway engineers and then mark a line through the scrub for the chosen route. Between 1882 and 1884 fierce rivalry developed between Cairns, Geraldton (Innisfail) and Port Douglas, with each advocating their virtues as the most suitable region for a port and railway terminus. Cairns and Geraldton used the boom in the sugar industry to support their claim, while Port Douglas advocated its position as the operating port made it the logical choice for a coastal terminus. When the Government chose Cairns for the railway hub in 1885, development around Port Douglas stalled. When the railway opened in 1891, the Bump Track was no longer the primary means of transport for the goldfields and became mainly a passenger service route, particularly when the railway reached Mareeba in 1893 and Mount Molloy in 1908.

This major setback forced settlers around Port Douglas to seek alternative business opportunities. With Cairns firmly established as the region's major port and link to the mineral fields, it looked to the transportation of sugar to sustain it in the decade before the turn of the twentieth century.

3.4 Early settlers: timber getters, packers and agricultural settlers

Dalrymple's reports of the abundant natural resources throughout the district caught the attention of speculators and settlers alike to the land around the north tropical

coast – particularly around the Johnstone, Mulgrave, Russell, Mossman, and Daintree rivers. Reports of gold, rich stands of timber and fertile valleys drew European settlers to the region in the mid 1870s, first as timber getters and prospectors, then later as horticulturalists and cane growers. Their settlement required climatic adaptation to intense heat and humidity, unfamiliar terrain and tropical diseases, and adjustment to the region's flooding monsoonal rains and periodic cyclones. Such intense climatic conditions significantly influenced settlement patterns and locations, sometimes through forethought, but more often through experience.

3.4.1 Timber getters and the opening of Daintree

Although timber cutters were felling red cedar (toona australis) in the Bloomfield and Daintree River areas by 1874, few stayed on to settle in the area. In their rush to cut cedar, the timber getters decimated the forest, cutting huge swathes through the resource. Between 1874 and 1878, the Port Douglas Times reported 59 vessels had shipped over 4,741,000 super feet of cedar that had been floated or hauled down from the Daintree and Mossman Valleys. A correspondent from the Brisbane Courier also described the quality and quantity of timber stripped from the Mossman and Daintree areas in January 1880:

> Altogether from the Mossman forests 200,000ft is reckoned in round numbers to be cut down, of which 60,000ft. has yet to be drawn in to tidal water. On the Daintree there is 40,000ft awaiting a fresh about eight miles above the tidal water, and on Martin's creek, a large tributary of that fine stream, as much more is being drawn in and floated against Freshney's boom; this lot can only be got out at the top of high spring tides (*Brisbane Courier*, 3 January 1880).

Contemporary historians lament this unbridled exploitation of natural resources, but for the settlers and timber getters the cedar stands offered them a chance to make their fortune. Even so, in 1877, the Queensland Government proposed introducing a Forest Conservancy Bill, and reports in The Queenslander December 1877 directly addressed what they saw as the unchecked abuse of resources with no resulting benefits to Queensland:

> Two years ago valuable forests of cedar were found on the banks of the Daintree, the Mossman … To-day we are told that the supply from this source has almost come to an end … What was the value of these forests in their original state, and what benefit has the colony of Queensland derived from the trade which has destroyed them?...
>
> When the timber camps on the Daintree are abandoned, there will be no settlers left behind. We have in fact sold the magnificent cedar forests on the northern rivers to Victorian speculators for the paltry sum received as license fees, whilst their men were at work falling the timber, and a very bad bargain for the colony it has been (*The Queenslander*, 1877: 16).

The urgency of this statement was not fully addressed until Norman Jolly was appointed as Director of Queensland Forests in 1909. For many areas of the Daintree, however, Jolly's forestry and silviculture practices came too late.

Figure 10: A dairy house in the Daintree River (Source: *The Queenslander* 26 November 1887).

Despite the transience of the early timber industry, the first settlers in the Daintree were timber getters. Daintree's first permanent settler was John Whitehead Stewart who took up 160 acres of land on the northern side of the Daintree in January 1879 and formed a property called "Skeleton Estate" (Fay, T, 2007).

> Mr. Stuart's [sic] house is situated in a beautiful spot, as indeed are all the homesteads of the Daintree, for it is a river among grand mountains covered with tropical vegetation. Around the house is a neatly-kept garden of flowers and an extensive orchard of the usual tropical fruit trees …
>
> Exactly opposite to Mr. Stuart's [sic] private township of Allanton, upon which there is one house, the district post office, is the rival Government town of Daintree upon which there is also only one house—the Junction Hotel, kept by Mr. W. Bingham. This township reserve in 640 acres, all covered with dense scrub excepting the one quarter acre allotted to the hotel; it may therefore be surmised that business is not very brisk in either of these two commercial centres (*The Queenslander* 26 November 1887).

Another early settler was Frank Osborne who took up a two square mile selection on Stewart's Creek. Chinese settlers also played a key role in the region's development. They worked hard to clear the land and were involved in early and horticulture and rice growing. Other migrants in the 1880s, hopeful of a permanent settlement, grew horticultural crops in the rainforest and John Bingham and John and Elisabeth Mahoney established hotels and a store in 1883 (Fay, 2007). These activities provided work for the sawmill and gave rise to proposals to establish a sugar mill. Rain and heavy flooding, however, meant many settlers abandoned Daintree in 1883-1884.

3.4.2 Packers camps near Craiglie and Mowbray

Early settlers in the region included John James Montgomery, who applied for the first homestead selection of 160 acres on 3 August 1877. A member of the Queensland Acclimatisation Society,

Montgomery established "Mayfield" and planted more than 300 fruit trees and cultivated maize, sugarcane, oats and vegetables to sell to the teamsters (Kerr, J, 1995; *The Queenslander,* 17 June 1882). He was also a member of the Divisional Board, and, in partnership with John George Robbins, leased some of their land to Chinese migrants who cleared it and grew rice, bananas and other vegetables.

Other prominent settlers include Rudolf Berzinski who selected land near Craiglie and worked as a packer. He converted his land to cane and has a long line of descendents in the district. Cornish born John Tresize applied for land in 1878 and worked as a teamster and in agriculture (Kerr, J, 1995). The original Tresize home was destroyed by the 1911 flood (Douglas Shire Historical Society: website). The Reynolds family were Irish migrants who lived in a number of Queensland towns before James Reynolds opened a hotel at the Cattle Creek coach change on the Port Douglas Road and then purchased land in the Mowbray Valley. His son became a prominent cane grower at their property Mowbray Vale and member of the Douglas Shire Council (Kerr, J, 1995). The Connolly family were also early settlers in the region.

3.4.2 Agricultural settlers around Mossman

Agricultural settlers followed the timber getters from the late 1870s and supplied fodder, maize, rice and tropical fruits to the goldfields. Mossman was first called Hartsville, and then known as the Mossman River Settlement.

Mossman's first settler, Daniel Hart, migrated from Jamaica and cut cedar in the Daintree before moving to Mossman. In 1878 he leased land along the Mossman River and was granted a Homestead Selection in 1883, calling his property "Coolshade". Description of Hart and his property in 1887 revealed:

> "Dan" is an enthusiast in horticulture, and his garden is a veritable experimental station… He points with pride to the fine collection of fruit trees in his garden, nearly all of which he obtained in the first instance from the Acclimatisation Society… and he points with still greater pride to the grand results he has attained to (*Brisbane Courier*, 8 November 1887)

Like Montgomery, Hart was a member of Queensland's Acclimatisation Society. He established an orchard with 250 fruit trees (including coconuts, mangos, lychees and rambutans, an acre of sugar cane, and half an acre of sweet potatoes (and other produce) and constructed two slab cottages on his selection. Hart's decision to subdivide "Coolshade" into allotments for a town site was reported in *The Queenslander in 1884*:

> Up to the present no township reserve has ever been made on the Mossman, and now there is no room for one, as the only parts of the river suitable for such are all taken up. This selection and Wilson's, which is adjoining, are the only sites fit for such purpose, as they command the

deep water and the junction where the machinery for the Brie Brie plantation was landed (*The Queenslander*, 26 April 1884: 672).

Hart also donated part of his land to the Anglican Church in 1898 where the present day St David's Anglican Church and associated Raintrees currently stand.

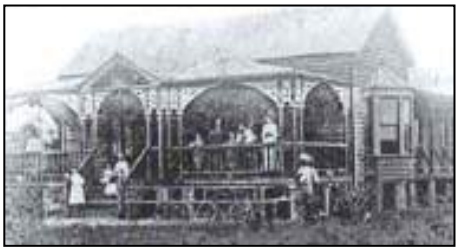

Figure 11: "The Cedars" (Source: Joe Noli in Willis-Burden, 2010: 72).

Other early settlers in the Mossman district included Mr Pringle who established "Fairymount", William Buchanan's farm called "Ellendale" and RO Jones who eventually established "The Cedars" on the northern side of Mossman River. Jones let land to Chinese workers and "erected a rice husking mill at Port Douglas for his Chinese tenants and operated a sawmill in Mossman for 11 years" (Kerr: 14). William Thomson, who selected land downriver from Hart in 1877, "built a piggery and planted mulberry, Liberian coffee and coconut trees" (Kerr, 1995: 12). John Crees selected land near Craiglie c.1880 and began dairying on his property "Ferndale" where he also established fruit trees and maize. In 1883, John Dorrens Johnston established "Mango Park" on portions 198 and 206 at Mossman while his brother Samuel Johnston acquired portion 134 which was known as "Drumsara".

Despite early agricultural endeavors, the district's excessive rain and poor soil productivity resulted in most of the region's land being converted to sugarcane. Between 1878 and 1891, nine sugar plantations became operational in far north Queensland (Bolton, G, 1963). Sugar plantations involved growing sugar cane and converting it into raw sugar in mills located on the property.

In 1882, Mrs Harriet Parker of Warrnambool in Victoria, applied for two square miles of land on the west side of the South Mossman River and established "Brie Brie". Determined to establish the districts first sugar mill, Mrs Parker took possession of the district's first sugar machinery in 1883. Foundations for the mill were completed in June 1883, and the first sugar was crushed on 5 September 1884 (Kerr, 1995). Although the mill only saw one year of crushing, it was an important step for the district. In 1887, new owners bought a new lease of life to the property. Reporters described the mill as:

> The mill is of but small capacity, as mills are now considered, but it possesses a good copper vacuum pan, and during the present season 60 tons of excellent sugar was turned out. The plantation is in a transition state, the new proprietor purposing to remodel the mill and its surroundings on modern lines… It had not been the intention of the management to crush cane at all this season and what sugar was made is from cane that was cut in order that the fields might be stumped, ploughed, and replanted…
>
> About twenty kanakas are employed stumping, also ten to a dozen Chinamen and four Europeans, who attend to the dynamite and the making of the fires. The ploughing is all done

by contract with a local resident selector (*Brisbane Courier*, 8 November 1887).

They also described "Brie Brie" farm and its situation in the landscape as:

> …romantically situated, the little valley of Brie Brie being completely surrounded by high mountains clothed to their very tops with the dense jungle growth of the tropics, and from the house veranda can be seen a mountain gorge-steep-sided, rugged, though with this ruggedness softened off with the rounded tops of the dark-green foliage vegetation-fully 2000ft. high, and up which no one has yet dared to climb. … it has an abundance of good water, has a scrub soil, a moist climate, and water carriage of only a few miles; certainly under good practical management it should become a profitable sugar producer - that is, if sugar producing can be made to pay at all *(Brisbane Courier*, 8 November 1887).

3.4.2.1 Chinese settlers

Chinese settlers were an important part of the broader DS region community during the 1880s. The 1886 census, for example, notes that Chinese made up 40% of the total population of Port Douglas (May, 1996). Apart from running stores, Chinese were also involved in land clearing and maize growing. They also established a Joss House at Port Douglas, which, according to sources, was constructed during the 1880s and dismantled as they moved to the Russell River goldfields and as the town went into decline (May, 1996).

3.4.2.2 Indentured labourers

Figure 12: "Kanaka Quarters at "The Cedars" plantation c.1883 (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

Plantation cane farming relied upon indentured Melanesian, Chinese, Javanese and Malay labour. Aboriginal labourers were also used on plantations, including the "Vilele" plantation near Bloomfield River and "Drumsara" in Mossman (Kerr, 1995). A few plantation owners erected slab huts, but most workers had to build their own accommodation (see Figure 10). Reports from "Drumsara" in 1886 note that the 'Kanaka' quarters comprised sleeping quarters made from split slabs and thatched roof and a separate dining shed (Kerr, 1995: 15). These migrant labourers (some of whom were part of the black birding slave trade) were integral to the harvest of cane and crucial to the early success of the sugar industry. Their ability to work in tropical conditions was considered to be far greater than white or European men and without these workers the industry would not have been so

prosperous.

3.4.3 The quest for central mills and the problem of indentured labour

The push for a central milling system was born out of the government's desire to create a state of yeoman farmers through closer settlement under the auspices of the 1884 *Land Act* (Cameron, D, 2005). It was also linked to the world-wide downturn in the sugar industry, high milling costs and small farmers struggling with limited access to plantation mills. At the same time, problems with indentured labour prompted the government to explore ways of restricting Melanesian workers and replacing them with 'white' workers. The recruitment and employment conditions for Pacific Islanders working on large plantations were an additional concern during this period. Allegations of kidnapping and exploitation surrounded their recruitment. Combined with Griffiths' support of the small farmers, these allegations, and riots that broke out in Mackay in 1883, resulted in the Government passing the 1885 *Pacific Islanders Act* to prohibit the importation of Melanesians after 1890.

These events were followed closely by farmers in the Port Douglas/ Mossman region. Despite the promise of the early sugar mill, "Brie Brie" mill ceased to operate by 1886. This was a setback for the region but did not deter locals - some, including JD Johnston, determined to set up their own (Kerr, 1995). The failure of "Brie Brie" also did not diminish the district's prospects in the eyes of Commissioner W.O. Hodgkinson. Hodgkinson, who toured Queensland's sugar districts in 1886 to identify suitable sites for central mills, assessed the flat land around the Mossman River area as having great potential for cane production He offered farmers £12000 to develop a central mill based on the use of white labour. In the north, however, the offer was rejected. Farmers relied upon indentured labour for their operations and the government's offer came with labour options and associated conditions that they believed were unrealistic.

By 1888 approximately 2800 ha in North Queensland were planted with sugar cane but plantation owners were struggling to maintain their operations (Griggs, 2000). By 1891 the amount of land used for growing sugar cane had halved and six out of the nine plantations with mills in North Queensland, including "Brie Brie" and "Vilele", had closed. In 1892, in response to the depressed state of the colony's sugar industry, the Queensland Government reversed its restriction on the importation of workers from the Pacific Islands and introduced new provisions preventing Melanesians from competing unduly with European labour in industries other than sugar (Johnson, WR, 1998). This was the precursor to the passing of the 1893 *Sugar Works Guarantee Act*, which changed the face of cane production in Queensland, including Mossman.

3.5 Conclusion

At the end of this first phase of development in the region there was a shift in the importance of the two main towns, Port Douglas and Mossman and a change in nature of local industry.

After the initial flurry of building activity in the town, Port Douglas had cut its close link to the Hodgkinson and was contracting due to the construction of the railway terminus in Cairns. Business and community facilities that had been established quickly in Port Douglas during its heyday began to look to other industry to support the struggling town. Timber getting at Daintree was also struggling, though this was mostly due to over exploitation.

The settlement at Mossman, on the other hand, was on the cusp of major development and sugar-related expansion. Having started as more of an agricultural settlement, its potential to produce good quality sugar brought it into prominence during the region's next phase of development.

4.0 1893 – 1945: Agriculture, administration and migration

4.1 Introduction

Between 1893 and 1945 the district at once expanded and contracted. With the advent of the Mossman Central Mill, Mossman attracted associated business and setters and grew rapidly. By the mid 1920s it became the district's administrative centre, a change that was subsequently expressed physically through the construction of substantial community buildings and administrative facilities during the 1930s. By the end of World War II, Mossman had attracted a range of migrants to the cane industry and was the district's premier town.

Once it lost its status as the hub for the Hodgkinson and as a sugar transportation port, Port Douglas slowly went into decline and became a quiet fishing village. Daintree gradually expanded its industry, with settlers pushing north of the river and settling around Cape Tribulation.

4.2 The rise and rise of the sugar industry

To understand the nature of the district's growth during this next period, it is important to understand the politics and economics behind the development of the central milling system. This system, and the associated expansion of sugar industry, was the impetus for most development throughout the district. It stimulated the construction of town infrastructure and community facilities, and was also the driver for new transportation networks and expansion north of the Daintree River.

4.2.1 1893 Sugar Works Guarantee Act

In 1893 the Queensland Government passed the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act.* This act allowed the government to lend money to groups of landowners on mortgaged, cleared, arable land for building central sugar mills without placing restrictions on their labour force. Authority for construction was granted to any district where there was sufficient cane available for profitable working. This made Mossman a prime candidate.

Existing small-scale canegrowers or other landholders interested in growing cane could form companies and mortgage their land to the government in return for up to £500,000 to erect new sugar mills. Farmers were expected to keep the mills fully supplied with cane. Mortgages on sufficient land used for cane growing had to be equal to the value of the money advanced for the mill. The funds were no longer tied to the proviso that the mills only accept cane grown and harvested by 'white' labour. Bids for the funds were assessed by the government's Valuator and Inspector of Central Mills, who also supervised the design and building of the mills chosen to receive funding.

(Griggs, P, 1997).

4.2.2 Mossman Central Mill

The 1893 Sugar Works Guarantee Act inspired farmers in the Mossman district to form the Mossman River Central Mill League. They convinced non-resident landowners to join the scheme and in December 1894 the Mossman Central Mill Company Limited was formed. In 1895, after further negotiation, the directors accepted landowner Tom Wilson's offer of 20 acres for the mill site at the junction of the two branches of Mossman River for £200 (Kerr, 1995). They also approached farmers from Saltwater Creek to join the League as their combined lands would demonstrate they had sufficient land to apply for the loan. Initially, Saltwater Creek farmers had wanted their own mill. However, the speculative nature of settlement in this area meant it was more practical to amalgamate with their Mossman neighbours (Kerr, 1995).

Landholders in Mossman River and Saltwater Creek were one of two districts in far north Queensland who successfully obtained a share of these funds (the other being Mulgrave – Gordonvale). With £35,000 secured, they were able to begin building the Mossman Central Mill. Land was set aside for the new mill site and the township of Mossman was created from a private subdivision. After an initial misunderstanding about who was responsible for developing plans for the mill and the role of the Public Works Department, the directors agreed to develop a mill with 4000 ton capacity, involving two six-foot mills. A. & W. Smith of Glasgow was awarded the tender for the sum of £34,000 with a planned completion date of October 1896 or May 1897.

Prior to the construction of the mill, a wharf and tramline were constructed to bring machinery and materials to the mill site. C.A.S. Andrews surveyed the tramlines and J.H. Rendall completed plans for the wharf. In January 1896 tenders were called for construction of the wharf on the Mossman River and for the tramline that would connect it to the mill. Construction of the tramway was awarded to Sutherland and funded by the government. By mid 1896 there were 40 men working on the tramway, which was completed in September 1896. The tramway's first job was to take mill machinery (that arrived from Glasgow on the Westfield) from the wharf to the mill site.

Figure 13: Mossman Central Mill Office c. 1920s (Source: Port Douglas Gazette in Willis Burden, 2010: 125).

The mill site was pegged out on 15 July 1896 and stone from a nearby quarry (possibly Bonnie Doon) was used in the mill foundations. Local residents Volkes and Brady cut timber for the buildings and Sutton and Glenden hauled it to the site. In addition to the main milling section, a number of other buildings were constructed onsite in 1897 to

facilitate operations. These early buildings, including a small cottage, a 20 room accommodation barrack and separate kitchens and dining rooms, are no longer extant (Kerr, 1995). They also included a two storey mill office that was constructed by G. Loch and set in a garden close to the river. The mill crushed its first cane in August 1897.

The mill played a central role in the social and economic life of the community. During the off season, the sugar room at the mill was used for social events, such as dances and balls (Kerr, 1995). The establishment of the mill also brought a number of hotels and other businesses to Mossman in the late 1890s. This includes the Exchange Hotel which was built by Denis O'Brien in 1896 and the double story Queens Hotel which was constructed of timber c.1897 (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Queen's Hotel, Mossman, c. 1897 (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

4.2.3 Mossman – Port Douglas Tramways

In 1895 Chairman of the Douglas Divisional Board, F.D.A. Carstens, announced that the Board intended borrowing £10,000 to build a tramway. This was made possible after the passing of the *Tramways Act 1882* which allowed registered companies or local authorities to construct tramways. The application was rejected on the basis that the mill had not yet been constructed. After another unsuccessful attempt in 1896, the Divisional Board made an application to build a two foot tramway from Port Douglas to Mossman with a branch to Mowbray River in November 1897 under the *Tramways Act 1890*. Carstens, who owned the Exchange Hotel in Port Douglas, stridently advocated for the tramway, extracting a loan of £22,000 from a reluctant government. The loan was approved in September 1898 on condition that the company guarantee the repayment of the loan so as to ensure the company would use the tramway. The company agreed and was given equal representation with the Divisional Board on the tramway's management committee.

The Divisional Board's tramway opened in August 1900. Initially it was managed separately from the mill tramways. However, when farmers were unhappy with the service, and when it began to lose money, the Mill leased the council's Fowler locomotive and cane trucks in 1905 and for an annual fee took over the responsibility for the transportation of cane on the council's tramway.

The tramway, which was used for both cane and passenger transport, gradually extended from Port Douglas to other areas around Mossman. A tramway depot was established on the corner of Mill Street and Front Street in Mossman, near the Mossman Triangle. Set back from the Mill Street tramline, the timber tram depot building and concrete platform was accessed via a spur line which diverted to the station.

4.2.4 Port Douglas Wharf

With Mossman Mill producing large quantities of sugar, there was pressure for suitable distribution networks in the district. In order to assist with the export of sugar from Port Douglas, the Douglas Divisional Board also erected two storage sheds on a wharf in 1896. These sheds were perpendicular to Dickson Inlet and projected into the channel. Lighters would be loaded with bagged sugar and ferry it to larger vessels anchored out to sea. With the completion of the Mossman to Port Douglas tramway in August 1900 these sheds became the storage points for sugar awaiting transportation.

In 1904 new work began on dredging Dickson Inlet. This work was accompanied by a proposal to construct a new wharf which would allow ships to berth alongside without using lighters and which would be accessible by rail. "Located at the end of Wharf Street and using day labour it was completed in October 1905" (Allom Lovell, 2008: 19). The new wharf was set out into the channel and was accessible by a rock causeway and timber bridge. The wharf and associated inlet, underwent a range of upgrades and changes during the 1920s and was used for sugar transportation and storage until the 1958.

Figure 15: Early photograph of sugar wharf (Source: Billi Noli).

4.2.5 Migrant workers

Figure 16: "Early South Sea Island workers employed on "Mango Park" and "Drumsara" (Source: Kerr, 1995: 73).

Pacific Islanders and Chinese workers were relatively commonplace in the Mossman district up to and including the 1890s. R.O. Jones worked with Chinese on his property "The Cedars", while many of the other plantations employed Pacific Islanders. In 1897, the Mossman Mill engaged 100 Pacific Islanders who were employed on a variety of farms around Mossman and Saltwater. Chinese who had leased land also tried to sell their cane to the Mossman Mill. This was permitted initially, but was quickly stopped amid rising complaints.

A number of Chinese workers are detailed in Kerr's (1995) research into the history of the Mossman Mill and which documents their initial foray into the sugar industry. Kerr also records that Japanese labourers were tried as an alternative to Pacific Islanders. Some of these were employed at the mill where three barracks and a small hospital was erected for their particular and exclusive use. However, a strike in 1900 bought this experiment largely to a close and their terms were not renewed with the company.

Figure 17: Indian workers in cane fields around Mossman (Source: Kerr, 1995: 78).

Indian migrant are also reported to have worked throughout the district, again, particularly in the sugar industry. Johnston and RO Jones both reported to have Indian workers in their "gangs" in 1905. Those farmers that took on Indian workers were required to build them a "humpy". (Kerr, 1995)

Restrictive (and divisive) immigration policies at the turn of the twentieth century had a major impact on the make-up of sugar communities in far north Queensland. The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* prevented various classes of people from immigrating and excluded people on the basis of literacy by means of a dictation test. The *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act 1901* prohibited the recruitment of Melanesians to Australia after 1904 and established a time limit for their repatriation (Cope et al, 1958). Both Acts caused concern for sugar farmers in the far north, because 'Kanaka'

labourers had a higher productivity rate than 'white' workers (Morton, 1995).

At the turn of the century, these 'white' workers were mostly Italians. The first labouring gang of Italian cane cutter worked at Bonnie Doon in 1906. Favourable reports of their work around the state prompted the mill to contact the Italian Consul and request a supply of labour (Kerr, 1995). Although this did not eventuate at this time, it is possible that this meant the influx of Italian migrants following World War I was regarded a generally positive. Starting in cane gangs, many worked until they could naturalise and purchase their own land and then bring out their families.

Other Southern Europeans gradually followed – particularly Sicilians, Yugoslavs and Maltese – and they became the major transient workers in the industry. They worked in gangs and lived in the cane barracks that farmers were required to provide, first under the 1905 *Sugar and Shearers Accommodation Acts*, and then more specifically under the 1915 and 1952 *Workers Accommodation Acts*. These barracks were commonplace throughout the region, and were built from local materials including timber and corrugated iron. Layout of these accommodation barracks appears to have varied from district to district. Although the L-shaped barracks with rooms leading to a veranda with a kitchen at one end appear to have been broadly used throughout the far north (from Tully to Mossman), it appears that Mossman farmers might have catered for more families and provided two bedroom cottage style barracks (Wills, 2009).

After World War II, during which many former migrants were interned, the cutting era peaked in 1955, with the industry employing 8754 cutters (Jupp, 2001: 492). Numbers declined after 1958, and by 1973, with the introduction of cane harvesters, the industry was fully mechanised. This meant that much of the accommodation related cane buildings were redundant, and many have been removed, destroyed or simply deteriorated through age.

4.2.6 Aboriginal workers

Farmers also used Aboriginal workers on plantations. John Dorrens Johnston, who established Mango Park on portions 198 and 206 at Mossman, was a keen to support the local indigenous population. He donated 64 acres of land at Mossman Gorge insisting it become a reserve for the local Aboriginal community.

> In 1915 the Chief Protector of Aborigines obtained unconditional leases for blocks of land that form the current Mossman Gorge Community. They were gazetted as Aboriginal Reserves in 1916. A Lutheran Church Mission was established on the reserve in the 1920s. As a result of various government policies and economic changes, Kuku Yalanji people gradually moved to the Gorge Reserve from their traditional camps at sites like Jinkalmu, Brie-Brie and the Junction on the Mossman River. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, 2010: website)

4.3 Moving from Port Douglas to Mossman

As Mossman expanded with the production of sugar, Port Douglas slipped into decline. Despite this ascendency, certain facilities were still located in Port Douglas at the turn of the century. Meetings of the Douglas Divisional Board were held in the "Divisional Board office on the corner of Grant and Warner Streets, which was removed to Wharf Street when the tramway between Port Douglas and Mossman was completed in August 1900" (Willis Burden, 2008: 105).

Figure 18: View of the town of Mossman showing the Mossman tram depot on Mill Street, c.1910. (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

In Mossman, the new town began to group up around the mill, with Mill Street being the main street and playing host to early facilities such as the tramway depot and hotels. Nearby a church was built on land that had been part of Daniel Hart's 1885 subdivision (and part of which he donated to the church in 1898). The first St David's Church was a simple gable-roofed timber structure, dedicated on Trinity Sunday on 29 May 1899 (DERM, 2010).

Figure 19: This could be the Mossman Butcher Shop, undated. (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

Although the post office, banks and hospital were still located in Port Douglas, it was clear that investment in Mossman took precedence over the ailing port town. Mossman Mill was not allowed to dominate business in the town which allowed a number of other companies and businesses to establish. This included prominent far north Queensland business Jack and Newell whose general store provided farmers and residents with machinery and general supplies for the cane industry. Farmers

also formed the Mossman Co-operative Butchering Company in 1904 which lasted until 1928 when it was taken over by a private company. Hotels were also numerous. Five hotels were established early on and, by 1906, Mossman had a reputation as a drinking town.

4.3.1 The 1911 Cyclone

Port Douglas' diminishing prosperity was exacerbated by two cyclones in 1911. These storms damaged the town on 10 February 1911 and again on 16 March 1911. The March 1911 cyclone was catastrophic: two people lost their lives (local councillor Andrew Jack and Joseph O. Brien) and there was extensive wreckage across the district. O' Brien was buried in the Port Douglas cemetery. Newspaper reports noted:

> The steamer 'Palmer' arrived last night from Port Douglas, bringing news of absolutely the most devastating calamity that could possibly overtake an already unfortunate township. The cyclone which was of extraordinary intensity, struck the scattered buildings which constituted the town of Port Douglas on Thursday evening last, and now but few buildings remain ... two sample rooms opposite McLean's Hotel collapsed, also the Shire Hall. St Mary's Roman Catholic Church Presbytery was blown to the ground, also St Andrew's Anglican Church, the Oddfellows Hall and the Joss House ... The lighthouse on the hill toppled over soon after the pilot had made his escape (*The Queenslander* 23 March 1911).

Damage to critical infrastructure occurred at both Port Douglas and Mossman, including both tramway stations, tramlines and the Mowbray River rail bridge. Images from Port Douglas just prior to the cyclone and then after illustrate the impact of the storm on the town (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Left: Buildings at Port Douglas, Queensland just before the cyclone, 1911; Right: the town following the cyclone. (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

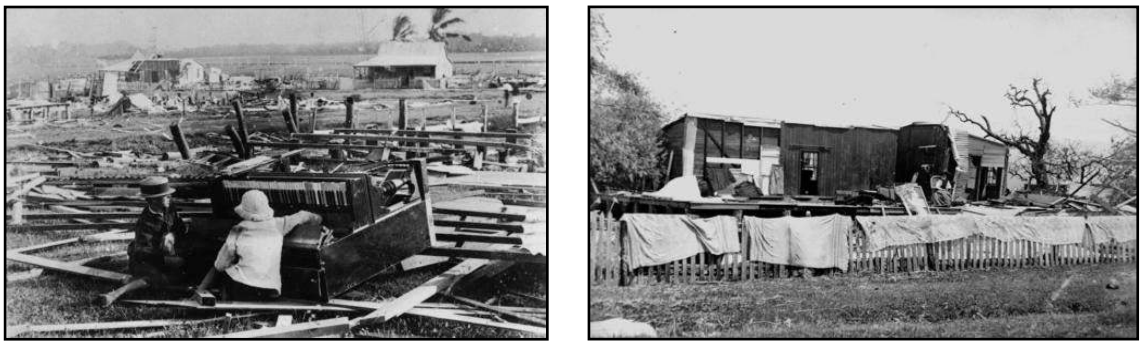

Figure 21: Left: Two children in Port Douglas in the aftermath of the 1911 cyclone; Right: Debris of a house at Port Douglas (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

The *Cairns Post* 24 March 1911 described the disaster as "tragic in its intensity" and, later, that the district had been "tempest swept and inundated (3 April 1911):

> Most of the people at present homeless at one time lived in houses which they owned — old buildings they might have been, but still they were as castles while they stood upright. There was no warning given of the cyclone. Many went from one place to another seeking for a time in vain for a refuge — leaving behind them everything except the clothing in which they stood — and that was still drenched, when dawn came.

Building losses after the storm included the Mowbray tramway bridge, shire hall, engine shed and store. Restoration of the Mowbray branch line cost more than £1000 (Kerr, 1995). Buildings damaged during the storm included the Port Douglas State School, the Court House Hotel and the Custom's boat shed on the wharf. Losses in Port Douglas weren't just physical: a number of residents decided to leave in the aftermath, determined to settle elsewhere.

Buildings and infrastructure in Mossman were also badly affected. Mossman Mill suffered damage to many of its ancillary buildings, including workers' accommodation, the manager's house and mess halls (see Figure 22). Other buildings affected in Mossman included St David's Church and the Roman Catholic Church, The Exchange Hotel, Callaghan Walsh's store, the Mossman Butcher Shop and Lunn's Coronation Hall, as well as many homes and farms.

Figure 22: Mossman Mill after the 1911 cyclone. Left: remnants of the Mill kitchen at Mossman; Right Single men's barracks at Mossman Mill, which were destroyed by the flood two weeks after 1911 cyclone (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

Figure 23: Damage to buildings in Mossman. Left: Lunn's Coronation Hall; Right: Remains of Mossman's Catholic Church (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

Although both Port Douglas and Mossman experienced widespread devastation, many of the buildings in Port Douglas were never rebuilt due to the uncertainty of its future. This state of uncertainty was underpinned by businesses gravitating to Mossman, and by an influx of both transient and permanent sugar workers to the more prosperous town. Services that moved to Mossman at this time included the Post Office. Plans from 1912 are evidence of this trend of moving buildings to more prosperous towns).

3.3.2 World War I

Following the destruction of the cyclone, many buildings had to be rebuilt. This included Mossman's Anglican Church which, under Reverand Taffs' guidance, was to be build from stone in an attempt to withstand the ferocity of storms. The stone was sourced from a quarry at Bonnie Doon and the Mill offered use of the tramway to cart materials to the site of present day St David's Church.

Despite the reconstruction required, the advent of World War I meant that many building projects were put on hold. Labour and material shortages meant that there was minimal development throughout the district during this period. Although personally significant for many individuals and families, the impact of the war in the district was felt at the social rather than an economic level.

Despite the lack of physical development, there were, however, a number of critical political changes during the war period. This included the Australian Workers Union-led strike of 1915 which called for better working conditions and wages. This led to the 1916 *Workers Accommodation Act* which required farmers to provide seasonal workers and gangs with food and quarters built to specific standards. Though not implemented immediately, this set the scene for the development of a range of cane barracks throughout the district.

Following World War I, the Port Douglas Red Cross Society wrote to the Douglas Shire Council requesting permission to erect a memorial to fallen soldiers. After a unanimous approval by council,

provisions were made for a reserve. The Soldier's Memorial was built with funds raised by the Port Douglas Red Cross Society. It was officially unveiled in 1923 by Mrs Tresize, who was the mother of the first soldier from Port Douglas to be killed during the First World War. The monument was designed and built by noted monumental masons Melrose and Fenwick of Townsville.

4.4 Mossman during the interwar period

Following World War I, there was renewed effort to establish industry throughout the district. Returned soldiers renewed demand for land and the area around Whyanbeel Creek was surveyed during the early 1920s. Further, an influx of migrants to the region, particularly Italian, increased sugar production substantially and meant there were more demand for services in the region. From the 1920s onwards, businesses set up in Mossman, and many others moved from Port Douglas. This included the Court House, and banking facilities.

4.4.1 Mossman Mill expands

As the Mossman Mill expanded during the early twentieth century it acquired new milling equipment. In 1924, Mossman Mill repaid the government loan in full. This significant achievement was celebrated with plans for a new mill and other equipment. A third mill, again built by A & W Smith, was purchased in1926 (current mill number 2). In 1935 Mossman Mill purchased a Walkers Mill making it the first mill to integrate a two roller, continuous pressure feeder (current number 5 mill) (Kerr, 1995). These continuous improvements in equipment have kept the mill competitive, but have compromised much of the mill original material fabric.

Figure 25: Mossman mill, showing the office, tramway and back of the milling shed (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library Queensland.

4.4.2 Mossman becomes the administrative centre

By the end of the 1920s, Mossman was, to all intents and purposes, the administrative centre of Douglas Shire. However, as the Douglas Shire Council still met in Port Douglas, the need to move the council services to Mossman became pressing.

In 1932, Queensland Government amended the *Local Authorities Act* so that governments in

council could subdivide shires into divisions for election purposes. Douglas Shire was divided into five divisions and all but one of the new divisions had one council member. Division three (Mossman River to South Mossman River) had two council members which gave residents of Mossman greater council representation and influence. When the new council was elected in 1933, R.D. Rex was elected Chairman. Rex moved immediately to support suggestions by Mossman Chamber of Commerce that the town be declared a municipality so as to improve the town's infrastructure, particularly, water services and street light electrification.

Rex's determination to improve the town did not result in the declaration of a municipality. However, his vision for infrastructure projects can also be seen in his advocacy for a coastal road to Cairns, the establishment of new services in the district and in his plans for a new Shire Hall.

4.4.3 Cairns to Port Douglas Coastal Road

Figure 26: Building the Cairns- Port Douglas Highway. (Source: Billi Noli).

Rex's call for a coastal road illustrated the changing nature of transportation during the 1920s and 1930s. As motor vehicles were increasingly favoured over tramways, roads rather than tramways took precedence. The use of the Port Douglas to Mossman tramway declined during this period and by the time the Captain Cook Highway between Cairns and Port Douglas opened in 1933 a depot was no longer required. The land on which the Mossman depot, platform and spur line stood, which had been owned by council since 1903, therefore became available for development. The buildings and line were removed in 1934.

Work on the extension of the Cook Highway (Cairns to Port Douglas Road) began in 1931 as part of the Forgan Smith Labor Government Unemployment Relief Scheme which was designed to support employment throughout the state during the Depression. In conjunction with the Intermittent Relief Work Scheme, and projects managed by the Bureau of Industry, this initiative served to assist the economy during a period of financial instability (DERM, 2010: QHR Citation 602758). Initially the construction of five timber bridges at Turtle Creek, Tin Creek, Hartley's Creek and two others past Hartley's were required. The road was then constructed as well as two toll

houses – one at Buchan's Point, the other at Pebbly Beach (Ford, 2009). The road was seen as a vital communication link, but was also valued as a tourism asset. Herb Evans, one of the road construction workers, established a house at Hartley's Creek following the road construction. This later became Hartley's Creek Crocodile Farm when Evans got a Lands Department lease in 1934 (Ford, 2009).

4.4.4 Infrastructure and community facilities

Figure 27: "Early view of a street [Mill Street] in Mossman, ca. 1930." (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

Under the Council's guidance, Mossman grew substantially during the interwar period. This was partly due to the success of sugar, but also partly due to the Council's ability to take advantage of government funding programs and schemes. This included developing a water scheme and the provision of a hydro electricity scheme from Rex's Creek. Further, electrification was also carried out (under the auspices of the new state-wide Electricity Regional Boards). By 1929 there were six schools in the district.

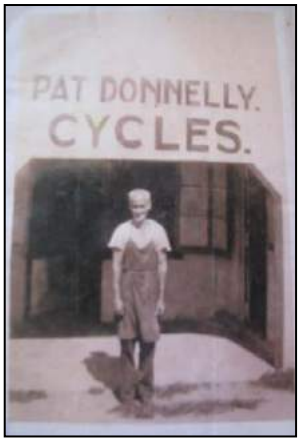

Figure 28: Pat Donnelly's Cycle shop was located under the stage of the new hall. (Source: Norm and Rita O'Donaghue, undated).

The Mossman Shire Hall was built under the auspices of the Forgan Smith Labor Government Unemployment Relief Scheme. Designed by architects Hill and Taylor, the building aimed to express confidence and progress in the burgeoning sugar town. However, the process of building the hall was not smooth. Problems with contractors, design and structure caused a number of delays. Despite this, the final building included a new shire hall, council chambers, administrative offices and four commercial shops. In addition, there were a number of temporary shops in the back of the hall, all of which provided the community with a range of services.

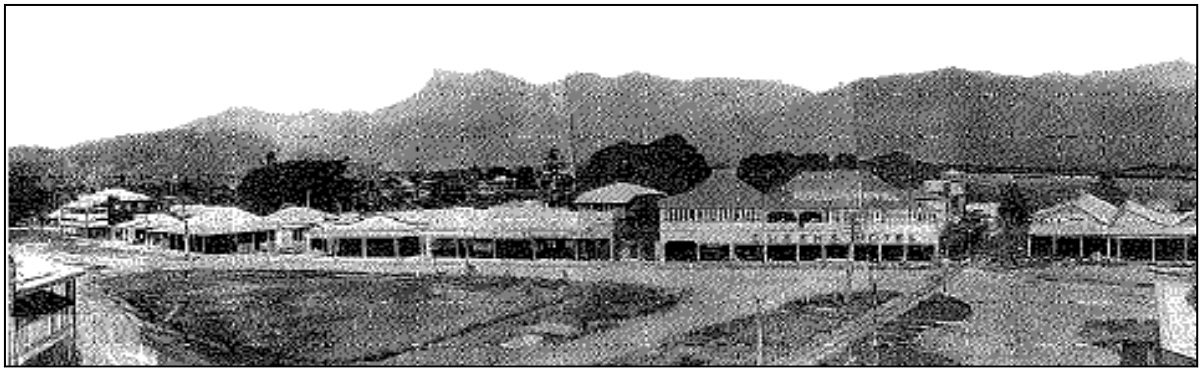

Figure 29: View of Front Street Mossman from the Town Hall, c.1936 (Source: Willis Burden, 2010: 136).

Figure 30: Mossman Hospital, c.1946, (Source: National Archives of Australia).

Figure 31: The first national bank of Australasia building in Mossman. (Source: National Australia Bank Archives).

Other significant buildings constructed in Mossman during the 1930s included the hospital and the National Bank of Australasia. After much pressure, a new hospital was designed by north Queensland architects Richard Hill and A.J. Taylor. It "was built by contractor J.J. Riley for the Port Douglas Hospitals Board, and was opened on 23 August 1930 by J.A.C. Kenny MLA, the State member for Cook" (DERM 2010). Originally designed to be a pavilion type of hospital, Hill and Taylor amended the plans in 1928. The complex had Spanish Mission style concrete façades and included nurses' quarters and a superintendent's residence (see Figure 30).

The National Bank of Australasia established temporary premises near the Exchange Hotel in Mossman c.1929, prior to building a permanent bank in 1935 (see Figure 31). The new bank, located on Mill Street, was designed by notable architect Brisbane Lange Leopold Powell and was a "small but prominent building in the main commercial precinct of Mossman, with a façade designed to impress and reassure patrons of the banking institution's financial stability and probity" (DERM, 2010).

In recognition of the growing population, the Catholic Church also engaged in the building during the 1930s. This was a significant undertaking for the Church, which had not had a resident priest in the area for many years. In 1934, a presbytery to accommodate a new priest was built, adjacent to a site

for a planned church-school and convent. St Augustine's school and convent were designed by Victor Brown, who designed of many buildings in north Queensland. 1934 also saw "the opening of Mossman Lodge, No. 52, of the Grand Lodge of Queensland, R.A.O.B. There was a full master of District Grand Lodge officers, and about 30- other members of the Order from Cairns, Redlynch and Gordonvale, whilst other visitors were present from Innisfail, Atherton, Malanda, Tully, Western Australia and Bristol (England)" (*Cairns Post*, 3 July 1934).

Figure 32: Augustine's Presbytery, Church School and Convent, Mossman, undated. (Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

4.4.5 Commercial businesses

The interwar period also saw a range of commercial businesses establish in Mossman. The Lunn family were involved in a number of businesses on Mill Street, including the Post Office Hotel, Photoplay Picture Theatre, garage and the Ford sales shop at the present day Welcome Mart.

Figure 33: Lunn's Photoplay Picture Theatre and garage on Mill Street, undated. (Source: Billie Noli).

Businesses included Jensen's cordial factory, next to the Royal Hotel and the Jack and Newell Store. The latter was rebuilt in concrete block during the 1930s in a prominent location overlooking the Mossman triangle.

Zeigler's newsagency was formerly located next to the tramway station. With the construction of the new shire offices, which incorporated four commercial shops, Aldridge's took over the newsagency business. The other three shops were occupied by a milk bar, a chemist and a cafe. At the rear of the hall, Pat Donnelly ran a cycle shop.

4.5 Daintree and Cape Tribulation during the interwar period

Like Mossman, settlers in the Daintree were keen to form a company under the 1893 *Sugar Works*

Guarantee Act and develop a mill in the Daintree. Their bid, however, was not successful. Following the 1916 enquiry into establishing new sugar mills, difficulties in transportation, the remote location and high establishment costs meant that the Daintree settlers were, again, unsuccessful and they were forced to look to other industries.

4.5.1 Daintree settlement

Figure 34: Butter factory and sawmill at Daintree (Source: National Library of Australia).

Although the cattle industry was well established in the district by the 1920s, there was still a need for more industry to sustain the settlement. Lucas Hughes was responsible for the revitalisation of Daintree Village after he arrived in 1920 to buy beef cattle and saw its rich grass and dairying possibilities. Hughes and Tom Kilpatrick with Henry Skennar and A.S Porter formed the Daintree River Development Company in 1922:

> The objects of the company are to provide cold storage at the Daintree River and elsewhere for 'perishable, products, and to deal with dairy farms and all other food products in every way practicable, by purchasing, manufacturing, producing, storing, selling, carrying or exporting the same and also to erect a refrigerating factory at the Daintree River for the' manufacture and storage of butter, cheese, bacon, dairy farm and other products. (*Cairns Post*, 19 October 1922).

They erected a butter factory and a sawmill, and created the site for the present day Daintree township. They also built a manager's residence and Osborne's grocery store, erected a school in 1925, and built the Red Mill House in 1930 (which was also known as "Tremaine"). Features of the town were described by a newspaper reporter as:

> A modern well equipped and well managed butter factory now, for the betterment of all occupies the ancient hotel site. A useful little sawmill is kept continually on the buzz to turn out local and district orders. Osborne Bros. supply the water transit for passengers, pigs and general freight with a couple of good and well handled junior sized motor vessels' also run mails, and [run a] … well managed store (*Cairns Post*, 29 October 1929).

4.5.1.1 Daintree River Mission

In 1926 an Aboriginal reserve mission was gazetted but was not settled until 1940. The Daintree Mission was first established in 1940 with seventeen huts constructed of grass and old timber with dirt floors. Despite questions about the steepness of the land, the mission soon built several rough timber huts, some with timber floors and tin roofs.

Figure 35: Daintree River Mission state c.1940s/1950s (Source Bennet Walker in Willis-Burden, ed, 2010:11).

Pastor H.S.G. Davidson ran the mission until December 1945. In 1947 the Assemblies of God Church offered to sell the mission to the Government but the purchase was not approved. The church then attempted to offer the mission to the government under a deed of trust but this option was also rejected. The mission closed in 1962, and most families were moved to the community at Mossman Gorge.

4.5.2 North of Daintree River – China Camp and Bailey's Creek

Land north of the Daintree River was not officially settled until the 1930s. Until this point there had been only minor exploration of the area, such as cedar cutters during the early exploratory period and some early prospecting for gold and tin around the Daintree. In 1890, John Moffat took up 2560 acres of land near Bailey's Creek and used Pacific Islander labour to clear the land. It was abandoned, however, when it became illegal to use Pacific Islanders (Willis Burden, ed, 2008).

Tin was discovered by R Baird c.1913 at China Camp, a small settlement located Roaring Meg Creek, a tributary of the Bloomfield River, (*Cairns Post* 18 February 1919). The finds were not extensive, but in 1926 there was renewed interest in a gold discovery around the area. The finds were treated seriously by Port Douglas and Cooktown settlers, with groups of men setting out to prospect and who set up a camp in the area. However, the finds did not make a big impact on the district's industry.

The push to settle land north of the Daintree River was pioneered by the Mason family who selected land at Bailey's Creek near the Cape Tribulation area in the 1930s. The Mason family initially tried to establish a banana plantation in the district during the Depression era. Although they were in the area during the mid 1930s, they did not officially select land until 1936. Their settlement included tropical crops, timber cutting and cattle, and their original homestead was called Noosa.

4.5.3 The 1934 Cyclone

Reports of a strong cyclone that crossed south of Cooktown near Cape Tribulation on 12 March 1934 bought news of extensive damage and destruction.

> On the south side of the Mossman River more than 15 houses were destroyed, and China Camp, near Mossman was razed to the ground. The banana growing settlement known as Almason's was seriously damaged. Floods damaged some of the Northern tobacco farms. The Low Isles were swept, and the light station outbuildings and the Laboratory of the Great Barrier Beef Committee were destroyed. Heavy loss of life occurred owing to luggers being sunk or battered to pieces. The list of drowned or missing, totals 76 person. The luggers lost or missing include the Waikato, Mossman, Quest, Norman, Mildred, Rotophis, and Way We Go (*The Queenslander*, 22 March 1924).

Initially the Mason family had settled closer to the beach at Cape Tribulation but were wiped out by the cyclone and decided to move back into the bush for protection. They milled the red cedar for a new homestead on site and the present day (house that has also been used as a store) was built with cyclones in mind (Pers. Comm, Laurence Mason, 16 April 2011). Conscious of the impact of damaging winds, the eclectic roofline that remains intact demonstrates Mason's belief that the different elements broke up the wind.

4.6 World War II

Figure 36: Four Mile Beach being used as a landing exercise area (Source: Australian War Memorial).

World War II had a major impact on far north Queensland. The area was used as a training camp and base, with troops being located in various towns within the district. Four Mile Beach at Port Douglas featured regularly as a location for military landing exercises. It was also used as a landing strip for planes.

Military use of facilities was commonplace across the region. Regular dances were held in the Mossman Shire Hall and the picture theatre was used to broadcast newsreels.

While many local men joined the army, many of the migrant cane cutters and farmers were interred for the duration of the war.

Significant infrastructure and events that affected the district during this period included the construction of the Rex Highway over the range to Mt Molloy by the US 2/15 Engineers. Further, explosives were put along the Bump Track in the event of a Japanese invasion (Doulgas Shire

Figure 37: A boomerang aircraft of no. 5 squadron RAAF is strafing the beach during the 6th division invasion exercise (Source: Australian War Memorial).

Historical Bulletin No.4). On 31 July 1942 a Japanese aircraft dropped a bomb on the Zullo farm, eight miles north of Mossman near Syndicate Road. Carmel Zullo, aged two, was grazed by the shrapnel that pieced the iron house and was the only civilian casualty in Australia during World War II.

4.7 Conclusion

By the end of World War II, the DS region has undergone significant change. As a settlement it has matured. It had infrastructure befitting an independent council and distance and isolation, though still an issue, did not present as great a challenge as in earlier years. Running on the back of a successful sugar industry and associated mill, Mossman was occupied by a range of long term settlers as well as an influx of migrants and seasonal labourers. This mix of residents required a range of different public, social and commercial facilities.

The shift from Port Douglas to Mossman was firmly established, with Port Douglas becoming all but a quiet fishing village. Daintree, while still isolated, was slowly growing though still struggling with the high rainfall and associated flooding, while land around Cape Tribulation was starting to be settled and used for farming. This period, therefore, can be seen as one of foundation setting, one which provided the district every opportunity to expand in the future.

5.0 1946-onwards: Sugar, tourism and conservation

5.1 Introduction

The post war period has been dominated by three major activities, and a general period of services expansion. Sugar has continued to be the backbone of the region's economy, though tropical fruit production has also been an important local industry, particularly around the Daintree and Cape Tribulation districts. The fishing industry was also important to to Port Douglas between 1960s and 1970s, particularly with regards to the prawn industry.

The changing nature of the tourism industry has been instrumental in bringing Port Douglas back to life – it has evolved from sleepy fishing village to being a major tourist destination. Fishing charters, snorkelling and diving have become highly sought after leisure activities for national and international tourists.

In conjunction with this tourism push, conservationism has played a major role in the district's development. Battles to preserve the Great Barrier Reef and sections of rainforest dominated the 1970s and 1980s and the ensuing success has seen the formation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, both of which have become a major tourist destinations.

The post war period has also experienced a growth in service provision. This includes the provision of electricity via the Cairns Regional Electricity Board Track through the Daintree and Bloomfield, and the continual development and improvement of transportation networks.

5.2 Sugar – expansion and diversification

Mossman Mill continued to prosper post World War II. In order to remain competitive, all mills underwent expansion programs during the 1960s. Mossman Mill installed a seven-foot unit in 1964 (current mill number one) and another in 1965. One of the original mills was replaced in 1988/9 by a mill from the Bundaberg Foundry (Kerr, 1995). Other equipment and buildings at the Mossman Mill have been changed constantly in order for the mill to remain efficient. The additional processing equipment includes tipplers, carriers, shredders, boilers, clarifiers, caustic tanks, pans, crystallisers, centrifugals, driers and evaporators.

In 1971, Mossman Mill gained prominence as the world's first sugar mill to install a computer to control the manufacturing process, gather research data and improve the mill's operational capacity (Kerr, 1995).

These improvements in technology and transport had the potential to increase the sugar industry's productivity and reduced the number of staff. The development of an electronic data processing system designed to reduce time spent on calculating the relative analysis payment system for cane was an important innovation for the industry and the Mossman Central Mill was the first mill in the world to integrate this system into its operations. Initially, this involved collecting data tapes at the mill and sending it to Brisbane for analysis. As the prices of computers fell, however, the Mill decided to invest in an on-site computer and purchased and installed an IBM model 1800 Process Control computer in 1971 to control the milling process. They constructed a small besser block room adjacent to the mill office to house this initial computer. The computer has been replaced, and the original is now housed in the Australian Sugar Museum in Mourilyan (Kerr, 1995).

In 1972 the Mill continued its computerisation program, investing in an automatic weighbridge. This worked in tandem with the other system, and eliminated the need for manual recording from this point. Computerisation of the milling system continued in 1973 when "the milling train – including the two original reciprocating steam engine mills installed in 1897 – was controlled by the electronic servant" (Kerr, 1995: 157). The new system with its associated consoles and machinery, was housed in the milling train control and effet room, a small room of ribbed profiled metal sheeting located near the milling train within the factory. This was followed by computer control of the clarification process in 1975, and the control of the powerhouse. New management systems required installation of closed circuit television to monitor operations.

5.2.1 The mill diversifies

Mossman Central Milling Company has been an industry innovator, having diversified to incorporate tourism ventures, such as the Bally Hooley tourist train and an onsite mill museum, as well as a prawn farm. Further, the evolution of infrastructure, machinery and manufacturing processes, sugar transportation and the diversification of the industry into other activities demonstrate the central role the Mill has played in developing and sustaining the Mossman region.

Although the Bally Hooley tourist train and prawn farm have been sold, and the museum has closed, the mill has continued looking for new ventures. It is well known for its innovation in creating low GI sugar, and has more recently explored the possibility of diversifying into chocolate manufacture.

5.3 Port Douglas reborn: a new tourist Mecca

The rise of the tourism industry is inextricably linked with transportation and access. Wider roads, cars, more reliable trains and, subsequently, the advent of affordable air travel have meant that the region is accessible to a broader section of society.

As noted in the previous section, the opening of the road between Cairns and Port Douglas had a major impact on the region's development and tourism potential. In 1949 the main runway at Cairns Airport was extended to accommodate larger aircraft and allow more tourists into the area. Between 1962 and 1967, the airport was upgraded and the runway was extended and strengthened so that jets could land. These improvements brought greater numbers of tourists to the region. The airport was redeveloped again in 1984, this time opening an international terminal.

Figure 38: White Cars (tourism operator) at Rex Lookout on the Cairns – Port Douglas Road, c.1950s (Source: Paddison in Willis Burden, 2010: 26).

Access, however, is not the only requirement for tourism. A gradual change in tourism attractions and activities also emerged during the post war period which saw the seaside and beaches becoming more attractive than inland waterfalls and high country. In 1947, this was put into practice with the Tourism Development Board for the State of Queensland undertaking an assessment of the Great Barrier Reef for its tourism potential (Thorp, 2008). This report was the instigator for promoting the reef, and northern Queensland, as a winter playground and they developed a targeted campaign to lure tourists to the region.

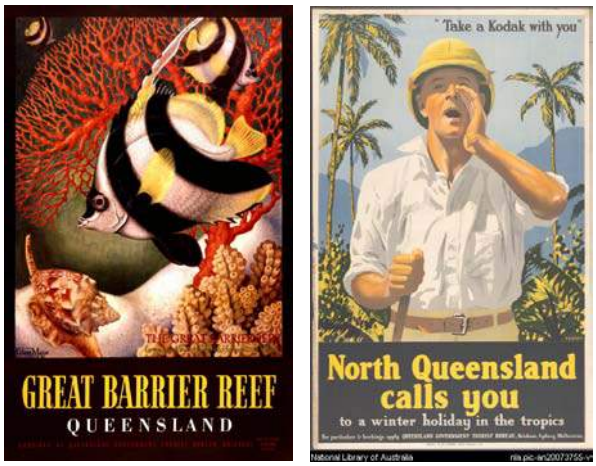

Figure 39: Advertising north Queensland and its tourism attractions. Left: Eileen Mayo travel poster, 1963; Right: Percy Trompf, 1950, (Source: National Library of Australia).

Taking advantage of the declaration of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in 1975, Jim and Jo Wallace from Quicksilver became the first commercial operator taking tourists to Low Isles in 1970. In 1983 they installed the first reef platform at Agincourt Reef. Snorkelling and diving on the Great Barrier Reef has become a major tourism drawcard for the town, and has stimulated other tourism related businesses, including accommodation, restaurants and other commercial activities.

In the 1980s, Port Douglas was put on the map by entrepreneur and former journalist, Christopher Skase, who took advantage of the newly opened Cairns International Airport. In 1988 he built the Port Douglas Sheraton Mirage, a five star resort backing onto Four Mile Beach. In September 1988, the new Marina Mirage opened, also part of Skase's vision for Port Douglas. This luxury facility, which was designed to service the guests at Sheraton Mirage, also allowed the cruising, sailing and

pleasure boat industries to flourish during this period. Although some have called Skase's legacy dubious due to the collapse of his Quintrex media and tourism enterprise, (ABC, 2001), there is no doubt that his vision influenced the opening of the region to international tourism. Some locals also argue that his influence is evident in the town's vegetation. This is certainly the case with the oil palms along Davidson Street which have become an entrance feature of the town.

Figure 40: View of the land that Marina Mirage now stands on, c.1977 (Source: Noel Weare).

5.3.1 Other tourism ventures

Tourism didn't centre entirely on Port Douglas and the reef. In the 1950s, the Douglas Shire Council took over the running of the Daintree Ferry which had been started in the early 1950s by George Quaid and his son. The council shifted operations from the original site upstream and eventually installed a cable drive barge.

5.4 Conserving the reef and rainforest: world heritage listing and eco tourism

During the late 1950s and 1960s, Queensland's coastal environments were under threat from rapid development stimulated by a boom in resource exploitation. John Busst, north Queensland resident and conservationist, observed large areas of rainforest being felled for sugar and banana cultivation and cattle, with subsequent wet season rain pouring topsoil out into the ocean. This resulted in pesticides, nutrients and phosphates being flushed out to sea and onto the Great Barrier Reef, which was also under pressure from unsustainable fishing practices and infestations of the crown-of-thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*).

Busst actively campaigned for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef and his battle became world renowned when he and a number of environmentalist groups challenged the Premier and the Ministers for Tourism and Conservation and the Director-General of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau. The ensuing campaign was highly political, with Büsst and his supporters linking the leases to the State government through the shareholdings in Exoil No Liability held by a number of ministers as well as the Queensland Premier, Joh Bjelke Petersen. The campaign broadened and pressed for the Commonwealth to wrest control of the reef from the State. Although Busst died in

1971, the Commonwealth took over management of the Great Barrier Reef in 1975 and established the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act and the world's largest marine protected area. This formed a precedent for challenging the construction of a coastal road between Cape Tribulation and Cooktown, and was a precursor to the formation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

5.4.1 Daintree and the Bloomfield track

First attempts to upgrade a track came in 1968 when a privately funded group of local farmers bulldozed a track through what was Timber Reserve 165. They felt that a coastal road link through to Cooktown would improve their land values. The track was narrow, avoided large trees, and was not gravelled or bituminised, with sections exceeding 33% (1:3) in gradient. It was open for a few weeks before the rain closed it. In 1978 a land developer attempted to reopen the road but again, rain and terrain proved too difficult.

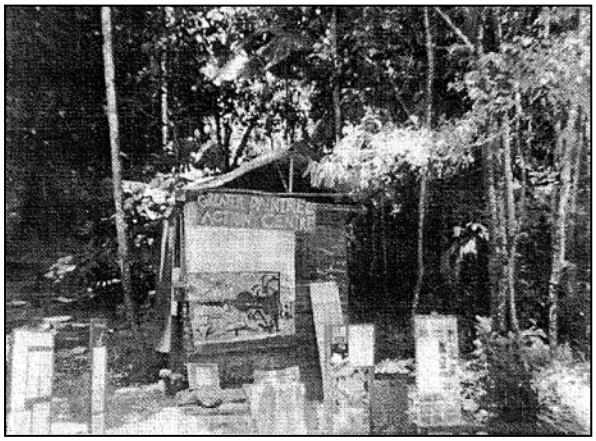

Figure 41: Protesters hut in rainforest near the site for the Bloomfield track, just after Cape Tribulation (Source: unknown).

Over the next 14 years the track was, essentially, a walking track. However, botanical research conducted during this period found that the flora of the area was rare and demonstrated major stages in the evolution of land plants, from the very first land plants to higher plants (Gymnosperms and Angiosperms), and was also an example of one of the most important living records of the history of marsupials and songbirds. This research coincided with the area being visited by increasing numbers of tourists. This saw the beginning of the Daintree's metamorphosis from a farming area (timber and dairying) to a tourist destination. In 1980 another attempt was made to redevelop the track. However, as it went through private property at the Bloomfield end (block 13V), and the owner at that time demanded that the bulldozers stop. In 1981, The Cape Tribulation National Park was gazetted, and by 1983, the track had regenerated sufficiently to make a good walking track.

At the same time, plans for a widened, gravelled Bloomfield Road were revitalized. The Douglas Shire Council argued that greater access to the area was needed for tourists, aged and residents of Cooktown, Helenvale and Rossville. Conflict between local council and residents over the resolution to do this resulted in a protest and eventual blockade of the site at the location where the bulldozers were to begin construction at Cape Tribulation. A camping ground on nearby land

housed more than 100 protesters and included a communal cooking hut and track to the beach so that protesters did not have to go past the police to get to the blockade site. A smaller group of protesters also gathered at the Bloomfield end of the track near Woobadda Creek, but were much less successful in their endeavours to blockade the bulldozers.

The road development in 1983 was interrupted by the wet season. Construction of the road began again in 1984 and the associated blockade continued. However, the police were called from around Queensland to assist and the conflict was more physical during this second stage of protest. Eventually, the protesters lost their battle and the road was built in a matter of weeks.

5.4.2 Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Despite the protesters failure to prevent the construction of road, the world wide publicity of the protest had bought the region's spectacular natural assets to the world's attention. In 1988 in the Daintree Rainforest was listed on the World Heritage List, a move that dramatically altered land use in the region. Supported by the Commonwealth Government, the listing resulted in the virtual closure of the far north Queensland's timber industry and fundamentally changed the region's economic base, land use patterns, and tourism practices.

The Daintree Discovery Centre, located north of Daintree at Cow Bay, was started by Pam and Ron Birkett in the 1980s. Buoyed by a vision to protect the rainforest, they tried unsuccessfully to get government funding to build a centre. Undaunted they began to develop the concept themselves, creating an educational interpretative centre on land just outside the Wet Tropics Heritage Area boundary, which opened in 1989. Additions include the 23 metre high observation tower constructed in 1998, and an aerial walkway which was constructed in 2003.

Tourism has advanced dramatically in the Daintree area, and new ecotourism ventures strive to be both environmentally and economically sustainable. Backpacker hostels and other accommodation facilities have gradually developed in the area north of the Daintree. There are also residential areas north of the river, particularly around Cow Bay and Thornton Beach.

5.5 Conclusion

The district has evolved again in the period following World War II. No longer solely reliant on sugar, it has diversified to include horticultural crops, but also relies heavily on the tourism industry. This industry, which takes advantage of the district's location between two world heritage sites, the reef and the rainforest, also promotes Port Douglas as a cosmopolitan tropical retreat, one that provide tourist with a sense of adventure and relaxation.

Thus while Port Douglas is home to a more transient population, demands of the tourism industry and developers have had a major impost on its early buildings and structure. Mossman, on the other hand, remains the district's bustling working town. Its main street still tells the story of its gradual development during the 1930s and 1950s, while its backstreets still contain original residences and accommodation. This dichotomy between the two main towns has been continuous, and illustrates the diversity and identify of the former Douglas Shire region.

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