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WILLIAM PETTIGREW

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Sawmiller, Surveyor, Shipowner and Citizen:
an immigrant's life in colonial Queensland

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by

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Statement of originality

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this work, including the editing, is original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text, and the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

E. R. Brown

Abstract

This thesis examines the contribution to the development of the colony of Queensland of the surveyor William Pettigrew, who arrived in Brisbane in 1849 as one of the Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang's *Fortitude* immigrants and established Brisbane's first steam sawmill. Chapter 1 sets out and justifies the aims of the study and considers sources, method, design and historiography. Chapters 2 to 8 constitute an historical biography of William Pettigrew, tracing his life from his birth in 1825 in Ayrshire, Scotland, to his death in Bowen, Queensland, in 1906. The biography examines the forces that shaped him and the ways in which he tried to shape his world. It chronicles his experiences as an immigrant, explorer, sawmiller, businessman, churchman and politician, considers his religious and political beliefs and practices, and notes the technological innovations which he contributed to the development of the colony. He is presented in the context of his times, and his successes and failures are reflected on in terms of the unpredictable and often overwhelming events in which he was a participant or a victim. Chapter 9 draws conclusions about his character and achievements, and assesses his place in Queensland colonial history. The thesis relies heavily on material created by Pettigrew himself – diaries, letters, speeches, financial records and official correspondence – and also on newspaper reports, maps and photographs produced during the colonial period.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANU Australian National University, Canberra	<i>QES Queensland Evangelical Standard</i>
<i>BC Brisbane Courier</i>	<i>QGG Queensland Government Gazette</i>
BMC Brisbane Municipal Council	<i>QPD Queensland Parliamentary Debates</i>
BSM Brisbane Saw Mills	<i>QPP Queensland Parliamentary Papers</i>
<i>GT Gympie Times</i>	QSA Queensland State Archives
JOL John Oxley Library, Brisbane	<i>QVP Queensland Votes and Proceedings</i>
<i>MBC Moreton Bay Courier</i>	QWHA Queensland Women's Historical Association
<i>MC Maryborough Chronicle</i>	RHSQ Royal Historical Society of Queensland
MLA Member of the Legislative Assembly	RP Robert Pettigrew
MLC Member of the Legislative Council	SRO Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh
<i>NSWGG New South Wales Government Gazette</i>	UQ University of Queensland
<i>QDG Queensland Daily Guardian</i>	WP William Pettigrew

CONVERSIONS OF MEASUREMENT

To avoid confusion, all measurements of distance, area, weight and currency in this text have been retained in the Imperial measures in which they were recorded in the nineteenth century.

The following information will assist those who wish to convert these measures to modern metric and decimal equivalents.

Distance: 1 inch = 2.54 centimetres; 1 foot = .305 metres; 1 mile = 1.61 kilometres.

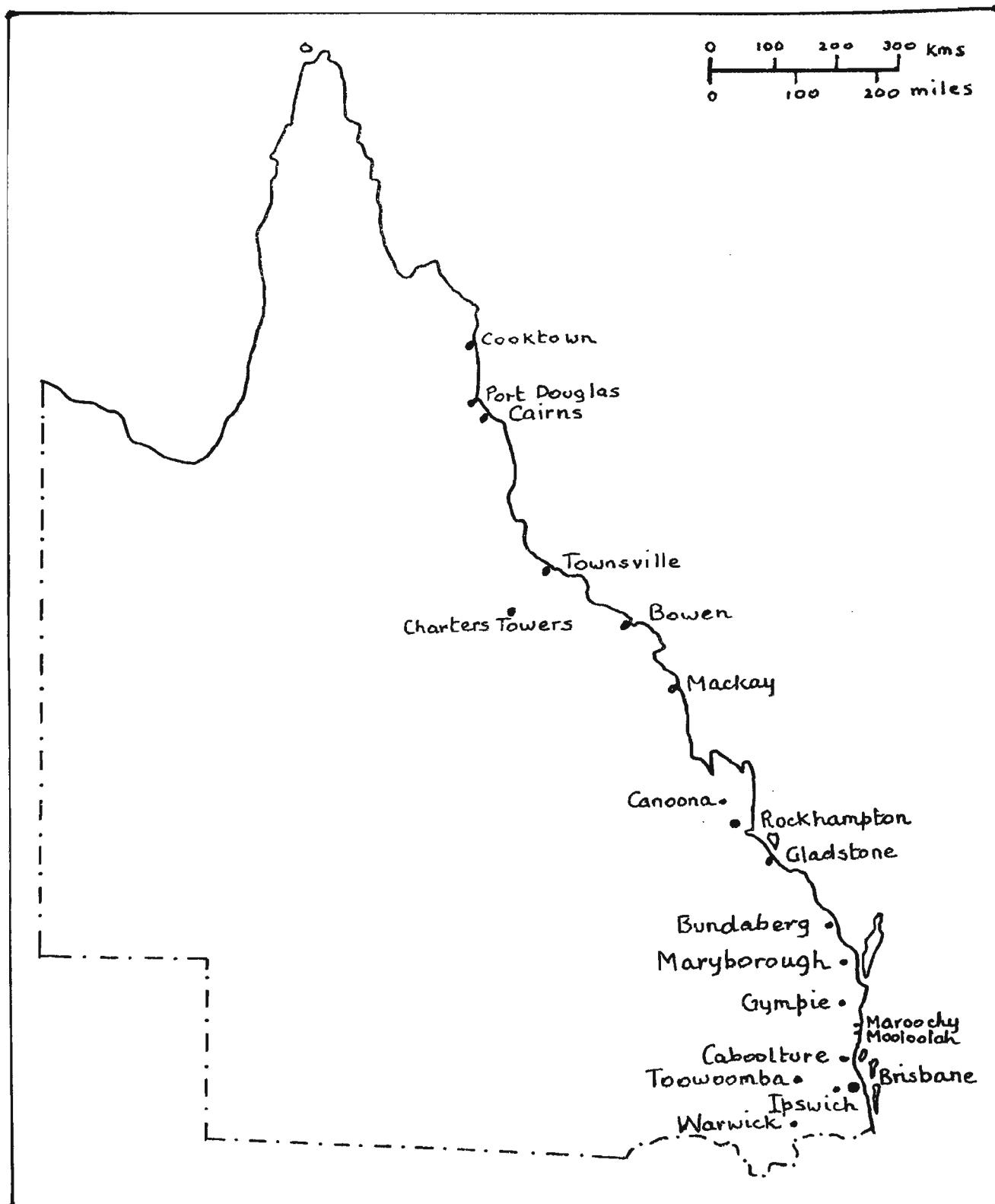
Area: 1 perch = 25.3 square metres; 1 rood = 932 square metres; 1 acre = 0.405 hectares.
(40 perches = 1 rood; 4 roods = 1 acre)

Weight: 1 pound (lb.) = 0.4535 kilograms; 1 stone = 6.35 kilograms; 1 ton = 1.016 tonnes.
(14 pounds = 1 stone)

Currency: £1 (pound) = \$2 (dollars). This was literally true in 1966, when the Australian currency was converted from pounds to dollars, but even then the value of the pound varied from its value at different times during the nineteenth century. For this reason and because currency values have inflated dramatically since 1966, simple conversions are inaccurate when pounds are compared with dollars.

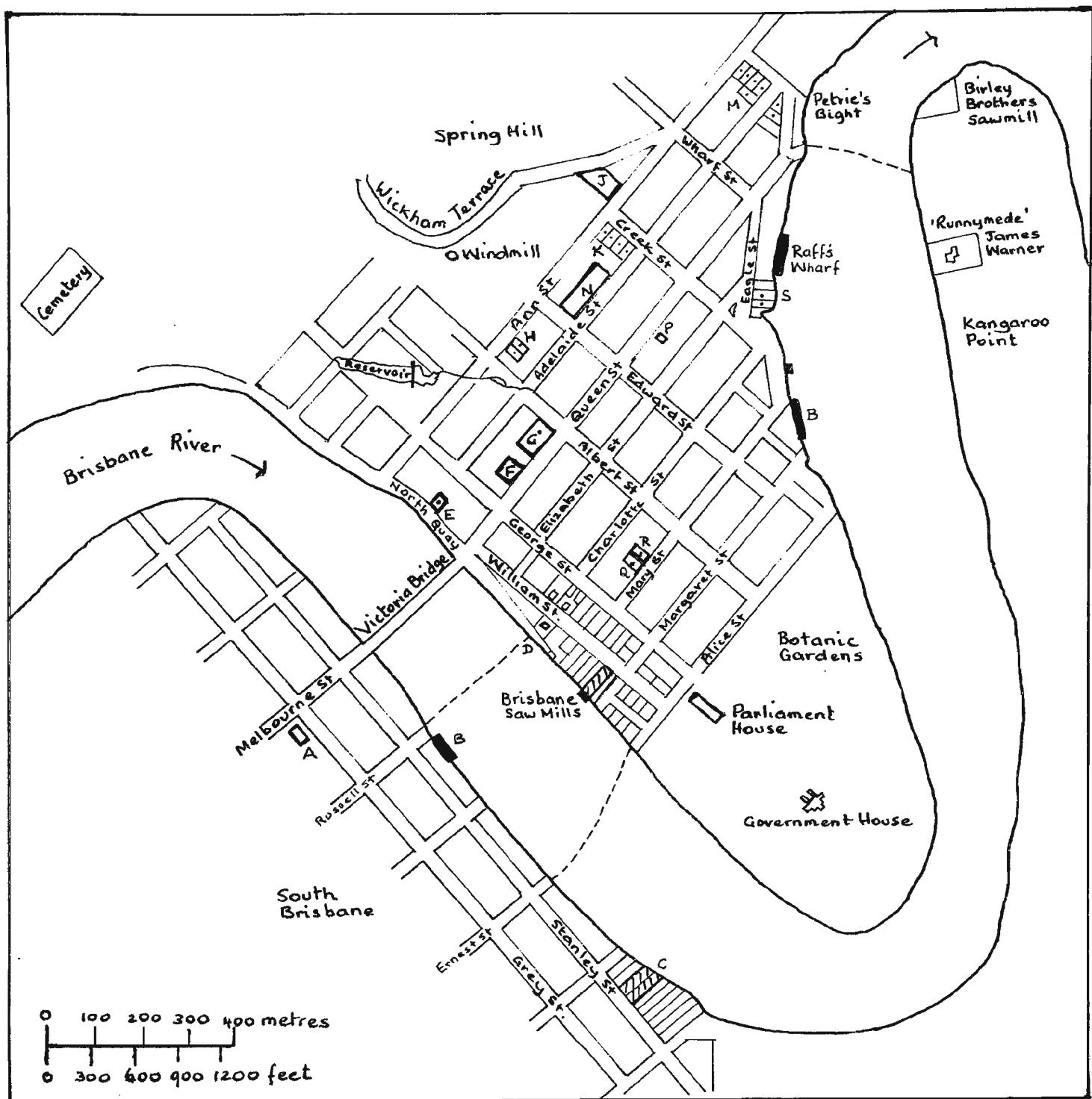
Map 1.

William Pettigrew's Queensland



Map 2.

William Pettigrew's Brisbane



- A South Brisbane Presbyterian Church
- B A.S.N. Co.'s Wharf
- C Pettigrew's Land at South Brisbane
- D Colonial (Commissariat) Store
- E Survey Office
- F Town Hall
- G Court House (Old Convict Barracks)
- H Ann Street Presbyterian Church
- J Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church
- K Creek Street Grant

- M Dr Hobbs's Houses
- N National School
- P Post Office
- Q Queensland Club
- R David McKergow's House
- S Dr Simpson's Houses
- Ferries
- Wharves

September 1871

28 Tho Tadorna R. to go into
Fryer & Strahan's employment at £4.
per day. To find firewood

Left Lyrae 8-20 & ab. Coolaluthie 5-30
Over Budenham. Have had no rain. Grand day

29 Fri Measured cedar and made
up acts. passed to Cr. £166.10.6.

Warm a.m. Thunder & ^{light} shower 5 p.m. another
Thunder & rain 6-45-p.m.

Agreed to pay 5/- for drawing 100,000 bush
To pay 4/- till completion.

30 Sat Kinnond & Chambers went &
looked at Beech logs & had agreement with
With Willow tried to find road to
my 500 acres, large lot of scrub. boggy.

D. Cogill to join in squaring beech and
to fence when not so engaged.

Illus. 1. An enlarged page from William Pettigrew's diary, September 1871.

1. AN INVETERATE MEMORIALIST

An historian who is a diligent biographer sees a life in the round, from many perspectives – associates, friends, enemies, family; from intimate records of inner life to public pronouncements. Soon the handwriting is as familiar as one's own, the characteristic habit of speech leaps from many different texts to proclaim the author, the faded photographs evoke the rich, full context of a life in all its contradictions, and the memories of friends seem like the researcher's own – memories of an intimate acquaintance.

Jill Ker Conway¹

Introduction

The core of this thesis is an historical biography of William Pettigrew, a Scottish surveyor, who in 1849 arrived at Moreton Bay, an isolated Australian outpost of the British Empire, and for the next fifty years contributed vigorously to its development as the colony of Queensland.

Pettigrew's importance during the colonial period became clear to me when I was researching the history of the remote Cooloola area for my MA thesis, Nineteenth Century Cooloola: A History of Human Contact and Environmental Change (1996).²

He was a key figure in this area, as an explorer during the 1860s and later when he built a wooden railway to extract timber from its forests. As I perused his private diaries, I realised that his achievements in Cooloola were only a part of what had been an unusually long, inventive and influential career. Further investigation revealed that, although a wealth of material relating to Pettigrew was available and a few historians had investigated some of his activities, no one had ever undertaken a full study of his life and work.

¹ Jill Ker Conway, *True North: a memoir* (London: Hutchinson, 1994), p. 65.

² Elaine Brown, *Nineteenth Century Cooloola: A History of Human Contact and Environmental Change*, MA thesis, UQ, 1996. This was published as *Cooloola Coast: The Aboriginal and Settler Histories of a Unique Environment* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 2000).

According to Thomas Dowse, an even earlier arrival at Moreton Bay, Pettigrew was one of ‘a handful of enterprising men [who] set the ball first rolling’ there.³ In 1853 he opened a steam sawmill in Brisbane, and from this early venture, through many vicissitudes, built a network of sawmills and associated transport systems that made him Queensland’s leading timberman. Closely involved as well in religious and political affairs, he was a prominent citizen until the 1890s, when he lost his wealth through flood, fire and economic depression.

Sources

On his death in 1906, Pettigrew left a remarkable legacy – a collection of diaries, books, letters, papers and photographs, which he had set aside for his family to preserve. Four generations and a century later, much of that legacy has survived, and a particular joy of researching his story has been engaging with these private records. Pettigrew was, in the words of Rod Fisher, ‘an inveterate memorialist’,⁴ who wrote the details of his busy life in diaries – not every day, but frequently. The worn covers of these precious books enclose a record of the business of the week, together with a bonus of newspaper clippings, receipts, and jottings on pieces of paper. As well as words that name people and places, and chronicle the meetings, journeys and observations of this energetic man, there are pages of calculations, diagrams, drawings and sketch maps. Each reading of the diaries squeezes meaning from the writer’s often cryptic comments, and for a student of colonial history, the information that they contain seems inexhaustible.

³ Thomas Dowse, ‘Recollections 1828-59’, Applied History Centre, University of Queensland. Dowse (1809-1885) arrived in Sydney as a convict in 1828 and after receiving a pardon came to Brisbane with his wife and sons as one of its earliest free settlers. He set up in business as a commission agent, served as Town Clerk (1862-1868) and wrote for newspapers under the name ‘Old Tom’.

⁴ Rod Fisher, ‘Against all the odds: Early industrial enterprise at Brisbane 1840-60’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 76, Part 2, October 1990, p. 114.



Forty-three of Pettigrew's diaries survive from the fifty-four year period 1846 to 1899. The earliest extant diary, a small, black-covered notebook, records his activities from 1846 to 1848, when he was working as a surveyor in Ayrshire, Scotland. The last was written in an 1899 Collins Ruby Diary. At Moreton Bay from 1849 to 1853, he used surveyor's notebooks, often penning his words in Indian ink over the pencilled notes from his field surveys. The diaries from 1854 to 1861 (and for 1868) are missing, but it is evident that, from 1861 to 1898, Pettigrew purchased annually (or was given) leather-bound Letts Diaries. These commercial diaries contained information that might be useful to a British colonist (such as the phases of the moon and the birthdays of all the members of Queen Victoria's family) and were supplied by a London company which began to promote its products throughout the British Empire during the 1850s.⁵

In 1952 Pettigrew's grand-daughter, Margaret Eckhoff, donated to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland the diaries and papers that had been left in the care of her mother, Margaret Hardgrave. The diaries then became such a frequently consulted repository of information about colonial Queensland that, in order to preserve the originals, the Society had them microfilmed. Among the papers donated by Margaret Eckhoff were the letters which Pettigrew received from the Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang during 1848 and the letterbook in which he drafted his correspondence between 1849 and 1854. In 1960 Mrs Eckhoff spoke about Pettigrew to members of the Queensland Women's Historical Association,⁶ and donated some of his furniture and a small collection of his letters, papers and photographs to

⁵ Anthony Letts, 'A History of Letts' in *Letts Keep a Diary: An Exhibition of the History of Diary Keeping in Great Britain from the 16th-20th Century in Commemoration of 175 years of Diary Publishing by Letts* (London: Charles Letts & Co., 1987), pp. 29-31; *Brisbane Courier*, 30 December 1872.

⁶ M. Eckhoff, 'The Late Hon. William Pettigrew, M.L.C.', typescript, John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

'Miegunyah', their museum at Bowen Hills, Brisbane.

Many of Pettigrew's possessions were left with his son Robert, whose daughter Hilda passed them on to her nephews, Allan and Keith Pettigrew. This material includes Pettigrew's library, surveying instruments, photograph albums and some private correspondence. Particularly helpful have been the Balance Books of the Brisbane Saw Mills (1866-1893), six compact notebooks in which Pettigrew annually summarised his ledgers, entered a stock-take, and calculated his assets and liabilities. An industrial *Who's Who* of colonial Queensland, these books have made it possible to identify Pettigrew's debtors, creditors, timber-getters and workmen, and also to trace his properties, and the rise and fall of his businesses. Three other treasures in this collection are a Memo Book, in which he recorded the history of each of his steam-ships and every important piece of machinery he owned, the herd book from his Maroochydore dairy farm, and a notebook dating from 1826, which belonged to his father.

In 1900 Pettigrew summarised his diaries, sorted his accumulated letters, account books, legal papers, photographs and clippings, and began to write the story of his life, calling it the 'Genealogy of William Pettigrew'. Because of his habit of preserving papers, he did not need to rely on memory alone, and it is clear from the closely written manuscript that he constantly checked and corrected his statements. He managed only a dozen foolscap pages before abandoning the project, but what he wrote about his early life has proved invaluable, not least because many of his claims have been verified from other sources, such as the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh. A fortnight's visit to Edinburgh and Ayrshire in 1998, guided by the 'Genealogy', led easily to the places where Pettigrew spent his childhood and youth,

even though the events which he described happened more than 150 years ago. Pettigrew's summaries reveal that items now missing, such as his diaries from 1854 to 1861, were available to him in 1900. It is also probable that he kept a diary of his emigration on the ship *Fortitude*, but this has not been found. Perhaps he took the missing items to Bowen in 1902 and left them with his second daughter, Mary Ann Davis, and perhaps they will come to light at some future time.

Pettigrew's writings are only a part of the paper trail he left behind. From the day he stepped ashore in Brisbane in 1849, his name appeared regularly in the columns of colonial newspapers – in advertisements for timber or shipping, in lists of donors, electors or purchasers of land, and in letters he wrote expressing his opinions on matters of public interest. There are reports of lectures he gave and meetings he chaired or addressed. Once he became a political figure, his utterances, as well as appearing in the newspapers, were formally recorded in the minutes of the Brisbane Municipal Council and the debates of the Legislative Council of the Queensland Parliament. As he explored the countryside, carried out surveys, took up land, invested in businesses, built sawmills, ships and railways, argued issues relating to timber and transport, became entangled in legal matters, and founded a family, he left his mark in the files of many government departments. Numerous papers in his distinctive handwriting – applications, depositions, letters, maps and diagrams – can be located in official records at the Queensland State Archives.

It is more difficult to discover details of Pettigrew's roles in community and church activities, where the survival of records is patchy, but his name appears in references to building societies, newspaper and insurance companies, the North Brisbane School of Arts, the Philosophical and Royal Societies, the National and Caledonian

Associations, and the Presbyterian Church. He is mentioned in the memoirs of contemporaries, such as Thomas Dowse,⁷ Nehemiah Bartley⁸ and Tom Petrie,⁹ and in histories of the colony, such as J. J. Knight's *In the Early Days*.¹⁰ Biographical entries confirming his prominence in colonial Queensland appear in *Pugh's Almanac*,¹¹ the *Aldine History of Queensland*¹² and *Australian Representative Men*.¹³ Evidence of his support for various causes and his contributions to pursuits both practical and intellectual crops up in unlikely places, and a fruitful strategy for locating this evidence has been to scan the indexes and bibliographies in publications on all aspects of Queensland history.

The frequency with which Pettigrew's name appears in public and private records and in primary and secondary materials relating to the colony leaves no doubt that he played a seminal role in the development of many localities, industries and organisations. His bankruptcy in 1898, however, diminished the public's perception of his importance. The old man himself slipped quietly into retirement and went to live in Bowen, a thousand miles away. By the time he died, his sawmills had ceased to exist, his ships no longer plied the waters, and, except among members of his family, his name was fading from memory. His business partner and only son, Robert Pettigrew, spent the rest of his life working for other men. His descendants, while preserving his possessions, have been reticent about publicising his career.

⁷ Dowse, 'Recollections 1828-1854'.

⁸ Nehemiah Bartley, *Opals and Agates* (Brisbane: Gordon and Gotch, 1892).

⁹ Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (Hawthorn: Lloyd O'Neil, 1975).

¹⁰ J. J. Knight, *In the Early Days: History and Incident of Pioneer Queensland* (Brisbane: Sapsford & Co., 1895).

¹¹ From 1886 to 1895, *Pugh's Queensland Almanac* published short biographies of prominent men under the heading 'Men of the Time', changing it to 'Queensland Notable Men Past and Present' in 1896. Pettigrew's biography appeared in every edition from 1886 to 1896.

¹² W. Frederic Morrison, comp., *The Aldine History of Queensland* (Sydney: Aldine Publishing Co., 1888).

¹³ T. W. H. Leavitt, *Australian Representative Men* (Brisbane: Muir and Morcom, 1888).

During the twentieth century, Pettigrew's name continued to fade. He did not rate an entry in the appropriate volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*,¹⁴ and neither he nor the early colonial timber industry was mentioned in Ross Fitzgerald's general history of Queensland, *From the Dreaming to 1915* (1982).¹⁵ By the end of the century, apart from a Pettigrew Street at Alexandra Headland and the name William Pettigrew in a list of Brisbane aldermen on the Mooney Fountain in Queen Street, he was all but forgotten in the many places where he had once been a familiar figure. In 1999 the Queensland Government named a new building on the site of Pettigrew's sawmill in William Street after the Aboriginal Senator, Neville Bonner. While there is no doubt that Senator Bonner deserved such an honour, it could also be argued that Pettigrew's productive, fifty-year occupation of this site and his long service as a Brisbane alderman and a member of the Queensland Legislative Council warranted some official recognition in this building.

Aims of this thesis

In undertaking the study for this thesis, my primary aim was to use the sources outlined above to write an historical biography of William Pettigrew, thus countering the neglect of an important colonist. I saw the need to produce a full account of Pettigrew and his work, rather than continue the piecemeal approach of those historians who – as I did when studying Cooloola – have used his diaries to clarify specific developments in different parts of Queensland. Pettigrew appears, for example, in E. G. Heap's articles on the early history of the Maroochy district¹⁶ and in

¹⁴ *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entries for Pettigrew's period were published in Volume 5, K-Q, 1974. This omission will be corrected in an entry I have prepared for a supplementary volume to be published in 2005.

¹⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: A History of Queensland* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1982).

¹⁶ E. G. Heap, 'In the Wake of the Raftsmen: A Survey of Early Settlement in the Maroochy District up to the passing of Macalister's Act (1868)', *Queensland Heritage*, Part I, November 1965; Part II, May 1966; Part III, November 1966.

Helen Gregory's later shire history, *Making Maroochy*.¹⁷ Rod Fisher identified him as an early industrialist in Brisbane,¹⁸ Sir Raphael Cilento assessed his contribution to the building of Wolston House,¹⁹ and Jean Farnfield recounted his attempt at Bowen to win the seat of Kennedy.²⁰ By gauging Pettigrew's overall place in colonial history, I hoped to gain new insights into the entire colonial period.

When considering the biographical format, however, I became aware that some academic historians, concerned about over-simplification, the possibility of bias and the limitations of a chronological approach, dispute the value of biography in the field of history.²¹ Patrick O'Brien, a British economic historian, has argued trenchantly that 'historians are educated to deal with group rather than personal behaviour',²² while the Australian historian Duncan Waterson has observed the 'general disposition of Australian historians ... to favour official society, economic development, the group, the class, and the organisation rather than the individual and his milieu'.²³

I would argue that, if history is about people as well as abstractions, it is as much about their behaviour as individuals as about their behaviour in groups and as groups. Furthermore, the popularity of the genre of biography with writers, publishers and readers suggests that biographies – literary, political or historical, of people living or dead – offer acceptable points of access to the past and, especially if the subjects are

¹⁷ Helen Gregory, *Making Maroochy: A History of the land, the people and the Shire* (Nambour: Boolarong and Maroochy Shire Council, 1991).

¹⁸ Fisher, 'Against all the odds: Early industrial enterprise at Brisbane 1840-1860', p. 114.

¹⁹ Sir Raphael Cilento, 'The Life and Residences of the Hon. Stephen Simpson', *RHSQJ*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1965-66, pp. 9-54.

²⁰ Jean Farnfield, *Frontiersman: A Biography of George Elphinstone Dalrymple* (Melbourne: OUP, 1968), pp. 81-83.

²¹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 72-74.

²² Patrick O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter 1996); p. 62. This debate is continued by Pauline Croft, 'Political Biography: A Defence (1)', pp. 67-74; John Derry, 'Political Biography: A Defence (2)', pp. 75-80; Nigel Hamilton, 'In Defence of the Practice of Biography', pp. 81-86.

²³ D. B. Waterson, 'Thomas McIlwraith' in Denis Murphy et al., *The Premiers of Queensland* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1990), p. 120.

presented in the context of their times, help to make history intelligible. (See section on Context, pp. 21-22.)

In the early stages of this study, it became clear that there was a need to correct the factual errors, distortions and misinterpretations that blight many references to Pettigrew, especially in those local histories and popular articles which rely on secondary rather than primary sources.²⁴ This concern for accuracy, in details as basic as the dates of events, the names of people and the location of places, meant that, as well as a methodical examination of Pettigrew's diaries, letters and papers, the research had to include inter-generational studies of the Pettigrew family²⁵ and meticulous checking of maps.

The search for accuracy also had practical aspects. In order to understand the cutting and hauling of timber and the technology of steam, I talked to a retired sawmill manager²⁶ and a boilermaker,²⁷ and visited the Woodworks Museum at Gympie on a day when the steam sawmill was operating.²⁸ I assisted Peter Olds, a Maryborough engineer, to research the history of the steam locomotive *Mary Ann*, of which he has built a full-sized replica.²⁹ On a visit to the National Maritime Museum in San Francisco, I walked over the ship *Balclutha* to learn the layout of sailing ships such as

²⁴ Examples include histories such as Fred Williams's *Written in Sand: A History of Fraser Island* (Milton, Q.: Jacaranda Press, 1982), pp. 93-98 and articles such as Stephen Lamble's 'Cooloola Coast's first 'high-flier', *Cooloola Lifestyle*, Vol. 12, No. 1, October 1992.

²⁵ In this thesis, care has been taken, wherever possible, to give people their full names, since common Christian names and surnames frequently cause confusion. Colonial newspapers often refer only to 'Mr Pettigrew', so William Pettigrew's activities have sometimes been confused with those of his brother John. Misunderstandings have also arisen when inaccurate dates have been given for such events as the fires in the Brisbane Saw Mills, Pettigrew's acquisitions of property, and his bankruptcies.

²⁶ Lindsay Harris, *As I Remember: A Pictorial Story of the Early Workers in the Imbil Forest* (Gympie: Lindsay Harris, 2000).

²⁷ Bevan Mahoney.

²⁸ Woodworks, located on the Bruce Highway at Gympie, is a branch of the Queensland Museum which specialises in the history of the timber industry.

²⁹ Nancy Bates, *Welcome Back, Mary Ann* (Maryborough: Bates Quick Print, 1999).

the *Fortitude*,³⁰ and in Bristol, England, I visited the restored *Great Britain*, the iron steamship in which John Pettigrew came to Melbourne during the Victorian goldrush.

Another concern was to obtain as many versions of events as possible, so that Pettigrew could be seen ‘in the round’, from the perspectives of ‘associates, friends, enemies and family’ – in the terms set out by Jill Ker Conway in the quotation that heads this chapter. When the study began, the opinions about Pettigrew that were available to be tested dated mostly from his lifetime, were on the public record, and were generally laudatory. Research uncovered unfavorable comments from some of his contemporaries, as well as his involvement, from time to time, in private quarrels and public controversies. In view of these contradictions, it became necessary to consider whether Pettigrew was ‘one of the best respected men in Queensland’,³¹ who ‘played his part well’,³² or, as the historian John Mackenzie-Smith recently asserted, a ‘preciously respectable Langite’ and an ‘epitome of Calvinist self-righteousness’.³³

In summary, in view of Pettigrew’s displacement as an important figure in Queensland’s colonial history, and the unreliability and selectivity of much existing information about him, I aimed in this thesis to use the wealth of available sources to investigate his life and work, assess his character, establish his significance and restore him to prominence. The fact that his life (1825-1906) neatly spanned the colonial period (1859-1900) also gave me an opportunity to view that entire period through the eyes of an observant, vocal, literate individual.

³⁰ Steven E. Levingston, *Historic Ships of San Francisco: A Collective History and Guide to the Restored Historic Vessels of the National Maritime Museum* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984), pp. 43-53.

³¹ ‘Men of Mark’, *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

³² Obituary in *The Herald*, 9 November 1906.

³³ John Mackenzie-Smith, *Moreton Bay Scots 1841-59* (Brisbane: Church Archivists Press, 2000), pp. 195-196.

Method

Fundamental to my research was a review of the available primary and secondary sources. The primary sources, as outlined above, were abundant; but I soon found that secondary sources, especially regarding Pettigrew, were limited and in some cases inaccurate. (See section on Context, pp.18-22.) Since the study carried out for my MA thesis, *Nineteenth Century Cooloola*, had given me a broad understanding of Queensland's colonial history, I chose to move from the particular to the general, and plunged into a comprehensive, systematic and thorough survey of Pettigrew's diaries.

The work began with close and repeated readings of Pettigrew's diaries on microfilm, a technology which, by allowing magnification, made it relatively easy to decipher his tiny, neat, spiky handwriting. The original diaries were also examined at the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, providing evidence of the colour of ink and texture of paper that cannot be detected on microfilm. This examination showed that, although pencilled notes had faded, entries written in Pettigrew's customary Indian ink remained clear and black. Subtle changes in the size and shape of his handwriting over the years made it possible to distinguish the comments which he added when he summarised his diaries in 1900.

Although diary-keeping was a common practice in the nineteenth century, and diaries of other Queensland colonists survive,³⁴ it is unusual to find a series as sustained or as interesting as Pettigrew's. Like the famous seventeenth-century diarist Samuel Pepys, Pettigrew wrote for his own convenience, not for publication or posterity, and his brief, uncontrived comments about the deaths, fires and floods that profoundly affected his life are as poignant as Pepys's observations of the Great Plague and the

³⁴ These include ship-board diaries, such as those of Samuel Welsby of the *Fortitude*, and the diaries of the sugar planter, Cladius Buchanan Whish. Both are held at John Oxley Library.

Great Fire of London.³⁵ Unlike the garrulous Pepys, however, Pettigrew was circumspect in what he recorded. His diaries contain little gossip or scandal, and only occasionally betray passion or sentiment. The favourable light in which they portray their writer was perhaps a consideration when, after re-reading them in his old age, he allowed them to survive.

To leaf through Pettigrew's 1846-1848 diary is to enter the world of a purposeful young man, who records matters briefly and does not give away his innermost thoughts. Fortunately, his 1849-1853 diaries, which, together with his notebook and draft letters, chronicle his reactions to the frontier society of Moreton Bay, reveal the true responsiveness of his character. From 1862 to 1899, Pettigrew's diary entries are the rapid jottings of a busy man, who wrote detailed observations only when it was important to record agreements, explorations, or the construction of his sawmills, ships and railways. Interpreting these jottings, whether they refer to his actions, opinions or feelings, to the management of his businesses or to external events, required investigation of the circumstances surrounding their creation, followed by patient elucidation. This process brought to light matters which had not previously been examined by historians, such as his attempts to win a seat on the Brisbane Municipal Council, and also revised earlier versions of significant events, such as his explorations of the Mooloolah and Maroochy Rivers.

From the early readings of the diaries, a chronology was compiled, which settled uncertainties about names, dates and events, and provided secure reference points for the rest of the research. 'Nothing beats pure chronology as the fundamental ordering

³⁵ Robert Latham, ed., *Pepys's Diary* (London: The Folio Society, 1996), Vols I (1660-63), II (1664-66) and III (1667-69). Pettigrew's diaries cover a longer period than Pepys's – fifty years instead of nine – but, except for his early years in the colony (1849-1853), they are not as full, intimate or self-explanatory. Pepys wrote in shorthand and kept his diaries hidden; the privacy of Pettigrew's diaries was never guaranteed.

principle of historical systems,' commented the biologist Stephen Jay Gould in his review of *The Map That Changed the World*, adding, 'What other criterion can speak so eloquently or offer more insight into the record of a man's life and strivings?'³⁶ And indeed, by identifying the changing settings, unusual experiences, varied activities and social networks in Pettigrew's life, the chronology provided by the diaries became a vital tool of interpretation.

For the years when diaries were missing, other primary sources filled the gaps in the chronology. Pettigrew's life from 1854 to 1861, in 1868, and after 1899 was followed chiefly in the colonial newspapers, which provided evidence of his movements and activities, and balanced the singlemindedness of the diaries by introducing points of view other than Pettigrew's. The newspapers proved to be so informative that they were used extensively in the study, not only to explain events mentioned in the diaries, but also to reveal incidents which Pettigrew did not record.³⁷ Details extracted from other substantial sources, such as the Balance Books of the Brisbane Saw Mills, the Queensland Parliamentary Debates and several collections of private letters,³⁸ also helped to explain puzzling diary entries.

In order to reconstruct the human and natural environments in which Pettigrew operated, I visited most of the places in Queensland where he lived, worked and journeyed. Gaining knowledge of his origins required a trip to Britain, with research at the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh, the Carnegie Libraries at Kilmarnock and Ayr, and the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, as well as visits to cemeteries, farms and

³⁶ Stephen Jay Gould, 'The Man Who Set the Clock Back', *New York Review of Books*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 15, October 2001, p. 55. This is a review of Simon Winchester's biography of William Smith, *The Map That Changed the World* (London: HarperCollins, 2001).

³⁷ For example, Pettigrew's visit to the Canoona Goldfield in 1858 and some of his activities as Mayor of Brisbane in 1870 were identified only in the newspapers.

³⁸ Letters: John Dunmore Lang to WP, 1848, RHSQ; WP's letter book 1849-1854, RHSQ; Richard Gill to WP, 1879-1902, Allan Pettigrew.

towns in Ayrshire, and Pettigrew relatives in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and Dorset, England. While the paper and photographic evidence thus obtained was valuable, the most rewarding outcomes of this tour were a sense of the reality of Pettigrew's early existence and an awareness of the values, attitudes, skills and memories which he carried from Scotland to Australia. These insights, expanded by genealogical research³⁹ and readings in Scottish history and nineteenth century emigration,⁴⁰ made it possible to compare his life in Ayrshire with his life in Queensland.

Design: Format and Structure

From the beginning, it was proposed to present this thesis as an historical biography, focusing on Pettigrew's character and actions. As the study proceeded, the viability of using this format to bring the subject to life was confirmed by the scope of the diaries, the comprehensive chronology developed from them, and the wide-ranging material available to support them. The possibility of producing an edited version of the diaries was also considered, but was set aside as too huge a task, since it would require not only painstaking transcription but also detailed annotations, which could be supplied only after biographical and historical studies were completed.

Within the biography, a simple progression from birth to death was adopted. Turning points, some personal to Pettigrew, others dictated by events outside his control, broke the narrative of his life into periods of varying length, each period being characterised by significant events, changes of direction, and expansions and contractions in business. These periods became chapters, within which the events of

³⁹ For assistance with Pettigrew genealogies, I am indebted to Diana Morgan of Dorset, England, Jim Pettigrew of Ayrshire, and John and Maisie Pettigrew of Lanarkshire, Scotland.

⁴⁰ Basil Greenhill and Ann Gifford, *Travelling by Sea in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1972); Basil Lubbock, *The Colonial Clippers* (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1948).

Pettigrew's life were carefully woven, using the threads of time, place and activity. This arrangement adequately covered his first thirty-five years (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) and last thirteen years (Chapter 8). Because of the need to reduce content and avoid awkward repetition, however, the complex patterns of his mid-life activities (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) proved more difficult to weave. A thematic treatment of all the material was considered, but the entwined themes of Pettigrew's life, defined by his experiences, occupations, interests and responsibilities, proved impractical to unravel and treat separately for periods of up to eighty years. I decided that these themes, which include the migration experience, exploring and settling a new land, involvement in farming, surveying, sawmilling and ship-building, interest in technological, industrial and political development, and responsibilities for family, church and community welfare, could be dealt with most coherently within a chronological framework.

Writing the Biography

Much more information about Pettigrew is available than can be explored in the word limits of this thesis. It was necessary, therefore, to select topics from the many relationships, activities and events discerned during research, and aim, in the words of the eminent Victorian biographer Lytton Strachey, for a 'brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant'.⁴¹ The process of listing appropriate topics was beneficial, because it sharpened the study's focus, identified important links, and allowed the intensity of Pettigrew's personality and the diverse themes of his life to emerge from the mass of accumulated detail. The importance of

⁴¹ Quoted in Frank E. Vandiver, 'Biography as an Agent of Humanism' in Stephen B. Oates, ed., *Biography as High Adventure: Life-writers Speak on their Art* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), p. 58.

family, for example, was ongoing, while the urge to explore dominated a particular period, and an interest in farming cropped up intermittently.

As the narrative of Pettigrew's life began to churn through the chapters, the constraints of writing an historical biography became evident. Since the spotlight had to remain on Pettigrew, I had to avoid being drawn into diverting side-issues, which called attention to unexplored aspects of colonial history and demanded extended study in their own right. These issues included the fates of the Lang immigrants and their influence on Queensland's development, the history of the Presbyterian Church, the development of community organisations and social elites, changing attitudes towards health and industrial relations, and the effects of the timber industry on the natural environment.

At the same time, I had to resist the tug of bias towards the subject of the biography, who had, directly or indirectly, created most of the sources. Dependence on the varied and fragmentary primary sources that had fortuitously survived the passing of time led to an inconsistent treatment of topics within each chapter. The need to balance the different periods of Pettigrew's life meant that much material had to be trimmed or omitted, costing the study depth and detail.⁴² The ethical requirements to reject

⁴² During this and my earlier studies, I gave a number of talks expanding on aspects of my work on Pettigrew, which are available as unpublished or published papers, viz.: Elaine Brown, 'Pettigrew and Sim and the Maryborough Connection', presented to the Maryborough, Wide Bay and Burnett Historical Society, 9 May 1994, published in *Maryborough Wide Bay Burnett News*, Volume 6, No. 3, September 1996; 'The Voyage of the *Fortitude*', presented to the Brisbane History Group, 27 February 1999; 'William Pettigrew at Woogaroo 1849-1852', presented at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, 29 April 1999; 'Colonial Enterprise: Pettigrew and Sim's Dundathu Sawmill, 1862-1893' presented to the Australian Forest History Society's Fourth National Conference, Gympie, Queensland, 19 April 1999, published in Dargavel, John and Brenda Libbis, eds, *Australia's Ever-Changing Forests IV* (Canberra: ANU and Australian Forest History Society, 1999); 'William Pettigrew', presented to the Professional Historians Association, Brisbane, 22 August 2000; 'The Cooloola Railway', presented to the Noosa Parks Association, Noosa, 15 June 2001; 'William Pettigrew and William Street', presented to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Brisbane, 6 June 2002; 'The Colonial Family of William Pettigrew', presented to the Queensland Women's Historical Association, Brisbane, 10 October 2002.

invention, limit surmise, and base interpretation only on reliable evidence pointed to the tantalising gaps that remained in the sources, despite their abundance.⁴³

Context

A major challenge in writing the biography was the problem of context, of relating Pettigrew accurately to the times and places in which he operated. In this regard, it was easier to place him confidently in his Scottish background than in the colony where he spent most of his life. Scottish repositories and libraries are rich in orderly, accessible records, and it was relatively easy to check the facts recorded by Pettigrew about his early life.⁴⁴ Histories of Scotland are based on centuries of a scholarly tradition in which topics relevant to Pettigrew and his family, such as the disruption of the Church of Scotland and the impact of the Industrial Revolution, have been examined and debated many times.

In comparison with the maturity of Scottish history, the writing of Queensland history is in its infancy. There are no Queensland works equivalent in scope to the three *Statistical Accounts of Scotland* (1791-1799, 1842 and 1951),⁴⁵ in perception to Arthur Herman's recent *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (2001)⁴⁶ or in

⁴³ Gaps which involved routines, such as the day-to-day running of Pettigrew's sawmills, were of no consequence; but the absence of Pettigrew's *Fortitude* diary made it impossible to re-create his experience of the voyage. Ironically, the journals of other *Fortitude* passengers, which were used, did not even mention Pettigrew.

⁴⁴ Cecil Sinclair, *Tracing Scottish Local History: A Guide to Local History Research in the Scottish Record Office* (Edinburgh: HM Scottish Record Office, 1994); Cecil Sinclair, *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors: A Guide to Ancestry Research in the Scottish Record Office* (Edinburgh: The Stationery Office, 1997). I acknowledge the assistance of Dr Jennifer Harrison, who helped me to plan this research.

⁴⁵ Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland: drawn up from communications of the ministers of the different parishes*, Vol. VI, *Ayrshire* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1791-1799); *Statistical Account of Scotland by the Ministers of the Respective Parishes* (Edinburgh: Wm Blackwood and Sons, 1842); John Strawhorn and William Boyd, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Ayrshire* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1951).

⁴⁶ Arthur Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (N.Y.: Random House, 2001).

breadth of enlightenment to the *New Penguin History of Scotland* (2002).⁴⁷ The few general works available on the colonial period include William Coote's unreliable *History of the Colony of Queensland* (1882),⁴⁸ W. H. Traill's anecdotal 'Historical Sketch of Queensland' (1888),⁴⁹ and *Our First Half-Century*,⁵⁰ a commemorative review produced by anonymous officials of the Queensland Government in 1909. Interpretations of the period by professional historians, such as Ross Fitzgerald's *From the Dreaming to 1915*⁵¹ and Ross Johnston's thematic *The Call of the Land*,⁵² did not appear until 1982, and neither these nor Bill Thorpe's post-colonial analysis, *Colonial Queensland* (1996),⁵³ provided an adequate context for Pettigrew's experiences, chiefly because they do not deal with the early timber and transport industries.

The extent to which Pettigrew's various roles have been overlooked in Queensland history was also evident in the specialised texts used to provide context. C. A. Bernays's *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years* (1920)⁵⁴ merely names Pettigrew and his brother John. The social analyses begun by A. A. Morrison⁵⁵ and continued by Ronald Lawson in *Brisbane in the 1890s* (1973)⁵⁶ have only limited relevance to

⁴⁷ R. A. Houston and W. W. J. Knox, eds, *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: Penguin, 2002).

⁴⁸ William Coote, *History of the Colony of Queensland*, Vol. 1 (Brisbane: William Thorne, 1882). Coote's negative attitude towards Pettigrew was the product of a dispute. See Ch. 5, pp. 192-193 and Ch. 6, p. 219.

⁴⁹ W. H. Traill, 'Historical Sketch of Queensland' in Andrew Garran, ed., *The First Hundred Years: Picturesque Atlas of Australia* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1974), pp. 313-366.

⁵⁰ *Our First Half-Century: A Review of Queensland Progress* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1909).

⁵¹ Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915*.

⁵² W. Ross Johnston, *The Call of the Land: A History of Queensland to the Present Day* (Milton, Q.: Jacaranda, 1982).

⁵³ Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: Perspectives on a frontier society* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1996).

⁵⁴ Charles Arrowsmith Bernays, *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years 1859-1919* (Brisbane: A. J. Cumming, Govt. Printer, 1920).

⁵⁵ A. A. Morrison, 'Colonial Society 1860-1890', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 5, November 1966, pp. 21-30; Allan A. Morrison, 'Religion and Politics in Queensland to 1881', *RHSQJ*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1951, p. 455.

⁵⁶ Ronald Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of Australian Urban Society* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1973).

Pettigrew's standing in the community, while little about his involvement with newspapers is revealed in Denis Cryle's *The Press in Colonial Queensland*.⁵⁷ Glen Lewis's study of *The Ports of Queensland* sweeps through economic history without mentioning Pettigrew's connections with shipping, ports and trade.⁵⁸ Commissioned histories, such as Richard Bardon's *Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland* (1949)⁵⁹ and Gordon Greenwood's *Brisbane 1853-1959: A History of Local Government* (1959),⁶⁰ mention Pettigrew, but omit or gloss over the contentious issues in which he was involved. John Laverty's thesis on The History of Municipal Government in Brisbane,⁶¹ however, provided a useful context for Pettigrew's involvement with the Brisbane Municipal Council; and, in the absence of broad studies of immigration and colonisation in Queensland, constructive insights were provided by classic Australian texts in colonial history, such as George Nadel's *Australia's Colonial Culture* (1957)⁶² and Margaret Kiddle's *Men of Yesterday* (1961),⁶³ and by Malcolm Prentis's *The Scots in Australia* (1983).⁶⁴ The work of Kiddle and Prentis was especially valuable for coming to terms with Pettigrew as a Scot. (See Ch. 9, pp. 319-320.)

Until the 1970s, when the historians John and Ruth Kerr began to investigate Queensland's industrial history, the timber and transport industries – Pettigrew's

⁵⁷ Denis Cryle, *The Press in Colonial Queensland: A Social and Political History 1845-1875* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1989).

⁵⁸ Glen Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland: A Study in Economic Nationalism* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1973).

⁵⁹ Richard Bardon, *The Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland 1849-1949* (Brisbane: Smith and Paterson, 1949).

⁶⁰ Gordon Greenwood, ed. *Brisbane 1853-1959: A History of Local Government* (Brisbane: Brisbane City Council, 1959).

⁶¹ J. R. Laverty, *The History of Municipal Government in Brisbane 1859-1925: A Study of the Development of Metropolitan Government in a Context of Urban Expansion*, PhD thesis, UQ, 1968.

⁶² George Nadel, *Australia's Colonial Culture* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957).

⁶³ Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1961).

⁶⁴ Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scots in Australia: A Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland 1788-1900* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1983).

chief areas of expertise and engagement – did not attract much attention. In 1970 John Kerr published a thoroughly researched article on the Cooloola Railway,⁶⁵ which awakened interest in Pettigrew and his achievements.⁶⁶ In 1973 Dr Roderick McLeod outlined Pettigrew's activities as a shipowner,⁶⁷ and in 1990 Ruth Kerr followed with the building of the first Brisbane Saw Mills.⁶⁸ During the same period, controversies between timber workers and environmentalists over the future of Queensland's forests created an interest in the neglected area of forest history. In 1983, more than a century after Pettigrew and others first raised the issue of forest conservancy, Kevin Frawley completed a ground-breaking thesis, which included a comprehensive analysis of the history of forest management in Queensland and briefly addressed Pettigrew's contributions.⁶⁹

Another problem in establishing context was the dearth of detailed, personal information about Pettigrew's contemporaries, which made it difficult to assess many of his relationships. Except for political figures of Australian significance, such as Sir Samuel Griffith,⁷⁰ there are few full biographies of Pettigrew's fellow colonists. Where studies of 'the individual and his milieu' were available, however, interactions involving Pettigrew became easier to understand. *Days of Wrath*,⁷¹ D. W. A. Baker's excellent life of John Dunmore Lang, for example, provided a framework within which Pettigrew's connection with Lang could be understood, even though Baker did not use the Lang letters held at the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, did not

⁶⁵ J. D. Kerr, 'The Calooli Creek and Thannae Railway, Tin Can Bay: Queensland's First Private Railway and First Queensland-built Locomotive', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970, pp. 14-20.

⁶⁶ Bates, *Welcome Back, Mary Ann*, Foreword and p. 21.

⁶⁷ G. Roderick McLeod, 'Two Brisbane Ship-owners of the Last Century', *RHSQJ*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1973, pp. 27-43.

⁶⁸ Ruth S. Kerr, 'Construction of Pettigrew's Sawmill close by the Commissariat Store in 1853', *RHSQJ*, Vol. XIV, No. 5, December 1990, pp. 177-179.

⁶⁹ Kevin J. Frawley, Forest and Land Management in North-East Queensland 1859-1960, PhD thesis, ANU, 1983. Unfortunately this excellent study has not been published.

⁷⁰ R. B. Joyce, *Samuel Walker Griffith* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1984).

⁷¹ D.W.A. Baker, *Days of Wrath* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1985).

fully cover Lang's activities in Queensland, and mentioned Pettigrew only briefly. Insights were also gleaned from family histories, such as Doris Grey-Woods's account of James Warner,⁷² which does not mention Pettigrew, and M. Breckenridge's account of the Breckenridge family,⁷³ which does. Although the research of family historians is slowly uncovering the experiences of other male settlers, including Pettigrew's associates, workmen and timber-getters,⁷⁴ sheer lack of information is the reason why this study touches only lightly on Pettigrew's interactions with women, children and Aborigines, the three groups whose lives remain the most hidden of all.⁷⁵

Conclusion

This thesis should be read as a first – but not a definitive – interpretation of Pettigrew's life. As an attempt to reconstruct the man and his 'milieu', it is limited by its biographical format and by the lack of both general and detailed studies of its colonial setting. The thesis does not seek to impose twenty-first century values on a nineteenth century life by adopting a post-colonial stance, and it is deliberately free of the jargon (and therefore the implied judgement) of post-modernism and psychology. These constructs – or other theories not yet devised – may be appropriate in future interpretations, and may, by generating more sophisticated analyses than I have attempted in this study, approach the 'real' Pettigrew more closely and establish his significance more decisively.

⁷² Doris Grey-Woods, *With Compass, Chain and Courage* (Brisbane: QWHA, 1997).

⁷³ M. Breckenridge, *Mills, Merchants and Migrants* (Sydney: M. Breckenridge, 1992).

⁷⁴ Information gathered by descendants of the Low, Potts, Jones, Sim and Willson families has been used in this study.

⁷⁵ For example, Robert Pettigrew was enrolled as a first day pupil at the Brisbane Grammar School at the age of seven, but I have not been able to establish at which school (or schools) Pettigrew's three daughters were educated.

The biography presented in this thesis is an attempt to reconstruct the life of a person who, to some extent, constructed his own life twice – by living it and by recording it. Knowing his own worth, Pettigrew planned to write this story himself, and although the result is my reconstruction and not what he could or would have written, it is satisfying to complete his unfinished design, using the paper trail he left behind.



Illus. 3.

William Pettigrew, 1888¹

¹ Portrait from T.W.H. Leavitt, *Australian Representative Men* (Brisbane: Muir and Morcom, 1888). JOL Neg. No. 104851. The original drawing is held at the Pioneer Cottage, Buderim, Queensland.

WILLIAM PETTIGREW – A PORTRAIT

Surviving portraits of William Pettigrew show him to have been blue-eyed, with a hooked nose, soft, light-brown hair, and, at least in his colonial life, a bushy beard that protected his fair skin. Although neither tall nor imposing, he was wiry and fit, and remained active and alert almost to the end of his life. He bought reading glasses at the age of fifty² and (not surprisingly, given his occupation) suffered hearing loss by the time he was sixty.³ When he died at the age of eighty-one, he had lived longer than either his parents or any family member of his generation.

Like most Scottish immigrants who arrived in the colony as adults, he retained a broad Scots accent, and it is helpful to read his writings and speeches with this in mind. His quaint turns of phrase (such as ‘and which’ for ‘which’, and ‘anent’ meaning ‘concerning’) were commented on during his public life, and some of his expressions (such as ‘kist o’ whistles’ and ‘humbug’) were handed down in his family for several generations.⁴

Unless ruffled, he had a calm, kindly disposition and a dignified, reserved demeanour. Occasionally a self-deprecating sense of humour gleamed through his fundamental seriousness. His writings and speeches reveal a sharp, rational intelligence, although his remarks could be tinged with resentment if he felt thwarted. Challenges roused him, and he was always ready to tackle problems, whether they involved broken machinery or troublesome human beings. Noted for his determination, he sometimes attacked obstacles with a tenacity that bordered on stubbornness. ‘When this son of Scotia takes a matter in hand,’ the *Maryborough Chronicle* observed of him in 1883, ‘he generally carries it through thick and thin.’⁵

His character was upright but somewhat naive, traits which were described after his death by a friend:

He was strictly conscientious in all his dealings, and had a sincere belief that all other people were animated by the same considerations as himself. Indeed his trustfulness in this respect not infrequently caused him financial worry.⁶

The ‘canny Scot’⁷ in Pettigrew was cautious, astute, and usually given to thoughtful planning and prudent investment. But he was also ambitious and venturesome, and in migrating to Australia he chose to stake his assets on an uncertain future in an unsettled land. His main preoccupation was business, in which, with time and opportunity on his side, he set goals and worked resolutely towards them, overcoming setbacks as they occurred. The example of his father and a sense of duty engendered by his upbringing drove him also to devote time to politics, community affairs and his church.

Pettigrew’s diaries and papers reveal a man of forthright character, firm opinions and unusual competence. The portrait opposite shows him in 1888, aged sixty-three, at the peak of his prestige and affluence. In 1897, the *Queenslander* summed him up in the following lines, attributed to the eighteenth century poet, William Cowper:

He that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart and keeps it: has a mind
That hungers and supplies it: and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business.⁸

² William Pettigrew’s Diary, 16 June 1876.

³ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. LI, 28 October 1887, p. 76.

⁴ Pers. com. Jan Smallhorn, 1999.

⁵ *Maryborough Chronicle*, 5 March 1883.

⁶ ‘A Pioneer of Industry’, BC, 4 July 1908.

⁷ WP to J. D. Lang, 14 April 1848, Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

⁸ ‘Men of Mark’, *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

2. SON OF SCOTIA, 1825-1849

'My father's name was Robert Petticrew,' wrote William Pettigrew in 1900, 'and so he spelled it till about the year 1830...'¹

William knew little about his Pettigrew ancestors beyond the facts that his paternal grandfather was named Adam, and the family had resided near the Scottish town of Ayr for several generations. He was much more aware of relationships within the large, extended family into which he was born, at Burton farm near the mouth of the River Doon, on 25 August 1825, the sixth child (and fourth son) in a family of eight siblings from three marriages.² His position within this complex family created some difficulties for him and had a bearing on his decision as a young man to emigrate to Australia. His private letters show that he had formed strong opinions about the worth of individual members of his family and was conscious of differences in wealth and status among his relatives.

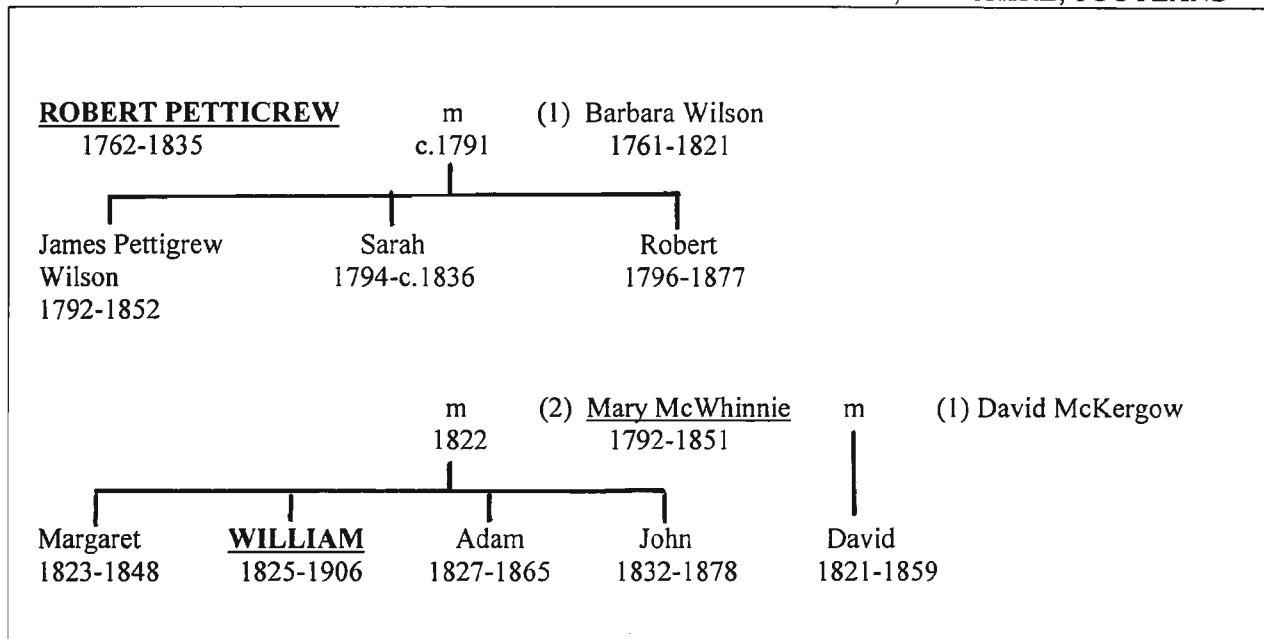
At the time of William's birth, members of the extended Pettigrew family were dispersed through a number of towns and districts in Ayrshire. His father, Robert Petticrew senior, was born at Monkton in 1762, the oldest child of Adam Petticrue, a farmer, and his first wife, Sarah Logan. Robert had three sisters and a brother, William. This William Petticrue was a tenant farmer and remained so to the end of his life; but Robert, starting as a tenant, increased his social status, acquired property in town and country, and died a wealthy man. Active and enterprising, he appears to have been one of those farmers who

¹ 'Genealogy of William Pettigrew', ms, 1900, p. 1. Pettigrew, with variant spellings, is an ancient British surname, first recorded in England and Scotland in the thirteenth century and probably derived from the French *petit cru*, meaning 'little growth' or small stature. The name is spelt Petticrue, Petticrew and Pettigrew in the eighteenth and nineteenth century records that relate to the Scottish Pettigrews.

² Parochial Registers, Parish of Maybole 1820-54, Baptisms 1825, Roll 605/1-4, Frame 736, New Register House, Edinburgh: *August 26th Mr Robert Petticrew in Burton and his spouse Mary McWhinnie had a son Born in lawfull Wedlock Baptised William*. August 26 appears to be the date of baptism. Pettigrew celebrated his birthday on August 25. See diary entries for 25 August 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852 and 1853.

benefitted from the Agrarian Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During his lifetime, the rural landscape of Ayrshire was transformed, as landowners consolidated the medieval riggs (or strips of land) into enclosed fields, redistributed on longer tenures the farms thus created, and introduced scientific methods of agriculture and grazing.³

Box 1. THE FAMILY OF ROBERT PETTICREW OF TARSHAW, AYRSHIRE, SCOTLAND



Robert Petticrew married well. His first marriage, about 1791, was to Barbara Wilson, with whom he had two sons, James and Robert junior, and a daughter, Sarah. The elder son, James, was made heir to his mother's childless brother, John Wilson, who occupied the farm of Greenan near Burton, and who, by money-lending and speculation, had amassed a fortune of £32,000. On his uncle's death in 1823, James took the name Pettigrew Wilson, and with his inheritance bought the hilly, inland estate of Polquhairn, which consisted of a number of farms and forests and a coalmine.⁴ James, his wife Isabella Mitchell, and their four sons and four daughters continued to reside at the

³ John Strawhorn and William Boyd, *Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Ayrshire*, p. 22.

⁴ Register of Sasines, Ayr: 4315, 21 January 1828 and 4635, 9 August 1828, SRO, Edinburgh.

comfortable farm of Holms in Dundonald until 1839, when they moved to a house named ‘Rosebank’ in Ayr. James’s younger brother Robert lived at Polquhain.

In 1826 James, together with Robert and a cousin, James Turner, benefitted from the will of another wealthy uncle, Thomas Wilson, who had acquired the estate of Orangefield, near Monkton.⁵ The closeness of this Pettigrew Wilson family is reflected in the churchyard of the ruined St Cuthbert’s Church at Monkton, where, in a row of well-marked graves, lie Barbara Wilson, who died in 1821, her brothers, John and Thomas, and her husband, Robert Petticrew senior. Her son James Pettigrew Wilson, who died in 1852, is buried in the same grave as his benefactor, John Wilson.



Illus. 4. Pettigrew Graves, St Cuthbert’s Church, Monkton, 1998

In this row, from left to right, are the graves of Robert Pettigrew senior (1835), Mary McWhinnie (1851), Margaret and Mary Joan Hight (1848); Barbara Wilson (1821); Thomas Wilson (1826); Jean Wilson; John Wilson (1823) and James Pettigrew Wilson (1852). The unusual tables mark the graves of Barbara Wilson’s wealthy brothers, Thomas and John Wilson.

⁵ Orangefield is now the site of Prestwick International Airport. See map p. 33.

The only member of the Pettigrew Wilson family with whom William Pettigrew regularly corresponded after leaving Scotland was his half-brother, Robert Pettigrew junior, whose inheritances enabled him to live the life of a gentleman. On his father's death, Robert inherited Tarshaw, a dairy farm near Tarbolton, which Robert Petticrew senior had purchased in 1813.⁶ Like his father, he was known as 'Robert Pettigrew of Tarshaw', the form of this title displaying the status of Laird and heritor, which ownership of rural land conferred on a Scotsman.⁷ Robert did not live at Tarshaw, but drew part of his income from farm rent. In 1848, when John Pettigrew Wilson, the nephew who was heir to the Polquhairn estate, married and made his home there, Robert and his wife, Margaret Guthrie, moved to the coastal resort town of Troon to be near her family and built 'St Medden's House', where they resided for the rest of their long lives.

Robert Petticrew senior was sixty years of age when, in 1822, he married his second wife, Mary McWhinnie, a woman thirty years his junior. Mary already had a young son, David, from a previous marriage to David McKergow, a carpenter. With Robert Petticrew, she produced a daughter, Margaret, and then three sons, William (the subject of this biography), Adam and John. Following the tradition in Scottish families by which Christian names were passed from generation to generation, William was named for his mother's brother, William McWhinnie, at whose farm on the coast near Fisherton he often spent his holidays. His mother also had a sister named Margaret and two other brothers: John McWhinnie, a stonemason, who moved to Campbelltown in Kintyre and changed his Galloway surname to its Highland version, Mackenzie, in order to get work among the clans; and Robert McWhinnie, who went to India, prospered in business, and in 1846 returned with his young English wife and son to live at Prestwick.

⁶ Sasines, Ayr: 10865, 23 March 1813, SRO, Edinburgh.

⁷ *Statistical Account of Scotland by the Ministers of the Respective Parishes* (1842), p. 743. In such titles, 'of' signified ownership, 'in' signified tenancy, and 'at' signified residence.

When William was an infant, his parents moved from Burton to his father's farm, Tarshaw. There his younger brothers were born, Adam in 1827 and John in 1832. In William's sentiments, Tarshaw was his place of origin. In Queensland, he was to give its name to one of his Brisbane homes and one of his ships. On the death of his half-brother Robert, he was to inherit it. A hundred acres of green pastures bordered by hedgerows, this beautiful farm lies on high, sloping ground, overlooking the coast and the burgh of Ayr, five miles away to the west. It is still a dairy farm, a complex of old stone and modern buildings, accessed through narrow lanes.

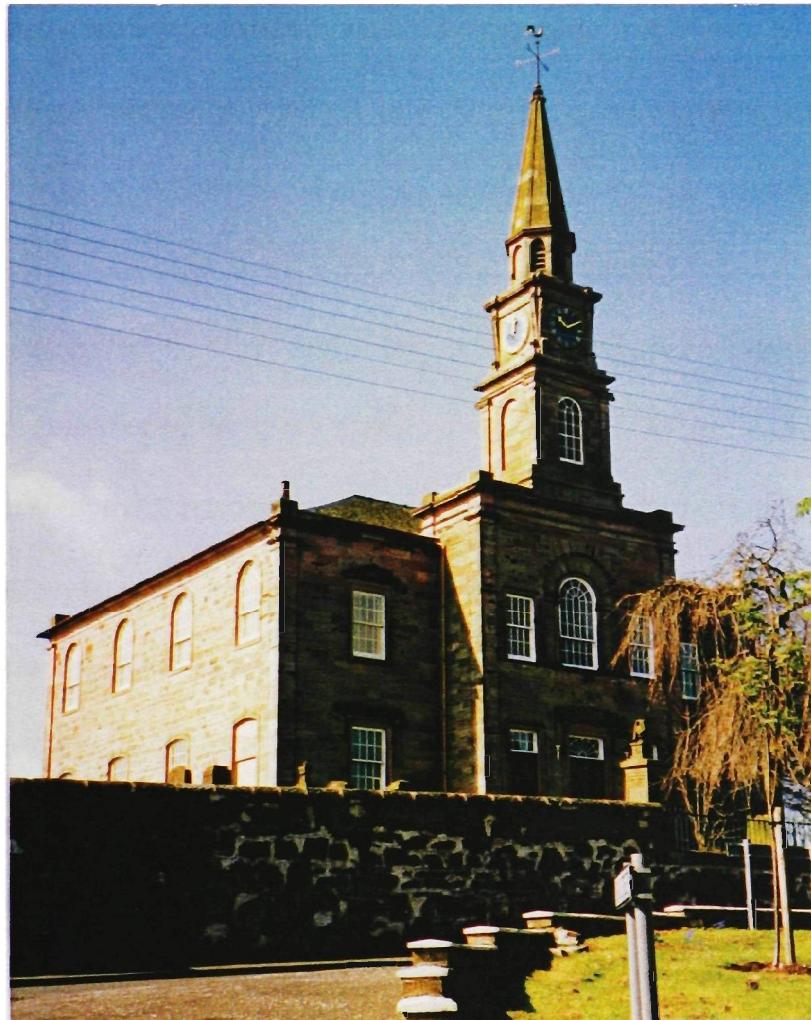


Illus. 5.

Tarshaw, Scotland, 1998

In the nearby village of Tarbolton, young William Pettigrew began his formal and religious education. From the age of seven, he walked two miles from Tarshaw to the Tarbolton Parish School to learn his alphabet and a little arithmetic. At this school he injured his spine while jumping, with the result, he wrote later, that he was 'never able

after that to do any such violent exertion'.⁸ His family attended the Tarbolton Parish Church, an impressive Georgian structure built in 1821, when the parish was increasing in prosperity.



Illus. 6.

Tarbolton Parish Church, 1998

Robert Petticrew's brother William was the tenant in Halrig farm, on the outskirts of Tarbolton. When William died in 1828, he owed Robert £300; but this debt, recorded only in a notebook, was not acknowledged by William's large, grown-up family. As a result, William Pettigrew wrote, 'all intercourse between the two families ceased'.⁹ Uncle

⁸ 'Genealogy', p. 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1; The Will and Inventory of Robert Petticrew, Book VII of the Record of Stamped Inventories of the Personal and Moveable Estates of persons deceasing within the boundaries of the Commissariat of Ayrshire ..., 1835-1836, SRO, Edinburgh, p. 380, lists 'Amount as appearing from book kept by the defunct as due to him by the late William Pettygrew in Halrig including interest, £302/11/5'.

William Petticrue, his wife Margaret Dunlop, and six of the thirteen children born to them between 1795 and 1820 are buried in the churchyard at Tarbolton.

After moving to Tarshaw, Robert Petticrew senior acted as a factor (steward or agent), collecting rents from the local tenants of Sir David Hunter Blair of Blairquhan, a large estate in southern Ayrshire near Straiton, and Richard Alexander Oswald, a Glasgow merchant, who owned the smaller estate of Auchencruive, near Ayr.¹⁰ According to William, his father lost the agency of Hunter Blair, a Tory, when he ‘took the Whig side’ and voted for Oswald of Auchencruive in the ‘great political bother anent passing the Reform Bill’,¹¹ which, in 1832, revised the British electoral system and extended voting rights to urban property-owners. Although this event occurred when William was only seven years old, neither his father’s concern for principle nor the detrimental effect of that principle on the family income was lost on him, and he developed a disdain for land-owners who abused their position in general, and the Hunter Blair family in particular. In voting to reform the franchise, Robert Petticrew was acting to benefit men who, like himself, had urban as well as rural interests; for, as well as buying a farm and becoming a Laird, he was one of the forty-eight freeman of the ancient burgh of Newton-upon-Ayr,¹² and for many years he had made money developing land and buildings in the centres of Newton, Prestwick, Wallacetown and Kilmarnock.¹³ (See map opposite.)

¹⁰ ‘My father’s Ledger Fail lands’, a notebook brought by William Pettigrew to Australia and now in the possession of Allan Pettigrew, contains his father’s record of the rents collected from Sir David Hunter Blair’s Fail lands and houses from 1825 to 1833. The Fail River flows through the Tarbolton district, and the crossroads at Fail and the farms listed – Brownhill, Clockstone, Fail Mains and Redwray – lie a little to the north-east of Tarshaw.

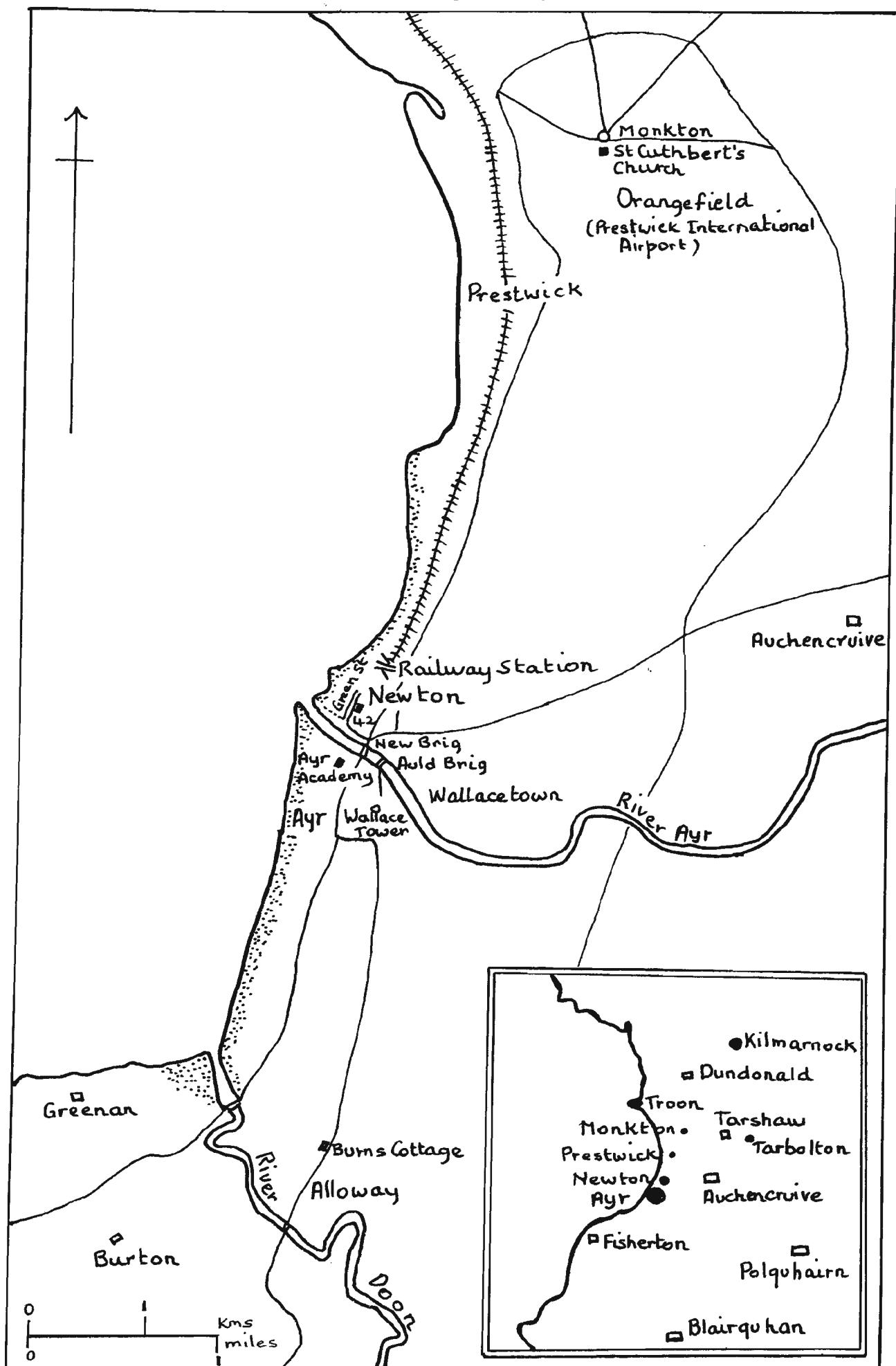
¹¹ My father’s Ledger, p. 29; ‘Genealogy’, p. 3. Pettigrew stated that, by way of compensation, Richard Oswald granted Robert Petticrew a road through his property which shortened the distance from Tarshaw to Ayr by about a mile. Strawhorn and Boyd, *Ayrshire*, p. 37; Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, pp. 238-246; David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1959), pp. 73-76.

¹² Sasines, Ayr: 11220, 3 December 1813; 1444, 13 November 1833; 1209, 27 May 1843, SRO, Edinburgh.

¹³ Transactions, for example: Sasines, Ayr: 10227, 4 September 1811 (Wallacetown); 11220, 3 December 1813 (Newton); 13396, 24 February 1818 (Wallacetown); 1351, 22 April 1823 (Kilmarnock); 4548, 17 June 1828 (Prestwick); 1373, 23 September 1833 (Newton), SRO, Edinburgh.

Map 3.

William Pettigrew's Ayrshire



Robert Petticrew died on 14 April 1835, aged seventy-two. His will, drawn up in 1831, set out at length his desire to deal fairly with his family and to ensure that the wealth he had gained was not dissipated. To James Pettigrew Wilson, who had already received more than his share of the family property, he left nothing. Tarshaw, entailed in the male line, went to Robert Pettigrew junior. Sarah Pettigrew, his unmarried daughter, received £500. His wife Mary McWhinnie was provided for during her lifetime, but the part of the estate left to their four children (chiefly his property in Newton) could not be divided until the youngest child reached twenty-one years of age. The trustees who were appointed to manage the estate in the interests of the children were their mother, banker Quinton Kennedy, and farmers John Boyle and James Fenton.¹⁴

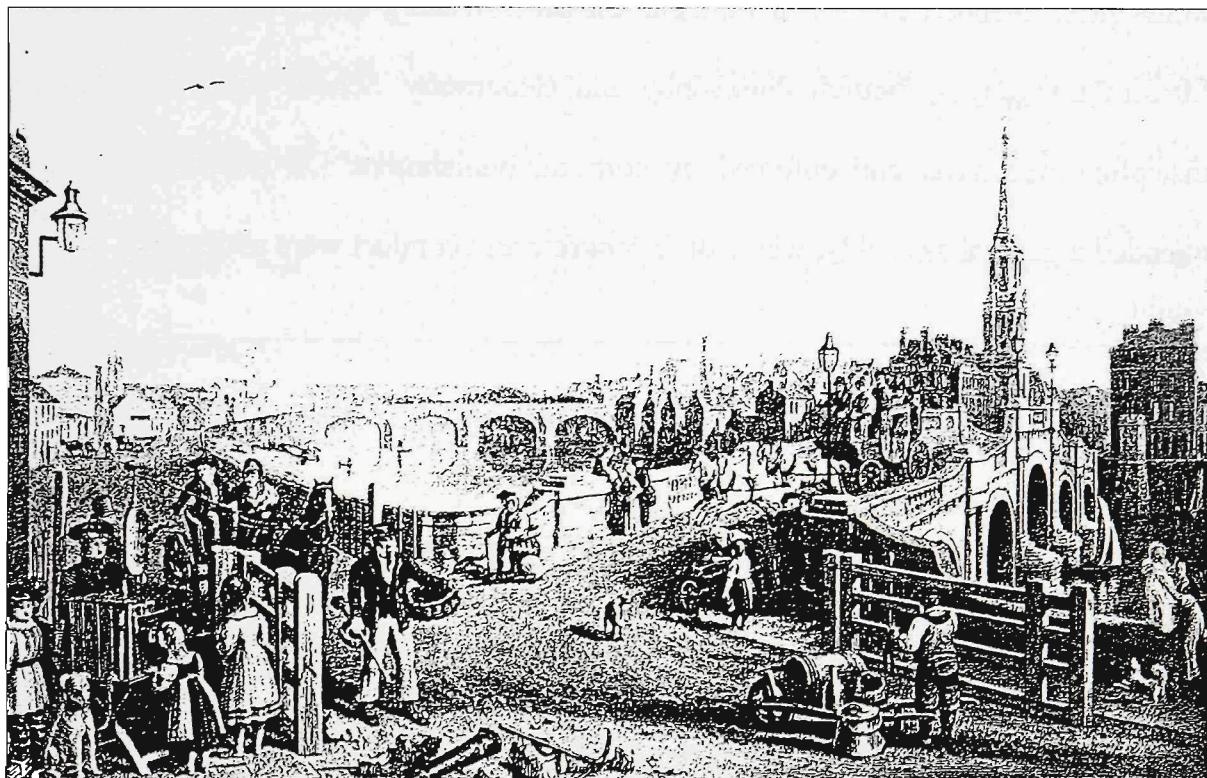
The will also provided that Mary McWhinnie could remain at Tarshaw for one year after her husband's death. In 1836, when ownership of Tarshaw was transferred to her stepson, Robert junior, Mary took her young family to live in a two-storey stone house at 42 Green Street, Newton-upon-Ayr, which may have been a house Robert Pettigrew had purchased in 1795 and given 'in liferent' to his first wife, Barbara Wilson.¹⁵ As members of a respectable, landed family, the younger Pettigrew children were to enjoy the advantages of a secure upbringing, a sound education, and the prospect of inheriting a substantial patrimony. But William, at least, chafed at the constraints of being a younger son, subject to control by his mother and the 'tutors and curators' who for nineteen years administered his father's estate.

Close to their home at Newton Green, the Pettigrew children played among the rocks, sands and waves of the coastal beaches; and the nearby River Ayr, with seagulls calling

¹⁴ 'Will and Inventory of Robert Petticrew'.

¹⁵ Sasines, Ayr: 4412, 2 April 1795 and 4642, 30 January 1796, SRO, Edinburgh. The right to give property 'in liferent' to their wives was one of the privileges enjoyed by the burgesses of the Burgh of Newton-upon-Ayr. This part of Newton has become industrialised, and the house at No. 42 no longer exists.

overhead, and ships arriving at and departing from its busy wharves, was a source of endless interest. ‘From 1836 to 1844,’ William later recalled, ‘I resided near Ayr harbour and knew every boat on it, as well as the regular traders.’¹⁶ Beaches, boats and trade were to be significant themes in his adult life.



Illus. 7. ‘The Twa Brigs’, late 1830s, by David Octavius Hill¹⁷

This scene, with its coaches, wagons, gaslights, boats, bridges, buildings and active people, brings to life the Royal Burgh of Ayr, where, during William Pettigrew’s boyhood and youth, a population of fewer than 15,000 people struggled to survive amidst bitterly cold Atlantic gales, coal-dust pollution and plagues of cholera. The picture is drawn from the Newton side of the river, and Green Street, where the Pettigrews lived, is not far behind the artist.

Ayr Harbour and the mouth of the River Ayr are downstream to the right. Upstream is the narrow, medieval bridge known as the Auld Brig, and in front of the artist is the New Brig, built in 1788 and destroyed in 1877, which William Pettigrew and his brothers crossed on their way to school at the Ayr Academy.

In the distance, the tall Wallace Tower, built in 1832 and therefore new when the Pettigrews came to live at Newton, honours the Scottish hero William Wallace, whose victory over the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297 became a symbol of Scottish independence. Loudon Hall, the home of the Sheriffs of Ayr, is prominent to the right of the New Brig. The Ayr Academy is out of the picture, still further to the right.

¹⁶ ‘History of an Idea’, WP Diary, 1862.

¹⁷ Illustration in Ian McIntyre, *Dirt & Deity: A Life of Robert Burns* (London: HarperCollins, 1995).

A short walk across the New Brig took eleven-year-old William to the Ayr Academy, a prestigious school with a tradition dating back to the thirteenth century and a curriculum that was to prepare him well for an unpredictable future. In the substantial, two-storey building, erected in 1800 and surrounded by the narrow streets, grey stone houses and ruined castle of the Royal Burgh of Ayr, about 400 pupils, mostly boys but including some girls, attended classes in English, Classics, Writing and Drawing, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Natural Philosophy and Geography. School days were long, and discipline was strict and enforced by corporal punishment. On Saturdays, all pupils attended a general assembly, where their progress and conduct were assessed.



Illus. 8.

The Ayr Academy, 1800-1880¹⁸

When William, his brothers Adam and John, and his nephews John and James Pettigrew Wilson attended the Ayr Academy during the late 1830s and early 1840s, the school was dominated by its restless and energetic Rector, Dr John Smyth Memes. A man of broad learning with a practical bent, Dr Memes was famous as a teacher who ‘never failed not only to attach his scholars to him personally, but also to make them take a lively interest

¹⁸ Illustration in John Strawhorn, *750 Years of a Scottish School: Ayr Academy 1233-1983* (Ayr: Alloway Publishing, 1983), p. 33.

in the pursuits in which they were engaged'.¹⁹ He painted two large terrestrial spheres on the ceiling of the school hall, and in 1837 introduced excursions into the country for his Geography classes. On one occasion, he and a party of senior pupils carried out a survey and prepared a report on the feasibility of bringing piped water from Carrick Hill into Ayr.²⁰ Dr Memes is mentioned in William's writings only as 'the Rector, or chief teacher, who taught various languages and Geography',²¹ but it is easy to surmise that his pupil's openness to travel and life-long interest in problem-solving owed something to the influence of this intense and active man.

Although William 'got on very well' with his teachers at the Ayr Academy, he believed that he carried through life the consequences of an injustice that occurred in his second year at the school. More than sixty years later, with a controlled sense of outrage, he recalled this incident, which concerned the head English teacher, Arthur Lang:

The class I was in was brought up before him and he asked a question which I did not know the meaning of, and seemingly the rest of the class were equally knowing [sic]. He ordered the whole class in to the next room to be flogged by his assistant teacher. Off that room was a narrow passage in which the flogging was done, so that I did not see the operation. He commenced at the top of the class. I always kept very near the bottom. There was another one, David Stephenson from Spain – very soft, tender. He started a weeping in anticipation of the flogging. While such was in progress, two ladies, friends of the child, came to see how he was getting on. The class was ordered back to the Hall. Some were weeping from the effects of the flogging – and these were the best in the class – and Stephenson [was] weeping in anticipation of the flogging.

The whole affair so disgusted me at the conduct of that teacher, that after the quarter for which I had paid, I never entered into any other class taught by him. I consider now that such a man should have been given thirty strokes with the cat and nine tails by the hangman as a punishment for such vile conduct. Because children do not understand a question and so cannot answer it, it is the master's business to lead them on to understand it. That is what he is paid for in any event. As a consequence of such

¹⁹ Strawhorn, *750 Years of a Scottish School*, p. 43. John Smyth Memes (1795-1858) undertook wide studies at the University of Aberdeen before travelling in Europe, where he mastered three languages. A man of 'polymathic powers' and 'varied and elegant accomplishments', he was appointed Rector of the Ayr Academy in 1826 at the age of thirty-one and left to become a parish minister in 1844. He had excellent relations with his staff and the Ayr community, was an impressive orator and an inspiring teacher, and also found the time to write seven books.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 44; Ayr had a gravity-fed water supply by 1840. See Strawhorn and Boyd, *Ayrshire*, p. 545.

²¹ 'Genealogy', p. 3.

conduct on the part of Arthur Lang, I never learned much of the English language or composition.²²

The English language, as opposed to the Scots dialect spoken by William, was carefully taught at the Ayr Academy. His English ‘composition’ certainly lacked the floridness of Victorian literary style, and his sentences were sometimes awkwardly constructed, but his direct, concise expression in writing and speaking was to be used to good effect throughout his life. From an early age he was a reader, using books to increase his understanding of the world. Devoutly religious, he studied the Bible and read sermons, tracts and commentaries. He also absorbed the pride of Scottish literature: the stirring historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, the tales of heroes who had faced over-whelming opposition, such as Robert the Bruce and William Wallace, and the lyrical poems and songs of his father’s contemporary, Robert Burns,²³ who had been born at Alloway, on the bank of the River Doon, opposite William’s birthplace at Burton.

As William grew up, however, his interests became more technical than literary, more practical than philosophical. ‘I am accustomed to deal more in matter than in mind,’ he modestly told a Brisbane audience in 1857.²⁴ His youth, during the 1830s and 1840s, coincided with rapid industrialisation in Scotland, as transport and industry adopted the technology of steam. The coalmines of Ayrshire fueled the factories of Glasgow, Ayr and other industrial centres. Steamships moved cargoes and people efficiently from port to port, and railway locomotives began to puff their way speedily across the countryside. Fascinated by these changes, young William Pettigrew longed to be part of the revolution powered by steam. In 1900, he wrote:

²² Ibid, pp. 3-4. Arthur Lang was at the Ayr Academy from 1838 to 1866. His problems with discipline are also recorded in Strawhorn, *750 Years of a Scottish School*, p. 39. Lang married Pettigrew’s niece Isabella, a daughter of James Pettigrew Wilson.

²³ Pettigrew’s library contains the complete Waverley novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and an attractive edition of the complete works of Robert Burns (1759-1796).

²⁴ MBC, 10 January 1857.

As to choosing a trade, I wanted to be a worker in iron, but in those days a premium had to be paid to get in to a shop to do such; besides my mother was against it. I was designed to be a farmer and had to put up with the wishes of [my] parent ...²⁵

Unwilling to accept that William's inclination towards industry would benefit him, Mary McWhinnie struggled with her son over what he was to do with his life. A family tradition holds that he first attempted to study medicine, but gave up after he fainted at his first operation.²⁶ This story does not appear in his own writings, but there was certainly time for him to have tried such a course after he left school at the age of sixteen. Following his mother's design, he 'learned farming for three or more years'.²⁷ It is not clear how much of this learning was formal and how much was gained simply by working on various family farms, but he certainly acquired theoretical and practical knowledge that was to stand him in good stead in Australia. A surviving set of exercises shows that during this time he also undertook a course in book-keeping, learning a system by which he thereafter kept account of his personal and business affairs.

In May 1843, when William was an impressionable seventeen-year-old, the Church of Scotland suffered the upheaval that became known as the Great Disruption.²⁸ After more than 450 ministers left the established Church over issues of patronage and voluntarism,²⁹ William, influenced by two evangelical ministers, the Rev. John Barclay and the Rev. James Stevenson, joined the breakaway Newton Free Presbyterian Church. From the prayer meetings, church services, congregational classes and intense discussions of this period, he derived certain religious practices that remained with him for the rest of his life, including family prayers, the seeking of guidance from the Scriptures, and strict

²⁵ 'Genealogy', p. 4.

²⁶ Eckhoff, 'The Late Hon. William Pettigrew'.

²⁷ 'Genealogy', p. 4.

²⁸ Houston and Knox, *History of Scotland*, pp. 357-360.

²⁹ 'Patronage' was the issue of the right of lay persons to appoint ministers to parishes; 'voluntarism' was the question of whether the church should accept assistance from the government. The dissenters believed that ministers should be called by congregations and that the church should be independent of state aid.

Sabbatarianism.³⁰ He also held the conviction, common in Scotland at the time, that the singing of the psalms should not be accompanied by musical instruments.

In October 1845, at the age of twenty, William went to work for James McDirment, a land surveyor, and for a year learned the skills of surveying and levelling. Following this training, he spent eighteen months measuring land and crops, drawing dykes, drains and docks, and making plans for the railway lines that were then being constructed in Ayrshire. These experiences later enabled him to earn his living as a surveyor, to plan the routes of roads and railways, and to chart his own journeys of exploration.

Early in 1848, the reluctant farmer and newly qualified surveyor became, for the first (but not the last) time in his life, the victim of an economic crisis. In 1847 the British railway bubble burst.³¹ Companies failed, speculators lost their money, and the construction of railways slowed. From mid-March 1848, William's employer could offer him work only two days a week, and in May he was dismissed. In desperation he considered emigrating, and, like many Scots at the time, contemplated moving to Canada.³²

When discussing migration, demographers consider 'push' and 'pull' factors. For William Pettigrew, the 'push' was economic: he needed a job and a future. A year after leaving Scotland, he wrote to his mother, justifying his decision to emigrate:

I was unemployed (and thousands beside) and as I wish to live an honourable life I could not endure the thought of remaining idle. In Australia there is room for thousands and me besides, and employment for all.³³

The 'pull' entered his life in the person of John Dunmore Lang, a Presbyterian minister, who came to Ayr to give a lecture on 'Cooksland' or Moreton Bay, an insignificant

³⁰ 'Sabbatarianism' is the belief that Sunday should be strictly kept as a day of rest and religious observance.

³¹ Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783-1867* (London: Longman, 1977), p. 296.

³² WP Diary, January 1846 - May 1848 - Pettigrew was dismissed on 2 May 1848; 'Genealogy', p. 4.

³³ WP to Mother, 7 September 1849.

Australian outpost of the British Empire, which he had visited in 1845.³⁴ During 1847 and 1848, Lang toured Britain, speaking about the glowing future of the Australian colonies and the need to populate their former convict settlements with respectable, Protestant families.³⁵ His campaign to attract emigrants was enhanced by a series of letters to an



Illus. 9. **The Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang³⁶**
(1799-1878)

Born at Greenock, Scotland, and educated at Glasgow University, Lang emigrated to New South Wales in 1823 to become Sydney's first Presbyterian minister. A large man, with imposing presence, high intelligence, decided opinions, overbearing disposition and boundless energy, he led an eventful life, stirring up controversy throughout his dual careers in the church and colonial politics.

³⁴ Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 223.

³⁵ The transportation of convicts to New South Wales was abolished in 1840 and Moreton Bay was opened to free settlement in 1842. In a letter to Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lang stated that his 'principal object in coming to England ... was to give such an impulse to emigration to Australia, as would direct to that country many families and individuals of virtuous character and industrious habits, who would not only contribute materially to develop its vast resources, but who would transmit the precious inheritance of our civil and religious liberties unimpaired to posterity.' *British Banner*, 21 November 1848.

³⁶ JOL Neg. No. 68178.

evangelical weekly paper, the *British Banner*; and he also attempted to influence public opinion with his descriptive and visionary book, *Cooksland*, published in 1847, which portrayed Moreton Bay as a potential source of cotton for Britain's hungry textile mills.³⁷

Like most of the emigrants recruited by Lang during this campaign, Pettigrew was to have a problematic relationship with his sponsor. There is no evidence that he met Lang in Ayr or attended his meeting. All he wrote, fifty years later, was that '... Dr Lang came to Scotland and delivered a lecture in Ayr about Cooksland in Australia. A friend recommended me to apply to him, and which I did.'³⁸ Early in 1848, Pettigrew wrote to Lang, explaining his interest in emigrating and requesting a copy of the prospectus of Lang's proposed Cooksland Colonisation Company.³⁹ On 6 April, Lang replied, enclosing the prospectus and strongly advising Pettigrew to emigrate to Cooksland rather than Canada. He stated that there would be considerable employment for a land surveyor in Cooksland, and guaranteed that Pettigrew, as the first of his profession to apply, would have the first offer of employment, provided he could supply satisfactory testimonials. 'If the proposed Company should require a Surveyor permanently, his salary would be the same as that of the Government Surveyor in the Colony,' wrote Lang. 'It is a moderate amount, but sufficient. I don't know what it is exactly.' At that stage, he expected a ship to leave Glasgow in May or June with a complement of small farmers, mechanics and shopkeepers, each of whom would pay £16.⁴⁰

³⁷ John Dunmore Lang, *Cooksland in North-Eastern Australia; The Future Cotton-field of Great Britain: Its Characteristics and Capabilities for European Colonization* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1847); J. Farnfield, 'Cotton and the Search for an Agricultural Staple in Early Queensland', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1971, pp. 20-25.

³⁸ 'Genealogy', p. 4.

³⁹ Most of Lang's letters to Pettigrew, together with drafts of some of Pettigrew's letters to Lang, have survived and are held by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. Lang began writing in the *British Banner* in March 1848, and Pettigrew's approach may have been in response to an article early in April in which Lang advertised five passages to Moreton Bay and 80 acres of land for the bargain price of £100. Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 259.

⁴⁰ Lang to WP, 6 April 1848.

On 14 April, Pettigrew wrote again, applying to be Land Surveyor to the Cooksland Colonisation Company, and enclosing testimonials from James McDirment, his former employer, John Paterson, another surveyor with whom he had worked, and the Rev. James Stevenson, minister of the Newton Free Presbyterian Church. But Pettigrew wanted to know more about his role in Lang's scheme, writing:

As I am one of those that you termed 'the canny Scotch', I would wish to know, in the event of my being chosen the Company's Land Surveyor, how I would stand in relation to the said Company, whether I would receive a yearly salary and how much, or go out and begin business on my own account and be employed by the Company. The latter seems to be the tenor of your letter, but I would prefer the former at least for a few years as it would give myself and friends a better idea of the situation.

On the question of how many families might consider going to Cooksland from Ayrshire, he commented:

The Scotch people are generally very cautious, and on that principle they emigrate. This season a considerable number have gone from this quarter to Canada and their principle [sic] reason for going thither was that they have friends or acquaintances there and these have sent home good reports of their adopted country. Now on the same principle, if emigration was set going to Cooksland and those who went thither sending home a better report than those who are in Canada, there is not the least doubt but the flood of emigration would go in that direction. I know for my part that if I go out and can send back a good report, several friends have already testified their willingness to go and others would follow them.⁴¹

During May, Lang's attention was divided between his emigration work in London and his worry about an attack of scarlet fever that had struck his wife and children, who were living in Glasgow. In a letter to Pettigrew, he mentioned the death of his young son, but wrote optimistically that 'the prospect [for the emigration scheme] is more favourable than it was', and that 'a gentleman of influence' had taken up the matter. 'I shall not fail to ... inform you ... as soon as anything definite is determined on ... , he assured Pettigrew.⁴²

⁴¹ WP to Lang, 14 April 1848.

⁴² Lang to WP, 27 May 1848.

During June, Lang's campaign in the *British Banner* began to pay off, and responses from prospective emigrants came flooding in. On 6 June, he wrote that he was now certain of the 'speedy and successful establishment' of the Company which he had been trying to form, and that, although 'certain preliminaries' had to be gone through, he had 'no further apprehension of failure'. Stating that a large number of respectable people had come forward – enough to fill a ship that would embark from London – he again gave an assurance: 'I shall not neglect your interest in the matter.'⁴³

Nothing was finalised until late July, when letters from an anxious Pettigrew and an increasingly confident Lang crossed in the mail. On 28 July, Pettigrew wrote:

I understood from your last letter that the affairs of this company would have been settled a fortnight ago; since that time I have been daily looking for your statement of the arrangements so far as my interest goes. As the vessel sails in August there is little time to prepare to go with it.⁴⁴

A few days later he received Lang's offer, dated 27 July:

... after many disappointments and most vexatious delays, I have succeeded in getting our Company fairly started at last. The first ship, the *John Edwards*, will sail from London on 24 [or] 25 of next month. Will you be ready to go by her? I will guarantee you a free passage with the same salary as Government Surveyors have in the Colony on their first appointment. I shall ascertain the amount very shortly.⁴⁵

Pettigrew replied the next day, accepting Lang's proposal. Then, believing he had a firm offer of employment, he began to negotiate with the trustees of his father's estate for financial support for his plan to emigrate. Lang wrote again on 7 August, apologising that he had not answered sooner and advising that the salary of a surveyor in the colony commenced at £200 and rose according to length of service. To Pettigrew, who had been earning about £40 per year, the amount was enticing. Lang confidently mentioned Mr Richardson, a 'Scotch merchant in Brisbane Town', who would 'handle matters' until he

⁴³ Lang to WP, 6 June 1848.

⁴⁴ WP to Lang, 28 July 1848.

⁴⁵ Lang to WP, 27 July 1848.

could go out himself, and referred vaguely to ‘our Charter, which has been as good as produced’, and ‘weighty men on our Committee – among others Mr Hawkey, the London banker, and J. Boyd Esq, Member for Coleraine’. The *John Edwards*, he informed Pettigrew, had been withdrawn by the desire of the owner, but with the concurrence of all concerned. The *Fortitude*, a much larger and finer vessel, had been substituted, and would leave on September 4, or a few days later. To this letter, Lang added a postscript, hinting at the financial pressure that he was under:

Did you mean to say that you expect to deposit £100 in the Company for shares or for your going out? It would be very desirable for us if you did; and no loss to your-self for we require all our available funds at starting, the expenditure for this larger vessel being very heavy.⁴⁶

Pettigrew’s letter of 11 August revealed his frustration with his own situation and another attempt on his part to get firm answers from Lang:

My father’s trustees met on Tuesday and my proposal of becoming surveyor to the Cooksland Colonization Company met with their decided opposition, as I anticipated in my previous letter. Since then I have received your letter of the 7th and am perfectly satisfied with the sum therein specified as my salary, but I must have proper security for that money and unless you can get people in this country that will become responsible for that amount annually it will serve no good purpose for me to proceed further in this concern as my Trustees will supply me with no money unless they have the very best security. You mention that the Company will have no other payments to make in the meantime, but may I remind you that my assistants will have to be paid unless you expect that I pay them out of my salary which I will not consent to do. Be pleased to send all necessary documents towards the conclusion of an agreement and answer this before the end of next week that I may be enabled to lay the whole matter before my trustees on Tuesday the 22nd.⁴⁷

Pettigrew later crossed both sides of this letter in ink and wrote on the bottom, ‘It had been well if the rejoinder of this had never been sent.’⁴⁸ Lang’s ‘rejoinder’, a masterpiece of manipulation, illustrates his slippery combativeness and the way he could punch, wind and bring to their knees those who attempted to pressure or oppose him. It also helps to

⁴⁶ Lang to WP, 7 August 1848.

⁴⁷ WP to Lang, 11 August 1848.

⁴⁸ In November 1856, however, Pettigrew revised this assessment, writing like a true Calvinist on the letter, ‘All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called ... ’

explain the ‘hands-off’ attitude towards Lang that was later taken, not only by Pettigrew, but also by most of those whom he deceived in the course of his emigration schemes:

I should be sorry to stand in the way of anything your father’s Trustees may design for you. In offering you this situation of Surveyor to the Company I was forming, I thought I was doing you a service and putting you in the way of attaining a respectable and influential position in our Colonial society – a service which it has been my lot to render to not a few persons of many grades and classes during my past life. It seems however that yourself and your Trustees regard the matter in a somewhat different light and suppose that I am driving a hard bargain with you and that I am disposed to take somewhat unfair advantage of you. I won’t say that you have not a right to be suspicious in the matter, especially considering the delay that has already taken place ... At the same time it is natural of me from a feeling of self respect to feel somewhat indignant at these suspicions. You will recollect that it was not I who applied to you in the first instance but that you applied to me.

In offering you the same salary as a Govt [sic] Surveyor in our Colony, it was fair to infer that the same would be made for the assistance in the discharge of your duties. And when I offered you a free cabin passage in a ship of 640 tons which had been chartered for the express purpose of carrying out 2 or 3 hundred persons as the expedition with which you were to have been connected, it was reasonable to infer that the influence which had been sufficient to expect such extensive arrangements as all this implied would have been sufficient to ensure the payment of a salary of £200 a year. In such circumstances to give security in this country for the payment of your salary in the Colony is what I am neither prepared nor disposed to do simply because I think it unreasonable for you to ask it ... I think it will serve no good purpose for you proceeding farther ... I am only sorry I had troubled you at all on the subject.⁴⁹

Pettigrew backed down, and his next two letters were conciliatory. He apologised for seeming to be a ‘dictator of others’, assured Lang that he was a ‘well-wisher of your adopted land’, and promised to encourage others, so that a flood of emigration would flow to Cooksland. He reported that his father’s trustees had failed to meet on the promised date, but he had talked to them individually, and they were now willing to grant him the money he required. He would take out £100 in Company shares, and expected a free, cabin passage for himself and the wife he intended to take with him. He mentioned a friend, a joiner by trade, who also intended to take a wife with him, but would not be available for the first vessel. He inquired again about his contract with the Company.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Lang to WP, 12 August 1848.

⁵⁰ WP to Lang, 17 and 23 August 1848.

Lang replied on 25 August, stating that he had received his first communication from the government. Although ‘not exactly all that we desire’, it was a ‘sufficient basis to work on’. The Committee would meet early the next week to set the Company fairly in motion. He questioned whether it would be practical to get the kind of arrangement that Pettigrew proposed, but held out the bait that the Company might give him a formal contract before the *Fortitude* sailed. Lang wrote that he had ‘confidence in myself on the one hand and our enterprise on the other ...’ for the ‘great emigration to Cooksland ...’; but that it was ‘out of the question to get formal ... contracts from a body only in an embryo state itself’. ‘If in these circumstances you are willing to go out by the *Fortitude*, trusting ...,’ he wrote, ‘the way is still open as it has been from the first and nothing remains to prevent you going.’⁵¹ This was, as Pettigrew noted on the letter, ‘no definite bargain’, but he was prepared to trust Lang, whose credentials, as a ‘Senior minister of the Presbyterian Church and Member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales’,⁵² were convincing. The certainty of emigrating put pressure on him to propose marriage to Mary Guthrie, the young lady he intended to take with him, but she turned him down. Lang’s response to this news was markedly unsympathetic:

In regard to your intended’s refusal, keep up your heart. You will find half a ship-load of well-educated and well-principled young ladies emigrating with their friends to Cooksland and if you cannot find one among them to supply the loss you have experienced it will be your own fault.⁵³

So that William would not be travelling alone, his half-brother, David McKergow (the ‘joiner friend’ who was also interested in emigrating), and David’s new wife, Jane Cameron, decided to accompany him. When he received an advance of £300 from his father’s trustees, he lent David and Jane £25 to set them up for the voyage, and spent £30 on his own clothing and gear and £100 on surveying equipment and guns. After settling

⁵¹ Lang to WP, 25 August 1848.

⁵² This description of Lang is pencilled in Pettigrew’s *Fortitude* notebook, ‘My father’s Ledger Fail lands’.

⁵³ Lang to WP, 31 August 1848.

minor debts and travel expenses, giving his brother Adam £40 to send to Moreton Bay by Bill of Exchange, and paying Dr Lang £40 for the McKergows' passage and land, he was to leave London carrying an Ayrshire Bank Bill for £40 and about £20 in cash.

On 6 September 1848, after two weeks of hurried preparation, William, David and Jane left Newton Railway Station to travel by train to Glasgow and Edinburgh, and then by steamer from Leith to London. Behind them they left their mother, their widowed sister Margaret Hight, her baby daughter Mary Joan, and their younger brothers – Adam, who had been funded by their father's trustees to open a draper's shop in Ayr,⁵⁴ and schoolboy John, the only member of the family that they would ever see again.

Arriving in London only a few days before the *Fortitude* was due to sail, Pettigrew called on Dr Lang, who received visitors at his lodgings in the mornings between 9 o'clock and noon.⁵⁵ Lang offered him no formal contract; but, in exchange for a free passage, he agreed to act as Lang's agent, helping to supervise the emigrants during the voyage, and selecting and surveying land for them once they reached Moreton Bay. Lang entrusted him with letters addressed to important men in Brisbane.

By Saturday 9 September, most of the 270 emigrants who had been drawn to the voyage by Lang's assurances had arrived at the West India Dock, Blackwall, and, under Lang's supervision, were settling into their ship-board accommodation. Pettigrew found himself sharing a small cabin with the ship's chaplain, the Rev. Charles Stewart, who was also to receive a free passage in exchange for duties during the voyage, and who, it was understood, would gather a congregation and establish a church at Moreton Bay.⁵⁶ The other cabin passengers were Stewart's sister, Caroline, who was to be his house-keeper;

⁵⁴ WP Diary, 23 February 1846.

⁵⁵ Lang to WP, 4 September 1848.

⁵⁶ Charles Stewart (1820-1858). See David Parker, 'Strange Bedfellows': Rev. Charles Stewart and the United Evangelical Church (Brisbane: Baptist Historical Society of Queensland, 1998).

Mrs Susanna Storer, a paying passenger, travelling with her two young children to join her husband in Sydney; and Dr Henry Challinor,⁵⁷ the ship's surgeon, who was accompanied by his widowed aunt, Mrs Mary Challinor, and her teenage children, George and Emily.

In quarters much less comfortable than the cabins, the 260 steerage passengers, including David and Jane McKergow, made their preparations. The forward space between the *Fortitude*'s upper and lower decks had been divided into a number of large, poorly ventilated compartments, reached by ladders down hatchways and furnished with long tables, benches, and rows of sleeping berths. One of Pettigrew's duties was to ensure that the emigrants kept these crowded living spaces clean and tidy.⁵⁸

Into the ship's hold were loaded trunks filled with the emigrants' worldly goods, and boxes of the merchandise with which the shopkeepers among them intended setting up their businesses at Moreton Bay. Pettigrew's valuable surveying instruments, including a theodolite, a circumferentor, a level and five compasses, were stowed away in their neat coffers, together with chains, scales, a quantity of paper, pencils, pens, inks and watercolour paints, and a number of reference books, including Castle's *Treatise on Land Surveying and Levelling*,⁵⁹ a set of logarithms, a lettering book and a dictionary.

On the morning of Sunday 10 September 1848, a steamboat towed the *Fortitude* downstream from Blackwall to Gravesend, where she lay at anchor in the River Thames. Dr Lang came on board and conducted a farewell service on the open deck. He began by calling for the singing of the 'Old Hundredth', a metrical version of Psalm 100, and

⁵⁷ Henry Challinor (1814-1882) had a distinguished career as a medical practitioner in Ipswich and Brisbane and also served as a Member of Parliament from 1861 to 1868.

⁵⁸ A list of four 'gangs' of twelve young men, each 'gang' in charge of an older man issued with a 'dust pan and besom [broom]', appears in Pettigrew's *Fortitude* notebook, 'My father's Ledger', pp. 114-115.

⁵⁹ Henry James Castle, *A Treatise on Land Surveying and Levelling* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1845). This book is in the possession of Allan Pettigrew.

Pettigrew, knowing that a young man named George Holt had a strong voice, prompted him to lead the singing.⁶⁰ The emigrants responded fervently, and a chorus of voices carried the psalm across the water and up into the fine autumn air:

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice.

During the service, extempore prayers were said, Charles Stewart preached, and Lang addressed the emigrants in his usual, eloquent style. He warned them that life at sea would be difficult, exhorted them to ‘bear one another’s burdens’, and emphasised how important it was, not only for the ‘unemployed myriads in Britain’ but for the ‘great cause of humanity itself’, that they should succeed in developing the ‘vast resources of their adopted country’.⁶¹ When he left them, the emigrants believed he had made arrangements for their reception at Moreton Bay and for the land grants which he had promised them.⁶² In fact, in dispatching the *Fortitude*, Lang was committing an astonishing act of deception.⁶³ There was no Cooksland Colonisation Company, his negotiations with the Colonial Office concerning bounties and land for his emigrants had been totally unsuccessful, and no officials at Sydney or Brisbane had been notified that an emigrant ship was about to set sail.

On Thursday 14 September 1848, the *Fortitude* left Gravesend and was towed until the wind filled her sails and sent her along the coast to Devon, where the emigrants caught their last glimpse of England. As the ship crossed the stormy Bay of Biscay, most of the passengers were seasick for nearly a fortnight, but near Madeira and the Canary Isles the

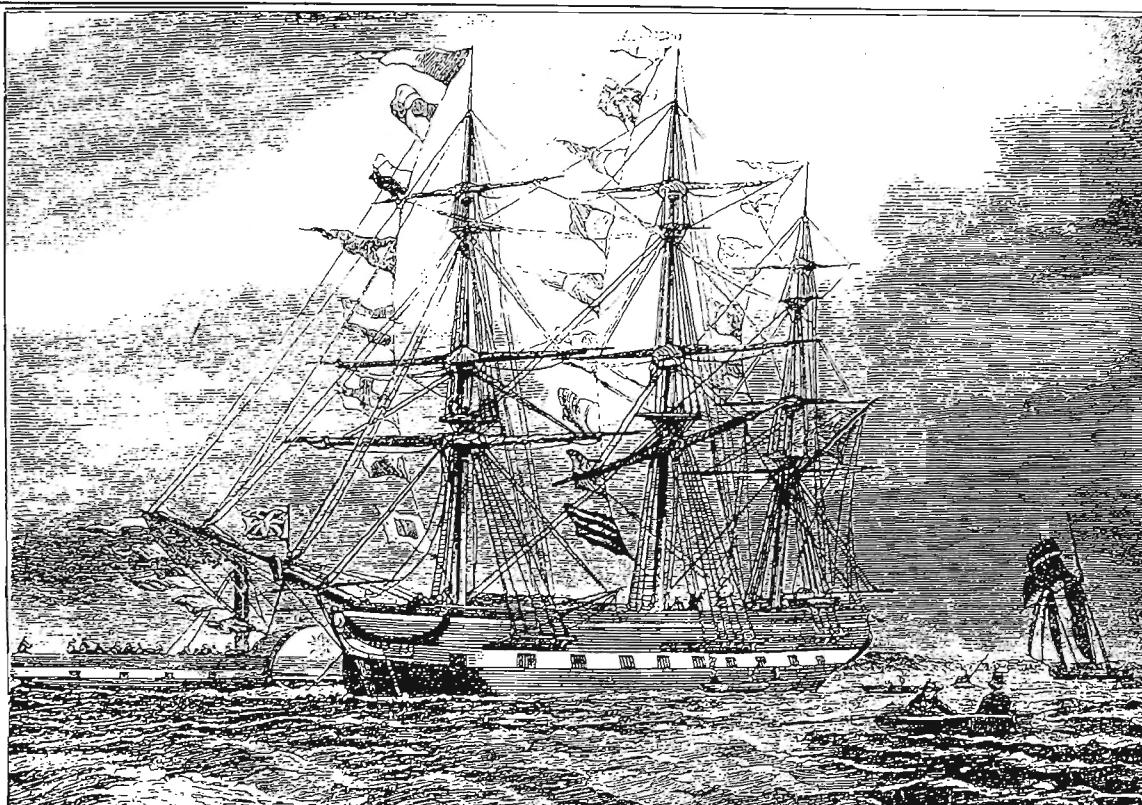
⁶⁰ ‘CB’ in Pettigrew papers, Queensland Women’s Historical Association. This psalm was also sung at the leaving of Lang’s other ships.

⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1849.

⁶² T. O. Dadswell, *MBC*, 30 March 1850.

⁶³ Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 264.

weather became warm and balmy, and they recovered. In early October, when the ship was becalmed for three days in intense heat off the Cape Verde Isles, the difficulties which Lang had warned them about became distressingly evident, and they began to ‘bear one another’s burdens’ in the form of vocal discontent.⁶⁴



Illus. 10.

The *Fortitude*⁶⁵

The 640 ton barque *Fortitude* was built at Scarborough, England, in 1842.⁶⁶ Designed for safety rather than speed, she had three masts, a deep, rounded hull and a flat bottom. White strips with dummy emplacements were painted along her sides as a warning to aggressors that she might be armed. Previously a trader to Ceylon, she was quickly refitted as a passenger ship for her 1848–1849 voyage to Australia.

Dr Lang chartered the *Fortitude* at a cost of £3,172 from William Tindall, a reputable ship-owner and an early director of Lloyds of London.⁶⁷ Her Captain was John Christmas, her First, Second and Third Mates were named Nottingham, Heritage and Palmer, and she carried a mostly English crew of thirty men.⁶⁸

At Moreton Bay she took on a cargo of coal and sailed for Hong Kong.⁶⁹ After returning to London, she made voyages to Bombay, Port Phillip and Ceylon, before being sold to American owners in 1863. This engraving, from the *London Illustrated News*, shows her leaving port, towed by a steamboat.

⁶⁴ Samuel Pearson Welsby, Voyage of the ‘Fortitude’, 2 and 13 October and 12 November 1848.

⁶⁵ JOL Neg. No. 75997.

⁶⁶ *Lloyd’s Register of British and Foreign Shipping*, 1 July 1848 to 30 June 1849 (London: J & H Cox Brothers, 1848), Queensland State Library Microfiche 387.2021.

⁶⁷ George Blake, *Lloyd’s Register of Shipping 1760–1960* (London: Lloyd’s Register, 1960), p. 22.

⁶⁸ Welsby, Voyage of the ‘Fortitude’, 9 September and 6 November 1848.

⁶⁹ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 17 February 1849.

The shared experiences of an emigrant voyage usually created strong and lasting bonds among the people who endured it. As Lang's agent and supervisor, Pettigrew became closely acquainted with the circumstances of all the *Fortitude*'s passengers, and all of them knew him. Some were to become his friends, colleagues or employees, and one was to become his wife. Fifty years later, when he set out to chronicle the fates of those who could be traced, he managed to account for 256 of the 270. They were a youthful band, with an average age of only twenty-one. Almost half were children and adolescents, making life below decks exceedingly noisy.⁷⁰ Of the forty-two married couples, seventeen had up to four children, and twelve had very large families which accounted for seventy of the more than ninety children under fourteen years of age.⁷¹ There were also forty-four single men and thirty-one single women, most of whom, like Pettigrew, were travelling as part of a family or with a group of friends.

Lang had chosen people with a variety of occupations. The largest group, termed 'agriculturalists', were the men who intended to develop farms in the colony. Pettigrew had a list of them,⁷² setting out how much they had paid for their fares, and how much land each was entitled to. There were also skilled tradesmen: carpenters, bricklayers, painters, blacksmiths, butchers, bakers, saddlers, tailors, shoemakers, printers and watchmakers. As well as a doctor, a minister and a surveyor, there were several clerks, a teacher, an accountant, an engineer and an analytical chemist. Most of them were, as the *Moreton Bay Courier* described them, 'of the class of small capitalists'.⁷³

Contrary to a popular myth, the *Fortitude* emigrants were not predominantly Scottish Presbyterians. Most were English nonconformists – Congregationalists, Methodists and

⁷⁰ James Roper, *Voyage to Australia: Diary of J. N. Roper*, typescript, JOL.

⁷¹ The large families were the Childs, Clarkes, Kings, Langridges, Lings, Lloyds, Melvilles, Ropers, Sextons, Slaughters, Trundles and Voyseys.

⁷² One page of this list is held by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

⁷³ MBC, 20 January 1849.

Baptists – and more than half came from London and the surrounding counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Essex and Hertford.⁷⁴ Although Lang had brought fifty-two ‘Scotch mechanics’⁷⁵ to Sydney in 1831, his 1847-48 campaign to attract Scottish emigrants had proved disappointing. Only twenty-one of the *Fortitude*’s passengers were Scottish-born, and not all of these were Presbyterians.⁷⁶ The strong, evangelical beliefs of the majority of the emigrants, however, meant that they shared Lang’s enmity towards Roman Catholicism and mistrust of the Church of England, and took religion very seriously. Their chaplain, Charles Stewart, was a Baptist who had agreed to put aside teaching the practice that distinguished his denomination – baptism by total immersion – while he ministered to the mixed flock on the *Fortitude*. This proved satisfactory during the voyage because, whatever their differences in theology and organisation, the emigrants shared a common approach to public worship and expected to participate fully in religious observances.

The *Fortitude*’s voyage from London to Moreton Bay, although somewhat longer than comparable emigrant voyages, was, by the standards of the time, unremarkable. The passengers experienced extremes of temperature and a variety of sea conditions, but there was no weather that threatened the ship’s safety. The food, prepared under the supervision of John Fowles, a baker, and his wife Jane, a cook, was better than standard emigrant fare, and was supplemented by condiments and preserves supplied by the emigrants themselves. Captain John Christmas and his officers and crew were competent seamen. Indeed, so concerned was the Captain about the well-being of his crowded charges, that he allowed the steerage passengers to promenade at the stern of the ship on

⁷⁴ Samuel Welsby recorded the birthplaces of 266 of the emigrants in his diary of the *Fortitude* voyage.

⁷⁵ These included Andrew Petrie and his family, who moved to Moreton Bay in 1837.

⁷⁶ The Scottish-born included William Pettigrew, David and Jane McKergow, Peter Buchanan, Williamson Munro Smith, ten members of the Melville family, the family of Alexander Black, and the Rev. Charles Stewart and his sister.

the raised poop deck that was usually restricted to cabin passengers.⁷⁷

The greatest trials of ship-board life were the inevitable births, deaths, illnesses and accidents. Falls were a frequent hazard in the heaving ship, and contagion spread easily in the confined spaces below deck. Dr Challinor, sober and kind, gave evidence of the proficiency that later characterised his long medical career in the colony; yet three of the four confinements on the *Fortitude* resulted in the deaths of mothers and babies,⁷⁸ four members of a family of six died,⁷⁹ and an outbreak of typhoid fever, resulting in two deaths,⁸⁰ clouded the latter part of the voyage. These crises, while causing deep anxiety for the families concerned, were borne with respectful detachment by the other passengers.

Through tedious days and nights of travel, the voyagers derived pleasure from observing the behaviour of the birds and sea creatures that could be viewed from the deck. Occasionally other ships hove in sight. A Danish vessel bound for Falmouth accepted letters from the *Fortitude*'s passengers,⁸¹ an American whaler sent an officer across by boat to gather news,⁸² and emigrants on the *Ajax*, bound for New Zealand, gave three cheers as they passed by.⁸³ Social events involving singing and playing musical instruments were arranged; but dancing, one of the usual ship-board diversions, was abandoned early in the voyage because of disapproval from the more puritanical passengers.⁸⁴ A secular school, organised by teacher Samuel Welsby, kept the children occupied on weekdays, and on Sundays, classes were provided for their religious education.

⁷⁷ James Roper, 'Report of an Emigrant to Australia', 4 March 1849 in *British Banner*, 20 July 1849.

⁷⁸ Caroline Slaughter and infant, Elizabeth Lloyd's infant and Naomi Scrace.

⁷⁹ Richard, Naomi, Mary Jane and Richard Thomas Scrace.

⁸⁰ Richard Scrace (4 January 1849) and Elizabeth Childs (18 January 1849).

⁸¹ Welsby, Voyage of the 'Fortitude', 8 October 1848.

⁸² Roper, Voyage to Australia, 14 October 1848.

⁸³ Ibid., 25 November 1848; Welsby, Voyage of the 'Fortitude', 25 November 1848.

⁸⁴ Roper, Voyage to Australia.

After crossing the Equator in fine, pleasant weather, the *Fortitude* made good progress and passed the Cape of Good Hope early in December. As the ship caught the westerly winds and set off across the Indian Ocean, the temperature dropped dramatically and many of the passengers became ill. On Christmas Day, which was celebrated as they approached the coast of Western Australia, the Captain issued a double allowance of rations – sugar, butter, flour and suet – and gave all adult passengers and crew half a pint each of rum punch.⁸⁵

In clear, cold weather, the *Fortitude* crossed the Great Australian Bight, and by New Year's Day 1849 was approaching King Island in Bass Strait. To this point, the ship had made good time, and the worst of the voyage should have been over; but for six days contrary winds caused her to beat about among the islands of Bass Strait. By this time, typhoid fever had broken out, its first victim, Richard Scrase, dying on 4 January.⁸⁶ On 7 January, a favourable wind sent the *Fortitude* out into the Pacific Ocean, where she turned north for the final run along the coast, passing Sydney three days later. The weather remained fine, but the winds were again adverse, and the voyage from Sydney to Moreton Bay took eleven long days. On the night of 18 January, just four days before the ship reached Moreton Bay, typhoid fever claimed its second victim, fourteen-year-old Elizabeth Childs.

After sailing past Mount Warning, Stradbroke Island, Point Lookout and Moreton Island, and noting with apprehension the many sandbanks and shoals, Captain Christmas and his passengers were relieved to be met by a small boat, which brought the Harbour Master, Captain Frederick Freeman, to pilot the *Fortitude* around Cape Moreton and into the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 25 December 1848; Welsby, Voyage of the 'Fortitude', 25 December 1848.

⁸⁶ Typhoid fever, caused by the bacteria *Salmonella typhi* and transmitted in conditions of poor hygiene by contaminated food and water, was a common disease on emigrant ships, often breaking out towards the end of a voyage when passengers had been closely confined for a long period.

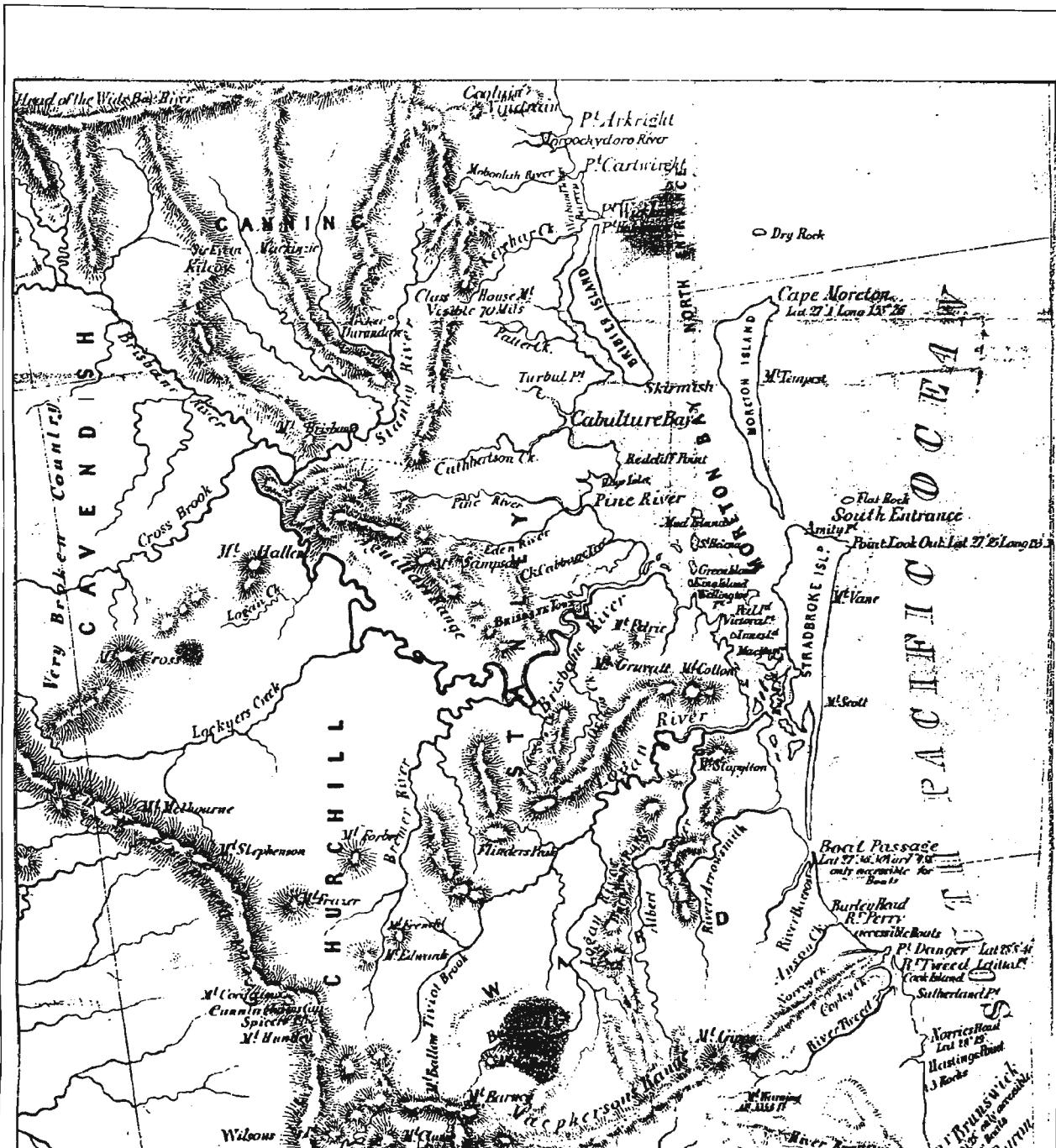
sheltered bay, where she dropped anchor opposite the Pilot Station at Cowan Cowan on Moreton Island on Saturday, 21 January 1849, local time.⁸⁷ The voyage had taken 128 days.

The emigrants now took on the new role of immigrants. Folded into their copies of Dr Lang's *Cooksländ* was a large map, which helped them understand the geography of their new home. (See map opposite). It showed a number of streams draining into Moreton Bay – the Brisbane River, on which was marked their destination, Brisbane Town; the smaller Logan and Albert Rivers to the south; and to the north the Pine River and a number of coastal creeks. Also marked were watersheds and prominent peaks, among which the distinctive volcanic cones of the Glasshouse Mountains were clearly visible from their anchorage. Later that day, the *Fortitude* sailed south and anchored near St Helena Island, close to the mud and mangroves at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Large ships could not safely cross the shallow entrance to the river, so the next morning the Harbour Master departed with five men to row twelve miles upstream and inform the authorities in Brisbane of the ship's arrival. He took with him Lang's letters to John Richardson, the 'Scotch merchant' who was to 'handle matters'; to James Swan, the Glasgow-born proprietor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, who had emigrated to Sydney in 1837 and worked as a compositor on Lang's *Colonist* newspaper; and to the Police Magistrate, Captain John Wickham, to forward to the Governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy, in Sydney. In his letter to the Governor, Lang intimated that the British Government had approved the granting of bounties and land to the *Fortitude* immigrants,⁸⁸ and also asked for funds to pay the salaries of Dr Challinor and surveyor William Pettigrew.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Because of the time difference between London and Brisbane, the emigrants calculated their date of arrival as 22 January.

⁸⁸ Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 105.

⁸⁹ Lang to Col. Sec., 12 August 1848, Col. Sec. Papers, MC 7425, A2 Reel 19, pp. 209-210, Fryer Library, UQ; MBC, 27 January 1849.



Map 4. Part of map of 'Cooksland' from J. D. Lang's *Cooksland*, 1847.⁹⁰

Released from the ocean's perils, the *Fortitude*'s passengers spent the next two days enjoying fine hot weather and cooling sea breezes, and waited cheerfully for the order to land.

⁹⁰ JOL Neg. No. 177931.

For Captain Wickham, the man in charge of the small settlement at Brisbane, the Harbour Master's news caused consternation. A report that the *Fortitude* was to leave London the previous September had been carried on a government-sponsored immigrant ship, the *Artemisia*, which had arrived at Moreton Bay in December 1848.⁹¹ But because the *Fortitude*'s departure had been delayed, her voyage was unduly long, and she did not call at Sydney, her arrival was quite unheralded. Wickham knew that Lang's ship was eagerly awaited in a colony hungry for labour and capital,⁹² but he had no power to assist unauthorised immigrants. John Richardson, who had heard nothing from Lang since his visit in 1845, declared that, although sympathetic to the immigrants' plight, he simply did not have the funds to accept responsibility for them.⁹³

Wickham wrote immediately to both the Colonial Secretary and the Immigration Agent in Sydney, explaining his dilemma and asking for advice.⁹⁴ He then dispatched Customs Officer William Augustine Duncan and Government Medical Officer Dr Keith Ballow, together with John Richardson, to inspect the ship. Arriving in the customs boat early in the morning of Tuesday 23 January, they spoke briefly to Captain Christmas, Dr Challinor and William Pettigrew, and then returned to Brisbane. Later that morning, the Sydney-bound paddle-steamer *Tamar* appeared from the river, and the immigrants took the opportunity to send out to it a batch of letters for home, quite unaware that Wickham's urgent correspondence concerning them was on board. At noon, nine Aborigines arrived in a boat that had been given to them for rescuing survivors from the wreck of the steamer *Sovereign* two years earlier. They were given biscuits but were not allowed on board.⁹⁵

⁹¹ MBC, 16 December 1848.

⁹² MBC, 20 January 1849.

⁹³ Richardson to Wickham, 23 January 1849; Col. Sec. Papers, pp. 236-237.

⁹⁴ Wickham to Col. Sec., 24 January 1849, Col. Sec. Papers, pp. 211-219; Wickham to Merewether, 22 January 1849, AONSW CSIL 4/4567.2.

⁹⁵ Welsby, *Voyage of the 'Fortitude'*, 23 January 1849.

The next two days were wet, with strong winds that prevented small boats from approaching the *Fortitude*. This gave Wickham time to reach a decision. Dr Challinor had reported the two recent deaths from typhoid fever and stated that six people (including William Pettigrew, who was suffering from ‘simple fever’) were still being treated for illnesses.⁹⁶ On this basis, Dr Ballow recommended a period of quarantine, and Wickham, who needed a breathing space until a reply could come from Sydney, agreed.⁹⁷ This unwelcome news was conveyed to the immigrants on Friday 26 January by the Immigration Agent, George Watson, who arrived in the schooner *Susan* to take charge of them. Watson was accompanied by a guard of six soldiers and the Commissariat Officer, Frederick Walker, who brought fresh provisions, such as vegetables and melons, and a number of tents. ‘It is hoped,’ reported the *Moreton Bay Courier*, ‘that a few days’ enjoyment of fresh air, accompanied by a wholesome change of diet, will eradicate all symptoms of disease from the passengers.’⁹⁸

Since Moreton Bay had no quarantine station, a make-shift camp was established at Tangalooma Point on Moreton Island, near a sand slope known as the Ship Patch, where fresh water was available. The *Fortitude* anchored offshore, and the immigrants were transferred by boat to the beach. There were not enough tents, so some built temporary shelters out of bush materials.⁹⁹ Disappointed at the delay, but grateful to stand once more on firm ground, they set themselves to spend the fortnight of their quarantine as pleasantly as possible. Like the generations of holiday-makers who followed them, they soaked in the summer heat, bathed in the sparkling water, and were entertained by the novelty of their situation and the beauty of the island, its vegetation and its wildlife.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Col. Sec. Papers, pp. 224-225.

⁹⁷ Col. Sec. Papers, pp. 211-223.

⁹⁸ MBC, 27 January 1849.

⁹⁹ W. T. Deacon, ‘The Voyage of the ‘Fortitude’, 20 March 1849, pub. *British Banner*, July 1849.

¹⁰⁰ Welsby, *Voyage of the ‘Fortitude’*, 29 January to 2 February 1849.

On Wednesday 31 January, Captain Wickham and Dr Ballow arrived in the *Susan* to inspect the camp, after which they announced that the quarantine would be lifted and the *Susan* would return the following Monday to convey the first group of immigrants to Brisbane. ‘By this arrangement,’ reported the *Moreton Bay Courier*, ‘those persons who are at all sickly will be left to the last, and thus have the full benefit of the sea air. It will probably be three weeks before the whole of the people are brought to Brisbane, with their luggage and goods ...’¹⁰¹ When the *Susan* returned as promised, Pettigrew, fully recovered after ten days of sea air, was among the sixty-four people who boarded her in wet, windy conditions and set off to sail across the Bay and up the Brisbane River to the settlement. At mid-morning on Tuesday 6 February, the *Susan* tied up to some large trees at Petrie’s Bight and landed her passengers on the riverbank. Carrying what they could, they trudged along the muddy track to the old Convict Barracks in Queen Street, where Wickham had agreed to accommodate them, provided they found their own food.

In the event, it took less than a fortnight and just three trips for the *Susan* to land all the *Fortitude* immigrants. In demeanour and outlook these people were very different from the convicts, soldiers, government officials, upper-class squatters and free-wheeling merchants who had earlier settled at Moreton Bay. Skilled and sober, respectable and religious, they believed in the virtues of enterprise and hard work. Most were literate, and many were well-read. As products of nonconformist independence, they were accustomed to holding meetings, debating issues and forming associations, and from the time they arrived in the colony, they made their presence felt.

On the evening of Monday 19 February, they gathered in the Courtroom of the old Convict Barracks, where the Rev. Charles Stewart conducted a Service of Thanksgiving for their safe arrival. The *Moreton Bay Courier* reported that this was the largest

¹⁰¹ MBC, 3 February 1849.

gathering the colony had seen, and commented on the ‘harmony and unity’ displayed.¹⁰² Riding the wave of this harmony, Stewart began to organise a United Presbyterian Church, gaining the support of Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists already living in Brisbane, as well as immigrants from the *Fortitude* and from Lang’s other ships, the *Chaseley* and the *Lima*, which arrived later in the year. Although Pettigrew had reservations about Stewart’s ability,¹⁰³ he was content to adhere to this large, inter-denominational congregation, and attended ‘Stewart’s church’ whenever possible during his first four years in the colony.

The Brisbane to which the Lang immigrants came in 1849 was a squalid, neglected settlement with a population of just over 1,000 people. Founded in 1824 as a penal colony, it had been for fifteen years a place with an unsavoury reputation for cruelty, violence and disease. In 1839 most of the convicts were removed and free settlers began to arrive. Two local officials, who took their orders from the Governor in Sydney, shared the administration. Police Magistrate Wickham resided in Brisbane, while the Crown Lands Commissioner, Dr Stephen Simpson, occupied a government station at Woogaroo, between Brisbane and a rival settlement at Ipswich. Although both Wickham and Simpson were dutiful public servants, Moreton Bay’s tainted reputation and its lack of any viable economic activity except the export of wool, tallow, hides and skins impeded its growth.

After his visit in 1845, Dr Lang thought that he had the answer to the problem of Moreton Bay’s development. In his book *Cooksländ* and his *British Banner* articles, he promoted cotton-growing, using the dubious evidence of samples grown in private gardens and a letter in which James and John Wright, Glasgow cotton brokers, stated that the cotton he

¹⁰² MBC, 24 February 1849.

¹⁰³ WP to Hugh Hunter, 22 October 1849; WP Diary, 25 November 1849.

had shown them was ‘clean in colour, finely stapled, but rather weak, which by care taken in cultivation might be much improved’.¹⁰⁴ It was Lang’s curious hope that enough cotton could be grown in Australia to put the American slave trade out of business.¹⁰⁵ Such was his influence that his dream of cotton-growing was pursued in the colony until the end of the American Civil War in 1865, by which time it was evident that sugar cane was better suited to the moist, flood-prone flats of the coastal rivers.

On landing in Brisbane, Pettigrew busied himself with the responsibilities of selecting land for the immigrants and making representations on their behalf. He approached Captain Wickham, but gained no comfort there. Wickham had received firm orders from Governor Fitzroy to deny land grants to the immigrants. Pending Lang’s return to Australia, however, he thought that he could stretch his authority and solve their immediate problems by permitting those who had not managed to find accommodation to form a temporary village outside the town boundaries, on the slopes below what is now Gregory Terrace. ‘They may erect dwellings for themselves sufficient for all present purposes,’ the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported, ‘and will have opportunities of making themselves, to a certain extent, acquainted with the customs and peculiarities of the colony, before they are called upon to elect their future course.’¹⁰⁶ Some families took up this offer, and a number remained in the area, founding the suburb of Fortitude Valley.¹⁰⁷

Wickham told Pettigrew that William Wilson, a squatter from Mt Flinders station near Ipswich, signing himself ‘An Old Colonist’, had written to the immigrants through John Richardson, advising them that, since the practice of unauthorised occupation was common in the colony, they should simply settle on the land they desired and wait for the

¹⁰⁴ Lang, *Cookslard*, p. 165, W. Scott McPheat, John Dunmore Lang: with special reference to his activities in Queensland, MA Thesis, UQ, 1952, p. 87, Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 250.

¹⁰⁵ Lang, *Cookslard*, pp. 168 and 172; Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁶ MBC, 3 February 1849.

¹⁰⁷ These included the Carver, Fowles, Hingston, Lloyd, Price and Voysey families.

legalities to be sorted out.¹⁰⁸ Wilson recommended land at Moggill, opposite the junction of the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers. Wickham also considered this land to be suitable for agriculture, but pointed out that it lay within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner for Crown Lands, and suggested that Pettigrew seek Dr Simpson's permission for those who held land orders to occupy the land that they wished to acquire.

Thus, only three days after arriving in Brisbane, Pettigrew and a fellow *Fortitude* immigrant, Alfred Slaughter, found themselves on board an old paddle-wheel steamer, the *Experiment*, churning through the clear waters of the Brisbane River on the way to Woogaroo. On this, the first of many such voyages, Pettigrew saw the wide, winding river in a nearly pristine state, flowing strongly between mangrove-lined, forested banks.¹⁰⁹ During the next fifty years, he would observe (and contribute to) many changes along the river, as trees were cut down, buildings were erected, and land was cleared, fenced and cultivated.

At Woogaroo, Dr Simpson was affable, but unable to help Pettigrew and Slaughter. He said that he had no personal objections to their proposal, but he could not grant what they were asking. 'He further informed us,' Pettigrew later reported to Lang, 'that we should apply to the Government for our request, but added that he thought it was out of their power to grant it according to the current state of the law.'¹¹⁰

At first, the men who had paid Dr Lang for land were not disposed to believe that it would be denied by the government. Even before the third group of immigrants came

¹⁰⁸ WP to Lang, 27 March 1849. Reporting this suggestion on 10 February 1849, the *Moreton Bay Courier* pointed out that squatting on Crown land was not a practice within the settled districts, and the Crown Lands Commissioner could eject the immigrants by force if they settled without his permission. The *MBC* also resented squatter Wilson's 'unworthy suspicion' that the immigrants were encouraged to settle near Brisbane 'in order that they might spend their money near the town'.

¹⁰⁹ In *Opals and Agates*, p. 99, Nehemiah Bartley described a similar voyage in 1854: 'What a strange, wild place this 'Moreton Bay' seemed, with the scrub creepers all trailing in the river, as it swept, with the tide, round the then uncleared points and bends.'

¹¹⁰ WP to Lang, 27 March 1849.

ashore, a meeting of prospective landowners was held, and a deputation was appointed to visit Cowper's (now Cooper's) Plains, another location recommended as suitable for agriculture. On 14 February, Pettigrew and Slaughter, accompanied by six potential farmers¹¹¹ and James Sutherland (a local shopkeeper who had volunteered to act as guide), examined Cooper's Plains, and Pettigrew presented their assessment at a meeting two nights later. Although this meeting resolved that more exploration was needed, that funds should be subscribed for defraying expenses, and that each man engaged in the inquiry should pay his own costs, doubts and jealousies were beginning to surface. 'It appeared,' reported the *Moreton Bay Courier*, 'that the smaller shareholders in the proposed Company – namely those who had paid the least in passage money – were fearful that they would not stand in as good a position with regard to the lands that might be allotted as the larger presumed proprietors'.¹¹²

Pettigrew then discovered that few of the prospective landowners were willing either to subscribe money or to go exploring with him. Only Alfred Slaughter, who had quickly disposed of the merchandise which he had brought to Brisbane, was prepared to accompany him. 'Farmers – practical men – were nominated, but they would not undertake to do the work,' Pettigrew later complained to Lang. 'Suffice to say that Mr Slaughter is the only one that has accompanied me from landing till now.'¹¹³ Undaunted by the lack of support, Pettigrew and Slaughter set off the day after the Service of Thanksgiving to spend a week looking at land along the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers.¹¹⁴

On the first day, accompanied by James Sutherland, George Poole (a local chemist who had offered to take soil samples), and an elderly *Fortitude* immigrant, John Langridge,

¹¹¹ James Carver, John Grimmer, Robert Jamieson, West Ling, James Russell and Richard Sexton.

¹¹² MBC, 17 February 1849.

¹¹³ WP to Lang, 27 March 1849.

¹¹⁴ Tuesday 20 to Tuesday 27 February 1849; MBC, 24 February 1849.

they rode on borrowed horses to Pullen Pullen¹¹⁵ and Moggill Creeks, and returned to Brisbane in the evening, impressed with the district's rich soil, and abundant water, grass and timber. The next day, Pettigrew, Slaughter, Sutherland, Langridge and another *Fortitude* immigrant, Edmund Mellor, set out to examine the Moggill area more thoroughly. Leaving Brisbane at daybreak in a boat borrowed from Andrew Petrie,¹¹⁶ they sailed up to Oxley Creek, which they investigated for about two miles of its course. Returning to the river, they attached a rope to the passing *Experiment*, and were towed upstream to John Williams's coalpits at Moggill. Here the party split up to examine the land, and Mellor and Langridge became lost. Mellor turned up later that day at a cattle station owned by the Sheehan brothers; but although the search continued well into the evening, there was no sign of Langridge. After camping overnight, the party resumed the search, and at Sheehans' station were relieved to learn that he had been found. Sutherland took the shaken Langridge back to Brisbane, and the inspection continued without them.

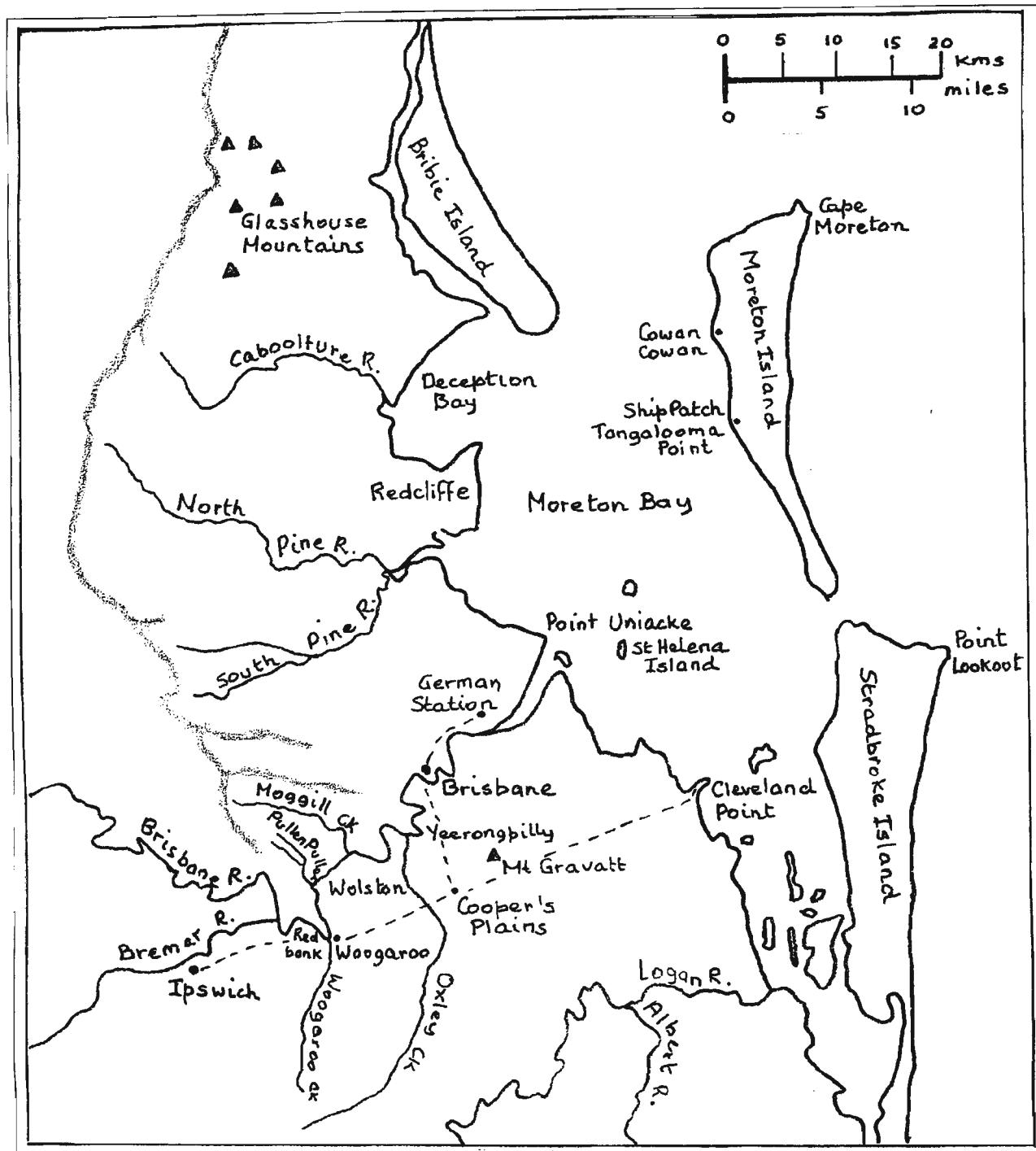
That evening Pettigrew, Slaughter and Mellor arrived at Woogaroo, where they 'abode all night, being kindly entertained by Dr Simpson'.¹¹⁷ Next morning, the farmer in Pettigrew examined the crops that Simpson was cultivating and reported that maize and sweet potatoes looked best. The party crossed the river, noted the flood plain opposite, with its fertile soil and extensive lagoons, then continued upstream to the old government station at Redbank, where a few soldiers, assisted by convicts, had once looked after a flock of sheep. Redbank Flats had good soil but lacked water. While Mellor returned to Brisbane on the passing *Experiment*, Pettigrew and Slaughter continued on to the junction of the

¹¹⁵ Pettigrew named Pullen Pullen Creek 'Running or Langridge' Creek.

¹¹⁶ Andrew Petrie (1798-1872), a stone mason, arrived in Sydney in 1831 as one of Lang's 'Scotch mechanics', came to Moreton Bay with his wife and family as Clerk of Works in 1837 and after free settlement established a reputable building firm. Pettigrew became and remained a friend of Andrew and his sons, John and Tom. Oxley Creek was then known as 'Canoe' Creek.

¹¹⁷ William Pettigrew, 'Report of deputation appointed to examine certain localities in the district, Feby 1849', ms, MSA 1390, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Map 5. William Pettigrew's Moreton Bay, 1849-1853



Brisbane and Bremer Rivers. On the south bank of the Bremer, they examined land recommended by Dr Lang, but the area was too small to suit their purpose. Arriving at Ipswich just in time to avoid being drenched in a thunderstorm, they spent the night at the Prince of Wales Inn.

On Saturday they found themselves among friends. Samuel Welsby, the teacher from the *Fortitude*, who had moved to Ipswich to open a school,¹¹⁸ accommodated them for the rest of their visit. They met their well-wisher, William Wilson of Mt Flinders, who advised them to visit the ‘Ploughed Station’ – land that had been cultivated during the convict period – and arranged for the former overseer of convicts at Ipswich, George Thorn, to show it to them. On Monday they visited the Long Pocket, where settlers were growing ‘Indian corn’, and met the foreman of the boiling-down works, William Thomson, who assured them that ‘the land at Moggill Creek [was] not to be equalled by any between Brisbane and Ipswich’.¹¹⁹ Satisfied, they returned to Brisbane on Tuesday on the *Experiment*.¹²⁰

Pettigrew composed a lengthy report on his activities and presented it at a gathering of immigrants held in the Wesleyan Meeting House. The first of many reports that he was to write during his life in the colony, this document reveals two aspects of his character – extreme conscientiousness and a rational, analytical approach to decision-making. After describing his journeys in more-than-necessary detail, he listed the five places to be considered – Cooper’s Plains, Running or Langridge (Pullen Pullen) Creek, Redbank Flats, the junction of the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers, and the Ploughed Station – and set out the three main principles of selection: good land in considerable quantities, an abundant supply of fresh water, and water carriage. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each location, he dismissed Redbank Flats and the Bremer as too small in area, and Cooper’s Plains and the Ploughed Station as too dry and too far from water carriage, and recommended that the immigrants should settle for the time being on the ‘Running or Langridge Creek land’.

¹¹⁸ MBC, 17 and 24 March 1849.

¹¹⁹ WP, ‘Report of deputation, Feby 1849’.

¹²⁰ MBC, 17 February 1849.

The meeting authorised Pettigrew to prepare a ‘memorial’ to Governor Fitzroy, asking for permission to occupy land at Moggill, and this, together with a letter from John Langridge, was sent to Sydney through Wickham on 7 March.¹²¹ The Governor’s reply took only a week, and was quite explicit. Lang’s immigrants had no permission to occupy, even temporarily, Crown lands. They would have to wait until the land they desired was surveyed and put up for auction. Recalling this setback years later, Pettigrew wrote:

That implied about four months at the very least. None of them could stand that, so they took what they could best get to do. Some went to one thing, and some another. A few went to Sydney. In two or three weeks’ time they were all employed one way and another.¹²²

For most of the *Fortitude* immigrants, gaining employment was not a problem. As news of the ship’s arrival spread through the colony, squatters arrived in Brisbane hoping to recruit labour, and many of the young, single men accepted jobs on properties in the bush. There was also plenty of work in Brisbane and Ipswich. The various boiling-down works, which had been established to produce tallow during a wool slump in the mid-1840s, paid good wages for unpleasant working conditions. Many of the single women found jobs as servants.¹²³ Other immigrants began to ply their trades, spreading themselves through the four nodes of settlement – North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Kangaroo Point and Ipswich – and for months their advertisements filled the slender pages of the *Moreton Bay Courier*.

William Pettigrew and David McKergow were among the few who had difficulty obtaining work. A ‘drunken blackguard in South Brisbane’ employed David but paid him

¹²¹ J. S. Langridge to Col. Sec., 7 March 1849, Col. Sec. Papers, pp. 159-163.

¹²² ‘Genealogy’, p. 5; *MBC*, 5 May 1849.

¹²³ *MBC*, 24 February 1849; Benjamin Bulcock, letter, 17 February 1849, typescript, RHSQ.

no wages, and his letters home were despondent.¹²⁴ Apart from a small survey for the *Fortitude* immigrant Thomas Dadswell, Pettigrew earned no money during March and April. Sharing the McKergows' cramped accommodation, he paid Jane for his meals and washing, and an entry in his accounts for a shilling's worth of tackle and hooks indicates that he spent some time fishing in the river to supplement their food.¹²⁵ On 27 March he wrote to Dr Lang, explaining his actions since arriving in the colony. Although he managed to keep the letter factual and the tone respectful, his disappointment was obvious. 'I have been thrown on my own resources,' he told Lang, 'and not expecting such when I left Scotland, I am rather deficient in means.'¹²⁶ Lang did not acknowledge this letter. Seeking to make light of the inconvenience suffered by the *Fortitude* immigrants, he selectively published, in the *British Banner*, more optimistic accounts sent by other immigrants to their families in England.¹²⁷

For Pettigrew, this was a testing time. On 29 March, he received a letter from his brother Adam, telling him that their sister Margaret had died only a month after he had left London. Two days later, the *Moreton Bay Courier* published official correspondence that revealed the truth about Lang's negotiations with the Colonial Office. A letter from Earl Grey to Governor Fitzroy, written the previous October in response to an appeal from Lang after the *Fortitude* had departed, stated that Lang had 'on more than one occasion' submitted his scheme and 'had been distinctly informed that it ... could not receive the encouragement he had requested in the shape of bounties which he now solicits'. Grey ordered Fitzroy to 'take care that no bounty is issued on account of emigrants sent out ... under the superintendence of private individuals and in disregard of the regulations of the

¹²⁴ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 28 October 1850.

¹²⁵ 'My father's Ledger', p. 87, 29 March 1849. According to James Roper's 'Report of an Emigrant to Australia', fish were abundant in the Brisbane River, but the price of meat was so low that few people bothered to catch them.

¹²⁶ WP to Lang, 27 March 1849.

¹²⁷ These immigrants included Benjamin Bulcock, Thomas Deacon, James Roper and Alfred Slaughter.

Government'. In unequivocal terms, the Under Secretary for the Colonies, Benjamin Hawes, had given Lang the same information. Although there were to be no bounties for the *Fortitude*'s Captain and officers, and no salaries for William Pettigrew or Dr Challinor, the Governor was prepared to pay the doctor twice the amount that he had requested for his services to the immigrants while the ship was in quarantine.¹²⁸

Despite these revelations, Pettigrew hoped that the immigrants on Lang's second ship, the *Chaseley*, might receive their land grants, and he awaited their arrival. On Saturday, 27 April 1849, after a voyage of 120 days, the *Chaseley* anchored in Moreton Bay. Dr Ballow declared all 214 passengers to be healthy, and the steamer *Raven* was hired to bring them up the river. David McConnel, the owner of Cressbrook station in the Brisbane Valley, who had returned to the colony on the *Chaseley* with his bride, Mary McLeod, came up to Brisbane in the customs boat and arranged for carts to carry the immigrants' luggage from the wharf to their accommodation. Tents were erected, and the old Barracks building was made ready. Fifty of the immigrants arrived on the *Raven* on Friday 4 May, and on Saturday, a crowd of people, many of whom were relatives or friends, waited in heavy rain at the Queen's Wharf to greet the rest. The warmth of this welcome was in marked contrast to the reception given to the people from the *Fortitude*, and McConnel's thoughtfulness was acknowledged by group who, signing themselves 'The Unfortunate Fortunates', placed a letter of thanks in the *Moreton Bay Courier* the following Saturday.¹²⁹

The *Chaseley*'s passengers were 'unfortunate' because, as Pettigrew soon discovered, their expectations regarding land grants were dashed in the same way as those of the *Fortitude* immigrants. The certificates that Dr Lang had given them in the name of the

¹²⁸ MBC, 31 March 1849.

¹²⁹ MBC, 12 May 1849.

Port Philip and Clarence River Colonisation Company carried no more weight with the authorities than those of the Cooksland Colonisation Company. Earl Grey's decision was final, and the letter that Pettigrew received from Lang, appointing him agent to the *Chaseley* people, was worthless.

With no hope of obtaining work from the immigrants, Pettigrew had to find another means of making a living. In June, Dr Simpson asked him to repair the leaking embankments of the waterholes at Woogaroo – a job he completed in fifteen days. There is no indication in his brief diary entries whether he had any assistance, but on at least one occasion he got very dirty.¹³⁰ ‘I put in a puddle or rather a dry rammed clay wall in the bank,’ he recalled proudly in 1900, ‘and it has held ever since.’¹³¹ While working at Woogaroo, he inserted the following advertisement in the *Moreton Bay Courier* on four consecutive Saturdays:

SURVEYING

William Pettigrew begs leave to inform the Landed Proprietors and Settlers in this and the surrounding districts, that he will undertake to do any work in the above profession, on the most reasonable terms. Orders addressed to the care of S. Simpson Esq., C.C.L. Wogaroo [sic] or to Mr A. Slaughter, Fortitude Store, North Brisbane, will meet prompt attention. Bne. June 13, 1849.¹³²

¹³⁰ WP Diary, 21 June to 7 July 1849. There were three waterholes at Woogaroo.

¹³¹ ‘Genealogy’, p. 5.

¹³² MBC, 16, 23 and 30 June and 7 July 1849.

3. AT WOOGAROO, 1849-1852

William Pettigrew's earliest surviving Australian diary, written in a tiny hand in a surveyor's notebook, begins on 21 June 1849 with the words, 'At Woogaroo'. For the next three years and four months, Pettigrew was based at Woogaroo, where Dr Simpson gave him a room and a variety of jobs. Although Simpson occasionally became impatient, even testy, with Pettigrew, their arrangement proved to be mutually advantageous. For a wage of £5 per month, Simpson gained an experienced farmer and gardener, a labourer, an odd-job man and a surveyor-draftsman. If a surveying job came up, Pettigrew was free to go and do it. Otherwise he could stay at Woogaroo, work at whatever was necessary, and act as supervisor during Simpson's frequent absences. The adaptable Pettigrew used his time at Woogaroo to learn as much as he could about how farming was done at Moreton Bay, and at Simpson's dinner table he became acquainted with the district's most prestigious men. At a time when Brisbane had no banks, he prudently deposited £80 of his capital with Simpson as an interest-bearing loan.¹

The government station at Woogaroo was built on a high, flat-topped ridge, where Woogaroo Creek enters the Brisbane River at one of its bigger bends. The site had magnificent views – upstream, downstream and across the river to the flood plain of Prior's Pocket. When Simpson was appointed Commissioner for Crown Lands in May 1842, he had lived at Moreton Bay for nearly two years, long enough to be aware of the tensions between the townsfolk of Brisbane and the squatters of the Darling Downs and Brisbane Valley, who had low regard for Brisbane and saw Ipswich as their future capital and Cleveland, on Moreton Bay, as their future port. In a clever move, Simpson wrote to the Colonial Secretary, arguing that the residence of the Commissioner should be

¹ 'My father's Ledger Fail lands', p. 89, entry in accounts, 5 November 1849. Simpson paid 10% interest.

centrally located in the neighbourhood of Redbank or Limestone (Ipswich), on routes to all parts of the Moreton Bay District and the Darling Downs. After prolonged negotiations, and pleas from Simpson and the squatters that police were needed to control and protect the Aborigines, the Governor, Sir George Gipps, agreed to give him a small force of Border Police and allowed him to settle at Woogaroo, with the proviso that he was not to have ‘any private interest in the station which is to be formed’.²

Thus Woogaroo came into existence in 1843 as a station for the Border Police. This force was disbanded in mid-1846, but Simpson was allowed to retain three troopers to support his duties as a magistrate. At his own expense, he built a house, stables and out-buildings, established a garden and a farm, and developed, in what was then a remote spot, a self-sufficient household. People coming to Woogaroo to consult him – as Pettigrew had done on first arriving in the colony – met him on his terms and in his territory. He kept an open house for travellers, and for twelve years managed to carry out his official duties with a reputation for firmness, fairness and hospitality. The disadvantage for him was that these duties forced him to travel constantly, on horseback or by riverboat, back and forth to Brisbane and Ipswich.

Simpson could never own Woogaroo, but when land downstream became available in 1851, he purchased 640 acres and named the property Wolston after his birthplace in England.³ Pettigrew surveyed Wolston and drew plans for its first house and out-buildings, which were constructed during 1852 and 1853. In 1855, Simpson resigned as Crown Lands Commissioner and developed the property as a farm and a horse stud. Two years later, Pettigrew assisted him to construct the brick and stone centre section of

² Col. Sec. to Simpson, 14 January 1843, 43/214: No.43/8, p.33, quoted in Sir Raphael Cilento, ‘The Life and Residences of the Hon. Stephen Simpson’, p. 31.

³ WP Diary, 27 June 1851; Gerry Langevad, *The Simpson Letterbook* (Brisbane: UQ Anthropology Museum, 1979), p. xx. [sic]

'Wolston House', which, extended by later owners, survives today as one of Brisbane's oldest homes.⁴

In 1862, after Queensland had achieved Separation from New South Wales and Simpson had returned to England, the government land at Woogaroo became a Lunatic Asylum. Simpson's slab and shingled house was replaced by a two-storey stone building, the Asylum's men's quarters, now demolished. (Today the site is part of the golf course of the Wolston Park Psychiatric Hospital.) Woogaroo remained important in Pettigrew's life. Not only did he draw the first supplies of logs for his Brisbane Saw Mills from the scrubs of Woogaroo Creek, but he also returned to the area many times to acquire timber and to picnic at reserves on the riverbank. In 1895, his step-son, Charles Ward Davis, died in the Woogaroo Asylum.

There are a number of descriptions of Simpson's establishment at Woogaroo. Before ever visiting the place, Pettigrew would have read Dr Lang's depiction of the house and garden, written after his 1845 visit and published in *Cooksland*:

Dr Simpson's residence is in the usual bush style, a rustic cottage formed of rough slabs, roofed either with bark or shingles ... with a verandah in front and out-buildings to match. The site, which has been selected with great taste, is on a ridge overlooking a beautiful bend of the river and Dr Simpson has spared neither pains nor expense in forming the most picturesque garden with a natural hollow, where the soil consists of the richest alluvial land intervening between the house and the river, leaving the more ornamental bush trees of the natural forest to give interest and variety to the scene and to contrast with the European pot herbs and other exotic vegetation of the garden.⁵

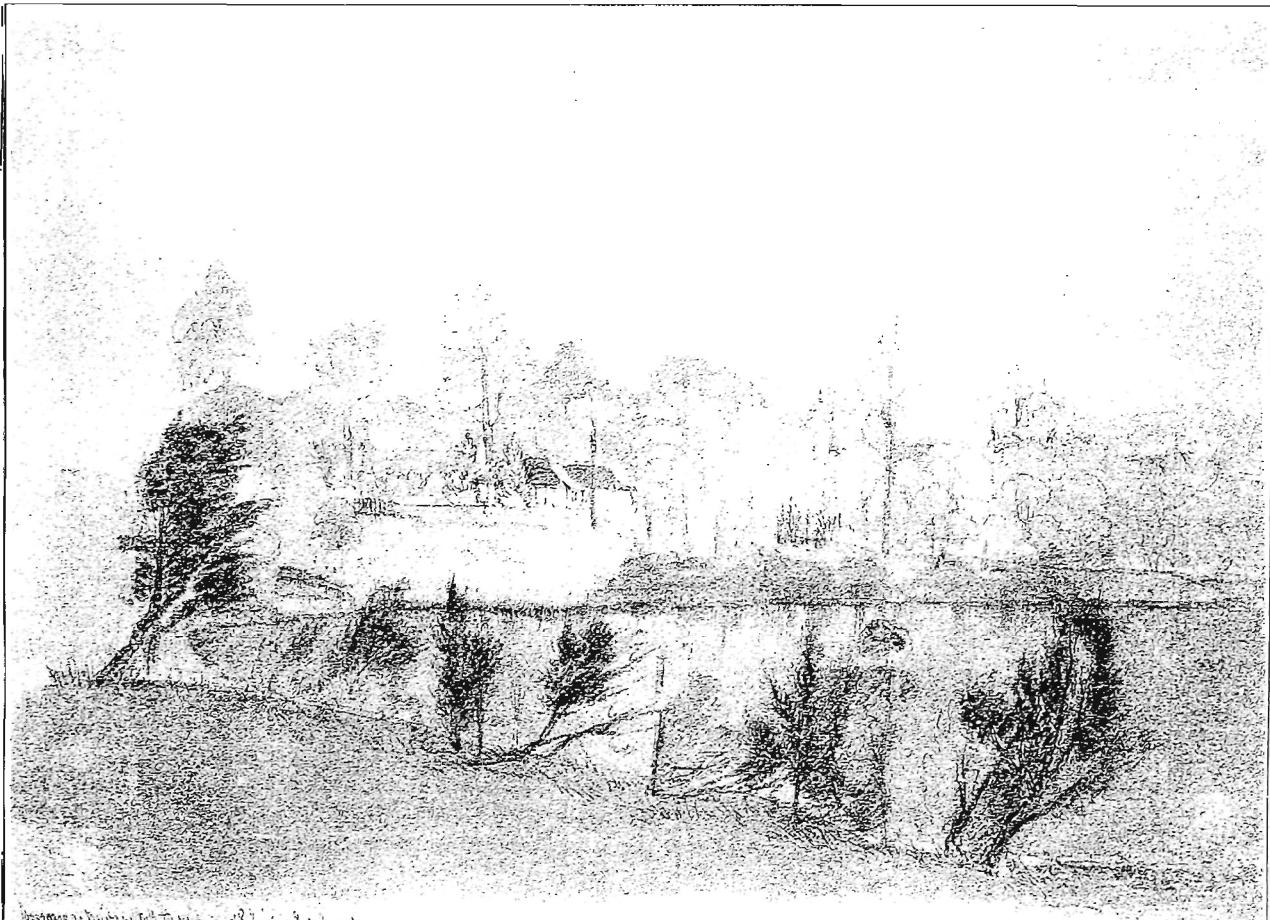
Emmeline Macarthur Leslie, wife of the Darling Downs squatter George Leslie, recalled Simpson's hospitality when she stayed at Woogaroo on her way to Canning Downs in 1848:

Impatient to get home, we borrowed Captain Wickham's inside car and set out with two horses, sleeping the first night at the wooden house of an old bachelor friend who

⁴ MBC, 18 and 25 April 1857. Wolston House is now a property of the National Trust of Queensland.

⁵ Lang, *Cooksland*, p. 110.

entertained us most hospitably – my first and last experience of a primitive establishment. We had an excellent supper. The first bottle of champagne, placed too near the fire, exploded! I had a maid with me and she shared my tiny room ... but with every convenience ... I recollect that [Dr Simpson's] fowls roosted in the trees around his wooden house ...⁶



Illus. 11.

Woogaroo

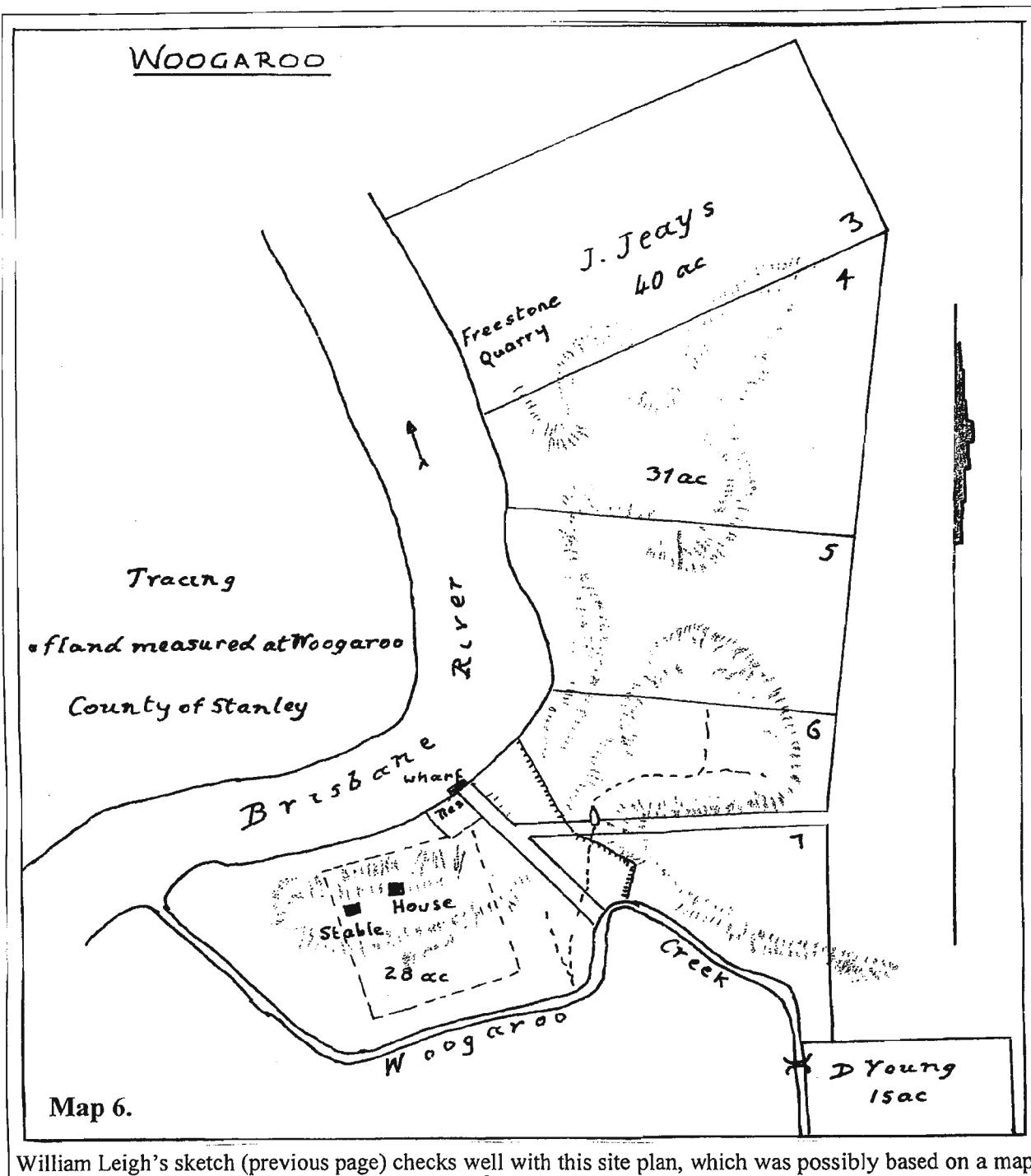
This watercolour sketch of Woogaroo was made by a visiting English artist, William Leigh, in August 1853.⁷ Simpson's house is shown in the distance, and only its twin roofs, chimneys and verandah posts are distinct. Its large grounds are surrounded by a paling fence to keep animals out of the orchard and garden. Between the house and the river the land is cleared, and a post and rail fence runs down to the riverbank.

Mary McLeod McConnel recalled staying at Woogaroo on her first trip to Cressbrook with her husband David in July 1849. In *Memories of Days Long Gone By*, she wrote:

... although the distance to Ipswich was only 25 miles it took two days to cover it, and we had to stop where there was a stopping place. Halfway there was a small township called Woogaroo ... beautifully situated on the Brisbane River. A pretty cottage in this early township was the home of Dr Simpson, the first Commissioner for Crown Lands for the Moreton Bay district. He was a man past middle life and a

⁶ Jane de Falbe, *My Dear Miss Macarthur: The Recollections of Emmeline Macarthur 1828-1911* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1988), pp. 43-44.

⁷ This sketch is held at the Mitchell Library, Sydney.



William Leigh's sketch (previous page) checks well with this site plan, which was possibly based on a map made by Pettigrew for Simpson in January 1853.⁸ It shows that Woogaroo was fenced on its eastern side, and was otherwise isolated by the Brisbane River to the north and Woogaroo Creek to the west and south. An area of 28 acres was fenced to contain the homestead, stables, outbuildings, orchard and garden.

widower, a doctor of medicine, had travelled much, principally in Europe ... His was my first experience of 'bush' hospitality; it was delightful, his welcome so hearty. We were made most comfortable. His arrangements were simple, and with an air of refinement. In the morning he showed us among other things, a large flock of fine turkeys, and told us he always had one for his Sunday dinner. No doubt he had willing friends to share it, who would not mind the ride from Brisbane to Ipswich to spend the day with so genial a host.⁹

⁸ WP Diary, 7 and 10 January 1853; Ray Oliver, Wolston file, National Trust of Queensland.

⁹ Mary McConnel, *Memories of Days Long Gone By* (London, 1905), p. 15.

By the time the McConnels paid this visit, Pettigrew had made Woogaroo his base in the colony,¹⁰ and it is clear from Mary McConnel's description of the 'small township' how much it had grown.

Pettigrew's diaries and letters confirm the information in these earlier descriptions. The 'European pot-herbs' mentioned by Lang included marjoram, thyme, sage, shallots and garlic. As well as the fowls and turkeys mentioned by his two women visitors, Simpson bred ducks and geese. His herb-flavoured turkey dinners may, as Mary McConnel suggested, have accounted for the numerous Sunday guests whose presence Pettigrew, who spent his Sabbaths resting, noted with disapproval. On his first Sunday at Woogaroo, he wrote in his diary, 'At about dinner time Gideon Scott came in uncalled and had a share of a turkey dinner. A low, mean fellow.'¹¹ Gideon Scott was a squatter. The sight and sounds of visiting squatters, dining well, drinking the doctor's good colonial wines and talking 'like magpies or jackasses'¹² late into the night, did nothing to counter Pettigrew's Langite prejudices.

Life at Woogaroo centred around Simpson's residence, identified as the home of a government official by its flag and flagpole. The bark-roofed, slab-walled cottage was extended, roofed with shingles and lined with bark as the years passed. It was warmed by open fireplaces in the main building and in the detached kitchen and servants' quarters, where Pettigrew had a small room, with a stretcher bed and pegs for hanging his clothes.

Simpson bred horses. His stallions, Lunatic and Cyreus, were kept in the stables, which had an antbed floor and frequently needed repair. Mares were brought to Woogaroo to be 'covered', and mobs of horses were turned out to graze in the broad paddocks at Redbank

¹⁰ WP Diary, 6 July 1849.

¹¹ WP Diary, 24 June 1849.

¹² WP Diary, 1 July 1849.

and Wolston. Because Woogaroo did not have a forge, Pettigrew sometimes took horses to the blacksmith in Ipswich to be shod. He enjoyed working with the horses, and while at Woogaroo learned to break them in, finding he could ‘do with them what seemingly none else could do’:

I simply took them quietly. Nothing more. Spoke to them quietly. Tried to make them understand what I wanted them to do, and when they had done it gave them praise. At one time of the year the handling of young horses was done in the forenoon and ploughing with two horses was done in the afternoon. One of the men was to bring in the horses and go with me while ploughing ... After getting the horses fairly in to work, I dispensed with such service ... Sometimes he seemed to be too long in getting them in, so I asked permission to get in the horses myself, which was not readily granted by Dr Simpson. I said it might take me longer the first two or three days, but it would save time eventually, and which it did.

I took two or three cobs of maize and went to a horse which I knew I could approach. Gave him some and talked to him. Went on a bit. He followed me. This attracted the attention of the other horses and some of them came and were treated likewise. The two I wanted came and got corn likewise and I put the halters on them and took them away. This might have occupied 15 minutes. There were about eight horses in the paddock. All had been so treated by degrees except one, and no one had ever been able to get that horse without running the whole into the stockyard. I therefore had my eye on him and by patience and perseverance subdued him likewise ...¹³

Pettigrew helped with all the activities associated with the farm animals, including feeding the poultry, chasing pigs out of the corn, burying dogs and drowning kittens. At times he carried out the routine chores of bringing barrels of water and stocks of firewood to the kitchen. When there was nothing else to do, he would work in the vegetable garden, where Simpson grew English and sweet potatoes, French and Turkey peas, beans, carrots, turnips, beetroot, cabbages, onions and herbs, or the orchard, which was planted with peaches, apples, figs, oranges, bananas, guavas, limes, almonds, grapes and pineapples. Pettigrew, who had an experimental turn of mind, attempted to preserve figs by drying them and bananas by sugaring them. Ornamental shrubs, bamboo (used to make handles for rakes and other tools), and native ironbarks and bunya pines were also planted at Woogaroo.

¹³ ‘Genealogy’, n.p.

Pettigrew's diaries describe the annual cycle of ploughing, harrowing, drilling, sowing, hillling up, weeding, chipping and harvesting, for the crops of maize, oats and millet which Simpson grew, under contract to the government, to provide a reliable source of fodder for the livestock.¹⁴ Hay was cut in November-December, cocked in the field for drying, then made into a haystack or stored in the barn. The humid climate created less-than-ideal conditions for hay-making, and Pettigrew systematically recorded both the progress and the often mouldy results of this major annual effort.

With a farmer's interest in the weather, he noted temperatures, rain, storms and winds, summer heat and winter frosts, and studied their effects on plants, crops and people. He enjoyed the generally pleasant, sub-tropical climate, but also experienced its extremes – the gales, floods, droughts and fires that were to affect his activities for the rest of the century. In March 1852, a flood covered the wharf at Woogaroo, and in April, when heavy rain caused big rises in Woogaroo and Oxley Creeks, the river brought down bales of hay and casks of tallow from the boiling-down works at Ipswich. Afterwards the ground was boggy for weeks, and he learned an important lesson when his bullock team refused to cross a damaged bridge while water covered it.

At the time of this flood, Pettigrew was helping to build a post-and-rail fence along the two-and-a-half mile boundary of Dr Simpson's property at Wolston. His job was to drag in logs with bullocks for the men to cut up, and then to place the posts and rails at intervals along the fenceline, using a dray.¹⁵ He applied his understanding of animals to the management of his bullocks:

I only once gave the bullocks some blows with the whip because they would not pull together – never touched the leaders. After having done so, I told them to go on pair after pair – naming them – and ready with the whip to strike – but they all pulled and out of the hole came the dray ...

¹⁴ Simpson to Col. Sec., 8 August 1843 and 4 April 1850 in Langevad, *Simpson Letterbook*, pp. 11 and 34.

¹⁵ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 3 May 1852.

On one occasion when working with the bullocks, a bit of stick got in between the hoofs of one of the fore feet of a bullock. I got a pair of pliers and tried to pull it out. He put down his horn at me. I desisted and told him if he did so I could not touch it. I looked at him and then tried again and pulled it out. This is a clear case of an animal understanding what you want him to do.¹⁶

Disliking sliprails, which he considered splintery and inconvenient, Pettigrew persuaded Simpson to employ David McKergow to make proper gates for the entrance to Wolston. To complete the job, Pettigrew neatly rounded the gateposts and hung the gates himself.¹⁷

The bush material outbuildings at Woogaroo – poultry and sheep pens, pigsties, cowbails, a dairy, hayshed, barn, carpenter's shop, toolhouse, stockyard, butcher's shop, smokehouse and privy – needed constant maintenance. Pettigrew fitted padlocks, glazed windows, and repaired doors, gates and fences. He sharpened knives and axes on the grinding stone outside the kitchen, and fashioned and fitted handles for tools and implements. Borrowing a set of mason's irons, he went down to a sandstone quarry on the riverbank and laboriously cut blocks of stone for the fireplaces. He mended the gauze that kept flies out of the meat safe and made water troughs for its legs to foil the ants. As well as helping with the slaughtering and butchering of animals, he learned to preserve meat by salting, drying or smoking it, and to produce the common cooking fat, lard.

Simpson's home at Woogaroo, however 'simple', was 'comfortable' and 'refined'. Pettigrew helped to keep it so. He repaired the doctor's desk and candlesticks, fixed the striking apparatus of the clock, made a weight for the pendulum and set it going. His inventiveness found expression when he made a sundial for the garden and an orange squeezer for the kitchen, fashioned a leather glove for picking pineapples, and carved a wooden mouldboard for the plough. He also made shelves for the hut of John Morrissey, one of Simpson's troopers, and helped Bridget Morrissey repair Simpson's cushions.

¹⁶ 'Genealogy', n.p.

¹⁷ MBC, 21 March 1857; WP Diary, 13 and 26 August and 13 September 1852.

Bridget, an Irish girl, was John Morrissey's sister and Dr Simpson's house servant. She arrived at Woogaroo in September 1850, and, after a series of crises, left on the Ipswich steamer in June 1852. Pettigrew's relationship with Bridget illustrates the tensions that were part of his life at Woogaroo. In spite of his prejudice against the Irish, he liked her, wrote letters for her, helped her get and prepare vegetables from the garden on a Sunday, and, on one of his trips to Brisbane, asked his sister-in-law Jane McKergow to buy her a gown. For her part, Bridget teased and distracted the vulnerable young man whose room adjoined hers. As time passed, Trooper Benjamin Robinson began coming to the kitchen early in the morning, stirring the fire, then entering Bridget's room. According to Pettigrew, whose diaries obsessively chronicled the affair, Simpson became 'angry at Bridget for humbugging and keeping Robinson off his work' and said 'they must either marry or one of them must go'.¹⁸ But this did not happen, and Robinson began to clash with Pettigrew, especially when Simpson was away.

The first crisis occurred in September 1851, when Pettigrew, having discussed the conduct of Bridget and Robinson with John Morrissey, advised Bridget to leave. She seemed displeased, and later told Pettigrew that Robinson had overheard their conversation and was in a great rage. Pettigrew confronted Robinson, who told him to mind his own business. After a warning from Bridget that Robinson was threatening to 'do for him', Pettigrew, armed with a pistol, spent a sleepless night barricaded into his room.¹⁹ A few days later Robinson stole grog from the store, and when Simpson returned a dozen bottles were missing. Robinson threatened Pettigrew, who told Simpson that if Robinson stayed, he would go. Since many people were leaving the colony for the Ballarat gold rush, and Simpson knew that he would have difficulty replacing them, he calmed Pettigrew down and kept Robinson hard at work, ploughing, planting, and

¹⁸ WP Diary, 5 September 1851.

¹⁹ WP Diary, 12 September 1851.

shingling the leaking roof of the house.²⁰

A second crisis occurred in May 1852, when Bridget woke Pettigrew early one Sunday morning, saying a man was opening her door and would not let her sleep. Simpson, also roused, heard Bridget laughing in her room, concluded it was a ‘made up affair’ to annoy Pettigrew, and told him bluntly ‘not to be made a buffer by such a bitch, lying prostitute etc’.²¹ Matters came to a head in June, when Simpson, annoyed with Robinson for loitering in the kitchen when he should have been working, decided he would have to go. A fortnight later, when Simpson left for Brisbane, Robinson and Bridget refused to work, and when Simpson returned on the steamer with a new groom and servant girl, he discharged them both. It was a sign of the times that the groom was so drunk that he had to be carried ashore.²²

As Pettigrew became acquainted with the wide range of human beings – from ex-convicts to the sons of aristocrats – who had somehow found their way to Moreton Bay, he commented on them, frankly and sometimes caustically, in his diaries and letters. He respected the humane, worldly-wise Dr Simpson, who was ‘not a Christian although too well learned to be an infidel’;²³ and on the occasions when he suffered from accidents, swollen glands, or head, stomach or tooth aches, he was impressed with the efficacy of Simpson’s homeopathic pills and medical advice. ‘I live here with a very celebrated Doctor or Physician,’ he wrote to his brother John. ‘He was so very celebrated in England that he had to leave it owing to the opposition of the other Drs. But could he have stood up to that opposition to this time he would have been the most celebrated Dr in Britain.’²⁴ Pettigrew described Simpson’s great friend William Henry Wiseman, who visited

²⁰ WP Diary, 16 September 1851.

²¹ WP Diary, 6 May 1852.

²² WP Diary, 14 and 19 June 1852.

²³ WP to unknown, 16 February 1851.

²⁴ WP to John Pettigrew, 21 July 1852.

Woogaroo every Christmas, as ‘a broken down gentleman’ who ‘belongs to the Church of England but ... is no Puseyite’.²⁵

As well as the Commissioner’s troopers – Robinson, Morrissey and Thomas Gee – other men were employed at Woogaroo. James Wood (‘Jim the Poultry Man’), an ‘exile’ from the convict ship *Bangalore*, arrived in May 1850. He had been transported for stealing hens, and Simpson paid him £20 per year, plus keep, to look after the pigs and poultry. The next year he demanded £27, and when that amount was not forthcoming, he left.²⁶ In the background were the Aborigines: old Jacky, sketched by Pettigrew in his bark canoe on the Brisbane River, who described a great flood that occurred when he was a little boy;²⁷ a ‘blackfellow’ who called at Woogaroo and was ‘sent about his business’;²⁸ and anonymous ‘blacks’ who helped to carry the corn from the garden into the barn.²⁹

Many of the squatters who came to Woogaroo to consult Simpson were associated with him in their roles as Justices of the Peace. As well as the McConnells and the Leslie, Pettigrew met the Balfour and Bigge brothers, John Ferriter, Edmund Uhr, Arthur Hodgson, Louis Hope, James Laidley, Major William North, Thomas Murray-Prior and Robert Ramsay. He also became acquainted with the Church of England minister Benjamin Glennie, the Post Master Captain John Barney, surveyors James Charles Burnett and Edward Moriarty, and doctors William Dorsey and Jacob Swift. In June 1850, the educationalist George William Rusden, on a visit to Brisbane to promote the founding of the National School that Pettigrew’s McKergow nephews and nieces were to

²⁵ W. H. Wiseman, then a Magistrate on the Darling Downs, was later the Commissioner for Crown Lands at Rockhampton. ‘Puseyite’ was a hostile term for ‘high church’ members of the Church of England, who followed the ideas of Pusey, Newman, Keble and Froude, the leaders of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s.

²⁶ WP Diary, 10 May 1850; WP to Jeannie Hunter, 23 May 1851. ‘Exiles’ – convicts banished to Australia before their sentences expired – could gain their freedom after a period of good behaviour as hired labour.

²⁷ WP Diary, 10 July 1849; Extra 1881 Diary, Sunday 2 January, note on Floods – Brisbane River.

²⁸ WP Diary, 26 July 1851.

²⁹ WP Diary, 18 January 1851.

attend during the 1860s, dined at Woogaroo.³⁰

Pettigrew's sensitivity about his own status can be read into his comments about other people. At Woogaroo, he was an employee, who slept in the servant's quarters and did odd jobs about the place; but he dined at Simpson's table and was clearly in the older man's confidence on many matters. His youthful outspokenness, perhaps brashness, sometimes earned a rebuke, and embarrassment usually clouded the way he recorded such incidents. In May 1850, for example, when the first judge to conduct trials in Brisbane visited Woogaroo, Pettigrew wrote, 'Steamboat *Raven* passed up in evening with Justice Thierry [sic] and Attorney-General. Was imprudent, caused a laugh at my expense. Will not be so foolish if possible.'³¹

For Pettigrew, visitors were 'the crying sin of the country',³² especially if they came on Sundays, when, apart from appearing at breakfast, dinner and tea, he was free to do as he wished. No one at Woogaroo shared his belief in the absolute sanctity of the Sabbath. Occasionally he attended church at Ipswich, but usually he spent the day in his room, reading, writing letters and searching the Scriptures.³³ The Biblical imagery of his upbringing filled his mind when, out walking on a cold Sunday in August 1849, he came upon a snake, 'an emblem of the evil one', lying asleep. He threw sticks at it until it woke, then panicked and killed it with his staff. 'My resentment was so great against it I could not control myself but was bent on its destruction,' he wrote. 'I will not travel far on the Sabbath to punish even the crooked serpent, but will punish the old serpent by remembering to keep the Sabbath holy by God's blessing.'³⁴

As a Presbyterian, Pettigrew did not celebrate Christmas as a religious festival, yet each

³⁰ WP Diary, 2 June 1850; MBC, 8 June 1850.

³¹ WP Diary, 19 May 1850.

³² WP Diary, 23 February 1851.

³³ WP to Hugh Hunter, 2 February 1851.

³⁴ WP Diary, 26 August 1849.

of his Christmas Days at Woogaroo was memorable. In 1849, Simpson's elderly cook had visitors on Christmas Eve and was tipsy the next morning. After managing a 'fairish' breakfast and dinner, she went to bed, leaving Simpson and Pettigrew to prepare the tea. In 1850, Pettigrew crossed the river to visit some of the immigrants from Dr Lang's third ship, the *Lima*, who were developing farms at Moggill. In 1851, Simpson and his guests, John and Robert Little and Surveyor Burnett, over-indulged in claret and 'colonial champain', and Simpson 'blew [Pettigrew] up for spoiling his maize and ruining him'. When Pettigrew 'denied the charge', he was 'ordered to leave the station'; but, since he was still there next morning, he cannot have taken Simpson seriously.³⁵

When Pettigrew left Woogaroo in October 1852 to build his sawmill in Brisbane, he accepted an invitation from Simpson to return at Christmas. After dining agreeably on turkey with Messrs Bigge and Little, he inspected the garden, visited Wolston to check on the buildings there, and took the opportunity to assess the quantity of timber left in the scrubs of Woogaroo Creek. Although Simpson expressed the opinion (which, he said, was shared by every other person he had spoken to) that the sawmill venture would ruin Pettigrew (although a flour mill would be good), their parting was friendly. Simpson gave him some ham and lent him books and newspapers, and he agreed to return for a week in January to look after the farm while Simpson went to Brisbane to supervise the election of a local member of the New South Wales Legislative Council.³⁶

At Woogaroo, Pettigrew, an optimist by nature, came to terms with the disappointments which his emigration had brought, and set a new course for his life. Mindful of 'the threefold way of health of body, health of soul and health of purse',³⁷ he considered his options and made his plans. In his early letters home, he canvassed the possibility that his

³⁵ WP Diary, 25 December 1851.

³⁶ WP Diaries, 28 December 1852 and 3-11 January 1853.

³⁷ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 24 April 1850.

brothers Adam and John might join him in Moreton Bay and bring their mother with them. But Mary McWhinnie's health was deteriorating and David McKergow's experiences had discouraged Adam. 'I have given up all thought of going to Australia,' he wrote. 'You have frightened me.'³⁸ In 1851, Adam married and moved to Ballina in County Sligo, Ireland, where he opened a draper's shop. Pettigrew reacted with dismay. 'Why what the mischief took you there – the holy fathers or the holy mothers!' he wrote to Adam, although he conceded that 'the chance for a draper [here] is not so good as it was two years ago, as several have set up ... in that line.'³⁹

John Pettigrew, also a draper, was left to care for their mother, who was living with him in Kilmarnock when she died of a bowel obstruction in October 1851 at the age of fifty-nine. The news did not reach Pettigrew until March 1852. 'The sudden and melancholy death of Mother took me by surprise more than any I have yet heard since leaving home,' he wrote to John. 'In her death the last link may be said to be broken that united us together as a family. As you were always her favourite (if such there was) you had the honour of attending her to the gates of death.'⁴⁰

Adam and some of Pettigrew's friends hinted in their correspondence that his former 'intended', Mary Guthrie, regretted her hasty decision to reject his offer of marriage, but he was so proud and hurt that it was two years before he could bring himself even to write her a letter.⁴¹ Marriage was on his mind for years before he found a suitable wife in the colony. To Adam he wrote:

I would recommend every young man to marry before he comes to Australia as it will make him more steady in his habits and be a means of keeping him from a great deal of bad company. What I term 'bad company' are gentlemen's sons, squatters, and

³⁸ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 28 October 1850. In this letter Pettigrew refers to a previous letter from Adam.

³⁹ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 17 June 1851.

⁴⁰ WP to John Pettigrew, 21 July 1852.

⁴¹ WP to Rev. John Barclay, 11 October 1850; WP to Adam Pettigrew, February 1851; WP to Jeanie Hunter, 23 May 1851; WP to Hugh Hunter, 18 July 1852; WP Diary, October 1850.

others, with which I may as well say I dine with here every other week. These men are unmarried, they are all bauds [sic], and all have had or got the clap. They consequently seduce whatever woman they come across if she will seduce whether she is married or single. They make these women to be idle, bad wives, drunkards and devils. These men are likewise extravagant, lazy, drunken, good for nothing and cut their lives short by 20 or 30 years ... I for my part will chose rather to be married: and be you sure, that if ever I come home and have the means to marry and come out here again, I will be sure to do so if I can possibly get a woman not a baud.⁴²

Each year at Woogaroo, on his birthday, Pettigrew mused in his diary on the passing of time, usually in religious terms. The intense loneliness of the newly arrived immigrant is reflected in his entry for 25 August 1849:

Thought a good deal about Miss Guthrie and friends at home. I ought to write to her. It is just about this time last year when I received notice and agreed to come here. Little did I know of the disappointments that awaited me, first the loss of the above and afterwards the same of the situation I was led to expect. A few years ago, I can recall when I anticipated being in a farm about the age of 21 or 22. That time has passed, and I have this day completed my 24th and entered my 25th year, and [am] as far away from my home as I can almost go, floating about on the wide world. To human ideas and calculation half or at least one-third of my days are past and gone, never to be recalled. I ought therefore to be more diligent and improve the future.⁴³

Pettigrew's advertisements in the *Moreton Bay Courier* in June 1849 attracted the attention of James Warner, the Assistant Government Surveyor. At the time, Warner was unwell and under pressure to lay out farms and a village at Moggill, a survey which was the government's response to the memorial which the *Fortitude* immigrants had submitted the previous March.⁴⁴ For the next nine months, Warner employed Pettigrew to assist him in this and a number of other surveys, which he then completed and signed. Working for Warner, Pettigrew wrote later, 'was of great use to me as it enabled me to know how surveys were done here'.⁴⁵

⁴² WP to Adam Pettigrew, February 1851.

⁴³ WP Diary, 25 August 1849.

⁴⁴ Grey-Woods, *With Compass, Chain and Courage*, pp. 79-81.

⁴⁵ 'Genealogy', p. 5.

On 23 July, Pettigrew bundled up his blankets and great-coat and sent them on the steamer *Raven* to the coalpits at Moggill, near the land to be surveyed. Three days later, he crossed the river in an Aboriginal canoe, met Warner at the coalpits, and went with him to the survey camp. His initial work proving satisfactory, Warner agreed to pay him one guinea per week with rations and accommodation while he was on the job.⁴⁶ An application to the Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, to employ him officially was rejected in December,⁴⁷ so Warner had to find the money from his own limited funds. Warner and Pettigrew completed the Moggill survey early in September,⁴⁸ and then surveyed seven smaller farms along the river. None of the *Fortitude* immigrants except James Roper and his family ever farmed at Moggill, but a number of other Lang immigrants eventually settled there.⁴⁹

After working in the field, Pettigrew spent time at the Survey Office on North Quay in Brisbane, plotting his Moggill results and drawing plans for farms at Bulimba, where David McConnel was developing his property, 'Toogooloowah', and building a home for his wife.⁵⁰ Pettigrew also visited 'Runnymede', Warner's home at Kangaroo Point, where he admired Warner's extensive gardens and purchased expensive pineapples. On one of these visits, he stayed so late that he had to row himself back to the Brisbane side of the river. On another occasion, an unexplained disagreement with Warner caused Pettigrew to write in his diary, 'Played the fool after a fool', and to enter fourpence (the cost of a ferry trip across the river and back) in his accounts, with the comment, 'Paid dear for acting the fool'.⁵¹

⁴⁶ WP Diary, 9 August 1849.

⁴⁷ WP Diary, 31 December 1849. Pettigrew was never registered as a surveyor in Queensland.

⁴⁸ MBC, 8 September 1849.

⁴⁹ WP, 'Moral Force', 1899.

⁵⁰ WP Diary, 8 September 1849. This home, Bulimba House, is still standing.

⁵¹ WP Diary, 29 September 1850; 'My father's Ledger Fail lands', 29 September 1849.

When in Brisbane, Pettigrew stayed with the McKergows, whose experiences continued to be discouraging. David eventually found work, but accommodation was in short supply. The first house he rented was demolished, and he and Jane were reduced to living in a small verandah room before they found a house to share with other people.⁵² In August 1849, a man entered their bedroom in broad daylight and stole David's silver watch. The thief was identified and arrested; but, because Brisbane had no Criminal Court, Jane had to travel to Sydney in September to give evidence at his trial. Found guilty, the man was sentenced to a year in irons, and Jane returned to Brisbane with the watch.⁵³

In February 1850, the McKergows' first child, Mary, was born. 'David has received an heiress,' Pettigrew wrote to Adam, and his comments from then on indicate how much he enjoyed watching the little girl grow.⁵⁴ Early in 1850, Dr Simpson employed David to build two houses on land he owned in Eagle Street. Pettigrew, while carefully shepherding his own finances, noted the cost of their construction and also began to collect statistics about the production and export of timber.⁵⁵

In Brisbane, he kept up his *Fortitude* connections and attended services at Charles Stewart's church, which became known as the United Evangelical (not Presbyterian) Church. Lang had hoped that his immigrants would stick together in the small community and thus increase their influence; but, since most were English nonconformists, the 'Presbyterian interest' (in Pettigrew's words) became 'swamped'.⁵⁶ Concerned that a commitment to the Westminster Confession of Faith would not be required in the new

⁵² WP to Adam Pettigrew, 28 October 1850.

⁵³ MBC, 14 August 1849; WP Diaries, 18 August and 24 September 1849; WP to Adam Pettigrew, n.d.

⁵⁴ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 24 April 1850.

⁵⁵ WP Diaries, 13 August 1850; 23 October 1851; January 1852 (Timber Exports for Brisbane, 30 September 1849 – 30 June 1852.)

⁵⁶ WP to Rev. John Barclay, 11 October 1850.

church, David McConnel and a retired minister, the Rev. Thomas Mowbray, called a meeting of local Presbyterians in December 1849 and moved to form a Free Presbyterian Church.⁵⁷ David McKergow joined them, but Pettigrew at first refused to do so, even though he was a member of the Free Church. In a long letter to the Rev. John Barclay, he criticised Presbyterian ‘sectarianism’ and the principles and practices of the Free Church in Australia, which, he observed, did not seem fully committed to independence from government. ‘If all the free church ministers got as great privileges before the disruption as the ministers enjoy here,’ he told Barclay, ‘there would never have been any such thing.’ He was not impressed by those colonial ministers who preferred to settle down in a comfortable manse and garden, ‘with a discourse or two on the Sabbath’, instead of travelling from house to house throughout the country to ‘preach and practise the gospel’.⁵⁸

During 1851, while Pettigrew was spending most of his time at Woogaroo, the United Evangelical congregation built a substantial brick chapel in William Street,⁵⁹ and the Presbyterians built a small wooden church at South Brisbane.⁶⁰ A second reason for the Presbyterians’ dissatisfaction with Stewart’s ministry was that, although he could preach to them, he could not administer the sacraments of communion and baptism. After August 1851, when the Rev. Walter Ross McLeod, an ordained Free Presbyterian minister and a brother of Mary McConnel, arrived in Brisbane to serve the South Brisbane congregation, Pettigrew was drawn back to his roots. ‘A day among a thousand

⁵⁷ Most of the ten men who attended the first meeting on 12 December 1849 had been in Moreton Bay for some time and none was a Langite. They were Thomas Boyland, merchant; William Cairncross, baker; John Graham, carpenter; Thomas Gray, shoemaker; Robert Inglis, iron founder; George McAdam, publican; Daniel McNaught, cartwright; Alexander McIntyre, Lachlan McLean and John Stewart, blacksmiths. Inglis and McNaught had arrived on the *Artemisia* and Gray, McLean and Stewart were former employees of Evan and Colin MacKenzie at Kilcoy. See MacKenzie-Smith, *Moreton Bay Scots*, p. 167.

⁵⁸ WP to Rev. John Barclay, 11 October 1850.

⁵⁹ Parker, ‘Strange Bedfellows’, pp. 19-21.

⁶⁰ Richard Bardon, *Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland*, p. 20.

– a communion Sabbath. Upwards of 30 communicants,⁶¹ he wrote joyfully in January 1852, when he attended church at South Brisbane. But Ross McLeod was a sick man. In December 1852, he baptised David and Jane McKergow's second child, John Cameron. A month later he left Brisbane and returned to England, too ill with tuberculosis to carry on.

In October 1849, Pettigrew joined Warner at Ipswich and spent a month surveying town allotments and farms at the Ploughed Station and Bundamba Creek. In a letter to his friend Hugh Hunter, he sketched and described the tent he was living in:



I am assisting the surveyor of this district (Mr Warner) and am up near Ipswich ... in a tent ... 10 feet long, 7 feet wide and 8 feet high. This is carpeted in the bottom and contains – 2 beds – Mr Warner's and mine, one along the back, one along the side (the latter removed during the day). The former contains drawers for apparel, books, odds and ends... In the middle of the tent stands a canteen for holding delf [crockery], etc, two camp stools, instruments, plans, cases. I have been living in it for three months except for a short time in Brisbane twice or thrice.⁶²

Pettigrew was at Ipswich when Dr Lang's third ship, the barque *Lima*, arrived at Moreton Bay on 3 November. Three days later, the steamer *Tamar* brought eighty-four immigrants up the river to Brisbane, where they were accommodated in various parts of the town. These people carried Land Orders similar to those given by Lang to the *Fortitude* and *Chaseley* immigrants, and in addition they had indisputable proof of their entitlements in the form of a remission ticket from the Emigration Commissioners to the value of £850, which some of them, having heard of the *Fortitude* debacle, had managed to press from Lang before the ship sailed.⁶³

⁶¹ WP Diary, 11 January 1852.

⁶² WP to Hugh Hunter, 22 October 1849.

⁶³ MBC, 10 November 1849; 'Nut Quad', 'William Pettigrew: Sawmiller and Shipbuilder', BC, 25 August 1928. The remission ticket recorded Lang's payment of £850 to government officials in London.

Warner delivered a number of documents from the *Lima* to Pettigrew at Ipswich, including the remission ticket, a list of the men who were eligible for land grants, and a letter from Lang which again appointed him his agent. ‘No word about my salary,’ Pettigrew noted grimly in his diary, as he began the paper work relating to the *Lima* and continued surveying for Warner.⁶⁴ A fortnight later, in Brisbane, he met the men from the *Lima*. Most of them were keen to settle their families on the land without delay, but at the meeting they discovered that two more of them held Land Orders than were on the list sent by Lang to Pettigrew or were covered by the Emigration Commissioners’ ticket.⁶⁵ Pettigrew proposed to solve this problem by dividing the entitlement equally among all those who held Land Orders. ‘To this several of them would not agree,’ he wrote, ‘and I next proposed that they should be entitled to lay claim on Dr Lang when he comes out. This I would do by writing on the back of their order to the amount of the order I give them on the government. To this proposition they all agreed except Job Pratten.’⁶⁶

At their next meeting, the *Lima* men generously agreed that Pratten should have his full allocation of 80 acres, while the rest would receive equal shares in the balance of the entitlement. They asked Pettigrew to show them the farms that had been surveyed at Moggill, and on Captain Wickham’s advice they paid Pettigrew to attend the sale and purchase the land for them.⁶⁷ He then accompanied them to their blocks and taught them how to strip bark from the trees to make their first huts. Six families settled at Moggill, and later Job Pratten took up land at Cooper’s Plains.

It was more than a year before the *Lima* immigrants’ claims were finalised. The authorities in Sydney questioned Pettigrew’s right to act as Lang’s agent and noticed the

⁶⁴ WP Diary, 7 November 1849.

⁶⁵ William Barlow, William Broadfoot, Richard Hudson, Joseph Lewis, John Lumsden, Job Pratten, Thorpe Riding and Job Twine were on the list. Herbert Ellerby and Thomas Nuttall were omitted.

⁶⁶ WP Diary, 20 November 1849.

⁶⁷ WP Diary, 28 November 1849.

discrepancy between the numbers of Land Orders and eligible immigrants.⁶⁸ All decisions were postponed until Lang returned to Australia, which he did on another of his emigrant vessels, the *Clifton*, in March 1850. In April, Pettigrew wrote to both Lang and the Governor, setting out the *Lima* immigrants' claims, but Lang neither acknowledged Pettigrew's letter nor contacted the Colonial Secretary.⁶⁹ The *Sydney Morning Herald* then revealed that Lang had borrowed £568 in England, using a duplicate of the Emigration Commissioners' ticket as security, and that the duplicate had been presented in Sydney to claim the money.⁷⁰ Fortunately, Pettigrew had sent the original document to Sydney well before the duplicate was presented, so the *Lima* immigrants' entitlement was secure. In spite of this scandal and the publication of more official correspondence concerning the dispatch of the *Fortitude*, Lang retained popular support with his opposition to the transportation of convicts, and his appeals for independence and manhood suffrage, and was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council in July.⁷¹ Finally, in November 1850, Pettigrew was advised that, although Lang had not communicated with the government, Governor Fitzroy had decided to grant the *Lima* immigrants the title deeds to their land.⁷²

In 1851, the irrepressible Lang started a weekly newspaper, the *Press*, which promoted his political ideas and savagely attacked his enemies. As a result of one such attack, he was imprisoned for four months for libel. After his release, he topped the poll to represent Sydney in the new Legislative Council, but, because of legal and financial problems, did not take up his seat.⁷³ In November 1851, before leaving on another voyage to England, he paid his second visit to Moreton Bay, and was warmly received at public meetings at

⁶⁸ Plunkett (Attorney-General) to Col. Sec., 28 November 1849.

⁶⁹ WP to Col. Sec., 24 April 1850; WP to Lang, 24 April 1850; WP Diary, 24 April 1850.

⁷⁰ SMH, 26 April 1850; WP Diary, 27 May 1850.

⁷¹ Baker, *Days of Wrath*, pp. 294-297.

⁷² Col. Sec. to WP, 16 November 1850.

⁷³ Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p. 342.

Brisbane and Ipswich when he proposed that Moreton Bay should become a separate colony from New South Wales. By focusing the minds of disgruntled settlers on the Sydney government's neglect of services and infrastructure, he consolidated a movement that was to bear fruit eight years later, and he left Moreton Bay carrying a petition from its residents to Queen Victoria, asking for separation.⁷⁴

During the fortnight of his stay, Lang visited some of his emigrants at Ipswich and Moggill, but he did not call at Woogaroo, where Pettigrew was busy ploughing and making hay. Instead, he wrote Pettigrew a long, friendly letter, asking him to be the surveyor in a new cotton and emigration company, which he was hoping to arrange in Britain.⁷⁵ Pettigrew was perplexed and doubted that he had anything to gain by accepting the proposal. After his problems with the *Lima* immigrants' land, he had resolved to distance himself from Lang, writing to the Rev. Barclay:

As to Dr Lang being able to do me justice since he came out, he has not so much as been able to answer a letter I sent him and I suppose he never will. Earl Grey in a despatch to the Governor ... says that if any of those persons whom Dr Lang has swindled would come forward and prove it, [Dr Lang] could be punished according to law. Accordingly some of his emigrants wrote to the government here on the subject but they were told that the prosecution of Dr Lang must be done in England as there the bargain was made ... For my own part, I do not trouble myself about him.⁷⁶

Deciding, as he told his mother, to 'take and stick by advice for once in my life',⁷⁷ he showed the letter to Dr Simpson. Aware of Lang's power in the colony and his propensity to make (and break) enemies, Simpson advised him to 'answer in a civil manner' and tell Lang that he would be 'happy to accept the situation of surveyor to any company that he may be able to form in England'.⁷⁸ He argued that, while Pettigrew might gain nothing, he

⁷⁴ MBC, 27 October, 15 and 29 November and 8 December 1851.

⁷⁵ Lang to WP, 8 December 1851.

⁷⁶ WP to Rev. John Barclay, 11 October 1850.

⁷⁷ WP to Mother, 5 January 1852.

⁷⁸ WP Diary, 17 December 1851; WP to Lang, 22 December 1851.

also had nothing to lose, and that contact with any emigrants Lang might send out would be to his advantage.

This wise advice from Simpson set the pattern for Pettigrew's subsequent dealings with Lang. He never openly opposed Lang, or participated in the recriminations that were periodically aired among Lang's emigrants, and he avoided becoming embroiled in the bitter controversies that surrounded Lang and his followers. When Lang embarked on a political career at Moreton Bay in 1854, Pettigrew's name was absent from the published lists of his supporters. But on Lang's later visits to Brisbane, Pettigrew entertained him and attended his services and lectures.⁷⁹ It is ironic that, in spite of Pettigrew's cautious handling of their association, his support for Lang's views on transportation, immigration and separation was to earn him a place in colonial history as a prominent Langite.⁸⁰

In the heat of late December 1849 and January 1850, Pettigrew was back in the field, surveying farms among the mosquitoes at Yeerongpilly and Oxley Creek, in the open country of Cooper's Plains, and among the grass-trees at Mt Gravatt. Early in February, Surveyor Warner, again under pressure from Sydney, sent him out 'in all haste' to trace the road to Cleveland, after which, for ten weeks, they were hard at work on the survey of Cleveland township.⁸¹ Pettigrew described the Cleveland area in a letter to Adam:

What is termed Cleveland Point is a small Island from 3 to 5 feet above high water during spring tides. It is 200 yards long by 100 yards wide, with a strip of sand and shell bank 100 yards wide stretching to within about 50 yards of the mainland. This division or strait is covered about 6 feet during spring tides. On the East side of the point and distant about 400-500 yards is supposed to be deep water about 30 feet at low tide. On the West side in Raby Bay is all shallow water and not above 10-15 feet at low water of Spring Tides. As we have not taken the marine Survey I cannot say much about this part.

⁷⁹ WP Diary, 4 and 12 August 1864.

⁸⁰ 'Nut Quad', 'Fighters of the Fifties', *The Queenslander Jubilee Number*, 7 August 1909, p. 19.

⁸¹ Cleveland survey: WP Diary, 4 February – 14 April 1850; Fr. Michael Endicott, 'The Origins of Old Cleveland Road', *RHSQJ*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1976-77, pp. 72-75.

The building ground of the proposed town is from 20 to 40 feet high some upwards of 50 feet i.e. above high water for spring tides. The soil is of a redish [sic] brown clay or gravel, and is of a very porous nature in as much as, although one inch of rain should fall, in five minutes it would all sink into the ground. On that account the ground is more even than the most of other parts. There is an abundant supply of water for the town about 1½ miles distant, but plenty could be obtained close to the town by making a reservoir. The access to the town from Brisbane, Ipswich and the Logan River are all very good. The town ... will not be such for eight months i.e. if it ever becomes so ...⁸²

Despite his reservations about the depth of water at Cleveland Point, Pettigrew believed the arguments that were being put forward in favour of a port at Cleveland, especially the idea that it might become a refitting station for whaling ships, which would stimulate farming and the production of sawn timber.⁸³ When the Cleveland town allotments were sold in August 1851, he bought one at the corner of Middle and Passage Streets, and wagered with David McKergow that it would triple in value in three years.⁸⁴ The whaling ships never came, and the port failed to prosper, but Pettigrew retained his property at Cleveland until 1894.

In mid-April, Pettigrew returned to Brisbane, where he plotted his work in the Survey Office and waited for his wages. On Saturday 4 May, Warner paid him £5 in cash and gave him an IOU for £25. ‘Certainly an easy way of paying servants,’ fumed Pettigrew in his diary, ‘but it is a way I do not like.’⁸⁵ On Monday, he finished the tracing he was working on and quit Warner’s employment. On Tuesday, after missing the steamboat, he walked from Brisbane back to Woogaroo.

The row with Warner became quite unpleasant. When Pettigrew visited the Survey Office a few weeks later to take tracings of the maps he needed for his next job with Simpson,

⁸² WP to Adam Pettigrew, 24 April 1850.

⁸³ WP to Adam Pettigrew, February 1851.

⁸⁴ MBC, 16 August 1851; WP Diary, 21 October 1851. Cleveland: Portion 56, Section 16, No. 17, 2 roods, cost £16/10/0.

⁸⁵ WP Diary, 4 May 1850.

Warner sent an employee to take away the key and deny him access.⁸⁶ In June, Pettigrew wrote to the Surveyor-General seeking permission to look at the maps; and in July, when he visited the Survey Office to view the plans of land he wished to buy in William Street, he noted that Warner was still angry with him. Three days later, Warner sent him four cheques, post-dated over four months. Pettigrew was ‘glad to get them’.⁸⁷ On 13 July, he wrote to the Surveyor-General in Sydney requesting access to materials at the Survey Office, and five weeks later received a cold reply from Warner stating that tracings might be made when the office was open to the public, and other documents might be viewed at Warner’s discretion.⁸⁸

Back at Woogaroo, Dr Simpson was proposing a different kind of survey work. Under instructions from Sydney, he had been attempting to define and describe the boundaries of all the sheep runs taken up by squatters in the Moreton Bay District since 1841. This task, difficult enough because of the rugged, forested, and mostly unsurveyed nature of the country, also required Simpson to settle disputes among men with whom he was otherwise on close terms. Pettigrew would accompany him as a professional surveyor and an independent witness, and in the process gain a valuable introduction to the district. During the next twelve months, they rode together on a series of ‘expeditions up the country’, visiting stations and talking to squatters and their employees. (See map, p. 99.) The fit, twenty-five-year-old Pettigrew found all these rides tiring, and it says much for Simpson’s strength and stamina that he undertook them at the age of fifty-eight. In his diary and his letters home, Pettigrew described the countryside, the weather, and the primitive living conditions of settlers in the bush. He concluded that grazing sheep for wool was a prosperous business, but his experiences with most of the squatters whom he

⁸⁶ WP Diary, 27-30 May 1850.

⁸⁷ WP Diary, 5 July 1850.

⁸⁸ Warner to WP, 24 August 1850.

met only reinforced his dislike of them. As the son of a burgess and land-owner, he resented the way some of them, especially the Scots, patronised him. He also observed what he regarded as dishonesty and greed in the way some of them dealt with Simpson and with each other.

The first journey, in June 1850, took Simpson and Pettigrew into the valley of the Bremer River, where they spent several days establishing the boundary between Henry Mort's Franklin Vale and John Brewster's Rose Vale runs. In a letter to his mother, Pettigrew described his evening at Franklin Vale station:

There were ladies at this place and therefore you may easily imagine things were more tidy altho in reality not so comfortable besides a great deal more bother to their guests. Well we had dinner after our patience was worn out waiting for it besides being very hungry. The dinner was grandly got up but the attendance in the shape of servants was very poor. Mort wished some of his women of which there were two to assist in bringing and removing the things but as they were ladies they could not dirty their fingers. After dinner was all over I went away to my room to sew on the buttons where there was a fire, but it had little effect in warming a person as the wind was blowing from the West very strong and could come through any part of it. After tea and toddy I got to bed and (notwithstanding the cold which was very severe) I slept pretty well.⁸⁹

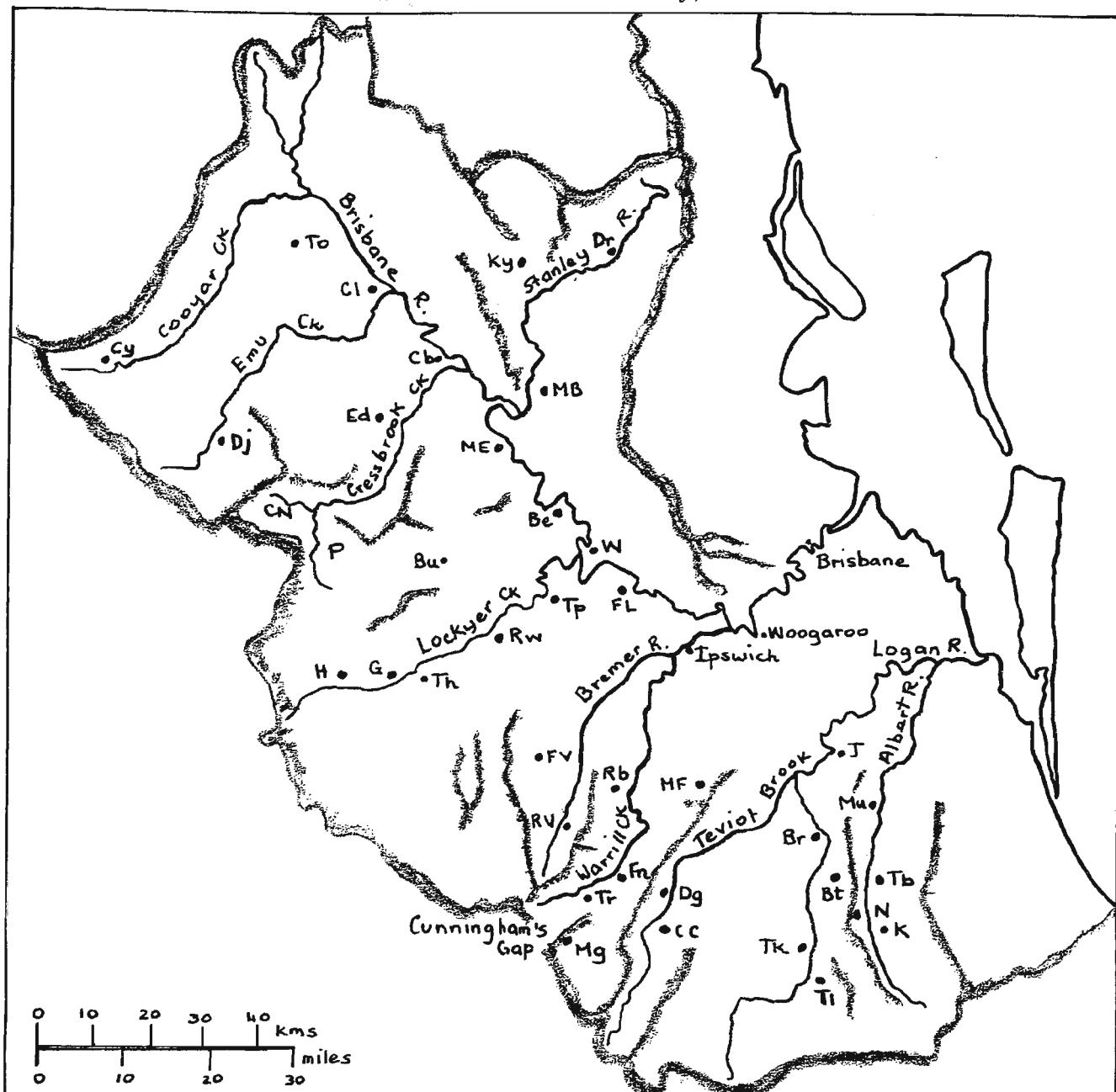
The next day Simpson and Pettigrew went with Mort to meet Brewster. Mort did not know where the boundary lay, and Brewster, according to Pettigrew, pretended not to know. As the investigation proceeded, Pettigrew formed the opinion that Brewster was determined to cheat Mort out of as much land as he could. Following confusion about the location of Mt Melbourne, a peak which both agreed was their boundary marker, they quarrelled, and Pettigrew, with his map and compass, was forced to settle the argument.

Simpson and Pettigrew then travelled north to Rosewood, Tenthill, Helidon, Crow's Nest and Grantham stations. At Crow's Nest, which lay in broken country on the side of the

⁸⁹ WP to Mother, 2 July 1850.

Map 7.

The Runs of Moreton Bay, 1850-51



Numbers indicate the journey on which the runs were visited.

Beaudesert	Bt 3	Franklin Vale	FV 1	Rosewood	Rw 1, 2, 5
Bellevue	Be 6	Grantham	G 1, 5	Tabragalba	Tb 3
Bromelton	Br 3	Helidon	H 1	Tamrookum	Tk 3
Buaraba	Bu 2, 5	Jimboomba	J 3	Tarampa	Tp 2, 5
Colinton	Cl 6	Kerry	Kr 3	Taromeo	To 6
Coochin Coochin	CC 4	Kilcoy	Ky 6	Taroom	Tr 4
Cooyer	Cy 6	Moogerah	Mg 4	Telemon	Tl 3
Cressbrook	Cb 6	Mt Brisbane	MB 6	Tenthill	Th 1
Crows Nest	CN 1	Mt Esk	ME 6	Wivenhoe	W 2
Djuan Djuan	Dj 6	Mt Flinders	MF 4		
Dugandan	Dg 4	Mundoolum	Mu 3		
Durundur	Dr 6	Nindooinbah	N 3	Not shown on map	
Eskdale	Ed 6	Perseverence	P 1	Melcombe	3
Fairnie Lawn	FL 2, 6	Rosebrook	Rb 4	Tandary	6
Fassifern	Fn 4	Rose Vale	RV 1		

Main Range at the head of Cressbrook Creek, Simpson faced a tricky situation.⁹⁰ James Canning Pearce, a well-connected squatter who was in financial trouble, had sold the Crow's Nest run to John Reeve and then applied for two new runs, named Perseverance and Everton. Believing that these runs lay within the boundaries which Pearce had described when he took up Crow's Nest in 1847, Simpson had rejected the applications. Pearce, who had previously clashed with Simpson over payment of overdue assessments and at a Court hearing at Ipswich,⁹¹ alleged to the Sydney authorities that Simpson was carrying out a vendetta against him, and continued to claim Perseverance.⁹² Later, Simpson explained his actions to the Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands:

Without laying my efforts [to verify the boundaries] open to the interpretation of personal motives, which Mr Pearce insinuates, I engaged Mr Pettigrew, an experienced surveyor, to accompany me to Crow's Nest and make a sketch of the country.⁹³

Accompanied by Reeve's superintendent, Simpson and Pettigrew rode to the top of the ridge that divided the two branches of Cressbrook Creek, and ascertained that Crow's Nest station lay in the valley of one branch, and Perseverance, from which Pearce's sheep had not been removed, lay in the other. They also gathered evidence that, when Pearce had shown Reeve and his agent over the run, he had taken them only to the Crow's Nest valley, and had not revealed the existence of the other branch of the creek.⁹⁴ For his mother, Pettigrew sketched and described the 'primeval hut' at Crow's Nest station, where he slept on a sheet of bark on the sandy floor, with a bag of coarse grass as a mattress:

The site is chosen near some waterholes on pretty level ground. The house is 50 or 60 feet long and divided into 3 parts, the one end is the hutkeeper's apartment, the middle is the store, and the other end is the residence of the squatter. The frame of the house consists of 4 corner posts sunk in the ground 3 or 4 feet to keep them upright

⁹⁰ *Simpson Letterbook*, pp. 34-38; WP to Mother, 2 July 1850.

⁹¹ Simpson to Col. Treasurer, 30 May 1849; Simpson to Chief Commissioner, 6 September 1849, *Simpson Letterbook*, pp. 31-32.

⁹² James Canning Pearce to Col. Sec., 3 August 1849, MIC 7425, Reel 19, pp. 107-109, Fryer Library, UQ.

⁹³ Simpson to Chief Commissioner, 28 October 1850, *Simpson Letterbook*, p. 36.

⁹⁴ WP Diary, 24 June 1850; WP to Mother, 2 July 1850.

besides others as the sides of windows doors etc. On the top of these are put the wall plates with cross beams between them to keep them from spreading. On the wall plates is the rafters of the roof which are put up much as for a thatch house at home with this difference in that these are always pavilion roofed. The next business is that it is entirely covered round and above with large sheets of bark. The doors and windows are made of slabs i.e. wood split instead instead of sawn. The doors are hung something like what I have seen gates at home by letting a piece of the door into the sill [sic] and another piece into the wall plate thus. hung by pieces of bullock hide. The chimneys are built on the house and are about 6 feet wide by 5 feet deep, more or less according to the taste. The sketch shows something like the hut described. The beams on the top of the house keep the bark down.⁹⁵



The windows are the outside of the

On their second journey, in August 1850, Simpson and Pettigrew followed a northerly route from Ipswich to Fairnie Lawn, Wivenhoe, Tarampa, Buaraba and Rosewood, but turned back after eight days because dry conditions had reduced the feed for their horses. For Adam, Pettigrew described the topography and soils of the Brisbane Valley, Lockyer's Creek and the 'great Rosewood Scrub', and his first encounter with the effects of drought:

The sheep drawing near to the lambing season are very badly prepared for it. It is expected that not one-third of the lambs will live: indeed we were told that some of the sheep on Rosewood were dying of starvation.

The pasture being 'eaten quite bare with sheep', they 'determined not to go out again till rain should come'.⁹⁶

Their third journey, in stormy October, took Simpson and Pettigrew south to the Logan and Albert Rivers, where they visited Jimboomba, Beaudesert, Bromelton, Tamrookum, Melcombe, Telamon, Kerry, Nindooinbah, Mundoolun and Tabragalba stations.⁹⁷ Impressed with the scenery and soil of the upper Logan and Albert valleys, Pettigrew predicted that, although remote from transport and markets, the area would be used for

⁹⁵ WP to Mother, 2 July 1850.

⁹⁶ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 4 September 1850.

⁹⁷ Modern spellings are used here for the names of these stations, some of which Pettigrew spelt differently.

farming. In a long letter to Adam, he gossiped about the squatters and described their establishments. Jimboomba, twenty-eight square miles and 4,000 sheep, was occupied by a former Brisbane innkeeper, Robert Rowland, who had purchased the run from Thomas Dowse for £1000. Rowland told Pettigrew that sheep farming was a ‘very bad paying business’, but Pettigrew analysed the reasons for his lack of success:

In the first place the man understands nothing about sheep. As an instance of it from his own mouth, ‘I purchased a lot of old crawlers from Captain Collins and I was taken in.’ Dr Simpson however told him he could not be taken in if he made a proper bargain. Secondly the man does not and cannot mind his station and sheep. During the time of the shearing the shearers took as much flour, tea and sugar as they pleased, not only as much as they could destroy but likewise as much as fed some blackfellows & gins to look after their horses ... He cannot mind his station because he has got a wife to look after and she will not remain at the station but must be down at Brisbane among her cronies to have a carouse in honour of Bacchus.⁹⁸

At Beaudesert, the run of Irishman William Duckett White, Pettigrew ironically observed ‘proof of how badly squatting is paying’:

... I offer you this man as an example. He came to this country as poor as a church mouse, say however he had a thousand pounds. He has now ... that sum expended in fencing alone. Also a boiling down establishment. A dairy that supplies Brisbane with cheese. A large dwelling house and offices. Also of course a lot of cattle and horses. Besides he is still carrying on fencing and accumulating capital. Notwithstanding the easy circumstances of these people and a mistress who is continually about the house, I was not only persecuted but nearly eaten up alive by the fleas.⁹⁹

Edinburgh-born William Barker, the proprietor of Tamrookum station, was away during their visit, but Simpson told Pettigrew the story of his success:

A few years ago, Dr Simpson considered this man to be the happiest in the district. He sat in his little hut quite contented, had a housekeeper that always made his meals well, a superintendent that looked after the sheep, and Barker looked after them all. He came with a small flock of sheep and they have increased till the whole of his ground is covered. He lately married a wife, got a good sized house built; built a kitchen and dwelling house for the servants at the back; abandoned his old hut to the flames; and is now engaged at building a large shearing shed. He is also fencing a little. Now it is evident that all this building ... could not be done without money, and

⁹⁸ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 28 October 1850.

⁹⁹ Ibid.; William Duckett White (1807-1893), a wealthy pastoralist, served as a Member of the Legislative Council from 1861 to 1880. See M. W. D. White, *An Early Settler: The Story of the Duckett White Family in Australia* (Ashgrove, Qld.: Hennessy Investments, 1990).

as there is but one way of accumulating that money, that is by sheep farming, it is evident that sheep farming is a good paying business.¹⁰⁰

Pettigrew's dislike of disorder is reflected in his description of Alfred Compigne's house at Nindooinbah:

As Mr Compigne is the son of a most respectable lawyer, and possessed with a considerable deal of capital, I will be at the trouble of introducing you into his house. It is situated on the west side of the valley of the Albert with a large waterhole about 60 yards from the front ... Entering the verandah you pass a lot of spades, axes, wood, pegs etc ranged along the side of the house to the door. At the other end there is a long stick hung to the rafters on which is a lot of saddles and harnesses. Entering the house, which does not look as if much of the water in the lagoon was wasted on it, on the left there are two boxes against the wall. The nearest serves as a cupboard, the next looks as if it was a place for laying things on. At its side is a large bundle of wool bags and in that corner a lot of trash. In the next corner there is a good sized table covered with nearly all the odds and ends in the place, a bare repetition of which would occupy the most of my letter. To the right next the fire is his large chair, next another package of wool bags then another box. In the middle near the fireplace is a good sized table used for nearly all purposes, and in different parts of the room are three cain [sic] bottomed chairs and a camp stool.

On being seated and looking around you see guns, pistols and swords hung up round the building. Above the door, from one end of the room to the other is a shelf well packed with valuable books. The roof is covered with bark and lets the water through when it rains fast. On the right side is Compigne's bed room and a small saddle room. On the left side is the store entering from the verandah and a bedroom for strangers. In this room there was a stretcher on which the Dr slept, in the bottom of which there is a hole which the Dr declares to have been in it for the last two years. For my head Mr C proposed I should sleep on the floor, but I had an idea of what fleas were, and I proposed putting the table against the package of wool bags ... However I did not rest well the first night being in dread of the fleas. The second night I rested better. Dr S ... was not as well off, as the fleas tormented him and his continually sinking through the hole in the stretcher greatly annoyed him.¹⁰¹

December 1850 found Simpson and Pettigrew on their fourth journey, a week spent visiting stations south-west of Ipswich: Rosebrook, Coochin Coochin, Taroom, Fassifern, Moogerah, Dugandan and Mt Flinders. To Adam, Pettigrew reported:

I have been up ... near Cunningham's Gap on the lands of the Bremer, Warrel and Teviot Brook. The scenery up here is very picturesque. Hills rise abruptly, of pretty

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; William Barker (1819-1886), a successful squatter, was an M.L.C. from 1861 to 1863.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; Alfred William Compigne (1818-1909) was trained as a lawyer. He held a number of runs but went bankrupt in 1871 and then became a Police Magistrate in rural towns. He was an M.L.C. from 1860 to 1864.

level country, but none of them are to be compared with the hills at the heads of the Logan and Albert. None of the creeks or brooks are running up here. The soil in the eastern part is of a black sort. The ground on Teviot brook is of a reddish sort, generally very good land. The ridges are covered in scrub. The ridge from Flinders Peak to near the Main Range is a continuation of scrub about 2 or 3 miles wide. I went through this scrub. The soil is red and of a fine quality for agriculture, but I expect it will be many years before such will be done with it. The open ridges are easily cleared and will no doubt be subjected to agriculture first.¹⁰²

At Mt Flinders station, they were entertained by Pettigrew's Ipswich acquaintance, William Wilson, whose house 'superceded all that I have yet seen in this country'. Another visitor at Mt Flinders, on his way to work on one of the Leslie brothers' stations on the Darling Downs, was an unnamed son of Pettigrew's father's former employer, Sir David Hunter Blair. Pettigrew found him supercilious, but the account of their meeting reveals more about his mistrust of squatters and scorn for the Hunter Blair family than about young Blair himself:

I met here a son of Sir D. H. Blair altho at the time I was not aware such was the case. He was getting in his horse from the paddock along with some other person. I do not know how he likes to put up with such menial service? When we wanted our horses we made Wilson send a man for them. Young Blair came out to purchase Dalhunty Plains (Cochin Coochin) Run. It was sold about a year ago so he is behind. He wishes to purchase some Run in these districts and he has gone up to Darling Downs to look out for some one or other. I understand some wide-awake fellows are determined to feel the bottom of his purse. As he is a stranger they wish to obey the gospel precept and take him in.¹⁰³

In the heat of January and February 1851, Pettigrew worked at Woogaroo on the descriptions and maps of the runs which he had visited. Then, on 19 February, he set off, this time on his own, to revisit Rosewood, Tarampa, Buaraba and Grantham, and to

¹⁰² WP to Adam Pettigrew, 16 December 1850.

¹⁰³ The identity of this young man is a mystery. Sir David Hunter Blair had two younger sons, John (born 1825) and David (born 1827), but the only record found in Queensland is of an A. (or S.) Hunter Blair, who in 1852, along with squatters W. H. Walsh, J. D. McTaggart and James and Norman Leith Hay, signed a letter to the Colonial Secretary requesting the opening of the 'beautiful country' north of the Burnett River and adjacent to Port Curtis. NSW Col. Sec. In-letters relating to Moreton Bay region 1822-1860, 52/4235, 24 April 1852. Pettigrew later found he had been misinformed about young Blair's money and intentions and corrected his comments in a letter to Adam Pettigrew in February 1851. According to Nehemiah Bartley in *Opals and Agates*, p. 111, a 'son of Sir David Hunter Blair' was staying at Campbell's Hotel, Stanley Street, South Brisbane in 1854.

ascertain the boundaries between them. Donald Cameron, the owner of Tarampa and Buaraba, was co-operative, but Pettigrew found Charles Pitts at Grantham a ‘humbugging fellow’, who ‘had received Drs letters and assessment all right’ but ‘does not see any good of leases and does not want his run surveyed at all’.¹⁰⁴ While waiting at Rosewood for the arrival of the squatter John Coutts, Pettigrew read Sir Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy*, and grumpily filled in census papers brought by ‘a fellow named Kirk, son of a Sydney jailor, one of the purest colonial puppies I have ever seen – altho I have heard of such before.’¹⁰⁵ This outburst, caused perhaps by heat and enforced idleness, was followed by a debilitating attack of diarrhoea, which hit Pettigrew the next day and persisted until he returned to Woogaroo, where Dr Simpson’s ‘little medicine’ gave him relief.¹⁰⁶

The sixth and final journey, in April-May 1851, took a whole month. Simpson and Pettigrew travelled north up the Brisbane Valley, visiting Fairnie Lawn, Bellevue, Mt Brisbane, Kilcoy, Durundur, Colinton, Cressbrook, Eskdale, Dinamba, Tandary, Taromeo and Wivenhoe. Summer rain had produced good pasture on these runs, but further inland the Cooyer and Djuan Djuan runs were very dry. Pettigrew described the McConnells’ Cressbrook station, where prayers were said every morning and twice on the Sabbath, as the ‘finest, cleanest and neatest head station we have visited’.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, at James Ivory’s Eskdale station, he noted:

This man is a son of Lord Ivory in Edinburgh. He dwells in one of the most miserable houses in the district, not fit for a pigsty where he comes from. The plan is all sorts of levels made by the wear and sweeping out. The stable is 6 or 8 inches above the level of the ground about it. The beds are very hard, only one stretcher – full of fleas. The slabs have not been put together since the day they were first up, consequently they are wide.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ WP Diary, 25 February 1851.

¹⁰⁵ WP Diary, 28 February 1851.

¹⁰⁶ WP Diary, 4 March 1851.

¹⁰⁷ WP Diary, 10 May 1851.

¹⁰⁸ WP Diary, 8 May 1851. Lord Ivory was a Scottish judge.

Returning to Woogaroo, Simpson wrote descriptions of the runs, and Pettigrew drew maps to accompany them. This work was finished in November. Drafts of the descriptions, in Simpson's handwriting, survive in his letterbook; but the copies sent to Sydney, together with Pettigrew's valuable maps, seem to have vanished.¹⁰⁹

During his third year at Woogaroo, Pettigrew carried out any small surveys that came his way, but spent most of the time earning his keep and a reduced wage of £3 per month doing farm work for Simpson. Setting a pattern that was to be repeated many times during his life, he was making his plans and biding his time. Having realised that Moreton Bay was too small to support a private surveyor, he had considered other ways of making a living and concluded that Brisbane needed a sawmill. Only six months after his arrival, he wrote to his mother:

Had I known last year what I know now, I would never have thought of surveying at all, but gone to some sawmill ... and learned to work and manage a circular saw and engine ... and with the money I expended otherwise ... have bought one, and engaged four or six sawyers for two years and given them a passage, and 30 to 50 shillings per week ...¹¹⁰

Three years were to pass before he was able to build a sawmill, but, with characteristic doggedness, he worked towards his goal. The Moreton Bay District had magnificent forests, and his journeys with Simpson had revealed their vast extent. At Woogaroo he worked with timber, and in Brisbane he listened to David McKergow's constant complaints about building with rough, pit-sawn boards.¹¹¹ As immigrants continued to arrive, more and better houses would be needed, and there was also the possibility of exporting sawn timber to Sydney and Melbourne. His only worry was that someone else

¹⁰⁹ In his introduction to the *Simpson Letterbook*, p. iv, Gerry Langevad states that correspondence between Dr Simpson and the Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands prior to 1856 has not been located. Further inquiries at the NSW State Archives have produced nothing.

¹¹⁰ WP to Mother, 7 September 1849; WP Diary, 3 September 1849.

¹¹¹ 'Genealogy', p. 5; WP to John Pettigrew, 14 January 1851.

would start a sawmill first.¹¹²

With David's help, he considered suitable sites, and in July 1850, at a government auction, he bought a block of land on the riverbank in William Street, downstream from the convict-built Commissariat Store.¹¹³ On the high ground fronting William Street, David built a two-storey, timber house, where he lived with Jane and Mary, paying rent to Pettigrew and reserving a room for his use when he visited Brisbane. The top floor of this dwelling, which became the 'Mill House', contained two bedrooms and a sitting room, and gave onto the street through a portico and a short flight of steps. A long staircase at the back led down to the kitchen and a large workshop on the ground floor.¹¹⁴

In order to build a sawmill, Pettigrew was counting on his inheritance, which would come to him on 21 April 1853, when his brother John turned twenty-one. As early as January 1850, he sounded out Adam on the subject of approaching their father's trustees for another loan, but received no encouragement. '[Adam] supposes me a complete blackguard,' he noted in his diary.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, soon after buying the William Street land, he wrote to the trustees through his half-brother Robert, requesting a loan of £700 and enclosing a sketch of the proposed sawmill and estimates of its cost.¹¹⁶

In October 1850, he wrote to his mother asking for a copy of his father's will and an explanation of how the estate was to be divided when the time came:

There is one thing I must now look after, that is, 'Man, mind thyself'. I have been and still am under tutors and curators, but as their time is now drawing near a close, and as I am a long way from them, I must come to some understanding with them, you and my brothers.¹¹⁷

¹¹² WP to Adam Pettigrew, 8 July 1850.

¹¹³ WP Diary, 3 July 1850. No.2 of Section near Queen's Wharf, 1 rood 28½ perches, £51/7/6.

¹¹⁴ See drawing of the 'Mill House', p. 115, and photo, p. 275.

¹¹⁵ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 4 January 1850; WP Diary, 7 July 1850.

¹¹⁶ WP Diary, c. 9 July 1850.

¹¹⁷ WP to Mother, 13 October 1850.

The will was sent from Scotland in a box of clothing ordered by Pettigrew and David, but the ship *Washington*, which was carrying it from Glasgow to Australia, was wrecked near Adelaide in June 1852, and they did not receive the salvaged box until March 1853.¹¹⁸ Carrying out negotiations by mail that took months to travel between Brisbane and Scotland was frustrating, but Pettigrew persisted. His first approach to his father's trustees for a loan to build a sawmill was firmly rejected on the grounds that the colony was not sufficiently advanced and the risk was too great. After gold was discovered at Bathurst and Ballarat in mid-1851, however, he wrote again to Robert, arguing that the situation was now changed:

In California a great deal of money was made by Sawmills at first, and I have no doubt that when the people begin to come in great numbers, which undoubtedly they will do by the time this reaches you, that there will be a great demand for sawn timber.¹¹⁹

The southern goldfields were a constant temptation, and after Bathurst broke out in May 1851, Pettigrew wrote enthusiastically about gold to his brother John.¹²⁰ In June 1852, when one of the *Lima* immigrants, William Broadfoot, left Moggill for the Victorian goldfields, Pettigrew asked him to write about 'the chances of a surveyor doing any good there'.¹²¹ Farming also appealed to him, and he seriously considered taking up land. Years later he wrote, 'Had I not before this time taken action about a sawmill, a very little at this time would have made me a horsey and a cattle man.'¹²²

The argument that gold would bring people and prosperity to the colony eventually won the day with Pettigrew's father's trustees, but organising an advance on his inheritance took nearly a year, and by the time it was finalised, settlement of his father's estate was not far off. Assisted by Robert Little, the Brisbane solicitor whom he had met at

¹¹⁸ WP Diary, 10 November 1852; WP Diary, 1 March 1853.

¹¹⁹ WP to Robert Pettigrew, 23 October 1851.

¹²⁰ WP to John Pettigrew, 4 June 1851.

¹²¹ WP Diary, 23 June 1852.

¹²² 'Genealogy', n.p.; WP Diary, 8 and 28 November 1851.

Woogaroo, Pettigrew arranged a power-of-attorney for his uncle, Robert McWhinnie, who agreed to act on his behalf in matters connected with the estate.¹²³ In August 1852, Pettigrew received word from his half-brother Robert that he could expect to receive £200 to build a shed, and that a set of secondhand sawmill machinery, purchased from McNab's Saw Mill and reconditioned by Taylor Brothers, an engineering firm in Ayr, would be sent by ship to Sydney.¹²⁴ The money arrived on 5 October. Ten days later, when an excited Pettigrew left Woogaroo to begin work on his long-planned Brisbane Saw Mills, Simpson, who had served as a surgeon in the British Army, farewelled him with the gift of a sword.

¹²³ WP Diary, 7 August and 11 November 1852; SC 6/62/58, pp. 221-222, SRO, Edinburgh.

¹²⁴ WP Diary, 9 August 1852.

4. THE MAN O' THE MILL, 1852-1859

On Monday 18 October 1852, William Pettigrew and David McKergow began to clear the overgrown riverbank below the house in William Street. In convict days, the area had been part of the Commandant's gardens, and as they dug out bushes and an old quince tree, they discovered drains and a decaying bridge. Pettigrew pegged out sites for a wharf and a shed, and ordered stones from Petries the stonemasons and pitsawn timber from Albert J. Hockings, a merchant at South Brisbane.

In late October, an epidemic of influenza, which had been carried to Brisbane on the immigrant ship *Rajah-go-paul*,¹ swept through the settlement. David, Jane and William all became ill, but the work continued. Because the southern gold rushes had drained workmen from Brisbane, labour was scarce and expensive, but in November Pettigrew employed *Fortitude* immigrant Edmund Mellor to assist them, and in December he hired a second labourer, Patrick Lyon.

During November, the stone and timber wharf was completed, and the frame of the shed rose on the riverbank. The *Moreton Bay Courier* reported progress approvingly:

Mr William Pettigrew, a Land Surveyor, who arrived here in the ship *Fortitude*, is engaged in constructing a substantial wooden building on the bank of the river at North Brisbane, with the object of establishing a steam sawmill at that spot. The machinery necessary for this purpose has been ordered from a house in Scotland. The engine will be of about twenty horsepower, and is expected soon to arrive. The building is constructed of sound timber, and appears to be very strongly put together. It is eighty feet in length, twenty-five feet wide, and fourteen feet high at the under part of the wall plates. The situation is an excellent one, being close to a natural wharf, which will be found very useful for the receipt and delivery of timber. We are happy to record this spirited attempt to introduce the benefits of a valuable discovery here: and we trust the projector will meet with the success which his enterprise deserves. The demand for timber is likely to increase in this colony and Victoria, and there is every prospect of a profitable issue to this experiment.²

¹ W. Ross Johnston, *Brisbane: The First Thirty Years* (Brisbane: Boolarong, 1988), p. 221.

² MBC, 11 December 1852.

Pine slabs for the shed walls were prepared by sawyers at Pullen Pullen Creek. In late November, Pettigrew hired a boat from Thomas Dowse, who owned a wharf and store in William Street, and sailed up the river to take delivery of the slabs, which were made into rafts and floated downstream on the tides. By travelling with the rafts for the three days it took them to reach Brisbane, he learned first-hand what was involved in conveying timber to his mill from the forests upstream.

In December a carpenter, John Kelly, was employed to shingle the roof of the shed. January 1853 saw Pettigrew and Mellor digging a well near the river to supply water for the boilers. By mid-February, the shed was boarded and floored, David McKergow had hung the doors, and the labourers were excavating sites for the foundations of the boiler. The sawmill machinery was on its way from Liverpool to Sydney on a Dutch ship, the *Anna en Elise*.

Also on the way to Australia (but not, as Pettigrew had hoped, with the machinery) was twenty-year-old John Pettigrew. Freed from family responsibilities by the death of his mother, and encouraged by his brother's letters about the gold discoveries, John took a passage to Melbourne on the steamship *Great Britain*, bringing with him cases of drapery goods. Arriving in Melbourne in November 1852, he sold his goods at a profit, and then spent six months on the Victorian goldfields. He was out of communication for so long that Pettigrew, who had hoped that John might be available to meet the *Anna en Elise*, decided to go to Sydney and take charge of the machinery himself.³

On 23 February 1853, he left Brisbane on the coastal steamer *Eagle*, arriving in Sydney in plenty of time because the *Anna en Elise* was late. The wait was spent shopping, writing letters, inspecting sawmills, attending church, reading at the School of Arts, and

³ WP Diary, 21 February 1852.

visiting the Museum and the Botanical Gardens. Renewing his acquaintance with Lang immigrants who had moved to Sydney, he obtained board and lodging with Henry and Anne Keid from the *Fortitude*; and when his request to cash a cheque for £100 at the Bank of New South Wales met with a frustrating refusal, he borrowed money from Peter Buchanan, a compositor, who, unable to find work in Brisbane, had been employed by the Government Printer in Sydney. A frantic letter written on board the *Eagle* to John's Melbourne address eventually produced a reply enclosing a bill for £50;⁴ and, after delays in the mail service between Sydney and Brisbane caused by bad weather, he finally received a draft from his bank that fixed his stretched finances.

The *Anna en Elise* arrived on 13 March. On board was James Breckenridge, a thirty-four-year-old employee of Taylor Brothers in Ayr, who had been engaged by Robert Pettigrew to install the machinery. Pettigrew assessed Breckenridge as quiet, steady and intelligent, and began to instruct him in colonial ways.⁵ It took a month to unload the bulky machinery, pass it through customs, and transfer it to the hold of the 134-ton brig *Palermo*, whose captain, Henry Wyborn, agreed to transport it to Brisbane and provide passages for Pettigrew and Breckenridge for £50. The week-long trip up the coast was rough, and everyone on board was seasick. When the ship grounded on a sandbank at the mouth of the Brisbane River, Pettigrew, impatient to redesign the placement of the machinery in his shed, asked to be put ashore at Point Uniake, and then set out on a five-hour walk to Brisbane.⁶ Two days later, the *Palermo* arrived at Raff's wharf at Petrie's Bight and unloaded its rusty cargo: a boiler in two pieces, thirty-two pieces and twenty-one boxes of parts, twenty-three cast iron pipes, forty-eight furnace bars, bearers and plates, two fly wheels, an anvil, and a barrel of paint. All the pieces had to be cleaned,

⁴ WP Diary, 25 February and 29 March 1853.

⁵ WP to Robert Pettigrew, 7 June 1853.

⁶ WP Diary, 21 April 1853; WP to Robert Pettigrew, 5 May 1853.

and oiled or painted. Some had been broken, either in transit or when unloading in Sydney, and Pettigrew had bought iron to repair them.

For the next two months, the William Street site was a hive of activity. While David Buntin and his men riveted the boiler, the Petries constructed a tall brick chimney and David McKergow and John Kelly built strong wooden benches for the saws. From the jumble of parts, James Breckenridge assembled a sawmill consisting of a boiler, a twenty horsepower steam engine, a heavy frame saw, and a circular saw. To this basic equipment, Pettigrew added a turning lathe, purchased from Andrew Petrie for £20. The Industrial Revolution had arrived in a community that had previously managed on wind, human and animal power, and there was much interest in what Pettigrew was doing. His diary entries for this period reflect his attention to detail, and his ability to organise and supervise many operations simultaneously. They also show that nothing ever went smoothly.

In April 1853, anticipating the opening of his sawmill, Pettigrew had advertised for men to supply him with timber;⁷ and on 26 May, while he was away at Woogaroo and Ipswich arranging for the delivery of logs, his brother John arrived in Brisbane on the brig *Brothers*.⁸ Having already invested money in the sawmill, John was prepared to act on their earlier understanding and take up William's offer to become a full partner.⁹ Accordingly, on 1 June, the firm, which had been styled 'W. Pettigrew and Brothers', became 'Pettigrew Brothers'. William, who was preoccupied with the problems of getting the sawmill started, found jobs for John to do, but from the beginning it was clear that the two were temperamentally unsuited to work together. William discovered that his spoilt youngest brother had grown into a plump, jovial young man with ideas and ambitions of

⁷ MBC, 30 April 1853.

⁸ WP Diary, 26 May 1853; MBC, 28 May 1853.

⁹ WP to John Pettigrew, 21 July 1852; WP to Robert Pettigrew, 7 June 1853.

his own. John had no intention of submitting himself tamely to William's direction, and from the time of his arrival they argued constantly. In July William wrote to Adam:

John has come up to join me in partnership about a month ago. Time does not seem to have corrected any of his faults but rather added new ones. One of his more prominent ones – especially in a country with wooden houses – is his noise, that is his very loud speaking. His ways and mine do not tally too well so that it is likely one or other of us will soon be home for some more sawing machinery, engines and boilers and perhaps another wife!¹⁰

On 28 June, the Brisbane Saw Mills' boiler was fired, and the saws were set to work. There were problems with the supply of water, and the machinery needed constant adjustment; but, a fortnight after operations began, 412 mechanically sawn boards were delivered to the Petries. Pettigrew's days were crammed with letter-writing, negotiating, receiving logs, delivering sawn timber and repairing equipment – but his biggest problem was coping with John. In December, after John had insisted on making James Breckenridge a third partner in the sawmill, William wrote to Adam:

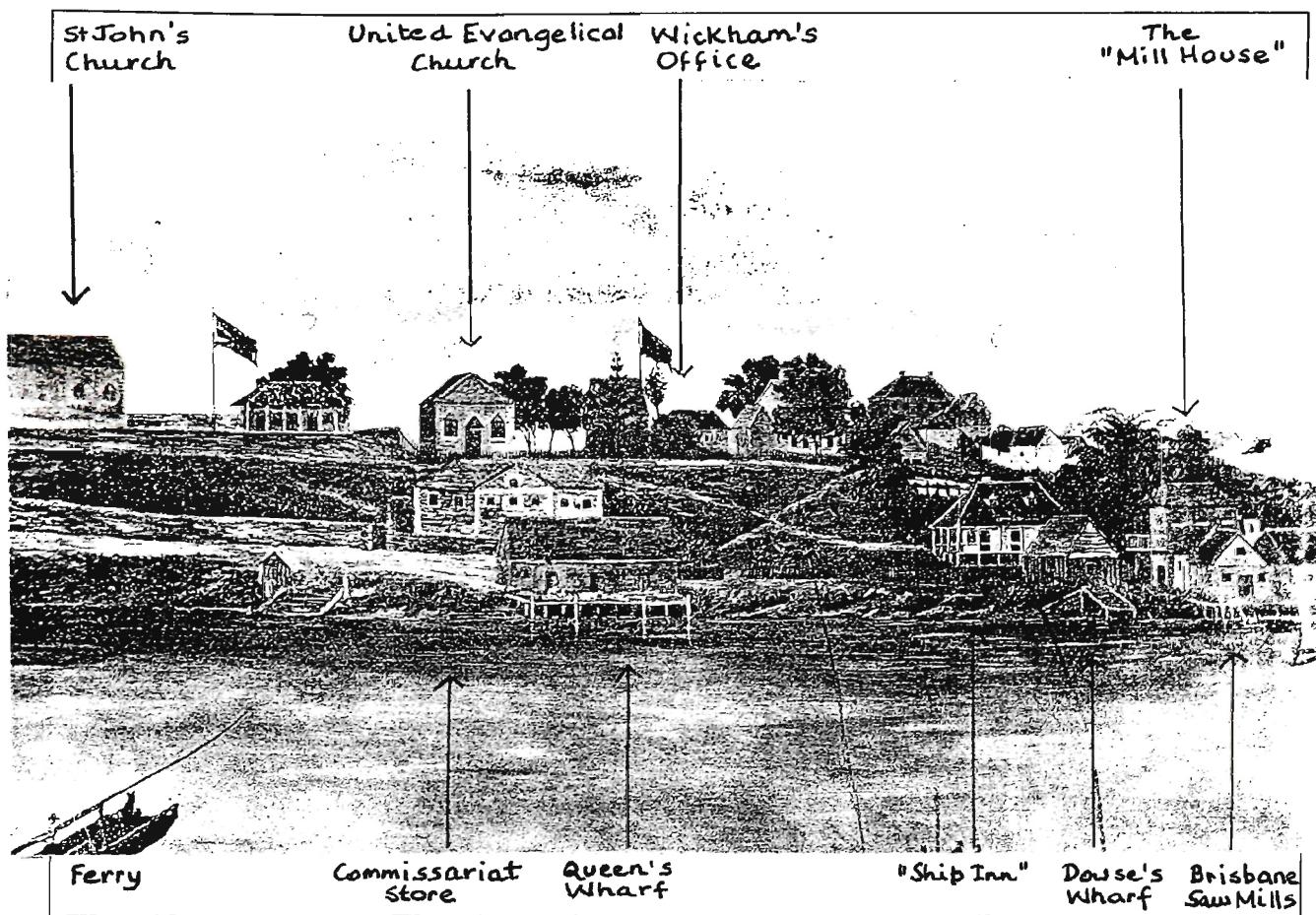
At present [the mill] is paying very well, but ... things go anything but smoothly between us. John has always been too much made of, all the days of his life, and when he comes among his equals who will not pamper him and his popish ideas, he is very indignant. He and I have quarrelled nearly incessantly since ever he came about the place and I earnestly wish I had never seen his face in Moreton Bay.

However as he was here and become a partner he would not sell his share and he would not pay me for mine, and as a proper arrangement was never made between us I could not well sell my share without perhaps his consent. He wished to admit James Breckenridge our engineer as a partner and to this I had no great objection. I lent him the money and gave him that share, so that now John and I have equal shares, & JB $\frac{1}{4}$ share. The partnership continues for 4 years and to be sold then. At that time I hope either to be able to purchase it or come home and have a first rater out. But as the saying is, 'There is many a slip between the cup and the lip.' I may be dead or have my ideas changed or many other things besides, which I cannot at present foresee.¹¹

John found fault with many of William's arrangements. For example, he thought that William was paying David McKergow too much in wages and charging him too little rent for the 'Mill House' in William Street. William agreed to raise the rent, but not to triple it

¹⁰ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 19 July 1853.

¹¹ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 11 December 1853. Breckenridge became a partner on 3 December 1853.



Illus. 12.

The First Brisbane Saw Mills, 1852-1855¹²

This sketch of the riverbank in William Street by an unknown artist may be a composite remembered from the mid-1850s, since it shows both the first Brisbane Saw Mills, which was burnt down in July 1855, and, at the Queen's Wharf, a large shed that was not constructed until late 1856.¹³ The relative spacing of the buildings on the riverbank is also not entirely accurate.

The sketch shows a ferry conveying a horse across the river to a landing near the Commissariat Store. Between the Commissariat Store and the BSM are William Alley's 'Ship Inn', which was destroyed in the 1864 flood,¹⁴ and Thomas Dowse's first wharf and store.¹⁵

High on the bank are St John's Church of England, built in 1854, and the United Evangelical Church, built in 1851. Flagpoles mark the administrative buildings left from convict days, including Captain Wickham's office on the right.

The two-storey 'Mill House' and the sheds, chimney and wharf that make up the BSM accord with Pettigrew's own sketchmap and descriptions.¹⁶

as John suggested. The atmosphere became so unpleasant that William, David and Jane threatened to leave the house, but this does not seem to have happened. Spurred by the conflict between William and John, David bought an allotment in Mary Street and built a

¹² 'View from South Brisbane, 1850s', JOL Neg. No. 1949.

¹³ MBC, 17 January 1857.

¹⁴ BC, 22 March 1864.

¹⁵ Bartley, *Opals and Agates*, p. 98.

¹⁶ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 14 December 1852.

home there for his family.¹⁷ His loyalty to William remained strong, and he continued to work at the sawmill.

Marginalised by William's preoccupation with work, John found his own way around the colony. Hearty, gregarious, and more tolerant than his brother, he had no difficulty making new friends. Within six months of his arrival, he had discovered an opening for a drapery business at Ipswich, and formed an attachment to Elizabeth Twine, the seventeen-year-old daughter of the *Lima* immigrant and Moggill settler, Job Twine. William complained to Adam:

[John] talks of being married to a little girl up the country called 'Twine' or as I once wrote to her father 'Swine', not being at the time very good at distinguishing between Dr Lang's T's and S's. The girl is not so big as Miss Guthrie and takes fits, exterics [sic] and such delicious things. He says he will not be married for six months – but I expect his ideas will be changed – as at best they are very fickle.¹⁸

Matters came to the boil late in January 1854, after which William let off steam in a long letter to Robert Pettigrew. Admitting that 'in all quarrels there are generally two to blame', he said that John would be putting his position separately. Even without knowing John's version of events, it is possible to read between the lines of William's letter and conclude that the conflict between the two brothers was not just the clash of two strong wills, but was based on unresolved issues of decision-making and authority in the business. One of their quarrels, for example, involved the taking of orders for sawn timber. William considered that this was his job, and he resented interference from John:

I put down some orders on a slate and one of the men was going to cut up a piece for these orders, when John came round and told the man to cut it some other way ... I happened to be passing nearly immediately thereafter when this man called my attention to the circumstances ... I told John that if orders are to be taken in they must be executed, and if they are not to be executed they must not be taken in ... The next morning ... John sets to and writes us a thundery letter stating 'he feels bound to cut

¹⁷ Allotment 14, Section 16, Mary Street, Brisbane, purchased 17 February 1854, 36 perches, £57, *New South Wales Government Gazette*, p. 1679.

¹⁸ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 11 December 1853.

the connection' on family grounds and that he will sell his share for £1650. Of course we treated the thing as ridiculous.¹⁹

Another quarrel arose from the outcome of a trip John took to Melbourne to order goods for a drapery business which he wanted to set up in Ipswich. William wrote:

... when John was in Sydney on his way to Melbourne, he wrote us of a vertical saw frame for sale. The concern with a little alteration would have suited us very well. In reply I told him what it would cost in England and what I thought he ought to give for it. Instead of giving something of the latter offer ... he offered them only the former. When he came up it was among my first questions, Have you purchased the frame? No. On ascertaining the reason I certainly had cause to be dissatisfied.²⁰

Before leaving for Melbourne, John had agreed with William and Breckenridge that a second well was needed on the edge of the river to provide a more reliable supply of water for the boiler. The design of this well included a stone wall, which was also to act as the foundation for a wharf. The wall was constructed during John's absence, but not long after his return it collapsed. William offered to pay for the wall, provided the well and the wall were reconstructed, but John 'determined that neither the well would be made nor the wall built'. During the row that followed, Breckenridge threatened to leave 'unless the well was made and the business conducted in a proper manner', and John offered to sell his share for £1500.²¹ Seizing this opportunity, William borrowed the money to pay him out. Their original agreement had not been drawn up legally, but the dissolution of the partnership was put into the hands of a lawyer.

With John's departure in February, the firm became William Pettigrew and Co., but Breckenridge's minority partnership lasted only another three months. Pettigrew was very unsettled. The sawmill was inefficient, the frame saw too heavy for the job, and their

¹⁹ WP to Robert Pettigrew, 23 February 1854.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

inexperienced saw-doctor, James B. Orr, had damaged some of the precious saws.²² He considered selling the mill and starting again with new machinery on two riverside blocks in Stanley Street, South Brisbane, which he purchased early in May.²³ At this point Breckenridge decided to leave, and the partnership was dissolved, by mutual consent, on 19 May 1854.²⁴ Breckenridge joined his brother Robert on the Ballarat goldfields, and later began a career as a sawmiller in New South Wales, establishing mills at Pumpkin Point on the Karuah River near Port Stephens and Wyrallah on the Richmond River downstream from Lismore.²⁵

Once the Pettigrew brothers were not in business together, their relationship improved. The partnership had shown how difficult it was for William to work with anyone who challenged his dominance. In business, he accepted total responsibility and expected total control. In 1897, at the end of his long career, a writer in the *Queenslander* summed up this characteristic with the comment: 'Never liked being bossed; prefers to boss.'²⁶ In David McKergow, Pettigrew had a brother who was prepared to play a subordinate role; but John and William shared their father's energy and drive. William felt aggrieved that, although John had invested money in the sawmill, he was not deeply committed to it. He had not accompanied the machinery to Australia, nor made himself available to meet it in Sydney, nor come straight to Brisbane to assist in building the shed. Instead, after adventuring on the goldfields, he had turned up, unannounced, when the hard work was done and operations were almost ready to begin, expecting to take his place as a partner and have equal authority with his brother.

²² WP to Robert Pettigrew, 8 April 1854.

²³ WP to Robert Pettigrew, 22 April 1854; Allotments 3 and 4, Section 28, South Brisbane, purchased 11 May 1854; MBC, 13 and 19 May 1854.

²⁴ MBC, 20 May 1854.

²⁵ Breckenridge, *Mills, Merchants and Migrants*.

²⁶ *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

John Pettigrew's life in Queensland was to prove that, like William, he was a man of character and ability. In May 1854, with flair and fanfare, he opened his drapery, 'The Gallery of Grandeur', in a former bank building in East Street, Ipswich.²⁷ In June, exactly six months after he had announced his intention of marrying Elizabeth Twine, their wedding took place at her father's home at Moggill with William as a witness. John prospered as a merchant, and in time his business expanded to become a large general store in Brisbane Street, selling drapery goods, footwear, groceries, ironmongery, and wine and spirits. He bought urban land and farm properties, invested in coalmines, sawmills, a sugar plantation and a grazing run, and played a flamboyant role in the early civic affairs of Ipswich. Successful in his own right, John did not bear grudges. He sold William's boards in his Ipswich timber-yard, and consulted him frequently on business, political, and family matters.

At the Brisbane Saw Mills in mid-1854, struggling on his own with large debts and inefficient machinery, Pettigrew next had a stroke of luck. In August, the ship *Genghis Khan* arrived in Brisbane with 474 'extremely well-conducted' immigrants,²⁸ including William Sim, an experienced timber-worker from Nairn, near Inverness in the Scottish Highlands, his wife Ann, and their two young sons. In Sim, who began working as a sawyer at the mill on 24 August 1854, Pettigrew found the 'first rater' he had been looking for. 'Till I got William Sim, nothing worth speaking of was done,' he wrote in 1900. 'Soon after [Sim's] coming, sawing was done in a proper manner so far as the appliances would permit.'²⁹

With Sim in charge, the BSM began to turn out increasing quantities of neatly sawn boards, the use of which, according to the observant Thomas Dowse, greatly improved

²⁷ *MBC*, 13 May 1854.

²⁸ *MBC*, 19 August 1854.

²⁹ 'Genealogy', p. 6.

the appearance of Brisbane's streets.³⁰ The success of the sawmill, however, affected the livelihoods of Brisbane's pit-sawyers, a problem Pettigrew had foreseen as, from his house in William Street, he watched the operations of eight saw-pits on surrounding land and across the river at South Brisbane.³¹ Nevertheless it was a shock when, on the night of 8 July 1855, the sawmill burnt to the ground. Pettigrew, who was sleeping in the roof, managed to throw a small trunk of his belongings to the ground, and then tried to fight the blaze, but was badly burnt on the face, hands and feet. An official inquiry found that the fire was started by 'the ignition of some dry planking by sparks emitted from a pile of burning sawdust',³² but Pettigrew was certain that the pit-sawyers were responsible. In 1900, he named the culprits and described his experience:

So long as the sawing by the mill was harmless, and plenty for the sawyers to do, there was no fault found by [them], but on Sim's management, and over fifty per cent more turned over, then the sawyers indignation got up. On the three allotments adjoining the mill, there were hand sawyers at work, sawing for various parties. There were the two Binsteads, one the father of W. & A. Binstead, and the other W.B. of Coomera. There was also a man named David Fergusson, afterwards residing at Pine River and Samford. He died about June 1897 in Brisbane Hospital. Another one was Tom Taylor. There were others besides these, altogether about 6 or 8 at work. These had meetings at Binsteads house about burning the mill down. They drew lots as to who were to do it and Fergusson and Taylor were the two.

On the Saturday night before it was burned down, I on going to bed ... saw the door of the mill towards the river open. I was rather surprised at this, seeing I had shut it in the evening, and it could not be opened from the outside. I went down to it and noticed some men leave the wharf in a little punt, and go off to a raft moored in the middle of the river. I went after them and asked them in as civil a manner as I could what they were after. The reply was in a very nervous manner – they were fishing. I said something and left them. No doubt but the man who spoke was Fergusson, and that I had disturbed them in their intended incendiarism.

Afterwards – Saturday night – rather Sunday morning I suppose about one or two o'clock, I was awakened by hearing fire burning. I raised the alarm. Had I a bucket with water and a pannikin ... I could have put it out. It burned out. A magesterial [sic]

³⁰ Dowse, 'Recollections 1828-59'.

³¹ WP to Adam Pettigrew, 2 November 1850; WP to Robert Pettigrew, 26 November 1850. The laborious process of sawing logs by hand involved the digging of a rectangular pit, across which a log was placed and then cut with a long saw drawn through it by a man on top (the 'top dog') and a man in the pit below (the 'under dog').

³² *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 10 July 1855 and 7 July 1856.

inquiry was held but nothing came of it. Of late years – within the last five or six years – Fergusson acknowledged burning down the mill and boasted of it.³³

The *Moreton Bay Courier* reported the fire, its consequences, and the establishment of a fund to assist Pettigrew to rebuild:

The fire appears to have broken out in the western end of the building, near to the roof, and was first discovered by Mr Pettigrew, who was sleeping on the premises. This was between three and four o'clock in the morning, and but few persons could be collected at that hour, to offer assistance. None of the police appear to have observed the breaking out of the fire, which had gained considerably on the building before it could be subdued by the limited means at hand. Fortunately there was not much wind at this time, although a strong westerly breeze prevailed immediately before and afterwards. By means of water from the river, conveyed in buckets, the flames were prevented from extending to other buildings and the timber which was lying about in large quantities, but all the efforts that could be used were insufficient to prevent the destruction of the building, which was burnt to the ground. The machinery of the engine necessarily sustained considerable damage, and the saws were warped and twisted by the fire like pieces of horn. The loss to Mr Pettigrew is very severe, and may be estimated at nearly £3000. We are sorry to learn also that Mr Pettigrew sustained considerable injury in endeavouring to arrest the progress of the flames, but it is satisfactory to announce that he is now recovering. The damage to the public will be serious, for the mills were cutting about 7500 feet of timber daily, and the sudden stoppage of this supply, now that so many buildings are being erected, will be a severe check to public enterprise. There seems to be some suspicion that the fire was caused by incendiarism, but there is no proof of this. A subscription has been commenced on behalf of Mr Pettigrew, and a considerable sum is already subscribed, which we trust will facilitate his laudable undertaking of rebuilding the premises.³⁴

Pettigrew's reaction to this disaster earned him an enduring reputation for what Thomas Dowse called 'indomitable pluck':³⁵

I had visits of George Raff for the Union Bank – possibly also with him Mr Turner – and informed them exactly how I stood financially; namely could pay off all the debts that I owed and be left with burned machinery and bare ground. Sir Robert R[amsay] McKenzie was the man to whom I owed most money on mortgage. Told him how it was. He said he would not disturb me but to go on. Go on I did.³⁶

³³ 'Genealogy', pp. 6-7.

³⁴ *MBC*, 15 July 1855.

³⁵ Dowse, 'Recollections 1828-59'.

³⁶ 'Genealogy', p. 7. Pettigrew became a customer of the Union Bank when it opened a branch in Brisbane in 1853 with John Sargent Turner as manager and remained with that bank for the rest of his career. George Raff (1815-1889) Brisbane merchant, sugar planter and politician, was a fellow Scot, friend and business associate of Pettigrew. Sir Robert Ramsay MacKenzie (1811-1873) was a squatter who, after becoming bankrupt in 1844, came to Moreton Bay and prospered. He entered Parliament in 1860 and served as Treasurer, Colonial Secretary and Premier (1867-68), before inheriting his brother's estate and returning to Scotland.

Pettigrew had previously leased the allotment owned by William and Arthur Binstead next to the sawmill. On this land, under a rough cover, he erected a circular saw bench, and on 11 August, a month after the fire, William Sim had the machinery working again. The sawmill, with seven employees, was back in production a week later. The wreckage of the old mill was cleared away, and in its place, in the light of his experience, Pettigrew designed and built a larger and altogether more efficient outfit. In May 1856, he and his friends celebrated the completion of the new, two-storey building with a ‘house-heating party’, and he slept once again in a room at the mill.³⁷

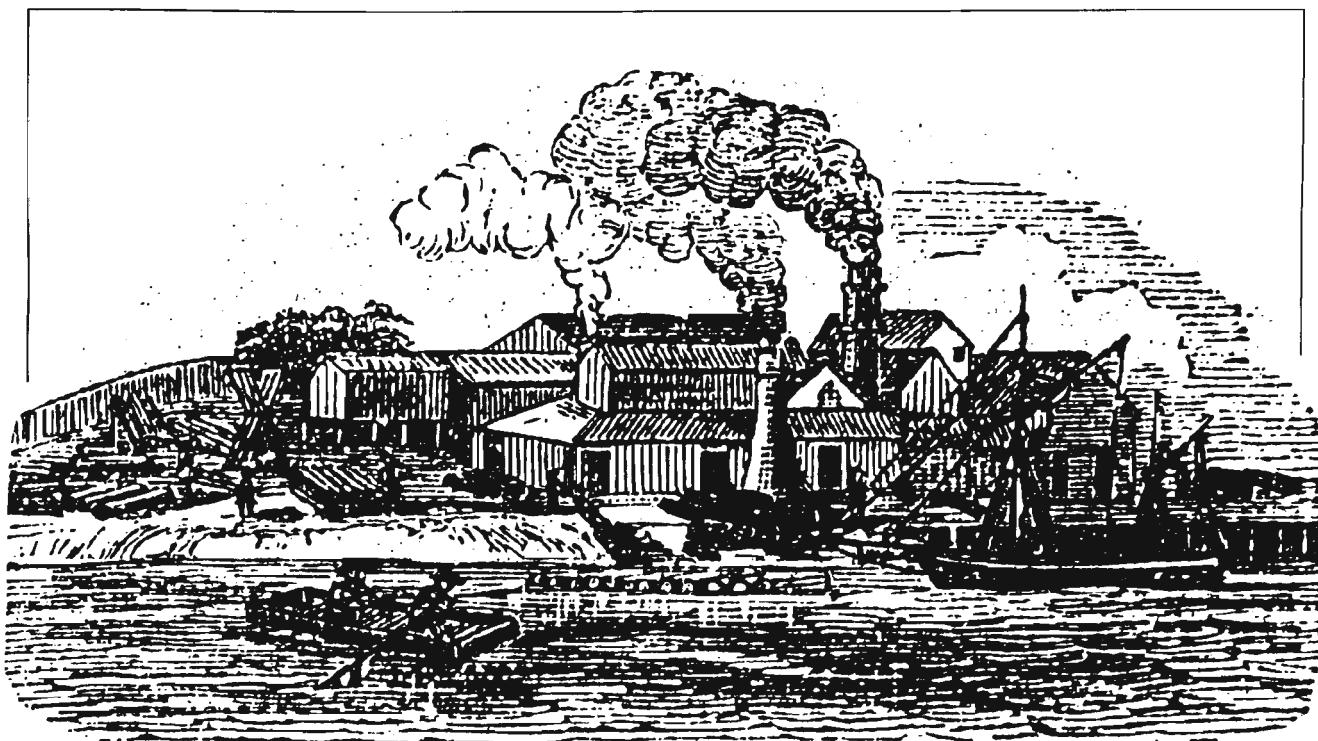
For the next nine years, although there were times when sawmilling slowed because of machinery breakdown or a shortage of logs, Pettigrew found that ‘trade was good and money came freely in’.³⁸ Immigrants continued to arrive, and exports of timber to Sydney and Melbourne increased. Hard work and sound management laid the foundations for thirty-five years of affluence. With the advantage of being first in the field, the BSM dominated the timber trade, and for twenty years its only serious rival in Brisbane was a smaller sawmill at Kangaroo Point, established in 1857 by the brothers Robert and Walter Birley.³⁹

Step by thoughtful step, Pettigrew improved the efficiency and scope of the BSM. He installed a second boiler and engine, a new frame saw, band saws and a planing machine, and designed wharf cranes to swing the logs out of the river, a travelling crane to manoeuvre them within the buildings, and tramways to convey timber around the yards. He extended the sawmill’s range of products, supplying customers with all the timber components needed in building. The new mill included a carpenter’s shop, where tool handles, chair legs, and the naves and spokes for wheels were turned, and doors, windows

³⁷ ‘Genealogy’, Notes on 1856, n.p.

³⁸ ‘Genealogy’, p. 7.

³⁹ BC, 16 October 1869.



B R I S B A N E S A W M I L L S, **WILLIAM-STREET, BRISBANE.**

Illus. 13.

The Second Brisbane Saw Mills, 1855-1874

The second Brisbane Saw Mills was larger and more elaborate than the first. This sketch, probably drawn in 1860, shows the two-storey sawmill and its associated structures as a hive of activity. Chimneys belch smoke. Two men row a punt in the river, and a sailing ship, possibly the *Granite City* before its conversion to a paddle-steamer, is tied up at the wharf. A raft of softwood logs floats in the river and hardwood logs lie on the riverbank. Sawn timber is stacked on Binstead's ground, to the left of the mill.

This sketch illustrated Pettigrew's advertisements in *Pugh's Almanac* from 1861 to 1866.

and other fittings were made. In 1864 he added to the complex a long-planned grainmill, which ground maize and wheat, and made use of surplus power. At first the boilers were fired with waste timber from the mill and coal from the mines at Ipswich, but Pettigrew successfully experimented with burning sawdust, thus reducing the cost of fuel and removing a potential fire danger from the premises. A journalist who visited the mill in 1865 commented on the 'principle of economy' that ran through the establishment.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *Queenslander*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 3 February 1866.

Of necessity, the operations of the BSM spilled out from Pettigrew's original allotment at 2 William Street. He attempted to buy out his neighbours, but Thomas Coutts, who owned allotment 1, and the Binsteads, who owned 3 and 4, steadfastly refused to sell their land, although they agreed to lease it to him. Unwilling to erect permanent structures on leased land, Pettigrew used these allotments to store timber before and after processing. In 1853 he leased from Mrs Dobson, an absentee owner in London, a corner block opposite the sawmill, where he set up a boiler as a water tank, established a garden, and built three cottages to house his workmen. In 1866 he bought land in Short Street, on the opposite side of Margaret Street, and built three more cottages and a large, windowless, brick store, where he could secure supplies and equipment away from the ever-present fire danger at the mill.

By colonial standards, Pettigrew became a large employer of labour, and at times as many as 500 to 600 men – including timber-getters, bullockies, raftsmen and seamen, as well as tradesmen, supervisors, clerks, carriers and sawmill hands – may have depended for at least part of their living on the operations of the BSM.⁴¹ Although timber-getters were independent workers who could sell to any sawmiller, most of them at some time had to deal with Pettigrew, who was known to be willing to advance money to get men started with bullock teams and equipment.⁴² With trust and loyalty, the families of some of his early timber-getters, bullockies and raftsmen supplied him with logs for several generations.

The numbers of labourers at the BSM fluctuated with the demand for timber, but Pettigrew also attracted a core of skilled employees, some of whom served him for twenty years or more. In a number of families, sons and grandsons followed fathers in

⁴¹ 'A Pioneer of Industry', BC, 4 July 1908.

⁴² A. J. Gold, *Samsonvale: A history of the Samsonvale District* (Strathpine: Pine Rivers Shire Council, 1994), p. 34, tells of a loan to Richard Reynolds Winn, one of Pettigrew's long-term timber-getters.

jobs at the BSM and Pettigrew's other sawmills. He expected his men to work as he did – whenever necessary and for long hours – and only his carpenters were ever granted an eight-hour-day.⁴³ But, once employed by Pettigrew, a man could expect 'a billet for life so long as he behaved himself',⁴⁴ and this, together with thoughtful gestures, such as gifts and annual excursions,⁴⁵ towards the families of his employees, gave him an unusually stable workforce in an inherently fluctuating industry. By nineteenth century standards, he was a benevolent employer, and it was said of him that he never presented to his men 'a dual exterior – suave today and severe tomorrow'.⁴⁶ Although not all workers found Pettigrew easy to deal with, and acceptance of his benevolent autocracy was challenged during the 1880s, he was described in 1897 as 'one of the best bosses going'.⁴⁷

With varying degrees of success, Pettigrew sponsored immigrants to the colony, most of whom, like the mill-wright Francis Dunlop, who arrived in 1854, were Scots.⁴⁸ 'At one time,' the *Queenslander* commented in 1897, 'no one except Scotch need apply at Pettigrew's sawmill',⁴⁹ and Scottish names – Archibald, Charles and James Carmichael, Robert Dath, William Ferguson, William Henderson, Andrew Thornton and David Scott – certainly dominate the list of men who, having worked for Pettigrew, later established sawmills in Brisbane and other parts of Queensland. Although Pettigrew had only limited success in attracting members of his own family to join him in Moreton Bay, and quite early reached a point where he declined to recommend emigration to anyone,⁵⁰ a chain of migration can be traced in a number of the families who worked for him. His foreman

⁴³ QPD, Legislative Council, 28 August 1889, p. 148.

⁴⁴ 'A Pioneer of Industry'.

⁴⁵ BC, 30 August 1856.

⁴⁶ 'A Pioneer of Industry'.

⁴⁷ *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

⁴⁸ WP to Robert Pettigrew, 22 March 1854. Francis Dunlop died in 1865. In 1875 his wife and family became pioneers at Bald Knob, north of Brisbane, and supplied the BSM with logs.

⁴⁹ *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

⁵⁰ WP to Hugh Hunter, 22 October 1849.

William Sim, for example, was joined in the colony by two of his brothers and a brother-in-law, together with their wives and children.

For some time after Pettigrew settled in Brisbane, his religious associations remained flexible. He continued to attend services at Stewart's United Evangelical Church, but he once visited the Methodist Chapel, and occasionally he crossed the river to attend McLeod's Free Presbyterian Church at South Brisbane. He and Jane McKergow even attended a service at the Church of England, an experience he found 'unedifying', commenting that 'worship is nearly out of the question to a stranger'.⁵¹

Although laymen could initiate congregations, only paid clergy had the time and energy to develop strong churches. In its early years, perhaps because of its warm climate, Moreton Bay attracted a succession of clergymen who suffered from ill health. In September 1851, Charles Stewart became seriously ill. Dr Lang, learning of this on his December visit to Moreton Bay, took Stewart to Sydney, where he lived with the Lang family for nine months while undergoing medical treatment. He returned to Brisbane in 1852, but, not fully recovered, was unable to arrest the decline which his congregation had suffered.⁵² After his final departure in January 1855, the congregation splintered, and in April 1857, Lang himself purchased the United Evangelical chapel and distributed the proceeds to its three constituent groups.

After Pettigrew returned from his trip to Sydney in April 1853, he crossed the river every Sunday to worship with the South Brisbane Presbyterians. On Sunday 21 August, he noted in his diary that, because of 'divisions' in Stewart's church, most of the United Evangelical congregation were also attending church at South Brisbane. In September, he acted as secretary at a meeting at which the Presbyterians agreed to approach the Rev.

⁵¹ WP Diary, 12 December 1852.

⁵² Parker, '*Strange Bedfellows*', pp. 21-25.

Alexander Waters Sinclair to be their minister, and from then on, in spite of his earlier reservations about the ‘sectarianism’ of the Free Church, he committed himself to its development. Sinclair arrived in Brisbane in February 1854 and set up a properly constituted church government, known as a Session, in which William Pettigrew was elected an elder and also Clerk of the Deacon’s Court, and David McKergow was elected a deacon.⁵³ The congregation purchased land in Ann Street, where a manse was built, and while its North Brisbane members raised money to build a church next door to the manse, Sinclair held services for them in the School of Arts. After making this considerable progress, Sinclair’s health broke down, and he was replaced in mid-1856 by the Rev. Charles Ogg, a man of forceful character, who was to serve the Ann Street congregation until his death in 1895.

At first Ogg met with Pettigrew’s approval, and even when he ‘began quarreling first with one [person], then with another’, and alienated the ailing but respected Rev. Thomas Mowbray by calling him ‘a deposed minister’,⁵⁴ Pettigrew tried to ‘put the best interpretation on his actions’.⁵⁵ By May 1857, however, the Presbyterians had split into two congregations, North and South of the river, and the church’s financial affairs were ‘very much injured’.⁵⁶ While South Brisbane struggled without a minister, the North Brisbane congregation, boosted by £196 raised by Ogg on a ‘missionary tour’ to ‘interior stations and townships’,⁵⁷ went ahead with the construction of the first Ann Street

⁵³ Bardon, *Centenary History*, p. 21. Elders – lay leaders concerned with pastoral care and the conduct of services – were appointed by congregations. Ministers – elders who had been set aside as pastors, teachers and preachers – were called by congregations and installed by presbyteries. Deacons looked after church property and facilities.

⁵⁴ ‘Memorandum re Presbyterian Church Bill’ in WP Papers, RHSQ. Thomas Mowbray (1812-1867) was born in Scotland, graduated from the University of Glasgow, and arrived in Australia in 1843 as a minister of the Church of Scotland. He served at Port Phillip and Sydney before arriving at Moreton Bay with his family in 1847 in search of a warmer climate. Although never strong enough to undertake full time duties, he survived for twenty years, teaching, preaching, baptizing Presbyterian children and holding lay positions in the Church.

⁵⁵ WP to George Raff, 12 November 1860, RHSQ.

⁵⁶ ‘Memorandum re Presbyterian Church Bill’, RHSQ.

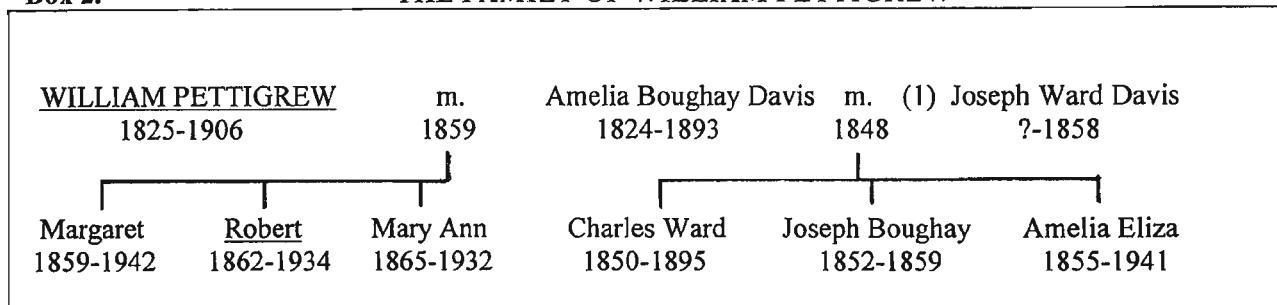
⁵⁷ MBC, 2 March 1859.

Presbyterian Church, which was opened in July 1858. During 1859, however, Pettigrew became suspicious that Ogg was not being honest with his congregation, and in 1860 the simmering tension between them broke out in a bitter and very public quarrel.

On 18 February 1859, Pettigrew's long search for a wife ended with his marriage, at the age of thirty-three, to a thirty-four-year-old widow, Amelia Boughay Davis. Their wedding ceremony at the 'Mill House' was conducted by a newly arrived Congregationalist minister, the Rev. George Wight,⁵⁸ who was to become a close friend and associate. By this marriage Pettigrew acquired responsibility for Amelia's three children and then for three children of his own. As the years passed and he outlived other male relatives, he became the head of a large, extended family, for whose members he was often called upon to accept moral, legal, or financial responsibility.

Box 2.

THE FAMILY OF WILLIAM PETTIGREW



Amelia, the daughter of a London ship's chandler, Philip Boughay, and his wife, Elizabeth Nash, had married Joseph Ward Davis in 1848 and sailed with him on the *Fortitude* to Moreton Bay. Their first son, Charles Ward Davis, born in Brisbane in 1850, was mentally retarded. A second son, Joseph Boughay Davis, was born in 1852, and a daughter, Amelia Eliza, in 1855. When, like other *Fortitude* immigrants, Joseph Ward Davis was unable to acquire land and become a farmer, he obtained work as a clerk. The

⁵⁸ George Wight, from Portobello, Scotland, arrived in Brisbane on 23 May 1858. A founder of the Philosophical Society, he later became editor of the *Queensland Daily Guardian*.

Davis family lived at Spring Hill, and as Dissenters (Congregationalists) attended the United Evangelical Church.

On 2 July 1855, just before Pettigrew's sawmill burnt down, a violent altercation occurred between Joseph Ward Davis and Robert Scott,⁵⁹ as a result of which Davis was arrested and imprisoned. He could not supply the £40 or two sureties of £20 each that were needed for his release, and the magistrate, W. A. Duncan, committed him to spend six months in the Brisbane Gaol. On 13 July, he was examined by Doctors William Hobbs and Kearsey Cannan, who certified that he was 'of unsound mind' and should be sent to Tarban Creek Asylum in Sydney, as he 'would be benefitted by treatment in such Asylum'.⁶⁰ Captain Wickham's letter requesting his removal stated that his family in Brisbane were not in a position to contribute to his support. Davis's case must have been serious, because he was transferred from the Brisbane Gaol to Sydney on 2 August, just one month after his offence, and he was one of the few people to be transferred in these circumstances.⁶¹ Evidently he did not benefit from his treatment at Tarban Creek, and by the time he died at the Lunatic Asylum at Parramatta in April 1858, he had become a nonentity. The officials at Parramatta, who filled in a death certificate stating that he died of 'mania' and 'diarrhoea', appeared to know nothing about his background, birth or parentage, or that he had a wife and three children in Brisbane. His age, they guessed, was thirty. (He was thirty-three.) His occupation was 'lunatic'. Although a non-conformist, he was given a Church of England burial in All Saints Cemetery.

It is not known how Amelia Davis coped during the difficult period between her

⁵⁹ There were at least two men named Robert Scott in Brisbane in 1855. It is unclear which of them was involved in the fight with Joseph Ward Davis.

⁶⁰ Wickham to Col. Sec., 12 July 1855.

⁶¹ Brisbane Gaol, Register of Prisoners Admitted and Discharged, 3 January 1850 to 3 February 1864, 181, QSA; Raymond Evans, Charitable Institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, MA thesis, UQ, 1969, p. 21; re Tarban Creek Asylum, see James Semple Kerr, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Australia's Places of Confinement 1788-1888* (Sydney: S.H. Ervin Gallery, 1988), pp. 35-36 and 101.

husband's removal to Sydney and her marriage to William Pettigrew. No doubt she was assisted by friends among the Lang immigrants and in the church. Pettigrew and Amelia were certainly acquainted by their *Fortitude* connection, but nothing is known about their courtship because Pettigrew's diaries from 1854 to 1861 are missing. After ten distressing years in the colony, Amelia's second marriage was to give her thirty-four years of prosperity and domestic stability, but she also faced more loss and grief.

In September 1859, Amelia gave birth to Pettigrew's first daughter, small, lively Margaret, who was named for the sister whom he had lost after he left Scotland. Only six weeks later, Amelia's seven-year-old son Joseph was accidentally drowned in the river below the sawmill. On the evening of Wednesday 26 October, Joseph and an older boy named Jonas Ward were playing in a timber punt on the river, which they were forbidden to do. William Simpson Sim, the six-year-old son of William Sim, saw them there and threatened to tell Mr Pettigrew, but then went back to his father, who was at work in the mill, and said nothing. While attempting to climb from the punt into a larger one moored next to it, Joseph fell into the water, floated a short distance, then sank. No one was near, and Jonas was unable to help the little boy, so he went home and told his parents what had happened. Joseph's body was not found until Saturday morning, when John Sullivan the ferryman brought it to the mill. During an inquest conducted by Dr Kearsey Cannan that day, the two boys identified the body and told their stories.⁶²

Pettigrew's only son Robert, named according to tradition after his paternal grandfather, was born on 29 March 1862 and grew into a slender, sensitive boy, close to and dependent on his father. Later that year, in order to accommodate his growing family, Pettigrew added a verandah and a two-storey wing to the 'Mill House'. The new wing's plastered, painted rooms and marble fireplaces, and the piano he imported for his wife to

⁶² MBC, 2 November 1859.

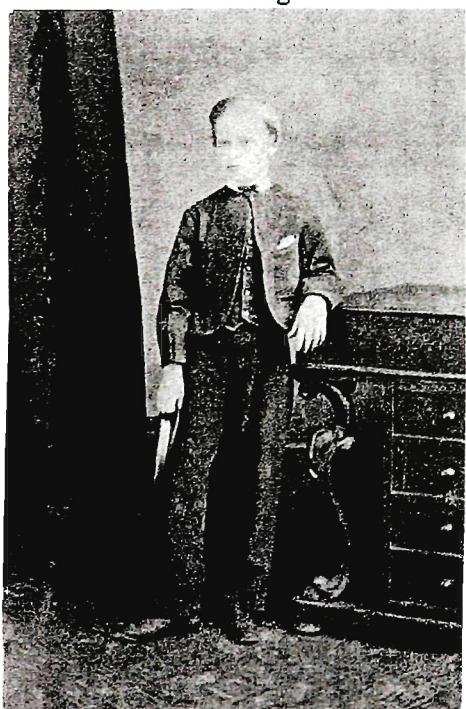
play were signs of his increasing prosperity.⁶³ A second daughter, blonde, blue-eyed Mary Ann, was born on 25 December 1865.



Amelia Pettigrew



Margaret



Robert



Mary Ann

Illus. 14.

The Family of William Pettigrew

⁶³ WP Diary, 5 September to 30 December 1862.

Pettigrew's marriage was a turning point in his life. With a wife to share his thoughts, he no longer confided in his diaries, which became chiefly a record of his appointments and activities. His colonial family was very important to him, and, with memories of his mother's well-ordered household,⁶⁴ he set about creating a pleasant domestic life. Although relationships within the family were conducted with Victorian formality – he always referred to Amelia as 'my wife' or 'Mrs Pettigrew', and his children called him 'Papa' – his actions marked him as an affectionate father and a considerate husband. His diaries show him making a doll for Mary Ann,⁶⁵ attending Robert's ninth birthday party,⁶⁶ worrying about his children's illnesses,⁶⁷ and sending letters and telegrams to his wife when he was away from home.⁶⁸ Amelia's handicapped son Charles was protected within the home, and her daughter Amelia, known as Millie, was brought up as Pettigrew's daughter.

Raising children in colonial Brisbane was not easy, and many died through accidents and illnesses. For the Pettigrews, the shock of Joseph's drowning was followed by anguish when two-year-old Margaret disappeared from the 'Mill House' one cold morning in August 1862. A bellman was employed to spread the news around the town, and later that day she was found, hatless and in her house-clothes, wandering in Fortitude Valley.⁶⁹

More aware than most people of the importance of hygiene and nutrition, Pettigrew created a basis for the general good health which his family enjoyed by constructing underground drains to remove effluent from the 'Mill House' and cultivating gardens to provide fresh fruit and vegetables for the family table. 'In my opinion,' he told an audience in 1861, 'nothing contributes so much to the beauty of a place as well as the

⁶⁴ WP to Hugh Hunter, 18 July 1852.

⁶⁵ WP Diary, 23 December 1869.

⁶⁶ WP Diary, 29 March 1871.

⁶⁷ WP Diary, 8 November 1863; 4 July 1875.

⁶⁸ WP Diary 1865, 1867; 21 July 1873; 1 December 1875; 31 March 1876.

⁶⁹ *Courier*, 5 August 1862.

happiness of a people, as nice gardens ...'⁷⁰ Although doctors were sometimes called in to treat sick members of the family, a surviving box of homeopathic remedies and lists in his diaries of the drugs needed to replenish its tiny jars,⁷¹ show that he continued to value the principles and practices of minimum medical intervention recommended by Dr Simpson.

After his marriage, Pettigrew rarely made diary entries on a Sunday. His grand-daughter, Margaret Eckhoff, recalled the strictness of his Sabbatarianism with the comment, 'He had a buggy and a pair of horses but would not use them on a Sunday to drive his family to Church. They had to walk.'⁷² The custom of keeping Sunday for complete rest no doubt helped him to cope with the demands of six week days of long hours and constant activity, but this and other rigid principles placed limitations on his family, and he was inclined to keep his private life as separate as possible from his public life. Although Amelia and the children lived in the grounds of the sawmill and observed the day to day running of the business, they were not greatly involved in the social diversions that Pettigrew's civic duties came to impose on him. They lived within a close, affectionate circle of relatives and friends, with whom they attended church, exchanged visits, shared holidays, and celebrated weddings and anniversaries.

The Pettigrew children grew up surrounded by cousins. Their McKergow cousins – Mary, John and Jane – lived in Mary Street, not far from the sawmill. David McKergow, never as robust as William, had suffered a number of accidents and illnesses after arriving in Brisbane. In November 1858 he became seriously ill, wasted away, and died of 'atrophy' on 19 January 1859 at the age of thirty-eight. Two weeks later, his wife Jane gave birth to a second son, whom she named David. With Pettigrew's help, Jane supported and educated her young family by turning her home into a boarding house.

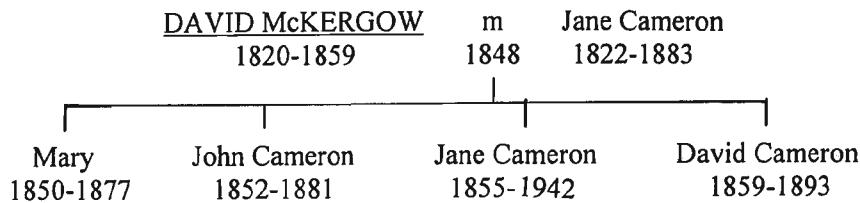
⁷⁰ MBC, 2 February 1861.

⁷¹ WP Diary, August 1895. This box is in the possession of Allan Pettigrew.

⁷² Eckhoff, 'The Late Hon. William Pettigrew'.

Box 3.

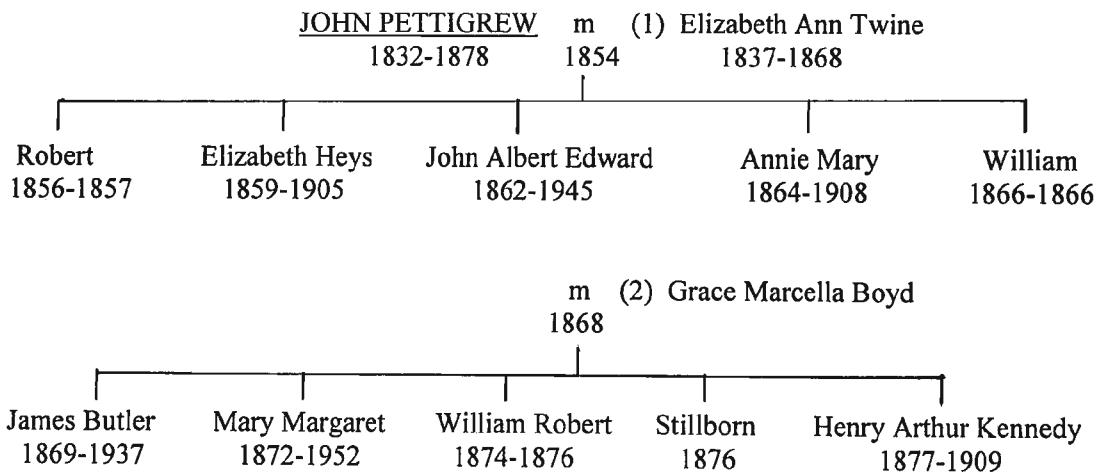
THE FAMILY OF DAVID McKERGOW



In Ipswich there were six Pettigrew cousins. John Pettigrew's marriage to Elizabeth Twine produced three surviving children, Elizabeth Heys, John Albert Edward and Annie Mary, before their mother died in 1868 at the age of thirty-one. Six months later, John married Grace Marcella Boyd, who also produced three surviving children, James Butler, Mary Margaret and Henry Arthur Kennedy. After John's premature death in 1878, William was to bear the same long-term responsibility for these children as, a generation earlier, the trustees of his father's estate had borne for him and his sister and brothers.

Box 4.

THE FAMILY OF JOHN PETTIGREW



Unlike many Scots who made good in the colonies, Pettigrew never returned to visit his relatives in Ayrshire. He considered going home after first arriving in the colony, and again after the mill burnt down in 1855, but decided against it. In the end, there was no one left to go home to. The death of his sister Margaret Hight in 1848 had been followed



Illus. 15.

John Pettigrew's First Family

Clockwise: Elizabeth, John and Lizzie; Lizzie; Annie; J. A. E. (Bertie)



Illus. 16.

John Pettigrew's Second Family

Clockwise: Grace; James Butler; H. A. K. (Harry); Margaret (Maggie)

some months later by the death of her young daughter Mary Joan, and Adam Pettigrew died in Ireland in 1865, leaving a widow but no children. As a result of these three deaths, William inherited part of Margaret's and Adam's shares of their father's estate.⁷³ News of 'deaths, births, insanity, matrimony and improvements'⁷⁴ among other members of the McWhinnie and Pettigrew families reached him from time to time by mail, but in 1900 he wrote, 'With the exception of my half brother Robert I never had any thing to do with any relations after coming to this country except in one or two small affairs.'⁷⁵ These 'affairs' included the emigration of some McWhinnie relatives and a brief correspondence with the sons of his half-brother James – John and Robert Pettigrew Wilson – who handled Robert Pettigrew's estate after his death in 1877. Pettigrew's relationship with the Pettigrew Wilsons, however, appears to have been neither close nor cordial.⁷⁶

From his vantage point on the riverbank in William Street, Pettigrew became as familiar with the punts, sailing boats and steamers on the Brisbane River as he had been with the vessels on the River Ayr during his boyhood and youth. Watching the ships of the Australian Steam Navigation Company, as they arrived and departed from their wharf at South Brisbane, stimulated his interest in designing ships for increased speed, capacity and efficiency.⁷⁷ After several years of observing the lively regattas which local committees arranged on occasions such as the Foundation Day of New South Wales (26 January) and Queen Victoria's Birthday (24 May), he designed his own racing boat, naming it *Meeanchin*, an Aboriginal word for the bend in the river on which North

⁷³ Sasines, Ayr: 3076, 28 June 1854; 3102 and 3103, 7 July 1854; 1591 and 1592, 11 June 1866 and 3776, 10 April 1868, SRO, Edinburgh.

⁷⁴ WP Diary, 31 October 1849.

⁷⁵ 'Genealogy', p. 3.

⁷⁶ J. Pettigrew Wilson to WP, 14 November 1877; R. Pettigrew Wilson to WP, 1 July 1879 and 13 March 1884. John Pettigrew Wilson, a 'prize-taker' at the Ayr Academy, became a lawyer. Robert was a cotton-broker in Manchester.

⁷⁷ WP Diary, 1861-62, 'History of an Idea – The proper lines for vessels', n.p.

Brisbane stood. Carpenters John Kelly and Robert Towell built the *Meeanchin* in January 1856, just in time for the Foundation Day Regatta. Thirty feet long, four feet wide, straight-sided and blunt-ended, the boat was politely described in the *Moreton Bay Courier* as having a ‘rather novel’ appearance.⁷⁸ Crews of enthusiastic but unpractised BSM employees rowed her in regattas in 1856, 1857 and 1859 with a singular lack of success.⁷⁹ Pettigrew candidly acknowledged her deficiencies, and continued to study theories of ship design while planning her successor, *Meeanchin II*.

For Pettigrew the regattas, with their half-day holidays, reflected a frivolous aspect of community life of which he did not entirely approve, and he might not have become involved in them but for his interest in ship design. He did not attend or approve of other popular frivolities, such as horse-racing or theatrical performances; but in matters he considered important, he contributed generously to community affairs, and his name and donations appeared frequently in published subscription lists for worthy causes.⁸⁰

Brisbane society in the 1850s was deeply divided by class, wealth and self-interest. When the Lang immigrants arrived in the colony, many of its inhabitants were degraded ex-convicts or illiterate labourers, and the wealthy, rural-based squatters, who could press their interests in Sydney, exercised power out of all proportion to their numbers. ‘Money is the god of the people here,’ Pettigrew noted in a letter to his friend Jeannie Hunter:

The ‘old hands’, labourers etc try to get as high wages as possible in order to have the more to drink. The squatters and shopkeepers that are in a manner their dependents try to reduce wages as low as possible in order to make money either to go home or to make a flourish at Sydney ... Few people that have capital have made up their minds to remain here ... Of course among such a people little is done for the good of society. They do not care a button for a society among whom they do not intend to spend their lives and raise their families. They look on society as so many animals made to carry out their plans; not as men made in the image of God and who have souls to be saved

⁷⁸ MBC, 2 February 1856.

⁷⁹ MBC, 2 February 1856; MBC, 27 January 1857; MBC, 29 January 1859.

⁸⁰ MBC, 9 May 1857; 27 December 1858; Courier, 30 October 1861; 2 January and 17 July 1862; BC, 15 October 1864; 28 January 1865.

or lost. In fact a person having in view any other thing than the making of money is laughed at and will not be believed.⁸¹

Lang's people, who expected to remain in the colony, swelled Brisbane's tiny middle class of merchants and government officials, and voluntarily set about improving Brisbane's facilities. One of Pettigrew's first acts after settling in Brisbane was to ask the *Fortitude* immigrant Williamson Munro Smith to nominate him as a member of the North Brisbane School of Arts.⁸² This institution, founded in September 1849 with support from Lang immigrants such as John Langridge, who was its first Secretary, had quickly provided the community with a building in Creek Street containing a library, and reading and lecture rooms. In January 1850, during one of his short stays in Brisbane, Pettigrew attended a three-hour lecture by the *Fortitude* immigrant Peter Buchanan, who traced the power of music from antiquity and illustrated his points by singing national airs.⁸³ At the School of Arts, Pettigrew read his fill of books and newspapers, and for many years he served on its fractious committee.⁸⁴

Between 1850 and the end of 1855, thousands of free settlers arrived at Moreton Bay on twenty-three government-sponsored immigrant ships, and although there was also an exodus to the southern goldfields, the population of the colony more than doubled. Brisbane's population, 4,393 at the 1856 census, had more than quadrupled since Pettigrew's arrival in 1849. Many of the newcomers were able to construct 'comfortable cottages' by borrowing from the terminating Building Societies that were established after 1854 by some of Lang's immigrants, especially the *Fortitude*'s Robert Cribb, who often took the chairman's role. As a timber merchant and builder, it was in Pettigrew's

⁸¹ WP to Jeannie Hunter, 23 May 1851.

⁸² WP Diary, 2 November 1852.

⁸³ WP Diary, 24 January 1850; MBC, 20 January 1850. Buchanan's English, Irish and Scottish songs, including 'Annie Laurie' and 'The Flowers of the Forest', appealed to his nostalgic audience so much that he gave a second lecture on 4 May 1850.

⁸⁴ MBC, 14 January 1854, 13 January 1855, 12 January 1856; See James T. Cleary, The North Brisbane School of Arts 1849-1899, BA hons thesis, UQ, 1967.

interest to became involved in this movement, and in January 1856, he became a director of the Moreton Bay Benefit Investment and Building Society No. 2.⁸⁵ After five years of lending money to its 119 members, this Society was successfully terminated, paying a dividend to its shareholders.⁸⁶ He then became a director of Building Society No. 4, and remained active in the movement for many years.⁸⁷

Pettigrew's involvement in local politics began early, with his support for the anti-transportation, free immigration and pro-separation causes promoted by Dr Lang. Following Lang's lead, some of his immigrants vociferously opposed the views of those influential squatters who, desperate for labour, were advocating the resumption of the transportation of convicts and the introduction of Chinese or Indian labourers.⁸⁸ On 13 November 1849, a 'great Anti-Transportation Meeting' was held in Brisbane to deplore the arrival of 225 convict 'exiles', who, having been released from confinement on the ship *Mt Stuart Elphinstone*, were filling the streets with disorder and the magistrates' courts with cases of drunkenness and theft.⁸⁹ On this occasion, the people of Moreton Bay expressed their opposition to transportation in a petition to Earl Grey, and in April 1850 they were informed that the *Bangalore*, which brought 368 convicts to Brisbane a few weeks later, would be the last ship of exiles to be sent to the colony.⁹⁰ Pettigrew did not attend this meeting because he was working at Ipswich at the time, but his brief comments on the convicts, 'a fine lot of rascals',⁹¹ on the thirty Irish orphan girls who had

⁸⁵ MBC, 26 January 1856; MBC, 5 January 1860.

⁸⁶ Courier, 4 October 1860.

⁸⁷ WP Diary, 6 and 9 October 1862; QPD, 3 November 1886, p. 245.

⁸⁸ In various forms, the issues of indentured vs free labour and European vs non-European immigration divided opinion in the colony for the rest of the century. Dr Lang's immigrants and their friends and descendants continued to argue the pro-free labour and anti-coloured immigration cases throughout the colonial period, helping to set the scene for the triumph of the White Australia policy at Federation in 1901.

⁸⁹ MBC, 10 and 17 December 1849; Johnston, *Brisbane: The First Thirty Years*, pp. 165-167.

⁹⁰ Knight, *In the Early Days*, p. 286.

⁹¹ WP, fragment of letter, n.d.

arrived in August 1849, ‘picked off the streets of Dublin’,⁹² and on the Chinese shepherds who arrived on the *Favourite* in 1850, ‘a lot of Chinese blackguards’,⁹³ leave no doubt about the nature and strength of his opinions.

Discontent with the Sydney government’s apparent lack of interest in the northern settlement led to calls for separation as early as January 1851, when Pettigrew attended an anti-transportation meeting which also addressed the ‘separation of this part of the territory from the Sydney district’.⁹⁴ Dr Lang’s pro-separation meetings in Brisbane and Ipswich in December 1851, the petition he took to London in 1852, and his efforts as the elected representative of the Moreton Bay District in the New South Wales Legislative Council after 1854 eventually bore fruit, and in November 1856 news reached Brisbane that separation would be granted.⁹⁵ Disagreements about boundaries and other matters, however, held up the final division of territory for another two-and-a-half years.

In 1909, the journalist William Clark,⁹⁶ who had arrived as a boy on the *Chaseley*, praised Pettigrew as one of Lang’s immigrants who ‘took an active part in keeping the Separation movement alive’, and named him, along with eight other men, as a ‘Fighter of the Fifties’.⁹⁷ Pettigrew was certainly in favour of separation, which he saw as essential for the colony’s progress; but although he attended meetings, sometimes spoke, and in 1856 became a member of the Separation Committee,⁹⁸ his public role was low-key, and he was usually content to let others take the lead. Only once, on the issue of local

⁹² WP to Robert McWhinnie, 27 September 1849.

⁹³ WP Diary, 9 May 1850.

⁹⁴ WP Diary, 8 January 1851; MBC, 4 and 11 January 1851. This meeting was held in opposition to a closed meeting of squatters, who also favoured separation, but with the reintroduction of convicts. The influx of free immigrants that followed the gold discoveries later that year made the squatters’ aspirations untenable.

⁹⁵ WP Notes, 3 November 1856.

⁹⁶ The writings of William Clark, whose pseudonym was ‘Nut Quad’, were usually favourable to Pettigrew.

⁹⁷ ‘Fighters of the Fifties’, *Queenslander*, 7 August 1909, pp. 18-19. The others named were Robert Cribb, Dr William Hobbs, W. Munro Smith, Thomas Dowse, James Swan, A. J. Hockings, William Brookes and Theophilus Pugh.

⁹⁸ MBC, 26 January 1856.

government for Brisbane (a matter distinct from separation), did he openly intervene in a political process that was under way.

In December 1858, after the New South Wales Legislative Council had passed a Municipality Act, the citizens of Brisbane held a meeting and petitioned for incorporation.⁹⁹ At this meeting, the vocal Langite Robert Cribb argued that it would be better to wait until after separation so that local councils could be formed under the legislation of the new colony. He lost the vote, but then proceeded to take up a counter-petition, opposing the granting of municipality to Brisbane at that time.¹⁰⁰ Incensed at Cribb's action, the movers of the first petition, including Pettigrew, immediately held another meeting and organised a third petition, in which they claimed that Cribb's petition was that of a 'private individual ... without support of a public meeting', and that many of its signatures were 'spurious, having been obtained under unfair circumstances by false representations as to the prayer of the petition ... some having been even appended without knowledge or consent of the parties'.¹⁰¹ The editor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, although in favour of the original petition, was unimpressed by the good-humoured rowdiness of this meeting, and wrote that Cribb was 'a Jack-of-all-Trades, who fights till he dies, and is, with all his failures, as brave a cock as ever crowed'. He added, however:

We beg most distinctly to state we are not Mr Cribb's organ – nor are we Mr Pettigrew's. We know how these two specimens of humanity war with each other, even to feeling a desire sometimes no doubt to punch each other's head.¹⁰²

The three petitions of 1859 provide snapshots of Brisbane's male population just before separation. The first contains the names of 181 Brisbane 'householders', the second 243,

⁹⁹ MBC, 15 December 1858; NSWGG, No.10, 20 January 1859, pp. 132-135.

¹⁰⁰ NSWGG, No.68, 16 April 1859, pp. 857-859. Robert Cribb (1805-1893), a London baker, arrived in Brisbane with his family on the *Fortitude* in 1849. An alderman from 1859 to 1861, he was also the Member for Moreton in the NSW Legislative Council in 1859 and a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly from 1860 to 1868.

¹⁰¹ NSWGG, No. 94, 25 May 1859, pp. 1149-1152.

¹⁰² MBC, 13 April 1859.

and the third 420, reflecting the intense talk and persuasion that surrounded the granting of municipal government. Analysis of the names reveals that the first and third petitions were supported by many of Brisbane's most influential men, and that Cribb's support was drawn chiefly from Lang immigrants and some North Brisbane businessmen. A few of those who signed the first petition then defected to Cribb and continued to agree with him; but some, who had signed Cribb's petition, were then persuaded to sign the third. A few signed all three, indicating that the claims of 'false representation', or the use of names without consent when Cribb's petition was collected may have had some validity. Pettigrew and workers at his sawmill are represented early on the first and third lists.

Pettigrew's relationship with Robert Cribb remained prickly. In 1902 he revealed his attitudes to Cribb, who had arrived on the *Fortitude*, and Cribb's brother Benjamin, who had followed on the *Chaseley*:

Mr Robert Cribb in Brisbane and Benjamin Cribb in Ipswich put themselves forward as leaders. Benjamin Cribb ... started a store there ... organised election matters there, and got returned to Parliament nearly all he wished for as long as he lived. Robert Cribb tried to do the same in Brisbane, but was only partly successful. At the first election in Brisbane in 1851, Robert took a prominent part in it and he was told he came from London in a flour sack – he was then a baker. It was true that he was a stowaway. There was a bailiff watching for him till the pilot left the vessel. R.C. kept himself very quiet on board the ship. Such seemed against his nature so that on his arrival, he must become a great man. Many like myself agreed with him in many things, but had no faith in him.¹⁰³

Opposing the popular Cribb cost Pettigrew some support. When the first election for the Brisbane Municipal Council was held in October 1859, both were among the thirty-seven candidates who stood for the nine positions as aldermen. Cribb was elected; Pettigrew polled tenth.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ 'Moral Force', 1902, ms, Mitchell Library, Sydney, MSA 1390.

¹⁰⁴ MBC, 15 October 1859. Those elected were John Petrie, builder; Patrick Mayne, butcher; Thomas B. Stephens, newspaper proprietor; Joshua Jeays, builder; Albert John Hockings, merchant; George Edmondstone, merchant; Robert Cribb, baker; George Warren, schoolmaster; William Samuel Sutton, publican.

Queen Victoria signed her colony of Queensland into being on 6 June 1859, and, on a very hot Saturday the following December, Pettigrew, along with thousands of his fellow colonists, witnessed the arrival of the first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen.¹⁰⁵ Two days later, at a pavilion in the Botanic Gardens, Bowen responded to addresses of welcome from a number of groups, including the 'Working Men of Brisbane', who arrived in a long procession, carrying banners and accompanied by a band. Among them were at least a dozen employees of the BSM, one of whom, John Murray, read their address to the Governor.¹⁰⁶

A week later, Pettigrew was among a hundred prominent citizens – public officials, graziers, doctors, surveyors, bankers, merchants and ministers of religion – who attended Governor Bowen's first levee.¹⁰⁷ John Pettigrew, who had campaigned to have Ipswich declared a municipality¹⁰⁸ and had been elected to serve on its first Council,¹⁰⁹ attended the Governor's levee at Ipswich the next day.¹¹⁰ As two of the successful Scots in the colony, the Pettigrew brothers were probably the kind of men whom Bowen (a Scot himself) had in mind when, in February 1860, he wrote his incisive, often-quoted summation of his new capital:

In a population of 7,000 we have fourteen churches, thirteen public houses, twelve policemen. The leading inhabitants are a hard-headed set of English and Scotch merchants and mechanics; very orderly, industrious, and prosperous; proud of the mother country; [and] loyal to the person of the Queen ...¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ MBC, 15 December 1859.

¹⁰⁶ MBC, 22 December 1859. The BSM men included William, James and Alexander Sim, Robert Towell, Andrew Orr, John Paterson, Robert Black, John Kennedy, John Murray, Francis Dunlop, George Smith, Robert Scott and William Fraser.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ NSWGG, Second Supplement, 17 November 1859, No.232, p. 2511. John Pettigrew's name headed the list of ninety-one petitioners.

¹⁰⁹ George Harrison, ed., *Jubilee History of Ipswich* (Brisbane: H.J. Diddams & Co., 1910), p. 16.

¹¹⁰ MBC, 24 December 1859.

¹¹¹ Bowen to Sir E. B. Lytton, 6 March 1860, quoted in *Our First Half-Century*, p. 6; Bowen to Newcastle, 6 February 1860, GOV/22 QSA, quoted in Mackenzie-Smith, *Moreton Bay Scots*, p. 229; also in Bernays, *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years*, p. 6.

5. UPS & DOWNS, 1860–1867

Pettigrew shared the mood of optimism that prevailed in Queensland for a few years after Separation. With government encouragement for immigration, the colony's population doubled from 30,000 in 1861 to more than 60,000 in 1864.¹ Timber from the BSM went into the construction of public buildings,² and private building flourished. At times, because of defective machinery and problems with the supply of logs, he struggled to keep up with the demand for his products. Between 1862 and 1866, with the aim of expanding his operations and locating new sources of timber, he explored the coastal rivers to the north of Moreton Bay and acquired land there. With the further aim of securing outlets in the small settlements that were developing along the coast, he built a second sawmill on the Mary River, opened timber-yards in the northern ports, and established a transport network to support his new activities. In 1862 he made his first purchase of land outside Brisbane – 88 acres on the South Pine River, where timber had been cut since convict days, and settlers, including his friend Tom Petrie, were taking up land for farming and grazing.³ (See map p. 217.)

By understanding the legislation enacted by the Queensland Parliament, Pettigrew was able to make astute business decisions; and, as numerous letters in government files attest, he developed the habit of writing to ministers to clarify issues or advocate changes that he thought were necessary. Like his brother John, he was a supporter of the Glasgow-born, Ipswich solicitor and 'liberal' politician, Arthur Macalister, who was an efficient

¹ 'Return Showing the Population by Electorates in 1861 and 1864', loose newspaper clipping in WP's 1864 Diary. Pettigrew was an avid collector of statistics.

² Petrie Terrace Gaol 1859-60, Government House 1860, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum and Town Hall 1864, Parliament House 1865. Re: Parliament House, see BSM Balance Book 1866-1870, pp. 19, 21, 55 and 58.

³ Portion 3, Parish of Warner, 88 acres, purchased 28 April 1862 for £88. Tom Petrie took up Murrumba in 1860. See Dimity Dornan and Denis Cryle, *The Petrie Family: Building Colonial Brisbane* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1992), pp. 98-101. In his diary Pettigrew recorded purchasing land for Petrie on 14 July 1862.

Secretary for Lands and Public Works from 1862 to 1866, and later served three times as premier.⁴

Pettigrew's expansion began with his investigation of the coast to the north of Bribie Island, where long stretches of white sandy beach were intersected by the mouths of the three small rivers that became known as the Mooloolah, the Maroochy and the Noosa. At the time of Separation, little was known about their swampy plains, scrub-filled gullies, forested ridges and strangely shaped mountains – but it was known that they contained timber. Between 1838 and 1841, during the convict period, Andrew Petrie and his son John had made several journeys through the country north of Moreton Bay, reaching a stream that Petrie named the 'Marootchy Doro or Black Swan River'.⁵ In its catchment grew pine trees called *bonyi bonyi*, whose large cones of edible nuts provided the Aborigines with food for annual feasts, and because of Petrie's expressed concern to maintain this resource for the Aborigines, Governor Gipps had prohibited settlement or timber-cutting in the undefined 'bunya country' north of Brisbane in 1842.⁶

This ban did not prevent squatters from investigating the area. In 1843 Tom and David Archer pushed to the coast from Durundur, their station in the upper Brisbane Valley, to examine Petrie's River. Floundering through swamps, they eventually came to the banks of a river where the country consisted of 'poor, sandy, densely timbered ridges and boggy, melancholy flats' and was 'too poor to feed a bandicoot' – a description which suggests that they reached the Mooloolah River rather than the Maroochy.⁷ During the 1850s, Daniel and Zachariah Skyring took up grazing leases which included the north branch of the Maroochy, but, up to the time of Separation, the authorities consistently

⁴ Paul Wilson, 'Arthur Macalister: "Slippery Mac"', in Murphy, *The Premiers of Queensland*, pp. 45-70.

⁵ Dorman and Cryle, *The Petrie Family*, pp. 39-51.

⁶ NSWGG, 19 April 1842, p. 587.

⁷ T. Archer, *Recollections of a Rambling Life* (Brisbane: Boolarong, 1988), pp. 57-59.

rejected applications for leases in the area between the Maroochy and the Mooloolah Rivers, and from the coast west to the Blackall Ranges.⁸

During 1860, the Queensland Parliament passed four *Land Acts*, which superceded New South Wales legislation and extinguished Governor Gipps's ban. When the *Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act* came into force in September, cattlemen and timber-getters were ready to move into the Maroochy-Mooloolah area.⁹ John Westaway acquired a lease of the eastern section, known as Moolooloo Plains, and soon afterwards Edmund Lander leased land further west, which he called Mooloolah Back Plains.¹⁰

The first timber-getter on the Maroochy River was an ex-convict named Richard (Dick) Jones. After the closure of the penal settlement, Jones had married another ex-convict, Jane McCarthy, and the couple had remained at Moreton Bay.¹¹ In the mid-1850s Jones was cutting timber at Moggill,¹² and Pettigrew recorded receiving his cedar logs from the Caboolture River in 1859 and Deception Bay in 1860.¹³ In 1861, claiming that he had accompanied Andrew Petrie on one of his expeditions to the 'Mooroocochie' River, Jones persuaded the Brisbane merchant Richard Symes Warry to send him and his mates to inspect the river for timber. On his return, he reported a completely landlocked inlet, three fathoms deep, four miles wide and two-and-a-half miles long, with sixteen feet of water at the entrance at high tide and nine feet at low water. The shore, he said, was fringed with valuable timber down to the water's edge; and, although he met 'a concourse of more than a thousand blacks', he knew how to handle them and they were not hostile.¹⁴

⁸ Heap, 'In the Wake of the Raftsmen', Part 1, pp. 6-8.

⁹ *The Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act, The Occupied Lands Leasing Act, The Tenders for Crown Lands Act, and the Crown Lands Alienation Act*, all of 1860. Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 308.

¹⁰ Heap, 'In the Wake of the Raftsmen', Part 1, pp. 8-11.

¹¹ Richard Jones and Jane McCarthy (or McCartney) were married in Brisbane on 13 June 1842.

¹² Sarah Oswin, 'Settlement at the First Pocket', *Gympie in its Cradle Days* (Gympie: Gympie and District Historical Society, 1985), p. 83.

¹³ BSM Balance Books, 31 December 1859, pp. 31-32 and 31 December 1860, p. 57.

¹⁴ MBC, 11 April 1861; see also Thomas Dowse, 'The Coast to the Northward', *Courier*, 20 April 1861.

On the strength of these optimistic recommendations, Warry equipped Jones and his party, who proceeded up the Maroochy River to the junction of its north and south branches, and cut down enough cedar trees to load several vessels.

Warry then pressed the government to survey the river so that ships might enter safely and load his timber. In April 1861, marine surveyor George Poynter Heath, accompanied by Warry's men, set out in the government sloop *Spitfire* to examine the area.¹⁵ Heath's report was more realistic than Jones's. He was unable to cross the shallow bar of the 'Murruche Juar', but found 'a very snug, perfectly landlocked little harbour' inside the entrance to the nearby 'Murrula' River. He sounded and charted the mouth of the river, then followed its course for three-and-a-half miles. At 'Murrula' he met twenty-five to thirty Aborigines, who brought him fish and crabs and informed him that round the next headland north of the Maroochy River there was another good harbour on a river called 'Weiba'. The condition of the *Spitfire*, which was damaged in a gale, prevented him from examining the northern river at this time.¹⁶

All this information – from the Petries, Warry, the newspapers and Heath's Report – interested Pettigrew, and he decided to examine the area himself. In 1860, he and two of his employees, James Low Jnr and William Grigor, had purchased a sixty-foot sailing boat, built in 1856 by David Steel. The vessel had been the property of Brisbane's first entrepreneur, John Williams, who had left her lying on the bank of the Brisbane River above Bulimba Creek.¹⁷ Her new owners named her *Granite City* after Aberdeen, the Scottish home town of both Low and Grigor, and Low used her to carry hardwood logs to the BSM from various parts of Moreton Bay. In June 1862 Pettigrew and Low, with

¹⁵ MBC, 11 April 1861; *Spitfire: Harbours and Marine* (Department of Harbours and Marine, 1986), pp. 64-65.

¹⁶ G. P. Heath, *Report on the New Harbour*, Legislative Assembly, 16 May 1861.

¹⁷ Memo Book BSM, p. 260; John H. C. McClurg, 'John Williams – The Early Brisbane Settler', *Historical Sketches of Brisbane* (Brisbane: RHSQ, 1975), pp. 10-12.

Aboriginal guides, sailed north in the *Granite City* and spent a week assessing the Maroochy-Mooloolah area. Crossing the Maroochy River, they walked north along the beach beyond Mt Coolum, but the only good timber that they saw was pine on distant Mt Cooroy. As Pettigrew plotted and sketched the lower courses of the two rivers, it became clear that Heath's assessment was correct – there was good timber in the basin of the Maroochy, but the Mooloolah had the better harbour.¹⁸

Pettigrew decided to establish a base on the Mooloolah River, and in October 1862, he applied to purchase 320 acres under the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* of 1860. With his application, he enclosed two maps. On Heath's chart of the 'Murrula' Harbour, he outlined the desired land, and, on his own sketch of the two rivers, he marked in red a tramline along the coast – his solution to the problem of transporting logs from the south bank of the Maroochy to the harbour at Mooloolah. When he approached Arthur Macalister on the subject, however, he was told that any such railway would have to be privately funded.¹⁹

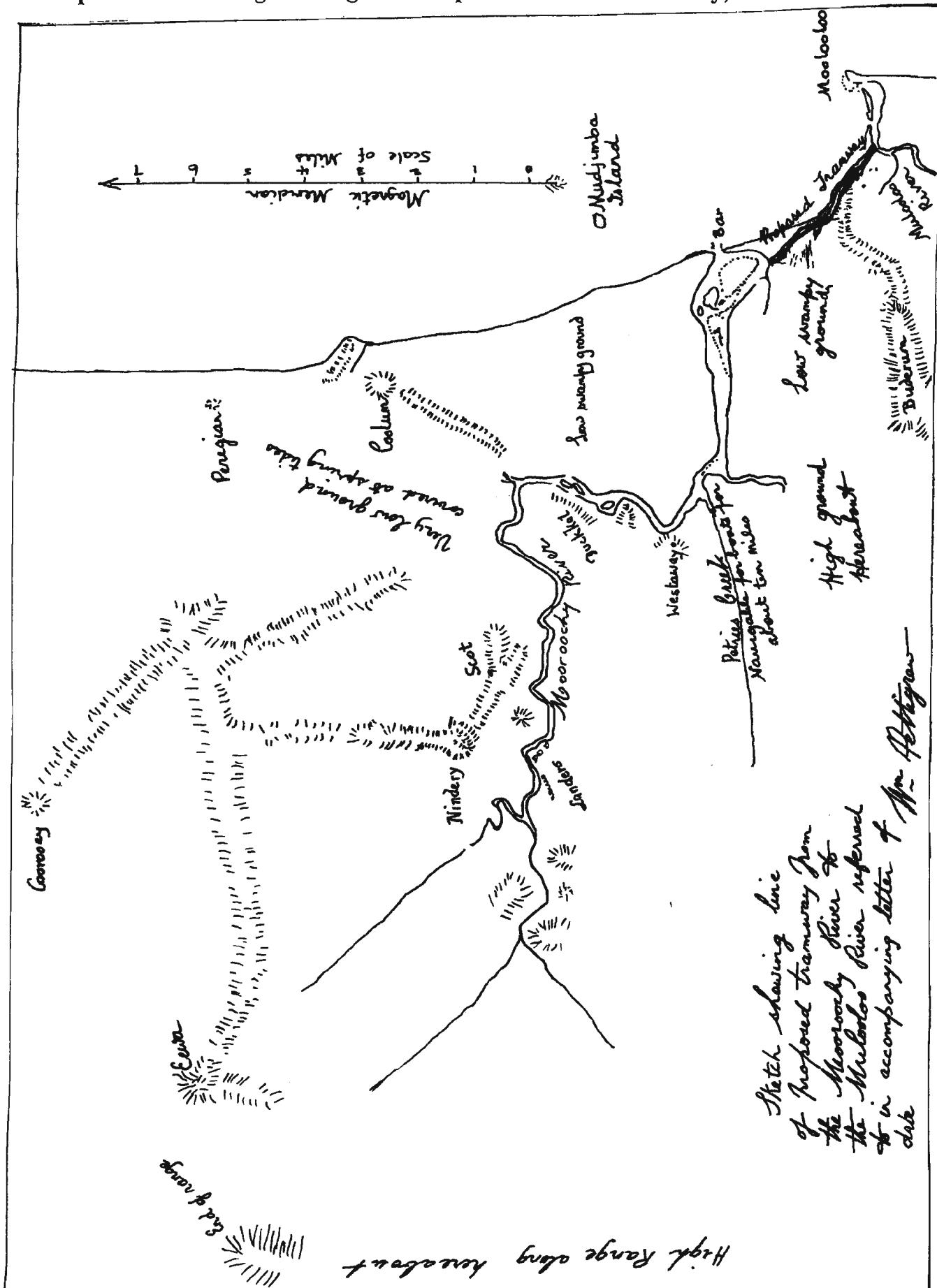
He then prepared the *Granite City* to enter the coastal shipping trade. In February 1863 she was placed on a slip and lengthened by eighteen feet. To enable her to negotiate the shallow bars and narrow channels of the coastal rivers, she was remodelled as a stern-wheel paddle steamer, with an engine and boiler fitted by the BSM's engineer, Percival Hiley.²⁰ Renamed *Gneering*, an Aboriginal word for the black swan, this small ship was to carry timber, goods and people on ocean, bay and river for the next thirty years. By July 1863, she was making regular trips to Mooloolah, where at least two of Pettigrew's

¹⁸ WP Diary, 3-11 June 1862.

¹⁹ Survey Office in-letter 5476/1862 SUR A 14. MAP, QSA; WP Diary, 9 May 1863. Pettigrew's depot was known as Mooloolah. After 1890 it became Mooloolah Heads, to avoid confusion with a railway station named Mooloolah on the line between Brisbane and Gympie. In the 1920s, the township that developed at Mooloolah Heads was given its present name – Mooloolaba.

²⁰ *Courier*, 25 June 1863.

Map 8. Tracing of Pettigrew's Map of Mooloolah-Maroochy, 1862



This map accompanied Pettigrew's first application for land at Mooloolah. Note the placenames, the dwellings of early settlers (Westaway, Landers and Scot) and the 'proposed tramway' along the coast.

timber-getters – William Wilson and William Roberts²¹ – as well as Warry's men and Pettigrew's friend Tom Petrie, were busy cutting cedar. In a lively account in his *Reminiscences of Early Queensland*, Petrie recalled that in 1862 he took twenty-five Aborigines to the scrubs of Buderim Mountain and Petrie Creek and cut cedar for Pettigrew, repeating this activity several times during the next few years and rafting logs down the Maroochy or snigging them down Buderim Mountain with bullocks to be removed from Mooloolah on the *Gneering*.²²

In March 1864, the surveyor William Fryar went to Mooloolah and divided the land that Pettigrew had applied for into two blocks.²³ When their sale was advertised in the *Government Gazette* in July, the *North Australian*, an Ipswich newspaper, protested at 'the schemes of self-interested parties in whose favour the allotments ... have been so exceptionally and stealthily set up for sale by the Department of Lands and Works'.²⁴ This anonymous complaint, a reference to Pettigrew's association with Arthur Macalister, inaccurately described the blocks as being situated on the 'Southern bank of the Maroochidore River', but correctly foresaw that their sale to a private individual would affect the interests of the 'squattages' of the district and also the shape of any future township that might be laid out there. The new legislation, however, permitted such a purchase, and Pettigrew had correctly followed all procedures under the Act. At the sale in August 1864, through his agent, Alexander Low Smith (the clerk at the BSM), Pettigrew successfully bid for both blocks. The 250 acres of Portion 1, which gave him control of the mouth of the Mooloolah River, cost £337/10/0. Portion 2, 80 acres on the

²¹ MC, 23 July 1863. William Roberts (died 1864) was married to Jane, a daughter of Richard and Jane Jones.

²² C. C. Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences*, pp. 191-197; WP Diaries, 9 March and 28 December 1863 and 31 March 1864.

²³ WP Diary, 12 January and 31 March 1864. William Fryar (1828-1912) arrived in Queensland in 1853, settled at Moggill, and became in turn a mine manager, surveyor, sugar planter, politician and inspector of mines.

²⁴ *North Australian*, 12 July 1864.

headland at Wangothan Beach overlooking a magnificent coast, cost £124.²⁵

At the site on the Mooloolah River now known as Charles Clarke Park, Pettigrew developed a depot. By the end of 1866 he had spent over £500 on draining and fencing the land, installing two boilers, and building a large store shed and two houses.²⁶ James Low brought his wife Christina and their two small children to live at Mooloolah, where he kept the store. His friend and partner, William Grigor, took charge of the transport of logs, which were dragged by bullock team along the beach from a landing near the mouth of the Maroochy River. Two more timber-getters – Charles Brown and John Kinmond – obtained licences to cut cedar at Mooloolah, and others followed.²⁷

Life was rough in the timber-getters' camps on the remote Maroochy, where idleness and drunkenness prevailed among some of the inhabitants. In April 1866, Richard Jones's wife Jane was brought from Mooloolah to Brisbane on the *Gneering*, charged with the murder of a young bullock-driver named Martin Farrell. Pettigrew, who had been appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1864²⁸ and happened to be on duty at the Brisbane court, took the depositions of witnesses and committed the woman for trial. At her trial, she admitted shooting Farrell, but pleaded 'not guilty' on the grounds that she was 'endeavouring to protect her honour' and was acquitted.²⁹

Pettigrew's plans for capturing the northern timber trade involved setting up a second sawmill in an area with plenty of timber. The Wide Bay District, where a small port had

²⁵ BC, 11 August 1864. The headland Pettigrew called Wangothan became known as Potts Point in the 1880s, and was renamed after Queen Alexandra when Thomas O'Connor subdivided the area in 1915.

²⁶ Balance Book, BSM, 30 November 1866, p. 59.

²⁷ WP Diary, 21 August 1864.

²⁸ 19 February 1864, A/4833, No.254, QSA.

²⁹ The shooting took place on 24 March 1866. WP Diary 3, 4 and 16 April 1866; BC, 6 April and 9 May 1866; Justice Department, SCT/CC17, 1866, QSA; Ebenezer Thorne, *Queen of the Colonies* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1876), pp. 63-65.

existed on the Mary River since 1847, seemed promising, and in August 1862, Pettigrew, accompanied by Tom Petrie, travelled to Maryborough on the steamer *Queensland*. Guided by Aborigines who respected Petrie as a *turrwan* or great man, they located, on Fraser Island, and at the Susan River and Tin Can Bay, extensive stands of majestic kauri pine trees.³⁰ This species, *Agathus robusta*, found only on Fraser Island and in the coastal scrubs between Maryborough and Tewantin, had first been reported by Andrew Petrie, who in 1842 had led the expedition that discovered the Mary River. At an Agricultural Reserve eight miles downstream from Maryborough, Pettigrew purchased 188 acres of land on which to build his 'proposed Dundathu Saw Mills'.³¹ This land – a ridge of high ground encircling a wide river bank – was chosen because it contained an extensive swamp, which would provide fresh water for the sawmill's boilers. Returning to Brisbane, he concluded a partnership agreement with his foreman, William Sim, who paid £200 for a quarter share in the new firm of Pettigrew and Sim.³²

Pettigrew's diaries describe the building of Dundathu in some detail. In October 1862 he spent a week at the site, drawing up plans for the sawmill and arranging for men to clear the river bank.³³ This activity evidently displeased the local Aborigines, because in November the *Maryborough Chronicle* reported that 'Mr Pettigrew's men employed at the Dundatha [sic] sawmills establishment were attacked and robbed by blackfellows'.³⁴ On a business trip to Rockhampton in January 1863, Pettigrew called at Dundathu and noted that the ground was cleared.³⁵ He supervised the cleaning out of the swamp in April, and in May and June made a number of trips to check on the construction of the

³⁰ C. C. Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences*, p. 187; WP Diary, 19 August 1862.

³¹ WP Diary, 18 August 1862; MC, 28 August 1862. Agricultural Reserves designed to promote cotton growing had been opened up along the Mary River in 1861. Pettigrew bought Portions 15 and 16, Parish of Walliebum.

³² WP Diary, 18 August 1862.

³³ WP Diary, 29 October to 6 November 1862.

³⁴ MC, 27 November 1862.

³⁵ WP Diary, 7 January 1863.

mill itself.³⁶ Most of the building materials were shipped from Brisbane, but the discovery of a deposit of clay on the property enabled him to employ a brickmaker to produce, on site, the 60,000 bricks needed to construct foundations for the machinery, and the chimneys of the mill and workers' cottages.³⁷

In mid-June, Pettigrew purchased from local timber-getters his 'first raft of Dundathu pine timber at 4 shillings per 100 feet',³⁸ and sent some of the logs to Brisbane on the schooner *Elizabeth*,³⁹ which was transporting supplies and machinery to Dundathu. The *Courier* reported the *Elizabeth*'s arrival with 17,000 feet of 'Dundathan' pine:

This ... is the first cargo of this species of pine ever brought to Brisbane. It is very similar to the kauri pine of New Zealand, and indeed it is frequently called by that name by the timber cutters. Dundatha is the aboriginal name for the trees. As a timber it is superior to the Moreton Bay [hoop] pine in respect to its durability.⁴⁰

By early July, the wharf and chimney were finished and the boilers were landed. Work on the mill, the workers' cottages, and a prefabricated house for the Sim family then proceeded rapidly, and on 21 July William Sim arrived to take up the position of manager. Under his supervision, the machinery was put in place and tested. On 22 August, the boilers were fired, the saws whined, and Dundathu Saw Mills began an operation that was to last for thirty years. Despite competition from Gladwell and Greathead's Union Sawmill in Maryborough and a flood that wreaked havoc in March 1864, Dundathu was quickly profitable, shipping timber to agents at Sydney, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Bowen. A large workforce was employed, including so many members

³⁶ WP Diary, 16 to 24 April, 16 May, 28 May to 4 June, 10 to 18 June 1863.

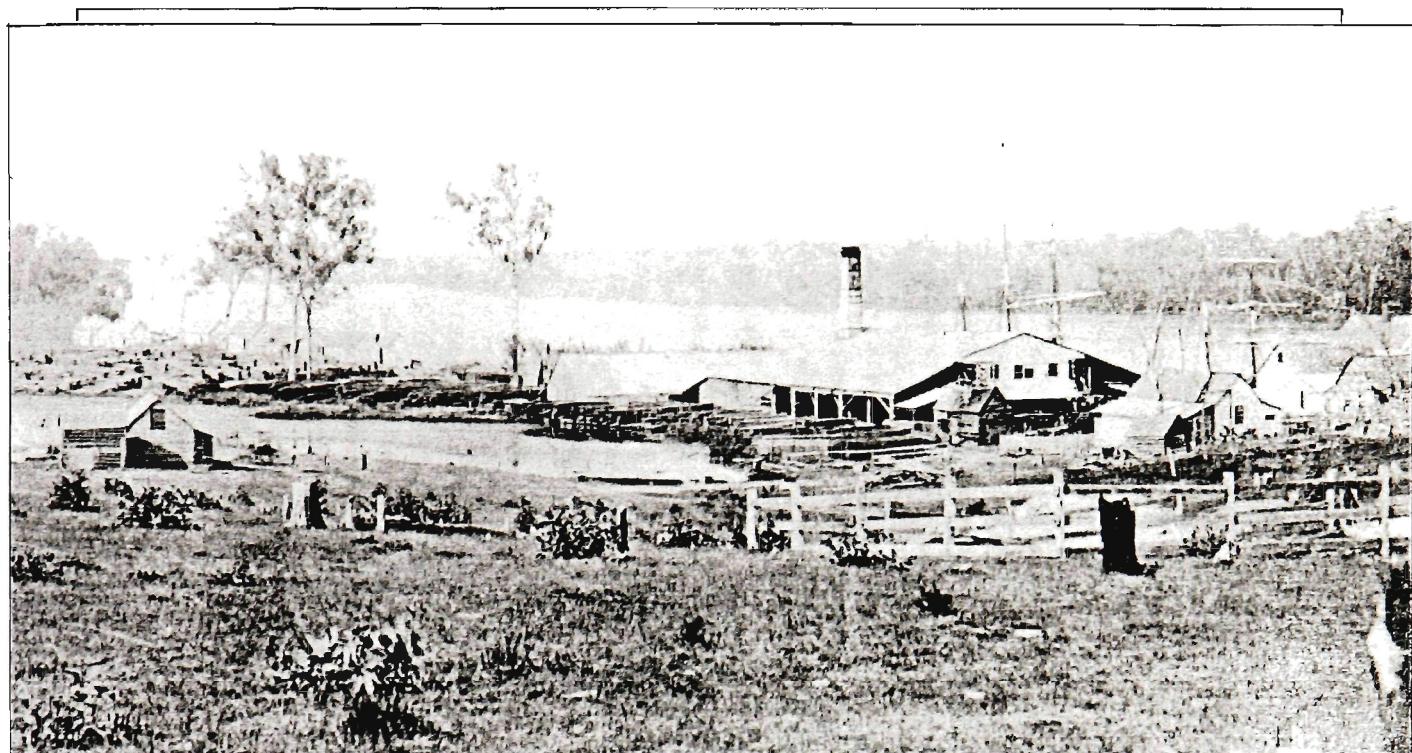
³⁷ WP Diary, 5 November 1862. The brickmaker was James Wise.

³⁸ WP Diary, 15 June 1863.

³⁹ WP Diary, 1 July 1863. The *Elizabeth*, a two-masted, 69-foot schooner, was built in 1862 in Doughboy Creek, Brisbane, by two of Pettigrew's employees, A. L. Smith and Thomas Miller. Pettigrew acquired a share in the vessel when he advanced £120 so that she could be finished, but later sold his share. The *Elizabeth* was lost while carrying a cargo of sawn timber to Sydney in 1868.

⁴⁰ MC, 23 July 1863.

of Sim's extended family that before long Dundathu was known as the home of the 'clan Sim'.⁴¹



Illus. 17.

Dundathu Sawmill, Mary River, 1870s⁴²

Once Dundathu was operating, Pettigrew set off in the *Gneering*, with James Low as Captain, to search for the stands of timber that were rumoured to exist on the river that George Heath had called 'Weiba' and Pettigrew was to name 'Noosa'. On deck they carried his new boat, *Meeanchin II*, which he tried out by sailing her some distance up Ningy Creek, near Bribie Island.⁴³ Picking up passengers at Mooloolah, the *Gneering* steamed north and entered the Noosa River on the morning of 17 September. 'No sailing vessel safe in entering or departing,' Pettigrew wrote, after sounding the channel and noting the shifting bar.⁴⁴ The *Gneering* anchored for the night, and the next morning an exploring party landed on the scrubby point that is now Tewantin, crossed Wooroi Creek

⁴¹ BC, 9 July 1872; *Wide Bay and Burnett News*, 26 December 1893.

⁴² JOL Neg. No. 22636.

⁴³ WP Diary, 15 September 1863.

⁴⁴ WP Diary, 17 September 1863.

and climbed the grassy southern ridges of the bluff, Tinbeerwah. Pettigrew became ill with diarrhoea, however, and they were forced to return to the ship.

Moving upstream, the *Gneering* anchored just below the entrance to Lake Cooroibah, near a supply of fresh water. The next day, in *Meeanchin II*, the party explored the shallow lake and its tributary creek, located the river's entrance on the northern side and rowed upstream to enter broad Lake Cootharaba. Pettigrew called this lake 'Proo', and noted its swamps and creeks, a rocky point, and a quantity of timber. On the lake, they caught two *gneerings* or black swans. One bird they took back to Brisbane for the Acclimatisation Society, but the other they ate, finding it very tough.⁴⁵ The next day they rowed up Cooroibah Creek and tackled Tinbeerwah in an easy climb from the north. From its rocky crest, Pettigrew took a 'sketch of angles of country', and saw a 'great quantity of hardwood to the west beyond Mt Cooroey'.⁴⁶ Returning in the *Gneering* to anchor near the mouth of the river, they rowed *Meeanchin II* up Weyba Creek and explored Lake Weyba. Unable to leave the river because of bad weather, Pettigrew walked along the coast, noted that a channel had once entered the sea close to Noosa Head, and conjectured that 'a little money expended could soon open it'.⁴⁷

While the *Gneering* loaded cedar at Mooloolah on the return journey, Pettigrew and William Grigor climbed Buderim Mountain, finding on its scrub-covered top enough good red soil to provide eighteen farms. Pettigrew also sailed *Meeanchin II* up the south branch of the Mooloolah River in search of hardwood, and examined the sandy, swampy land which he had applied for near the river's mouth.⁴⁸ Back in Brisbane, he published an

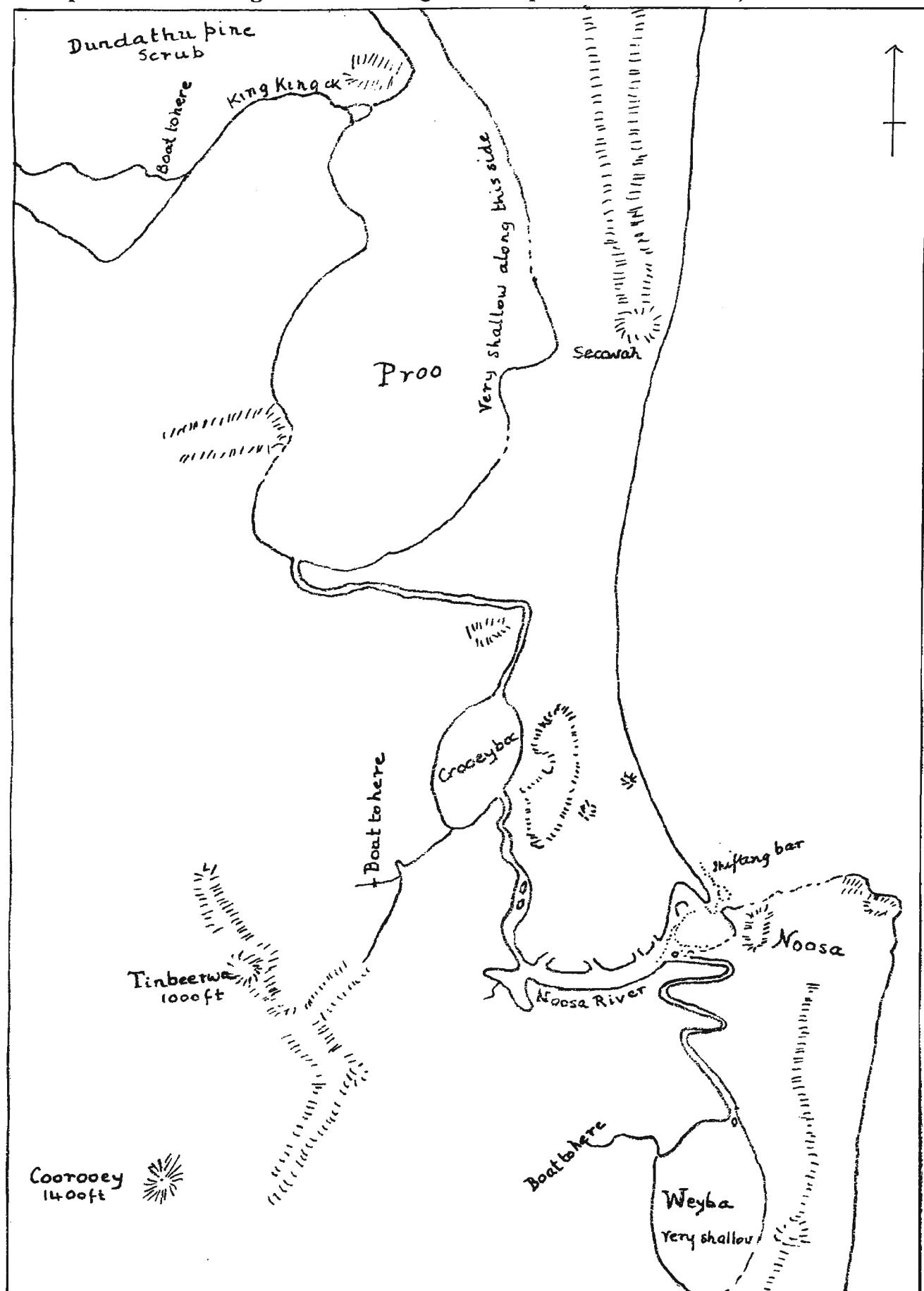
⁴⁵ QDG, 1 October 1863.

⁴⁶ WP Diary, 22 September 1863.

⁴⁷ WP Diary, 25 September 1863.

⁴⁸ WP Diary, 27 and 28 September 1863.

Map 9. Tracing of Part of Pettigrew's Map of the Noosa River, 1865



Pettigrew recorded Aboriginal placenames for features in the Noosa area, including Lake Proo, which was later renamed Lake Cootharaba. The 'Dundathu pine scrub' along 'King King Creek' was later processed at McGhie, Luya and Co.'s sawmill at Elanda Point, the northern point on the western side of the lake.

account of his explorations in the *Queensland Daily Guardian*.⁴⁹

Although Pettigrew concluded that the timber at Noosa was virtually inaccessible, timber-getters moved there soon after his visit and began cutting red cedar along Kin Kin Creek. The first of these was Henry Blakesley, who planned to send his logs direct to Melbourne.⁵⁰ In 1864 the firm of Webb Brothers sent George Harris overland to the area with a bullock team to drag the logs to Lake Cootharaba, where they were rafted downstream to Tewantin and removed by sailing ships. Harris and his men spent eighteen months on this job, but conditions in the forest were such that many logs were left where they fell, and the wastage of timber was great.⁵¹ In 1865, Ebenezer Thorne, a journalist who had worked for the *Queensland Daily Guardian*, moved to Kin Kin Creek to cut cedar, and the following year Pettigrew dispatched the *Gneering* to remove the logs that Thorne had rafted to Tewantin.⁵²

Becoming concerned that the unbridled competition permitted by the Timber Regulations was causing quarrels among timber-getters and encouraging over-cutting and waste, Pettigrew wrote to Arthur Macalister in April 1864, setting out arguments for protecting timber-getters who made improvements such as roads for the extraction of timber, but could not then prevent others from using them. Although usually not given to exaggeration, he offered Macalister this insight: 'As a rule timber-getters all *hate one another*'.⁵³ Macalister responded with new regulations, making available Special Timber Licences that gave their holders exclusive rights to cut timber within defined limits. Under this new arrangement, Pettigrew acquired a Special Timber Licence over a large

⁴⁹ 'A Trip to Noosa and the Lakes', *QDG*, 30 September, repeated on 1 and 16 October 1863.

⁵⁰ G. St John Carter, 'Early Days of Tewantin and Noosa River', *Noosa Advocate*, Christmas 1912, pp. 3-4.

⁵¹ George Harris, 'Reminiscences of My Early Days in Ipswich', c. 1923, typescript, Fryer Library, UQ.

⁵² WP Diary, 15 July, 18 October and 18 November 1866.

⁵³ Pettigrew to Macalister, 14 April 1864, LWO/A12, QSA; 'The Introduction of Special Timber Licences in Queensland', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 10, May 1969, pp. 24-26.

block on Buderim Mountain, known as Roberts Pocket after the cedar-getter William Roberts.⁵⁴

During 1865, economic activity in Brisbane was in decline. Slack trade at the BSM allowed Pettigrew to set out in the *Gneering* in June on a month-long voyage of exploration along the coast. Adding to the data that he had previously gathered, he mapped the coast from the Mooloolah River to Wide Bay, marking on it rivers (such as the Noosa) and mountains (such as Pinbarren and Bilewilam), which still bear his names and spellings.⁵⁵ Calling at the Mooloolah depot, he noted that the area was ‘very much shut up’ – a lack of activity which was to send Low and Grigor’s partnership into insolvency eighteen months later. He was pleased, however, with the timber and grass on his Special Timber Lease at Buderim, noting that, if fenced, it would feed a large number of cattle.⁵⁶

Moving to Noosa, he spent twelve days in unsettled weather surveying, plotting, and drawing his map. Wind, rain, and heavy breakers on the bar trapped the *Gneering* in the river, where she broke her tiller, lost an anchor, and was stranded for a time on a sandbank. The shifting entrance again drew Pettigrew’s attention, and this time he observed that ‘a channel cut close into the hillside & cleaned out at bottom would remain so. £2000 judiciously expended would make a place for steam vessels to enter’.⁵⁷

Leaving Noosa at last, the *Gneering* steamed north. Unable to cross the breakers of the Wide Bay bar, Pettigrew was forced to coast along Fraser Island and Breaksea Spit and enter Hervey Bay from the north, in an extended voyage that exhausted the *Gneering*’s

⁵⁴ *Queensland Government Gazette*, 3 September 1864, p. 622; WP Diary, 31 March 1869.

⁵⁵ ‘Map of Coast from Bribie Island to Fraser Island’ (title obscured). Pettigrew’s original map is held by the Department of Natural Resources, Queensland.

⁵⁶ WP Diary, 7 June 1865.

⁵⁷ WP Diary, 15 June 1865.

supply of fuel. Fortunately he spotted the wreck of the American barque *Panama* at Rooney Point, and helped himself to dry timber from the *Panama*'s poop deck.⁵⁸

Arriving at Dundathu on 24 June, Pettigrew sent his wife a telegram to say that he had not yet been everywhere he wanted to go, but intended to be home by 7 July. Then, loading the *Gneering* with timber and supplies, he headed off with Aboriginal guides to visit the kauri pine forests at Tin Can Bay. Sailing *Meeanchin II* to the head of the inlet, he struck overland, climbed Toolara (now East Mullen) and Bilewilam, two hills that marked the watershed between the Noosa River and Tin Can Bay, and took bearings on hills to the south, such as Coondoo and Seawah. He noted hoop pine trees on Coondoo and the mountains to the west, and the Aborigines told him that there were large scrubs of dundathu pine on Fraser Island. Rowing to the rafting ground on Seary's Creek, he walked along the sandy track to Woolann (the scrubs around Lake Poona), where his timber-getters were working but finding it difficult to sustain their bullocks on the scanty grasses. Visualising a solution to this problem, Pettigrew wrote in his diary, 'A railway could be taken from where we came off ... to the foot of the range over very level land – only some hollow watercourses to cross ...'⁵⁹ After loading the *Gneering* with firewood, he set off for home, but bad weather forced the ship to lie for four days in shelter at Inskip Point. Frustrated because his map was not coming together correctly, he spent some time thinking about the railway:

The distance a railway would be from suitable navigation would be from 5½ to 6 miles to the nearest Dundathu ... To make a railway would require the ground raised 2 feet or + and on piles across the gullies or flat watercourses.⁶⁰

Leaving the *Gneering*, he caught a passing steamer and arrived in Brisbane, as expected, on 7 July.

⁵⁸ WP Diary, 22 June 1865. The *Panama* was wrecked on 19 March 1864.

⁵⁹ WP Diary, 30 June 1865.

⁶⁰ WP Diary, 5 July 1865.

In September 1865, Pettigrew returned to Mooloolah to continue his explorations, envisaging railways, sawmills, and also sugar mills. Guided by Richard Jones, he surveyed the Maroochy River and took a three-day ride through the Nambour area to assess its timber, finding oak, box, turpentine and blackbutt near the watercourses, and cedar, flooded gum and bunya pine in the scrubs. He considered the ‘agricultural’ land at Nambour ‘too steep for the plough’, though possibly suitable for fruit trees, and concluded that Buderim was ‘the best land hereabouts’.⁶¹ His completed, hand-drawn map was given to the Survey Department, where the information which it contained was quickly transferred to published maps.

During the early 1860s, as timber resources along the Brisbane River declined and his men were forced to move further afield, Pettigrew became increasingly concerned about the unreliability of his supplies of logs. At times the BSM lay idle, waiting for rafts to arrive from the Logan, Albert, Pine and Caboolture Rivers. Rafting logs across Moreton Bay was slow work, dependent on weather and tide, and the cost of hiring tugs to tow rafts up the river was eating into his profits.⁶²

Despite the slowdown in trade, Pettigrew decided to build a tugboat, which he designed according to the theories he had been studying. From December 1865 to July 1866, under a large shed on his riverbank allotments in South Brisbane, the BSM shipwright, Matthew Miller, constructed a sturdy, 64-foot, stern-wheel paddle-steamer.⁶³ Pettigrew named her *Tadorna Radjah*, the scientific name for the Burdekin duck; but, because she could negotiate the narrow, twisting channels of the coastal rivers, and skim their shallow bars and sand banks, the settlers who came to rely on her for their supplies nick-named her

⁶¹ WP Diary, 28 and 29 September 1865.

⁶² WP Diaries, 10 to 17 October and 13 to 16 December 1862 and 6 to 8 May 1864.

⁶³ WP Diaries, 4 December 1865; 14 July, 22 August and 24 September 1866; *Queenslander*, 21 July 1866.

The Dodger.⁶⁴ Pettigrew liked to mention that her engine, made by F. H. Wenham of London, was the first compound engine in the Pacific Ocean.⁶⁵ After initial technical problems were overcome, the *Tadorna Radjah*, like the *Gneering*, was to serve him for decades as a reliable and economical workhorse.

At the same time as Pettigrew was exploring the coast, building ships and expanding his business, he was also caught up in the ferment of local politics. After Separation, power and influence in Queensland continued to be divided between the ‘conservative’ squatters and their opposition, the ‘liberal’ townsmen with whom Pettigrew identified. But self-government changed the colony’s political dynamic. Sydney, the ‘cormorant south’,⁶⁶ could no longer be blamed for every deficiency, and with more at stake locally, contention, often involving pettiness and personal rivalry, increased. In the timber industry, where he was a leader, Pettigrew’s individualism was an asset; but in politics, where he had to persuade others, his unyielding adherence to fixed principles often led to frustration. Although he contributed a total of thirty-six years to unpaid positions in local and colonial government, there were times when, if he could not win a round, he was inclined to leave the game.

The new Parliament met at first in the old Convict Barracks in Queen Street, but the Botanic Gardens end of George Street, a block away from the BSM, was soon selected as the seat of government. Construction of a Government House began in November 1860, and from 1862, when Governor Bowen and his family moved in, Pettigrew was to know every colonial Governor as a neighbour, as well as in the course of duty. His

⁶⁴ N. N. Mavek, Pioneers of the North Coast: Experiences and Reminiscences, No.1, Mr T. Chambers, JOL.

⁶⁵ WP Diary, 1862; Advertisement for Wenham’s Patent Heated Air Engine and F.H. Wenham to WP, 14 November 1868, QWHA; Morrison, *Aldine History of Queensland*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ ‘W.C.’, ‘A Queensland Pioneer: The Late W. Pettigrew’, *The Herald*, 9 November 1906.

acquaintance with Bowen developed in August 1860, when the Governor accepted an invitation to visit the BSM and inspect a new planing machine.⁶⁷

Early in 1860, Dr Lang visited Brisbane to give the colonists advice about how to handle Separation,⁶⁸ and also to petition the Parliament for recognition that he had introduced many settlers to Moreton Bay. His appeal caused an outburst of recriminations among his immigrants, and a counter-petition, referring to Lang's 'promises' regarding land, was presented to the Parliament. A Select Committee eventually decided that Lang had no right to compensation because his scheme 'was initiated as a commercial and strictly sectarian effort'⁶⁹ and advised that his immigrants should pursue their claims against him personally. In September, however, the Legislative Assembly thanked Lang for his part in the achievement of Separation, and in December the government purchased his United Evangelical Church property at almost double the price that he had paid for it in 1857.⁷⁰ This windfall profit enabled him to pay another visit to Britain in 1861, a journey which he shared with Dr Stephen Simpson, who had sold Wolston and was returning to England to retire.⁷¹ During the voyage, Lang wrote *Queensland*, a book which proved to be as popular and influential as his earlier *Cooksländ*, of which it was an expanded version. In *Queensland*, he praised Pettigrew:

Perhaps there is no establishment connected with mechanics and trade in Brisbane more interesting, considering the place and its prospects, than the steam sawmill of Mr William Pettigrew, combining as it does all the recent improvements in that department of mechanics, and conducted, as it evidently is, by its spirited proprietor, with great mechanical ability.⁷²

⁶⁷ WP Notes, 1 August 1860.

⁶⁸ 'Separation and how to follow it up', *MBC*, 27 December 1859, 21 January, 21 February and 29 March 1860; 'On the Prospects of the Colony', *MBC*, 31 March 1860.

⁶⁹ Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 22.

⁷⁰ Parker, 'Strange Bedfellows', p. 33.

⁷¹ John Dunmore Lang, *Queensland, Australia: a highly eligible field for emigration, and the future cotton-field of Great Britain* (London: Edward Stanford, 1861), p. 80; *Queensland Guardian*, 15 December 1860; *MBC*, 27 December 1860.

⁷² Lang, *Queensland*, p. 63.

Pettigrew avoided becoming involved in the 1860 Lang controversy, but in 1861 he signed a petition from twenty-nine *Fortitude* and *Chaseley* immigrants, asking Parliament to honour the Land Orders that had been denied them in 1849.⁷³ Their application was overwhelmingly rejected on the grounds that the issue had been resolved the previous year.⁷⁴ In July 1864, Lang returned to Brisbane, made another appeal to the Parliament, and was granted £1000 in recognition of his services in the cause of Separation.⁷⁵ On this, his last visit to the colony, he lectured on the American Civil War at the School of Arts, and travelled to the northern ports. When he visited Maryborough, Pettigrew entertained him to tea and a tour of the Dundathu sawmill.⁷⁶

Pettigrew's chief political involvement continued to be with the Brisbane Municipal Council. Although he had not been elected in 1859, he had firm ideas about what the Council needed to do, and the first correspondence dealt with by the new aldermen was a letter from him on the urgent subject of the town reservoir.⁷⁷ A week later, in response to the Council's call for tenders for taking the levels of Brisbane's streets, Pettigrew and the surveyor Henry Charles Rawnsley submitted equal tenders; whereupon the aldermen called fresh tenders, and, after considering equal tenders from Pettigrew, Rawnsley and the engineer Thomas Oldham, gave the job to Rawnsley.⁷⁸ Following this experience, Pettigrew began to harbour a not unreasonable suspicion that some of the aldermen were against him, but he persisted in drawing their attention to matters that needed to be fixed.

For the new Council, meeting community expectations was bound to be difficult. The aldermen, most of whom were well-known businessmen, faced the daunting tasks of

⁷³ 'Immigrants by 'Fortitude' and 'Chaseley'', Legislative Assembly, 27 June 1861 (Brisbane: T.P.Pugh, 1861).

⁷⁴ *Courier*, 17 July 1861.

⁷⁵ BC, 28 July 1864; Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 22. This grant was cancelled the following year.

⁷⁶ WP Diary, 4 and 12 August 1864.

⁷⁷ Brisbane Municipal Council Minutes, 17 October 1859.

⁷⁸ BMC Minutes, 7 and 28 November 1859; MBC, 22 June 1850.

imposing regulations, collecting rate money and building the town from the ground up, with limited resources and little co-operation from the squatter-dominated Parliament.⁷⁹ The minutes of their early meetings show that they were a disputatious group, two of the most disruptive being Robert Cribb and the Irish butcher, Patrick Mayne. When three of the original representatives – George Warren, Robert Cribb and William Sutton – faced re-election in February 1860, Pettigrew stood again, this time gaining ninety votes, the same number as Sutton. Mayor John Petrie, having a casting vote in these circumstances, ruled in favour of Sutton.⁸⁰

A year later, in February 1861, Pettigrew tried for the third time. In his election speech, he denounced the work of the Council's Improvement Committee, criticizing the street levels that had been decided upon, the roadwork that was disturbing the inhabitants of William Street, and the design of a drain in Frog's Hollow, an unhealthy swamp in lower Albert Street.⁸¹ With his usual practicality, he presented his own designs for drains, involving the use of timber, rubble and tiles. He also suggested that pine would be more suitable than hardwood for the battens on the shingled roofs of ferry sheds, and put forward the novel idea that, in order to prevent erosion, streets should be turfed where they were not metalled. With an eye on economy, he recommended that the Council's only salaried officer should be a Town Clerk, and that surveyors and architects should be employed on contracts. Observing the 'extravagance of the present lot of aldermen', he asked, with remarkable prescience, 'What will they be like when they propose building a room in which to hold their meetings?'⁸²

⁷⁹ Laverty, *The History of Municipal Government in Brisbane*, pp. 162-163.

⁸⁰ MBC, 16 February 1860. The rules required that one-third of the aldermen should face election each year.

⁸¹ Rod Fisher, 'Old Frog's Hollow: Devoid of Interest or Den of Iniquity?', *Brisbane History Group Papers*, No. 8, 1988, Ch. 2. The *Courier*, 31 August 1861, suggested humorously that the inhabitants of Frog's Hollow were 'an amphibious race, living partly on water and partly on land'.

⁸² MBC, 2 February 1861.

The ideas in this speech were immediately condemned in letters to the *Moreton Bay Courier*.⁸³ Then, at the nomination of candidates, John Innes, the secretary of the School of Arts and a leading supporter of Robert Cribb, while proposing Albert Hockings as an alderman, launched into a vicious personal attack on Pettigrew. He was scathing about Pettigrew's proposals for drains and his 'absurd notion about the turf and the green appearance of the streets'. He expressed surprise 'that a man professing to know something of timber should ... suppose that, in ... an open shed exposed to the wind and weather, pine could be equal to hardwood'. Accusing Pettigrew of having a 'fixed and deliberate determination ... to upset everything the corporation had ever done – to make himself as obstructionist in the council as he had proved himself to be elsewhere', he contended that, on the School of Arts committee, Pettigrew was 'the greatest nuisance that ever existed' and 'for seven long and dreary years' had 'met hebdomadally⁸⁴ ... for the sole purpose of opposing and persecuting the secretary and throwing obstacles in the way of the committee'. Referring to Pettigrew's connection with Building Society No. 2, he said it was 'notorious' that Pettigrew had joined that society in order to oppose his 'respected and highly intelligent friend Mr Robert Cribb', and had 'vexaciously and injuriously ... obstructed the business of the Society in the disposal of shares'. At this point the Chairman, Mayor John Petrie, tried to divert Innes, but he only became more extreme in his allegations, contending that 'he had a right to show up Mr Pettigrew's gross malversation',⁸⁵ and that 'a man who was not honest in private matters could scarcely lay claim to public confidence'. Then Innes, who was known for his disdain towards men less educated than himself, sarcastically attacked Pettigrew's education, reading habits and religion, in terms that were exaggeratedly untrue.⁸⁶

⁸³ MBC, 5 February 1861.

⁸⁴ 'Hebdomadally' means 'weekly'. 'Let that be put down correctly', said Innes, showing off his erudition.

⁸⁵ 'Malversation' means 'corrupt behaviour in a position of trust of office'.

⁸⁶ MBC, 7 February 1861.

Although some of the men present at the meeting laughed during Innes's outburst, many, including Hockings and Cribb, were embarrassed by his behaviour. Hockings disclaimed 'any identity of opinion with the personal remarks of Mr Innes' and explained that Innes 'had not been authorised either to move or second him'. As for Cribb, although it might seem that Innes had set Pettigrew and Cribb further at loggerheads, a curious letter appeared in the *Moreton Bay Courier* on the same day as the report of the meeting, linking Cribb and Patrick Mayne with Pettigrew on the subject of 'obstruction':

At the nomination Mr Cribb held up his hand for Mr Pettigrew. After the nomination Mr Alderman Mayne passed up the street in close confab with Mr Pettigrew. Not long ago, Cribb and his satelite [sic] Mayne used to be at 'daggers drawn' with the 'man o' the mill', and were it not that we are getting used to strange sights nowadays, I should look upon this fraternisation as something marvellous ... The only inference to be drawn from these 'signs of the times' is that friend Pettigrew is going in – if he can get in – as a second satelite of the ancient obstructive [i.e. Cribb] who sits on the right of the Mayor's chair.⁸⁷

With a calmness that did him credit, Pettigrew let Innes's outburst pass. After the meeting, he composed a letter in which he dealt with 'factual' criticisms about his ideas on drainage, but dismissed the rest. 'As I cannot see the drift of this man's remarks, unless it be to uphold the ideas of the present surveyor,' he wrote of one of his detractors, 'I will let them and Mr John Innes's criticisms on my conduct for the past seven years in his speech today go for what they are worth.' 'As ridicule is not argument,' he added, 'I need not reply to the remarks about turfing the streets where not metalled.'⁸⁸

Why did the *Moreton Bay Courier* publish this derogatory, even defamatory, material? An explanation might lie in the fact that the Langite James Swan, who was noted for tempering personal criticism when he controlled the *Courier*, had sold it in 1859 to T. B. Stephens, and the new editor was the hard-hitting Theophilus Parsons Pugh. In addition, Pettigrew was by then supporting a rival newspaper, the *Queensland Daily Guardian*, and

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* This letter was signed J. F***d***g, who may have been the *Fortitude* immigrant John Fielding.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

it is evident that during the 1860s the *Courier*, as well as attacking the *Guardian's* editorial pronouncements, was more inclined than before to criticise Pettigrew.⁸⁹ With these forces arrayed against him, it is not surprising that Pettigrew polled sixth out of eight candidates in the 1861 election.⁹⁰

He then turned his attention to improving the ferry services, and in April 1861 became the lessee of a new ferry running from Ernest Street, South Brisbane, to Alice Street, near the BSM. Before building shelter sheds at the ferry terminals, he asked the Council to agree to acquire them at a fair valuation when the lease expired, but the Council refused his request.⁹¹ In August, when the terminals were ready, he sought permission to put a steam vessel on the ferry.⁹² To this the Council agreed, but the influential Sydney merchant Captain Robert Towns, who was expanding his interests in Queensland and had just bought the old Queen's Wharf, created such difficulties for Pettigrew that in September he wiped his hands of ferries and transferred the lease to an experienced ferry operator, William Carter.⁹³

In February 1862, Pettigrew was looking to expand his business and did not seek election to the Council. John Innes sarcastically nominated him,⁹⁴ but at this time Innes's reign at the School of Arts was coming to an end. He was 'increasingly given to intoxication',⁹⁵ and in his work had become inefficient, irascible, and so arrogant that he was frequently heard to proclaim, 'I am the School of Arts!'⁹⁶ When there were complaints about his

⁸⁹ BC, 3 December 1864; Morrison, 'Religion and Politics in Queensland', pp. 463-465.

⁹⁰ MBC, 14 February 1861.

⁹¹ BMC Minutes, 29 April 1861.

⁹² BMC Minutes, 12 August 1861.

⁹³ BMC Minutes, 9 September 1861. Robert Towns (1794-1873), after whom Townsville was named, had a large cotton plantation on the Logan River and introduced South Sea Island labour to Queensland.

⁹⁴ *Courier*, 5 February 1862.

⁹⁵ Cleary, The North Brisbane School of Arts, p. 94.

⁹⁶ Rev. T. Mowbray, undated letter, RHSQ.

aggressive behaviour,⁹⁷ he was defended by Robert Cribb, who led the dominant faction on the committee.⁹⁸ Pettigrew, who had clashed with Cribb at various meetings,⁹⁹ was not the only member of the School of Arts who saw the need for change in what had become known as the ‘Temple of Discord’.¹⁰⁰

Matters came to a head in September 1861, when Innes disrupted a practice of the Philharmonic Society by making a speech that was ‘very uncomplimentary to certain members of the society’. After being forcibly ejected from the building, he charged Henry Hockings with assault, but the case was dismissed.¹⁰¹ The School of Arts committee excused Innes;¹⁰² but the ironmonger William Brookes, displaying courage in the face of acrimonious resistance, led a forthright campaign to dislodge him.¹⁰³ After the election of a new committee, Innes was dismissed. His career ended, sadly and ignominiously, when, on 18 February 1862, he was caught attempting to break into the School of Arts building.¹⁰⁴

It is clear that, between 1859 and 1862, although Pettigrew had considerable support, he was also very unpopular in some quarters. His lack of electoral success reflected not only his disagreements with Robert Cribb but also his quarrel with the Rev. Charles Ogg. This quarrel became unpleasantly public during 1860,¹⁰⁵ and John Innes alluded to it in his attack on Pettigrew by referring to Frog’s Hollow as ‘Hog’s Hollow’.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ *MBC*, 28 September 1861.

⁹⁸ *Courier*, 8 February and 5 March 1862.

⁹⁹ *MBC*, 6 January 1858; 14 January 1860.

¹⁰⁰ *MBC*, 14 January 1860; ‘Temple of Discord’: *MBC*, 12 September 1861.

¹⁰¹ *Courier*, 25 September 1861.

¹⁰² *Courier*, 28 September 1861.

¹⁰³ *Courier*, 8 February 1862.

¹⁰⁴ *Courier*, 19 and 20 February 1862; Cleary, The North Brisbane School of Arts, p. 94. Innes came to Brisbane as a schoolmaster and by 1850 had set up an ‘Academy’ at South Brisbane. When John Langridge left Brisbane in 1852, Innes was elected Secretary of the School of Arts, where, although initially popular, he eventually became an embarrassment.

¹⁰⁵ *MBC*, 8 May and 19 July 1860.

¹⁰⁶ *MBC*, 7 February 1861.

Touching on dissension within the church, the historian Richard Bardon observed drily in 1949 that ‘unanimity is not a characteristic of Presbyterian deliberations ...’¹⁰⁷ This lack of ‘unanimity’ also characterised the Presbyterians of Sydney, where Dr Lang, for all his talk of unity, had quarrelled with many of his fellow ministers and twice formed his own Synod.¹⁰⁸ The dissension that had wracked the Scottish church in 1843 journeyed with its members and ministers to the colonies, and continued to divide them. This situation, according to the historian George Nadel, ‘deprived the Presbyterian Church of some of its effectiveness as a religious organization, and left its members to make their contributions to society as individuals rather than as believers in a common, distinct set of Christian doctrines’.¹⁰⁹ Since congregations tended to centre on the personalities of their ministers, and the ministers who came to Brisbane during the 1850s represented four different branches of Presbyterianism – the established Church of Scotland, the Free Church, the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland – the early history of the colonial church was dominated by disputes, not about theology, since all Presbyterians agreed with the Westminster Confession of Faith, but about secular principles and religious practices – matters that troubled Pettigrew – such as State aid and the use of musical instruments in church services.

The quarrel between Pettigrew and Ogg had its origins in an action by Ogg in December 1857, when, without the knowledge of his congregation and contrary to Free Church principles, he applied to the Governor in Sydney for a grant of land for church purposes. That application was refused, but four allotments in Creek Street, the site of the pound, were offered instead.¹¹⁰ The congregation accepted the offer, but the land was not

¹⁰⁷ Bardon, *Centenary History*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ ‘John Dunmore Lang’ in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 2, 1788-1850 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), pp. 78-79.

¹⁰⁹ Nadel, *Australia’s Colonial Culture*, pp. 249-250.

¹¹⁰ Allotments 8, 9, 10 and 11, Section 26, Parish of North Brisbane.

allocated until July 1858, by which time a church had been built next to the manse in Ann Street, on the site previously purchased.

In February 1859, the pound and a cottage were removed from the Creek Street land at the congregation's expense,¹¹¹ and the Deacon's Court proposed to erect a school-house there for the Presbyterian teacher John Scott, whose school near the Leichhardt Street quarry was not finding favour with parents because of its distance from town.¹¹² At this point, the first discrepancy appeared in writing between the intentions of the congregation and the actions of their minister. Troubled by the principle that the Free Church did not accept state aid, Pettigrew pushed for a school to be built on the land, and the minutes of that meeting, in his handwriting, required that the word 'school' be inserted in the deed of conveyance in place of 'manse'.¹¹³ Believing that a grant would only be made for a church, Ogg failed to follow this instruction. When he wrote to the Colonial Secretary nominating six trustees for the Creek Street land, he stated:

As there will (as a matter of course) be a school in connection with our church, it might be as well to add the word 'school' to the words 'church and manse' in the conveyance.¹¹⁴

Pettigrew and John Scott underwrote the cost of the schoolhouse, which was erected in 1859;¹¹⁵ but it was not in use for long before the National School opened nearby, and the building was then rented to the government for school purposes.¹¹⁶

Separation intervened before tenure of the Creek Street land was finalised. One of the first acts passed by the Queensland Parliament in 1860 – the *State Aid to Religion*

¹¹¹ *QVP*, Vol. 3, Part 2, 1888, p. 940.

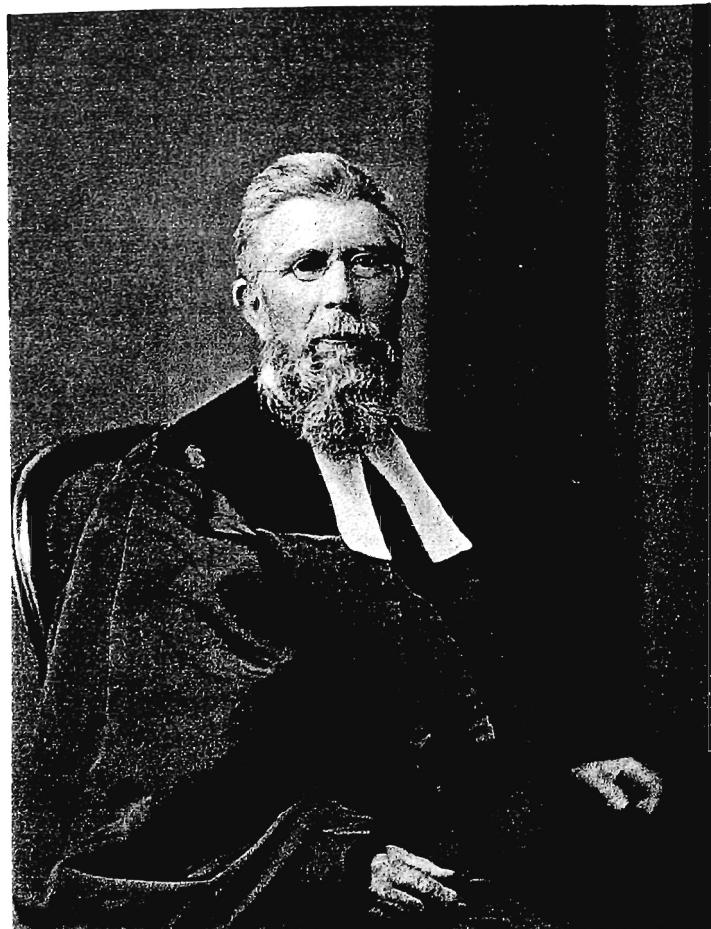
¹¹² *QPD*, 16 October 1889, p. 272.

¹¹³ *QVP*, 1888, p. 940.

¹¹⁴ *QVP*, 1888, p. 940; Ogg to Col. Sec., 9 March 1859. The trustees were John Scott (teacher), William Pettigrew (sawmiller), Thomas Gray (shoemaker), James Thompson (timber merchant), William Wright (clerk, BSM), William Murray (engineer).

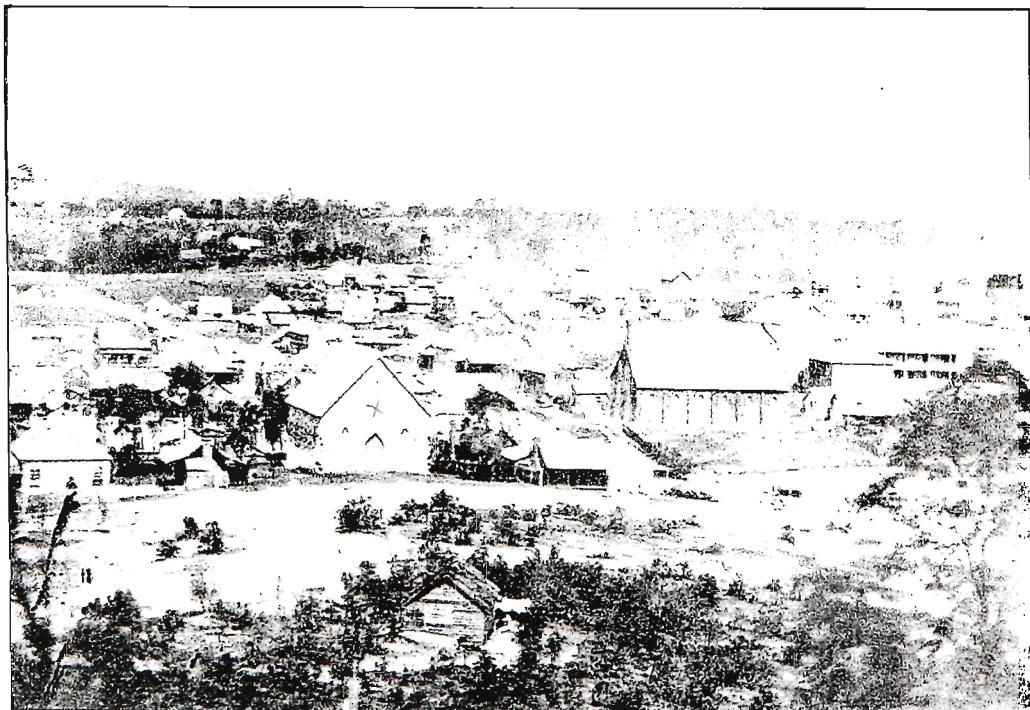
¹¹⁵ *MBC*, 11 May 1859.

¹¹⁶ *QVP*, 1888, p. 941; *QPD*, 16 October 1889, p. 272.



Illus. 18.

The Rev. Charles Ogg



Illus. 19.

† The First Ann Street Presbyterian Church (1858-1872)

Discontinuance Act – abolished State aid but allowed earlier undertakings of the New South Wales government to be honoured. Although no title deeds had been issued, Ogg wrote to the Colonial Secretary in April 1860, seeking permission to sell the Creek Street land in order to remove the debt of £350 that remained on the Ann Street Church. He did not disclose to his congregation the nature of this request, but rumours about it were soon circulating. Writing as a person who had ‘for the past seven years taken an active part in matters relating to the Presbyterian Church’, Pettigrew asked the Colonial Secretary for a copy of Ogg’s correspondence. In this letter, Pettigrew revealed that he had ‘accepted a bill’ for the erection of the schoolhouse, and was concerned about how he would be paid if the government allowed Ogg to sell the land.¹¹⁷

The government’s reply to Ogg indicated that his earlier list of trustees had not reached the Queensland authorities. After a congregational meeting in June, Ogg submitted five names, of which only John Scott’s was on the original list.¹¹⁸ Although no longer Clerk of the Deacon’s Court, Pettigrew had retained the Ann Street church’s papers, and in August the new Clerk, Daniel McAlpine, wrote asking him to hand over the Minute Book and Title Deed.¹¹⁹ He refused, and in December he received a letter from the solicitors Little and Brown, stating that they were instructed by ‘the trustees of Scotch Presbyterian Church to require from you all deeds relating to the Church property and also all books, papers and documents entrusted to your care as Clerk of the Deacon’s Court’, and threatening legal action if he did not comply.¹²⁰

Pettigrew had been seeking advice from friends such as George Raff about how best to

¹¹⁷ WP to Col. Sec., 7 May 1860, RHSQ.

¹¹⁸ Col. Sec. to Ogg, 24 April 1860; Congregational Meeting, 14 June 1860. The substitute trustees were George Edmondstone, Daniel McAlpine, Alexander Anderson and James Bryden.

¹¹⁹ Daniel McAlpine to WP, 16 August 1860. McAlpine was manager of the Bank of New South Wales.

¹²⁰ Little and Brown to WP, 7 December 1860.

resolve the situation.¹²¹ Disheartened by what he perceived to be the ‘lies’ in Ogg’s letter to the Colonial Secretary, he took action, calling on Little and Brown to ask who the author of the request really was. When they refused to tell him, he approached the trustees of the Ann Street church, each of whom denied any knowledge of the instruction. In an ‘advertisement’ addressed to the Presbyterians of Brisbane, he voiced his suspicion that ‘the title deeds of the property in Ann Street on which the Church and manse are erected are very much wanted by certain individuals, who think they have a large interest therein.’¹²² Although he sent this ‘advertisement’ to the newspapers, it was not published; but a series of other ‘advertisements’ that appeared in the *Moreton Bay Courier* during 1860 showed that he was not alone in his concerns.¹²³

By mid-1861, Pettigrew and other disaffected members had left the Ann Street church and were hearing guest preachers in the School of Arts.¹²⁴ In July Pettigrew ‘resigned [his] connection with Ogg’ in a carefully drafted letter to the Presbyterians of Brisbane, in which he argued that State aid to religion was the stumbling block in their quarrel, that Ogg had written to the government without authorisation, and that the spirit of ‘striving who will be greatest’ was actuating some of the congregation. ‘I will not enter the Ann Street Presbyterian Church doors again,’ he wrote, ‘till it turns from its evil doings and shows by its works that it has done so.’¹²⁵ Fifty copies of this letter were printed and distributed, and within a fortnight Daniel McAlpine had responded, accusing Pettigrew of making ‘false and libellous statements’ against Ogg, and demanding ‘an ample apology’, without which the Session would start criminal proceedings against him. On McAlpine’s letter, the unrepentant Pettigrew wrote, ‘They found they could bounce but could not bite.

¹²¹ WP to George Raff, 12 November 1860, RHSQ.

¹²² A draft of this ‘advertisement’ is in the Pettigrew Papers, RHSQ.

¹²³ MBC, 15 March, 5 May and 19 July 1860.

¹²⁴ *Courier*, 22 June 1861 (Rev. W. Ritchie); *Courier*, 20 October 1861 (Rev. Dr Fullerton).

¹²⁵ WP Notes, 10 July/61; WP to Presbyterians, 10 July 1861.

It was a privileged communication and was not libelous [sic].¹²⁶

In 1862, the Ann Street congregation received the title deeds for the Creek Street allotments, only to face a further complication. The land was granted, as the law required, as though they were connected with the established Church of Scotland through the Synod of Australia.¹²⁷ This had never been the case – Ann Street had always been a Free Presbyterian church – and in June 1862, Ogg wrote to the Surveyor-General, A. C. Gregory, pointing out the error. In his reply, Gregory advised that, as the Deed of Grant had been made up the previous September and signed by Governor Bowen in December, it was too late to alter it.¹²⁸ Ogg later claimed that he had also approached Robert Little, the Crown Solicitor, and Arthur Macalister, the Colonial Secretary, but could not persuade them to make any changes, because by that time the Presbyterian churches were negotiating union and the issue did not seem important.¹²⁹ An attempt by Ogg to bring a bill before Parliament to permit the congregation to sell the land was scuttled by a scathing, satirical advertisement in the *Courier* that gave Ogg the nickname by which Pettigrew thereafter referred to him: Charlie Cheatyekirkie.¹³⁰ Resentment over the Creek Street land and the income it earned for the Ann Street congregation was to fester among Presbyterians until 1889, when the issue was resolved – by an Act of Parliament.

Meanwhile, the Presbyterians meeting in the School of Arts sent to Britain for a minister, and in August 1862, the Rev. James Love, an Irish Presbyterian, arrived to serve them. For a time they used a small church in Creek Street, built for the Rev. Thomas Bell, who, until his death in 1859 had ministered to the remaining Presbyterians of the United

¹²⁶ Daniel McAlpine to WP, 27 July 1861.

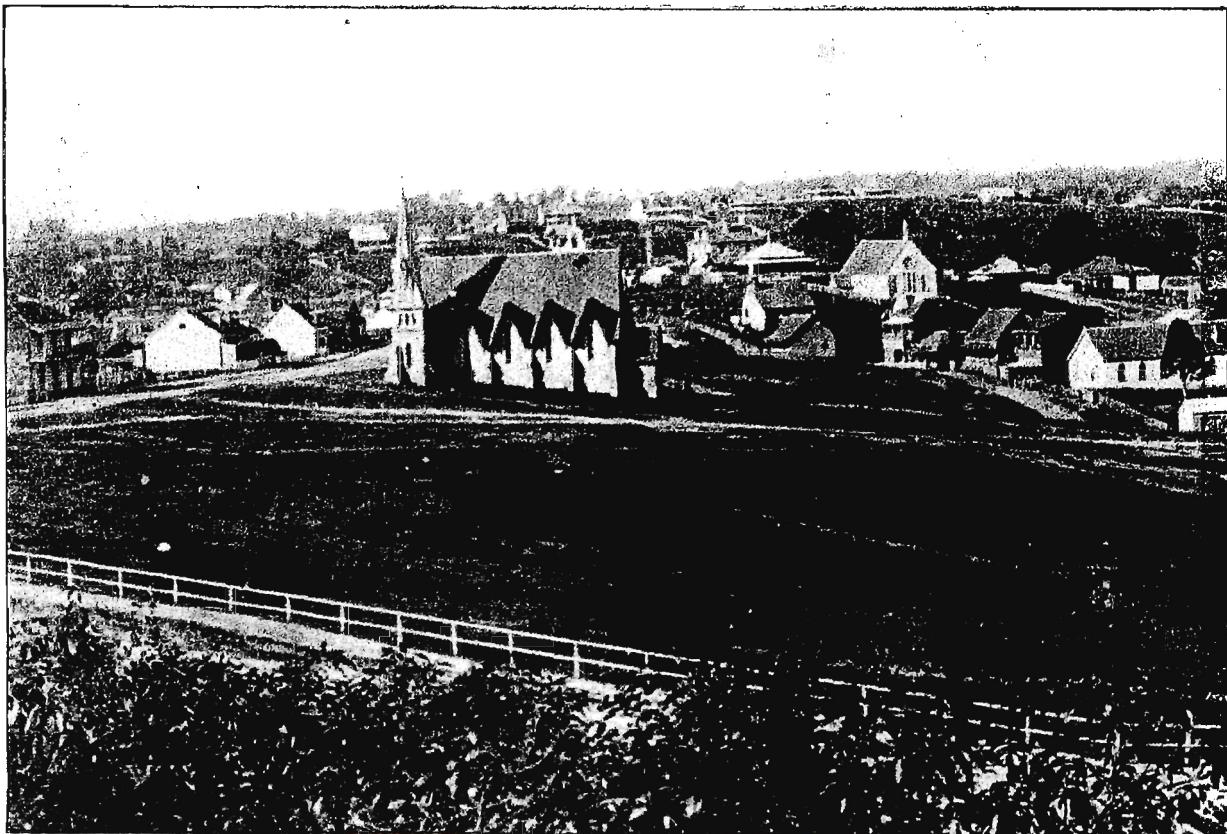
¹²⁷ The Bourke *Church Acts* of 1836. See Parker, 'Strange Bedfellows', p. 12.

¹²⁸ Ogg to Surveyor-General, 25 June 1862; Surveyor-General to Ogg, 1 July 1862, *QVP*, 1888, pp. 942-943.

¹²⁹ *QVP*, 1888, p. 943. Ogg's statement was incorrect in that, at the time, Arthur Macalister was Secretary for Lands and Works and Robert Herbert was Colonial Secretary.

¹³⁰ *Courier*, 22 February and 16 July 1862. Pettigrew denied that he was the author of this 'advertisement'.

Evangelical congregation. The arrival of a United Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Matthew McGavin, together with the intervention of Charles Ogg, precluded a permanent arrangement,¹³¹ and in the end they acquired a church site next to All Saints Church of England on Wickham Terrace, and lost no time in raising funds and building a new church. The foundation stone was laid in April 1864, and the church, designed by the architect Benjamin Backhouse, was opened in November. Two speeches made on that occasion foreshadowed later trouble. James Love found himself defending the building against charges that it was too ornate; and trustee William Pettigrew, while making a presentation to the precentor, his friend William Murray, emphasised that he was 'an



Illus. 20. The First Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church, c. 1870¹³²

Edward Street, in the foreground, rises to meet Wickham Terrace. The cross on All Saints Church of England is just visible above the roof-line of the Presbyterian church, which was opened in 1864 and demolished in 1886.

¹³¹ Bardon, *Centenary History*, pp. 24-25; James Johnston in *BC*, 4 February 1865; Ogg in *QVP*, 1888, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 952.

¹³² JOL Neg. No. 138851.

admirer of good psalmody' and 'a devoted hater of harmoniums and kists o' whistles'.¹³³

The *State Aid to Religion Discontinuance Act*, which provided that there should be no established church in Queensland and no state aid to any church, removed one of the major differences that the Presbyterians had brought with them from Britain. In 1863, in a move of which Pettigrew entirely approved, the existing congregations united to form the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. The new church on Wickham Terrace, which was named the 'Union Presbyterian Church' to commemorate this achievement, attracted a number of wealthy families, and quickly became the largest of Brisbane's four Presbyterian congregations.¹³⁴

In 1867, Pettigrew again became a centre of controversy, this time involving his detestation of 'harmoniums and kists o' whistles'. When, with the encouragement of their minister, the Wickham Terrace congregation decided to install an harmonium in the church to accompany the singing, Pettigrew, seeing in such instruments the influence of 'the Church of Rome', was outraged. Stating firmly that he was 'not in favour of innovations', he left the church 'in thorough disgust and abhorrence' and asked for the return of the £200 he had contributed to the building fund.¹³⁵ Throughout the year, attempts were made by the elders to reconcile him with the wishes of the majority of the congregation; but he held out, and in February 1868, they advertised for 'a competent

¹³³ BC, 1 December 1864. Precentors led Presbyterian congregations in the singing of metrical versions of the psalms, either by 'lining' (singing each line first) or by conducting a choir. 'Kist o' whistle' is a Scottish expression meaning 'blowing through an empty space'. It could be used against a person who spoke a lot but said little, and was also applied to church organs. Pers. com. Jim Pettigrew, Alloway.

¹³⁴ BC, 21 July 1868.

¹³⁵ WP to James Bryden, 15 February 1868, QWHA. Pettigrew's opinion was not unusual. During the nineteenth century the introduction of church organs was sturdily resisted in both Scotland and Australia. The first organ in a Brisbane Presbyterian Church was installed in the Creek Street Church of the Rev. John Fleming McSwaine in the late 1870s, although the Ipswich congregation (of which John Pettigrew was a member) installed a harmonium in their church in the late 1850s. See Alexander Hay, *Jubilee Memorial of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland* (Brisbane: Alexander Muir & Co., 1900), p. 23; Leslie G. Slaughter, *Ipswich Municipal Centenary* (Ipswich: Ipswich City Council, 1960), p. 69.

person to conduct the psalmody'.¹³⁶ Somewhat ungraciously, Pettigrew paid his contribution to the Sustenance Fund and a year's arrears on his pew rent;¹³⁷ but his relations with James Love were so soured that he continued to take his family to church at South Brisbane, and only after Love 'passed over to the Church of England'¹³⁸ in 1871 did he return wholeheartedly to Wickham Terrace.

During 1862, Pettigrew joined two very different organisations, each of which enhanced his standing in the community, extended his network of friends and acquaintances, and helped to make him more politically acceptable. The first was the Caledonian Association, formed that year for the purpose of keeping Scottish customs and culture alive.¹³⁹ Three influential members of Parliament – Arthur Macalister, John Douglas and George Edmondstone – were its first President and Vice-Presidents, and Pettigrew served for many years as its Treasurer, helping to organise picnics, sports gatherings, and annual dinners to honour the birthday of Robert Burns.

The Caledonian Association's lively activities attracted public support, which increased during the 1860s. When the Association sponsored a trip to the Pine Rivers in Edmund Mellor's steamer *Settler* on Christmas Day 1863, Pettigrew, who was given to combining business with pleasure, took the opportunity to visit the property that he had just purchased on the South Pine.¹⁴⁰ The following year, on Boxing Day, a similar excursion up the river to Woogaroo involved competitions in Highland sports, Highland dancing, and bagpipe-playing. Pettigrew, by then an alderman, distributed the prizes.¹⁴¹ In 1865-66 the Association arranged employment as servants for a group of young women from the

¹³⁶ McLeish to WP, 29 December 1867 and 10 February 1868; BC, 6 February 1868.

¹³⁷ James Bryden to WP, 24 March 1868.

¹³⁸ Hay, *Jubilee Memorial*, p. 18.

¹³⁹ WP Diary, 27 November and 5 December 1862.

¹⁴⁰ WP Diary, 25 December 1863.

¹⁴¹ WP Diary, 7 December 1864; BC, 7, 8, 15 and 27 December 1864.

Shetland Islands.¹⁴² In February 1868, during the visit to Brisbane of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, an ambitious program of Caledonian Games had to be cut short because the guest of honour arrived late;¹⁴³ but a gathering held in August 1870, when Pettigrew was Mayor of Brisbane, attracted nearly 5,000 people, and, to his delight, raised £100 for the Brisbane Hospital.¹⁴⁴

He also joined the Philosophical Society, which had been established in 1859 by a small group of men who met to discuss ‘scientific subjects, with special reference to the natural history, soil, climate and agriculture of the colony of Queensland’,¹⁴⁵ and to hear papers given by its members. Pettigrew became a stalwart of the Philosophical Society, and, according to Elizabeth Marks, ‘probably attended more meetings than any other member’.¹⁴⁶ As in other organisations, his presence was low-key and steadfast. He presented five papers, served as a councillor from 1867 to 1869 and again in 1872, and was Treasurer from 1872 to 1883. With his enthusiasm for pure and natural science, design, construction and experiment, Pettigrew was stimulated by the company of the intelligent men from different backgrounds who were attracted to the Philosophical Society. While his innovative ideas were often scoffed at in the wider community, he could be sure that Philosophical Society members would at least consider his propositions and arguments.

On 1 April 1862, he presented his first paper, a discussion ‘On the Drainage of Land’, in which he dealt chiefly with draining agricultural land to improve soil quality, and argued the case for tile drains, giving scientific explanations and practical examples. This

¹⁴² *QDG*, 11 November 1865.

¹⁴³ *BC*, 1 and 25 February 1868.

¹⁴⁴ WP Diary, 15 August 1870; *BC*, 13, 15 and 16 August 1870.

¹⁴⁵ E. N. Marks, ‘A History of the Queensland Philosophical Society and the Royal Society of Queensland from 1859 to 1911’, *Proc. Royal Society of Queensland*, Vol. LXXI, No. 2, 1959, pp. 17-42; WP Diary, 2 December 1862.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

paper¹⁴⁷ revealed not only his agricultural background and grasp of scientific terms and concepts, but also his consciousness of economic factors and willingness to experiment. Leading by example, he drained his land at South Brisbane and cultivated it, successfully growing crops of potatoes¹⁴⁸ and several varieties of peach, for which he won prizes at the Horticultural Shows.¹⁴⁹ Although his enthusiasm for drainage was ridiculed by those who wished to denigrate him, he was quite prepared to ride out derision, acknowledging in his speech that ‘the mere enunciation of an improvement, even when it appeals to self-interest, does not necessarily insure its adoption’.¹⁵⁰

On 17 October 1864, he presented a short paper entitled ‘Remarks on the Waveline Principle in Shipbuilding’,¹⁵¹ which he illustrated with models and diagrams. ‘I have not yet found a good theory for ship-building,’ he admitted, as he expounded the idea that, if the sides of a ship were made straight, its speed would be increased by the force of the waves formed by the bow. He mentioned that he had designed his new boat, *Meeanchin II*, on this principle, but believed that he had ‘over-stretched the mark’ because she was ‘too full aft for any speed that can be attained by pulling’. In February, she had been beaten at rowing; but, just before giving his paper, he had sailed her against Shepherd Smith’s *Foam* in a strong wind, and she had performed according to his theory.¹⁵²

Pettigrew’s interest in ships became an investment in 1861, when he took shares in the Queensland Steam Navigation Company, which was established to provide competition for the Australian Steam Navigation Company on the Sydney to Brisbane run. The need for an improved shipping service had long been discussed in Brisbane, and an attempted

¹⁴⁷ ‘On the Drainage of Land’ in *Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Queensland*, Vol. 1, 1859-1872 (Brisbane, MDCCCLXXII).

¹⁴⁸ BC, 22 September 1869. The potatoes were grown in 1862.

¹⁴⁹ *Courier*, 15 January 1864 and BC, 31 December 1864.

¹⁵⁰ ‘On the Drainage of Land’, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ ‘Remarks on the Waveline Principle in Shipbuilding’ in *Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Queensland*, Vol. 1, 1859-1872 (Brisbane, MDCCCLXXII).

¹⁵² WP Diary, 8 October 1864. Shepherd Smith was the manager of the Bank of New South Wales.

Moreton Bay Steam Navigation Company had failed to get off the ground in 1853.¹⁵³ By 1860, the A.S.N.Co. had extended its service north to Gladstone and Rockhampton, but traders such as Pettigrew had only limited use of it, because large cargoes for these ports were loaded in Sydney, and ‘consequently, goods were left on the [Brisbane] wharf for weeks to the great loss and annoyance of northern customers.’¹⁵⁴

The Q.S.N.Co. was established as a limited liability company with capital of £25,000 and a list of distinguished promoters. Captain George Patullo went to Scotland to buy the company’s first ship, the 287 ton paddle-steamer *Queensland*. Pettigrew was pleased with the *Queensland*, and sent his goods in her whenever possible.¹⁵⁵ By the end of 1862, the service was profitable, and the Q.S.N.Co. directors ambitiously decided to increase the capital to £60,000, and build two larger ships and an iron riverboat.¹⁵⁶ At this, the A.S.N.Co. dropped its fares and freight rates, and when the Q.S.N.Co.’s *Lady Bowen* and *Lady Young*, each of 425 tons, were put into service in 1864, continued price-cutting, together with the economic downturn, ensured that by 1868 the Q.S.N.Co. was out of business, its ships being acquired by the A.S.N.Co.¹⁵⁷

For Pettigrew, who lost an investment of £1,098¹⁵⁸ and had to pay an extra £300 in calls on partly paid shares, the failure of the Q.S.N.Co. was especially galling, because he linked it to the directors’ unwillingness to heed his recommendations about the design of its ships. When he had approached them with the idea of having the first vessel made with a straight section amidships, he was referred to George Patullo, who did not agree with him. On a visit to Sydney in 1858, however, Pettigrew had discussed ship design

¹⁵³ MBC, 8 January 1853.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Genealogy’, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ WP Diary, 23 June 1862; *Courier*, 25 June 1862.

¹⁵⁶ BC, 7 August 1865. The riverboat, named the *Emu*, was launched on 5 August 1865.

¹⁵⁷ WP Diary, 2 October 1862; WP Notes, 27 January 1868; N. L. McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown: The A.U.S.N. Story* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1977), pp. 36-39; Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland*, pp. 42-44.

¹⁵⁸ BSM Balance Book, 1866-1870, pp. 59, 104 and 171.

with the A.S.N.Co's Chief Engineer, Thomas McArthur, who gave 'strict attention' to his ideas. Pettigrew believed that these discussions influenced the A.S.N.Co. to lengthen the steamer *Telegraph*, doubling her cargo capacity while maintaining her former speed.¹⁵⁹ The A.S.N.Co. then lengthened nearly all its ships, and the practice spread to other parts of the world. 'I thereby lifted a stone to break my own head', wrote Pettigrew, 'for I held considerable shares in the Q.S.N.Co.'¹⁶⁰

In January 1863, Pettigrew was approached by eighty-three ratepayers to try again for a seat on the Brisbane Municipal Council.¹⁶¹ Addressing electors in North and South Brisbane and the Valley, he advocated the division of the town into wards for better representation, and promised to support the building of a bridge across the river, provided that it could be properly funded.¹⁶² This time he was elected, coming second out of four candidates to the popular Patrick Mayne.¹⁶³ The core of businessmen¹⁶⁴ who had served as aldermen since the Council's inception remained, but Pettigrew was spared the antagonism of Robert Cribb, who was defeated and then devoted himself to his responsibilities as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

During a turbulent, three-year term, Pettigrew the individualist learned something of the art of local government. He was not easily accepted by the established aldermen, and his desire to be appointed to the Council's Improvement Committee led to a 'squabble' at the first meeting – but he got his way.¹⁶⁵ In 1863 he also served on the Water and Lighting Committees, in 1864 on the Improvement, Water and Bridge Committees, and in 1865 on

¹⁵⁹ WP Notes. In February 1858, on a visit to Sydney to purchase the engine of the steamer *Ben Bolt*, Pettigrew discussed ship design with McArthur. The lengthened *Telegraph* was tried in January 1859.

¹⁶⁰ 'Genealogy', p. 10.

¹⁶¹ WP Diary, 31 January 1863.

¹⁶² WP Diary, 5, 6, and 7 February 1863; *Courier*, 6 February 1863.

¹⁶³ WP Diary, 11 February 1863; *Courier*, 12 February 1863.

¹⁶⁴ John Petrie, Patrick Mayne, T.B. Stephens, Joshua Jeays, George Edmondstone and A.J. Hockings.

¹⁶⁵ WP Diary, 16 March 1863.

the Finance Committee, where, keen to see the Council's limited funds used effectively, he constantly opposed 'unnecessary' expenditure. His idea of turfing the streets was ignored, but long grass continued to grow there anyway, becoming part of an extended joke and giving him a nick-name – 'the verdant alderman'.¹⁶⁶ In 1865 the town was divided into six wards, each represented by two aldermen. Pettigrew then represented only central Brisbane, the East Ward, from which the Council drew most of its rates.¹⁶⁷ When drawing attention to the need for improvements to the East Ward's streets and drains, he frequently argued (against the views of aldermen from less affluent wards) that rates money should be spent in the ward where it was collected.

In 1864 Brisbane suffered a series of natural disasters, which heralded the economic downturn that followed. The town was inundated by unseasonal floods in June and July, by minor floods in February, and by a major flood in March, when driving rain penetrated roofs, walls and windows, and gale-force winds brought down trees and fences, and destroyed gardens and unfinished buildings.¹⁶⁸ Pettigrew's workmen, accustomed to taking action when water rose over the wharves and entered the BSM, busily secured the sawmill and removed timber from the riverbank.¹⁶⁹

Only three weeks later, on 11 April, an accidental fire burnt out fourteen shops and two cottages in Queen Street, causing losses estimated at £40,000.¹⁷⁰ The chaos and unnecessary damage attending this fire demonstrated the seriousness of Brisbane's lack of a reticulated water supply and a fire brigade, and the need to ensure that only brick or stone buildings were erected in the main streets. At a public meeting after the fire, Pettigrew was appointed to a committee which was asked to 'take the necessary steps to

¹⁶⁶ WP Diary, 12 February 1863; BC, 17 January 1871.

¹⁶⁷ *Municipal Institutions Acts* of 1864 and 1865. The wards were North, South, East, West, the Valley and Kangaroo Point.

¹⁶⁸ *Courier*, 19, 21, 22 and 23 March 1864.

¹⁶⁹ WP Diary, 20 March 1864.

¹⁷⁰ WP Diary, 11 April 1864; BC, 12 April 1864.

prevent a similar calamity'.¹⁷¹ The committee confined itself to a recommendation that three fire brigades be formed, one to be funded by the Municipal Council and two by insurance companies.¹⁷²

On 1 December, an even greater blaze burnt out an entire Queen Street block between Albert and George Streets. Fifty houses and businesses were destroyed, with losses of £60,000. The newly formed Volunteer Fire Brigade No.1 directed its attention to saving the contents of buildings, and there was less unnecessary loss than in April; but, because the block contained many old, wooden structures, the fire spread rapidly and smouldered for days afterwards.¹⁷³ Sparks fell on other parts of the town, including the BSM, where spot fires were put out in the lower office. Pettigrew and his workmen assisted at the fire, and the next day he wrote that he was 'very tired [and] unable to move'.¹⁷⁴

Public pressure for action on safer buildings and an assured water supply followed these fires.¹⁷⁵ The *Municipal Institutions Act* of 1864 was not amended to give the Council power to control building standards until 1867;¹⁷⁶ but the much-needed water supply, provided for in the *Brisbane Waterworks Act* of 1863,¹⁷⁷ was begun in 1864 with the damming of Enoggera Creek. During 1865, pipes and associated waterworks were pushed towards the town, and on 3 July 1866, water flowed from a hydrant in Queen Street.¹⁷⁸ The work of connecting premises then began, and in 1868, to Pettigrew's satisfaction, the BSM at last had a reliable source of fresh water. The sawmill's boilers, which had previously been cleaned out fortnightly to remove sludge and salt from the river water,

¹⁷¹ BC, 13 April 1864.

¹⁷² BC, 14 April 1864; For a history of Brisbane's fire brigades, see K. D. Calthorpe and K. Capell, *Brisbane on Fire: a history of fire-fighting 1860-1925* (Brisbane: Fire Brigade Historical Society, 1997).

¹⁷³ BC, 2 December 1864.

¹⁷⁴ WP Diary, 2 December 1864.

¹⁷⁵ BC, 2 December 1864.

¹⁷⁶ Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, pp. 385-387.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁸ Helen Gregory, *The Brisbane River Story* (Brisbane: Aust. Marine Conservation Soc., 1996), pp. 76-77.

needed to be emptied only once a year.¹⁷⁹

Pettigrew was present at other hopeful beginnings in 1864. He was among the dignitaries when, on a hot January evening, with full Masonic ceremony, the foundation stone of the Brisbane Town Hall, complete with inscriptions in Latin and English and a collection of coins, was laid by Governor Bowen. Boasting that no citizen would be taxed for its erection, and that the revenue it generated would pay it off, the Council had borrowed £20,000 to build this three-storey edifice.¹⁸⁰ Pettigrew recorded with relief that there was ‘no spree’ afterwards.¹⁸¹ In August, he watched the Governor lay the foundation stone of a substantial stone and iron bridge, designed to cross the river from Queen Street to South Brisbane, and he attended the celebratory banquet and ball, held that evening in a large room in the unfinished Town Hall.¹⁸² Construction of the bridge was slow because of the difficulty of finding secure footings for its pillars. In June 1865, while Pettigrew was away exploring the coast, a temporary bridge was opened, but this structure, built on timber piles, became riddled with cobra (a marine borer), and collapsed resoundingly into the river only seventeen months later.¹⁸³

As part of his plan to capture the northern timber trade, Pettigrew made a number of trips to the developing ports at Gladstone (established 1854) and Rockhampton (established 1858), where his timber was sold through agents. He first visited Rockhampton in September 1858, at the beginning of the disastrous Canoona gold rush, and published a report that displayed his customary caution. ‘That there is gold at the diggings I do not doubt,’ he wrote, ‘but the means of getting it is the difficulty.’ Pointing out that the wet

¹⁷⁹ Memo Book, BSM, p. 28.

¹⁸⁰ BC, 29 January 1864.

¹⁸¹ WP Diary, 28 January 1864.

¹⁸² WP Diary, 23 August 1864.

¹⁸³ Gregory, *The Brisbane River Story*, pp. 92-93.

season was imminent, he criticised the site chosen for Rockhampton township as likely to flood, and suggested that ‘parties’ who were thinking of going to Canoona should wait at least four months for ‘more authentic intelligence’ and ‘more favourable weather’.¹⁸⁴ Other accounts of the goldfield were wildly enthusiastic, however, and Pettigrew’s advice was ignored. The thousands of men who arrived at Rockhampton by ship from the south found the field limited in size and fully occupied, and the disorder and disillusionment that followed led to public scepticism whenever subsequent gold discoveries were reported.¹⁸⁵

Much further north, on the harbour of Port Denison, the township of Bowen was established in 1861 by Crown Lands Commissioner George Elphinstone Dalrymple, a well-connected Scot with squatting interests and considerable achievement as an explorer.¹⁸⁶ At first Bowen was a settlement of tents;¹⁸⁷ but, on a visit to Gladstone and Rockhampton in October 1863, Pettigrew noted that there was ‘a considerable demand for timber’ at Port Denison,¹⁸⁸ and from mid-1864, schooners loaded with timber from Maryborough sawmills were sent there.¹⁸⁹

Pettigrew pursued the northern trade tenaciously, keeping the price of his timber low. During 1864, he came under pressure from other sawmillers, including his brother John Pettigrew, who was involved in a mill at Ipswich, and a Maryborough rival, Robert Greathead, to raise prices.¹⁹⁰ Towards the end of 1864, an increasing number of

¹⁸⁴ MBC, 6 October 1858.

¹⁸⁵ Lorna McDonald, ‘The Rockhampton Delusion: A Brief History of the Canoona Rush’, *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 3, No. 10, May 1979, pp. 28-35.

¹⁸⁶ G.A.F.E. Dalrymple (1826-1876). See Farnfield, *Frontiersman: A Biography of George Elphinstone Dalrymple*.

¹⁸⁷ Geoffrey Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1970.), p. 28.

¹⁸⁸ WP Diary, 18 October 1863.

¹⁸⁹ *Port Denison Times*, 16 June 1864. These ships included the *Louisa Maria*, *Elizabeth*, *Marion Renny* and *Susannah*.

¹⁹⁰ WP Diary, 12 August and 4 November 1864.

insolvencies signalled the beginnings of a recession. ‘Money scarce and timber not in such demand,’ he noted in his diary in November.¹⁹¹ Becoming aware that Gladwell and Greathead, his chief competitors in Maryborough, were ‘shaky’, he advised William Sim of the importance of selling Dundathu timber cheaply in order to keep northern trade, ‘let who like go to the wall’,¹⁹² and sent BSM employee George Smith to Bowen to open a timber-yard and reduce the price of timber.¹⁹³

At the BSM in January 1865, with a yard full of timber but no orders, Pettigrew paid off thirty-four employees, and set off on a trip to inspect his business interests in the northern ports. At Dundathu, he calculated that the assets of Pettigrew and Sim exceeded liabilities by £25, and noted the election of the controversial squatter William Henry Walsh as Member for Maryborough with the frank comment: ‘Walsh returned. No politics. All vainglory and bounce.’¹⁹⁴ At Gladstone and Rockhampton, the timberyards were full and sales were slow. Attending a service at the Rockhampton Presbyterian Church, Pettigrew complained of the heat and suggested that the roof be lined with boards.¹⁹⁵ On 12 February, he arrived at Bowen on the steamer *Diamantina*.¹⁹⁶

A frontier settlement of about 1,000 people and dependent on its pastoral hinterland, Bowen in 1865 was similar to the Brisbane which Pettigrew had known in 1849 – and reputedly just as rough. His initial discussions with Bowen businessmen, many of whom he had known in Brisbane, revealed a local quandary. They were about to elect a representative for the new seat of Kennedy in the Legislative Assembly, and the favoured candidate was Bowen’s popular founder, G. E. Dalrymple. However, after accepting

¹⁹¹ WP Diary, 19 November 1864.

¹⁹² WP Diary, 6 December 1864.

¹⁹³ PDT, 21 January and 4 February 1865.

¹⁹⁴ WP Diary, 1 and 2 February 1865. W. H. Walsh (1823-1888) was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1865 to 1878 and the Legislative Council from 1879 to 1888.

¹⁹⁵ WP Diary, 5 February 1865.

¹⁹⁶ PDT, 18 February 1865.

nomination for Kennedy the previous October,¹⁹⁷ Dalrymple had gone to Brisbane for medical treatment and had not returned. Since he was reportedly enjoying life at the Queensland Club, some Bowen residents suspected that he might be taking them for granted. On the other hand, if his health was really an issue, he might never return, and a new candidate had to be found.

Pettigrew was asked if he would stand for Kennedy, and, perhaps prompted by his irritation at the election of W. H. Walsh, he saw it as his 'duty' to agree.¹⁹⁸ On Saturday 18 January, Bowen's weekly newspaper, the *Port Denison Times*, published a request, signed by sixteen residents, that Pettigrew would accept nomination as a candidate in the forth-coming election.¹⁹⁹ Taking the proposal seriously, he wrote a policy speech and had it printed and distributed. Rambling and sprinkled with Biblical quotations, the speech discussed general principles, such as his belief in income tax and enthusiasm for railways. Some policies, such as his support for the pastoral industry, direct immigration, and the eventual separation of north Queensland, were acceptable in Bowen; but his total opposition to coolie labour and his indication that he would be an independent, supporting neither the government nor the opposition, were not calculated to win him popularity in the north. The specific and pressing needs of a frontier town – a hospital, a National School, law courts and postal services – were mentioned almost as an afterthought. 'If God permit,' he promised, 'it is my intention to visit this town once a year; and, if elected, it will give me pleasure to meet you and give an account of my stewardship.'²⁰⁰

The name of Korah Halcombe Wills, a publican, headed the list of Pettigrew's

¹⁹⁷ *PDT*, 29 October 1864.

¹⁹⁸ Election speech, Bowen, 20 February 1865. Printed copy in collection of Allan Pettigrew.

¹⁹⁹ *PDT*, 18 February 1865.

²⁰⁰ Election speech, Bowen, 20 February 1865.

supporters, and on the ‘particularly warm’ evening of Wednesday 15 February, he delivered his speech at Wills’s Hotel. Two chairs were placed on top of a large table in the middle of the room, so that the candidate and a chairman, William Keith, were entirely surrounded by a crowd of sceptical electors. Although Keith expressed the hope that Pettigrew would be given ‘a patient and impartial hearing’, the crowd became increasingly hostile, and the *Port Denison Times* commented that the meeting was the noisiest that Bowen had seen.²⁰¹

It was not unusual for voters in outlying areas to return members of parliament who did not live in their electorates, but Pettigrew was not seen as the right man for Bowen. The editor of the *Port Denison Times*, Frederick Rayner, unimpressed by Pettigrew’s speech, produced a cutting editorial:

Mr Pettigrew ... arrives at the eleventh hour, just to take a stroll around his timber-yard, quite ‘permiscuous like’, and is at once recognised and hailed as our political chieftain, and will take his stand by the side of [Dalrymple] the old pioneer.’²⁰²

Apart from not being a local man, Pettigrew was criticised as a ‘town liberal’, opposed to the squatters and the coolie labour which they considered essential for the development of the north. He was for the ‘poor’ man and against the ‘rich’. His proclaimed political independence, combined with the ‘dogmatism and pragmatism’ detected by Rayner, might ‘curdle into insufferable self-sufficiency and conceit’. Self-righteous, even ‘pharasaical’, he was much too religious for the frontier society of Bowen.²⁰³ Only four years settled, this remote community had already developed the parochial attitudes – mistrust of outsiders, and dislike of the city and the south – that became enduring themes in Queensland (and especially North Queensland) politics.

²⁰¹ *PDT*, 18 February 1865.

²⁰² *PDT*, 25 February 1865; However, in ‘Pioneer Editor: Frederick Rayner’s Writings’, *Newspaper History at Bowen, N.Q. 1864-1969* (Bowen: Bowen Historical Society, 1969), n.p., Gertrude Kelly noted that in 1887 Rayner admitted ‘it might have been better if they had elected Pettigrew’.

²⁰³ *PDT*, 25 February 1865.

Pettigrew was present at the nomination of candidates on 18 February, and then returned to Brisbane on the steamer *James Paterson*, attending to business by noting the stunted pine trees that grew on the coastal islands, and speculating that ‘a portable saw mill in some quiet bay might be got but too expensive for a long time to come.’²⁰⁴ His diary barely mentions the election, but instead contains brief observations about the people, activities and future prospects of Bowen. His candidature, however, had the effect of galvanising his absent rival into action. From the Queensland Club on 21 February, Dalrymple wrote to the *Port Denison Times*: ‘A rumour has reached me that Mr Pettigrew intends to contest the election. I trust the constituency will think twice before they support an out and out centralising Brisbanite, even a member of the Brisbane Municipal Council’; and he mentioned his own representations to the Colonial Secretary concerning direct migration to Bowen and the supply of timber.²⁰⁵

Dalrymple returned to Bowen just before the election. On the evening of 17 March, he addressed a receptive meeting of electors at Wills’s Hotel, assuring them that Bowen was his ‘first love’ and speaking patronisingly about Pettigrew, saying he was ‘a thorough Brisbane man ... no doubt a very excellent individual in his private character, but not a fit representative for the Kennedy District’.²⁰⁶ The next day Dalrymple was returned for Kennedy with ninety-eight votes to Pettigrew’s eleven.

Kennedy was the only Legislative Assembly seat that Pettigrew ever contested. He calculated that it cost him one third of the £30/10/- which he spent on his northern trip.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ WP Diary, 2 March 1865.

²⁰⁵ PDT, 4 March 1865.

²⁰⁶ PTD, 18 March 1865.

²⁰⁷ WP Diary, 7 March 1865.

While Pettigrew was visiting North Queensland, he was returned unopposed as an alderman and then elected Mayor of Brisbane – but his absence probably cost him the position. At the Council meeting on 7 February, he and Albert Hockings received five votes each. The Chairman and retiring Mayor, Joshua Jeays, decided in Pettigrew's favour, but the validity of Jeays's action was challenged at the next meeting, and a ballot was held which resulted in the election of Hockings.²⁰⁸ Absent in North Queensland in February and exploring the coast in June and September, Pettigrew missed nine of the Council's fortnightly meetings during 1865, but was active and outspoken when present. Some meetings were affected by the erratic behaviour of Alderman Patrick Mayne, and in August the community was stirred by the scandal associated with his untimely death.²⁰⁹ Whatever he heard or knew, Pettigrew was restrained when describing Mayne's funeral, which drew thousands of onlookers: 'P. Mayne's remains were buried today,' he wrote in his diary. 'Great crowd.'²¹⁰

Summing up the 1860s in 1900, Pettigrew wrote: 'Things went on well enough for a time, but like all other times there are ups & downs.'²¹¹ In south-east Queensland, the 'downs' that began with the floods and fires of 1864 continued in 1865 and plunged to the depths in an economic crisis in 1866. Between 1866 and 1868 there were numerous resignations from the Council, chiefly because of the financial difficulties of individual aldermen. The businessmen who had given long service – John Petrie, T. B. Stephens, Joshua Jeays, Albert Hockings and George Edmondstone – retired, to be replaced, when the 'ups' of the 1870s began, by a new set of incumbents.

Allegations of 'jobbery' – the conflict of interest involved when an alderman benefitted

²⁰⁸ BC, 18, 20 and 21 February 1865; BMC Minutes, 17 and 18 February 1865.

²⁰⁹ Rosamund Siemon, *The Mayne Inheritance* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1997), pp. 100-103.

²¹⁰ WP Diary, 20 August 1865; BC, 21 August 1865.

²¹¹ 'Genealogy', p. 7.

from Council contracts – constantly bedevilled those aldermen whose businesses supplied materials to the Council. Allegations of ‘jobbery’ had been flung between Pettigrew and Robert Cribb before the 1863 election,²¹² and Pettigrew himself came in for considerable criticism, usually from anonymous accusers. His participation in the Town Hall contract, for example, led to the publication in 1864 of the following advertisement, addressed to ‘Mr Alderman Pettigrew’ and signed ‘Myles’ Boy’:

Sir, - Is it not jobbery, or something very like it, for you, an Alderman, to be engaged in a Corporation contract? Is it not in contravention of the *Municipal Institutions Act*? I speak, my canny friend, anent the beams for the Town Hall.²¹³

One of Pettigrew’s known critics was the engineer William Coote, whose *History of the Colony of Queensland*, published in 1882, contained barbed comments about Presbyterians’ ‘hatred of whistle kists and preference of precentors’ that were almost certainly aimed at Pettigrew.²¹⁴ The animosity between the two arose from a dispute over Coote’s design for the Town Hall, which proved to be so structurally inadequate that the upper walls spread and had to be strengthened with the use of tie-rods. One of Coote’s responses to this problem was to assert that the timber Pettigrew had supplied for the building was ‘green’, or unseasoned, a claim which Pettigrew denied. Annoyed and sceptical, he moved that the Council should ‘secure professional assistance to inquire and report into the stability of the roof and walls of the Town Hall’.²¹⁵ This was done, and Coote eventually acknowledged the problem; but the Council battled the legal issues arising from design and construction faults in the Town Hall for years afterwards²¹⁶ – and Pettigrew had made another enemy.

²¹² *Courier*, 6 and 9 February 1863.

²¹³ BC, 3 December 1864.

²¹⁴ Coote, *History of the Colony of Queensland*, pp. 249-250.

²¹⁵ BC, 3 August 1865; BMC Minutes, 14 August 1865.

²¹⁶ John Laverty, ‘Brisbane’s First Town Hall: A Case of Aldermanic Bumbling and Jobbery’, in *Brisbane: Corridors of Power*, Brisbane History Group Papers, No. 15, 1997, pp. 1-14.

It is difficult to follow the personal hostilities involved, but Pettigrew was certainly aware of Coote's ill will. His 1866 diary contains the newspaper clipping of a disparaging, anonymous letter which referred to his 'reputation of being an amateur engineer'. Under the signature, 'M', he wrote the names 'W. Coote or T. Oldham'.²¹⁷ This letter was part of a campaign to change the composition of the Council at a time of widespread discontent. With deepening recession, public support for the Town Hall and the Bridge weakened, and the press fostered a perception that the Council, influenced by the 'siren song' of John Petrie,²¹⁸ had overstretched its resources in undertaking projects which it could not pay for. In a savage attack on the Council just before the 1866 election, the *Queenslander* condemned Pettigrew's 'didactic utterances upon drainage etc, etc, etc, etc';²¹⁹ but when, along with Aldermen Mooney, Marshall and Merry, he was defeated, the same newspaper commented:

We would remind the new aldermen that they have unfortunately lost, in Mr Pettigrew, one of the few who strenuously opposed entering into large contracts without first providing the means of paying the contractors.²²⁰

Off the Council during the tough times that followed, Pettigrew was free to pursue other goals, including his own survival in business. During 1866, he often noted that trade was 'dull', and in July, just as he was about to launch the *Tadorna Radjah*, the Agra and Mastermans Bank, which had lent money to the Queensland Government for its railway building projects, 'smashed'. As Pettigrew recalled in 1900,

... that caused the Queensland Bank to smash also. At that time the Town Hall and the Brisbane Bridge were being built. The contractor, Mr Bourne, had to do with that bank so he had to stop work. Nearly everything in the building line came to a standstill. People burned their houses down to get the insurance money on them and leave the place. The insurance people were not so to be done, so they would not give money, but built the homes up again altho at a greater cost than the amount of the

²¹⁷ WP Diary, January 1866. Thomas Oldham was the engineer who had been Pettigrew's rival for the job of marking the levels of streets in 1860.

²¹⁸ *Queenslander*, 17 February 1866.

²¹⁹ *Queenslander*, 3 February 1866; BC, 29 August and 10 October 1865.

²²⁰ *Queenslander*, 17 February 1866.

insurance. That stopped the firing of houses. On Gregory Terrace very few of the houses were occupied. Houses were taken down and taken to the country to be erected there. Brisbane was in a bad way in so far as the house building trade was concerned.²²¹

The government found itself in crisis, unable to pay either its public servants or the contractors who were building the railway line from Ipswich to Toowoomba.²²² The Treasurer, Joshua Peter Bell, proposed to issue unsecured government notes, known as ‘greenbacks’, but Governor Bowen blocked the move because he was not empowered to approve measures that affected the currency. The Premier, Arthur Macalister, resigned, and the former Premier, Robert Herbert, replaced him for nineteen days, just long enough to ease the situation by issuing Treasury bonds.²²³

Macalister’s supporters rallied on 20 July at a public meeting called to discuss the crisis. Pettigrew spoke briefly, claiming that Macalister’s ‘greenback’ proposal should have been given a chance. As a ‘large employer of labour’ with a ‘great stake in the colony’, he identified himself as a supporter of the ‘people’s party’ that had gained power for the first time when Macalister came into office, and portrayed Bowen’s action as an attempt by the ‘squatting or rich party’ to regain power. Bowen and those who agreed with him, such as Pettigrew’s friend George Raff, who was a member of Herbert’s emergency cabinet, had become very unpopular, and Pettigrew was put on a committee to try to change Raff’s mind.²²⁴

Although the political crisis was resolved by mid-August, distress among the victims of the dull times – the families of working men, railway navvies and newly arrived immigrants – increased. On 6 September, groups of unpaid navvies from Laidley and

²²¹ ‘Genealogy’, pp. 7-8.

²²² The railway from Ipswich to Grandchester was opened in July 1865 and the line was then continued on to Toowoomba.

²²³ *Our First Half-Century*, p. 10; Wilson, ‘Arthur Macalister: “Slippery Mac”’, pp. 50-51; Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, pp. 35-37.

²²⁴ *Queenslander*, 21 July 1866; *BC*, 15 August 1870.

Helidon arrived in Ipswich, where Alderman John Pettigrew, in spite of his own financial difficulties,²²⁵ arranged for local shopkeepers to supply them with flour, potatoes, sugar, meat and other provisions, and the next morning watched them depart peacefully on foot to put their case for relief to the authorities in Brisbane.²²⁶

Two days later, anxious citizens and hastily assembled volunteer forces looked on as 135 silent navvies tramped across the temporary wooden bridge into Queen Street and set up camp at the Green Hills (Upper Roma Street). The following Monday and Tuesday, the government responded to their requests with promises of relief work and free passages to the northern ports, where jobs were readily available. On Tuesday evening, a group of about a hundred malcontents, stirred up by talk of ‘blood or bread’, rioted near the Treasury Hotel in George Street and threw stones in an attempt to break into the Colonial (Commissariat) Stores in William Street. Confronted by a disciplined police force, the rioters dispersed, leaving behind a little blood, a few casualties, and an aftermath of court hearings that punished the ring-leaders.²²⁷ Of these disturbances, which he must have witnessed, Pettigrew left no record.

During 1866 and 1867, while noting the fluctuating demand for timber, the scarcity of money, and the increasing number of insolvencies, Pettigrew, buoyed by his own reserves (including the inheritance from his brother Adam), acquired the assets of people who were bankrupted. When the partnership of James Low and William Grigor at Mooloolah became insolvent, for example, he took over the *Gneering* and their bullock teams, and paid them to continue drawing timber for him.²²⁸ He emerged from this unstable period owning various allotments, buildings and boarding houses in Brisbane, and (for him)

²²⁵ WP Diaries, 6 December 1865 and 30 August 1866. Pettigrew assisted John financially during this time.

²²⁶ *Queenslander*, 15 September 1866.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*; Paul Wilson, ‘The Brisbane Riot of September 1866’, *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1971, pp. 13-20.

²²⁸ WP Diary, 4 January 1867.

such unlikely investments as the Clarence Hotel in South Brisbane and the Shamrock Hotel in Margaret Street. Some of these properties he kept for many years; others he later sold at a profit.

In December 1866, the government advertised a reward for the discovery of gold within a convenient distance from Brisbane, and prospectors set out to scour the countryside.²²⁹ By this time, even the optimistic Pettigrew was noting in his diary that the 'extravagant government [was] doing too much',²³⁰ reflecting the widely held view that the colony's problems had been caused by over-ambitious building projects and immigration schemes. Uncertainty and dull times continued into 1867.

²²⁹ WP Diary, 17 December 1866.

²³⁰ WP Diary, December 1866.

6. GREAT NEWS OF GOLD, 1867–1876

On 22 October 1867, Pettigrew wrote in his diary, ‘Great news of gold found on Mary River in papers this morning.’ Reaction to this announcement, even in such bad times, was cautious at first; but the discoverer, James Nash, an experienced prospector who understood the perils of prematurely declaring a goldfield, had taken care to prove his find before reporting it, and as soon as it became clear that a bonanza was waiting in the gold-embedded ridges and gullies at Gympie, men left Brisbane in droves to try their luck. Although just over 100 miles from Brisbane, the diggings were not easily accessible. There was no direct road north along the swampy, forested coast, and the inland route involved a difficult journey across the steep range that divided the Brisbane and Mary Valleys. Most people took a ship to Maryborough, then followed the tracks that linked the isolated sheep and cattle stations along the Mary River.

Having calculated that the shortest routes to Gympie would be via the Noosa River or his depot at Mooloolah, a buoyant Pettigrew set out in the *Tadorna Radjah*, three days after the announcement, with the intention of visiting the goldfield. Calling at Caboolture with the news, he bought a ‘sample bottle’ of rum from the sugar planter Claudio Buchanan Whish.¹ Then, when the steamer ran aground at the northern end of Pumicestone Passage, Pettigrew and a companion named Wilson came ashore, walked north and camped on the south bank of the Mooloolah River while a ‘black-fellow’ fetched a boat to ferry them across to the depot.²

¹ Whish Diary, 25 October 1867, JOL; WP Diary, 25 October 1867; *QDG*, 25 October 1867. Captain C.B. Whish (1827-1890) was born in India, where he became a soldier and visited NSW to purchase horses (remounts) for the Indian Army. Arriving in Brisbane in 1862, he established Oaklands plantation at Caboolture and produced the first commercial sugar and rum in Queensland. An M.L.C. from 1870 until his bankruptcy in 1872, he then became an Inspector of Road Surveys until 1890, when he was drowned in the wreck of the *Quetta*.

² WP Diary, 26 October 1867.

At the news of gold, Low and Grigor's men 'rebelled', were 'discharged', and promptly left for the diggings; but at Pettigrew's request Low, Wilson and John Kinmond set out to mark a dray track from the Maroochy River to Gympie. Pettigrew stayed at the Mooloolah depot and spent the next week assessing logs, planting sugar cane in the garden, and examining potential agricultural land along the Maroochy and Mooloolah Rivers with William Grigor. He also visited the deserted timber-getters' camp on the Maroochy, where Anne Chambers, alone with her baby, awaited the return of her husband Charles, who was rafting cedar.³

On his return to Brisbane, Pettigrew wrote to the *Queensland Daily Guardian*, proposing a road along the coast from Brisbane to Gympie that included the route Low was marking from the Maroochy.⁴ He also pursued the option of a route via Noosa by writing to the Premier, Robert Ramsay Mackenzie, pointing out the desirability of cutting a road from Noosa to Gympie. Since this route would involve improving the entrance to the Noosa River, he also wrote to the Colonial Secretary, proposing that he (Pettigrew) be granted an acre of land for every pound that he spent cutting a new channel.⁵ Receiving the response that a survey would be needed before the government could consider the proposal, he took William Fryar to Noosa twice early in 1868 and, at a cost of £200, surveyed the entrance to the river.⁶ Anticipating future developments, he took up a Special Lease for a wharf site on the Noosa River at the landing place which the cedar-getters called 'Toowantan'.⁷ However, when Fryar concluded that cutting a channel close to Noosa Head was impractical, because a reef of rocks lay just beneath the surface, Pettigrew turned his

³ WP Diary, 26 October to 1 November 1867.

⁴ QDG, 4, 7 and 19 November 1867.

⁵ BC, 12 August 1868; GT, 14 August 1872.

⁶ GT, 9 July 1870 and 14 August 1872. Pettigrew's 1868 diary is missing, but these trips seem to have been in February and March, before and after Prince Alfred's visit to Brisbane.

impractical, because a reef of rocks lay just beneath the surface, Pettigrew turned his attention back to Mooloolah, and from then on sent his vessels to Noosa only occasionally to pick up timber. In a letter to the *Brisbane Courier*, he proposed a route from Mooloolah to Gympie involving a railway from his depot to the Maroochy River, a steamer service up the Maroochy River to the head of navigation, and another railway to connect this point with the goldfield.⁸ His lack of interest in Noosa was later to make him unpopular among the Gympie men who bought land there, anticipating the development of a port.⁹

During February and March 1868, as pressure mounted for the government to build a coastal road from Brisbane to Gympie, James Low improved his track through forest and scrub, logging bad ‘pinches’ and bridging a creek.¹⁰ In March, Pettigrew announced that he would open direct communication between Brisbane and Gympie,¹¹ and in April, Low and Grigor advertised that they would convey passengers and their swags by horse-dray along the forty miles of road that they had made from Mooloolah to Gympie.¹² Travellers took the *Gneering* from Brisbane to the Mooloolah depot, walked along the beach to the Maroochy River and were conveyed upstream to Dunethin Rock, where they crossed the river by punt and continued along Low’s Road to meet an old track near Traverston station that took them to the goldfield.

John Buckland, the Gympie agent for Pettigrew and Low’s service, praised the Mooloolah route in a letter to the *Brisbane Courier*,¹³ and a controversy that erupted over false reports of a gold find near Mt Cooroora gave it some publicity.¹⁴ For a time Low delivered mail

⁸ BC, 12 August 1868.

⁹ GT, 9, 16 and 27 July and 3 August 1870; 24 July and 14 and 17 August 1872.

¹⁰ Nashville Times, 20 May 1868.

¹¹ BC, 13 March 1868.

¹² BC, 7 April, 1868; .

¹³ BC, 22 May 1868; Nashville Times, 22 April and 7 July 1868.

¹⁴ BC, 9 April and 8, 11 and 13 May 1868; Nashville Times, 15 and 22 April 1868.

and goods to Gympie faster than any other carrier,¹⁵ but only small numbers of people used the service, and it was not profitable. The chosen route between Brisbane and Gympie did not include Low's Road, but crossed the Maroochy River at what is now Yandina.¹⁶ When Cobb and Co. began a coach service to the goldfield along the new Gympie Road in November 1868, Low selected land at this crossing and built an inn named 'Mooroochie House'. William Grigor built a similar inn, 'Bankfoot House', near the Glasshouse Mountains.¹⁷ Both men and their sons remained on good terms with Pettigrew, and he called at their establishments on journeys in subsequent years.¹⁸

In 1866 Pettigrew had been President of a National Land League, formed to advocate laws based on the leasing rather than the direct purchase of agricultural land.¹⁹ Legislation to effect this change was delayed by the recession and by obstruction in the Legislative Council, but in March 1868 a *Crown Lands Alienation Act*, which allowed free selection before survey and a period of rental before acquisition, was finally gazetted.²⁰ Under this Act, which made land easier and cheaper to obtain, Pettigrew began to acquire more properties north of Brisbane. In June 1868, after gold was discovered at Jimna, in the mountains south-west of Gympie, the *Tadorna Radjah*, which already traded to the Caboolture River, was able to land travellers on a road that led to the diggings. In August, Pettigrew selected 160 acres on the north bank of the Caboolture River and built a wharf and a store, from which, for the next twenty years, the *Tadorna Radjah* regularly serviced

¹⁵ *Nashville Times*, 20 May 1868; *GT*, 24 July 1872.

¹⁶ E.G.Heap, 'In the Wake of the Raftsmen', Part II, pp. 9-13.

¹⁷ Audienne Blyth, *John Low's House and family, Yandina: Koongalba 1894-1994* (Nambour: Audienne Blyth, 1994), pp. 1-9.

¹⁸ WP Diary, 7 and 8 May 1869.

¹⁹ WP Diary, 4 June 1866; *Queenslander*, 9 June and 21 July 1866; Beverley Kingston, 'The Search for an Alternative to Free Selection in Queensland 1859-1866', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 5, November 1966, pp. 3-9.

²⁰ *QGG*, 6 March 1868; Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, pp. 314-315.

sugar planters, timber-getters, farmers and graziers, as far inland as Durundur station.²¹

In May 1869, concerned that the free selection laws might over-ride his Special Timber Licences, Pettigrew took a day-long, bumpy coach ride from Maryborough to Gympie, and applied in the name of William Sim to select the land at Tin Can Bay where their timber-getters were working.²² On this occasion he noted that the timbered land along Kin Kin Creek, which he had discovered in 1865, had already been selected by a Brisbane businessman, Charles Samuel Russell, on behalf of a group of successful goldminers.²³ These men, who established the firm of McGhie, Luya and Co., opened the Cootharaba sawmill on their Kin Kin Creek selection in 1871 and pressed the government to declare Tewantin a port.²⁴ In 1873, when a road from Gympie to Tewantin was opened to traffic, McGhie, Luya and Co. established a timber depot on the Noosa River and acquired the paddle-steamer *Culgoa* to operate on the Tewantin to Brisbane run.²⁵ Pettigrew, who had sent the *Gneering* to Noosa a number of times to pick up timber, followed these developments with interest; but, seeing no reason to change his mind about the viability of the port there, he allowed his Tewantin wharf lease to lapse in 1872. Nevertheless, the Noosa settler St John Carter, whose first consignment of cedar logs was shipped to Brisbane on the *Gneering* in 1872, faithfully supplied him with timber every year for the next twenty years.²⁶

During his visit to Gympie, Pettigrew inspected a sawmill, newly erected by three of his

²¹ BC, 27 July 1868; This land, Portion 66, County of Canning, was located where the Bruce Highway now crosses the Caboolture River via the Captain Whish Bridge.

²² WP Diary, 2 and 3 May 1869; GT, 8 May 1869; Portions 1 and 2, Parish of Cooloola.

²³ WP Diary, 3 May 1869; James McGhie, Abraham Fleetwood Luya, Frederick George Goodchap and John Woodburn. See Brown, *Cooloola Coast*, pp. 154-167.

²⁴ GT, 8 October 1870; George Heath, 'Plan of Laguna Bay and Nusa Harbour', 1870, in Nancy Cato, *The Noosa Story* (Brisbane: Jacaranda, 1979), p. 19.

²⁵ GT, 22 January and 26 February 1873; WP Diary, 29 January 1873.

²⁶ WP Diary, 19-23 April 1872; St John Carter, 'Early Days of Tewantin and Noosa River', *Noosa Advocate*, Christmas 1912, p. 2; BSM Balance Books, 1873 to 1890.

former employees, William Ferguson, William Henderson and Robert Dath.²⁷ Ferguson and Henderson had been among the first BSM men to leave for the goldfield.²⁸ Dath and Pettigrew had parted company in 1866 during a strike by carpenters in support of an eight-hour-day, and Dath had become a building contractor, buying his timber from the BSM.²⁹ Pettigrew examined the country around Gympie on horseback, then returned to Brisbane by coach, complaining of rheumatism in his back and commenting that the road went 'up hill & down hill – some places a caution'.³⁰ Along the way he met a number of the friends who had established coaching inns – the Lows at Yandina, Edmund Lander on the Mooloolah River, the Grigors at Glasshouse, and Tom Petrie on the North Pine River.

Also in 1869, Pettigrew began to expand his land holdings at Mooloolah by selecting 540 acres of his Special Timber Lease on Buderim Mountain.³¹ In 1872 and 1873 he selected two blocks on the south bank of the Maroochy River, one with a river frontage, the other a swamp that linked his riverside and Buderim blocks.³² Ten years later, he consolidated his holdings by acquiring another inland block and two riverside blocks that had initially been selected by Charles Chambers.³³ When his daughter Margaret acquired two blocks on the Maroochy beachfront in 1880,³⁴ Pettigrew controlled most of the coastal land between the south bank of the Maroochy River and the north bank of the Mooloolah that was not reserved by the Crown. (See map p. 203.) In 1882 his son Robert Pettigrew selected a heavily forested block of 640 acres in the Blackall Range at the source of the Maroochy River near Mt Eerwah, and drew timber from it while developing it as a farm.³⁵

²⁷ WP Diary, 3 May 1869.

²⁸ *GT*, 4 November 1919; Morrison, *Aldine History of Queensland*, n.p.

²⁹ WP Diary, 20 January 1866; BSM Balance Book, 1867, p. 87; *BC*, 27 July 1905.

³⁰ WP Diary, 1 to 8 May 1869.

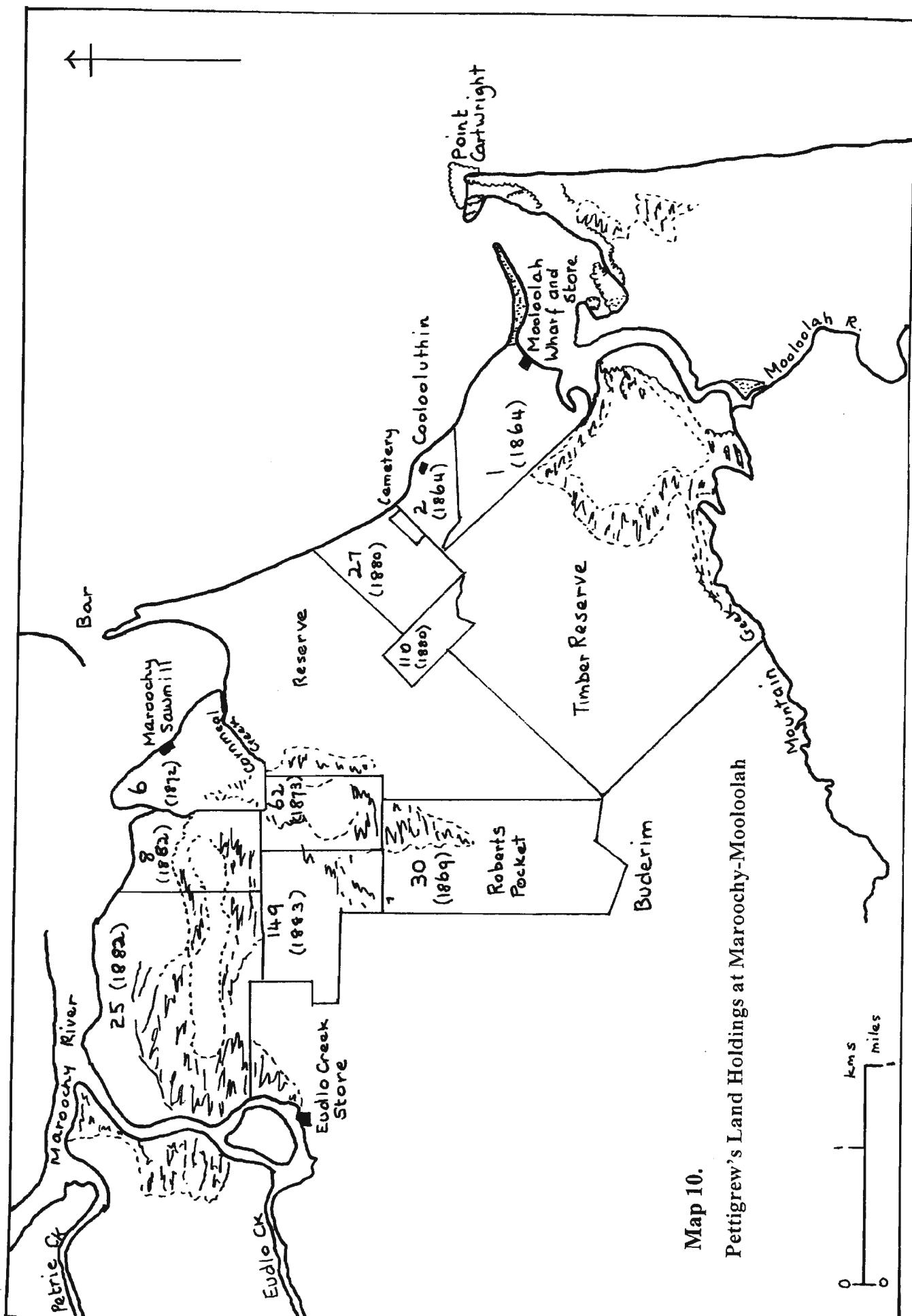
³¹ Portion 30, Parish of Mooloolah.

³² Portion 6, Parish of Maroochy and Portion 62, Parish of Mooloolah.

³³ Portion 149, Parish of Mooloolah and Portions 8 and 25, Parish of Maroochy.

³⁴ Portions 27 and 110, Parish of Mooloolah.

³⁵ Portion 133, Parish of Maroochy; WP Diary, 15 and 23 May 1884.



Map 10.
Pettigrew's Land Holdings at Maroochy-Mooloolah

In June 1869, Henry Willson became the storekeeper at Mooloolah, replacing John Kinmond, who, for a short time, had continued the work of Low and Grigor. Willson was the husband of Mary Hamilton, whose grandmother was Pettigrew's mother's sister.³⁶ After emigrating to work for John Pettigrew at Ipswich, she had married Willson in 1862, and by 1866, when John's business was hit by recession and the Willsons found themselves unemployed, they had two children. Pettigrew had assisted them then,³⁷ and in May 1869, finding them near Yandina and still in difficulties, he installed them at Mooloolah.³⁸ For the next nine years, as well as managing the store, Willson cut timber and ran cattle on Pettigrew's land.

On the breezy headland at Wangothan Beach, Pettigrew built 'Coolaluthin', the house that was to be his family's holiday retreat in the 1870s and early 1880s.³⁹ During their first holiday there in the summer of 1872, he took delight in showing his older children and their friends around the district.⁴⁰ In 1871, one of the houses at the sandfly-ridden depot on the river was pulled down and rebuilt just to the north of 'Coolaluthin'.⁴¹ Named 'Wangothan', this house was occupied by Henry Willson and his family.

At 'Coolaluthin', Pettigrew was, like a Scottish laird, 'monarch of all he surveyed'.⁴² The site was remarkably like his Uncle William McWhinnie's farm on the coast at Fisherton, in Ayrshire. From the verandah of 'Coolaluthin', he could observe his ships, as they entered Mooloolah Harbour with stores for the settlers, and departed, loaded with timber, bags of sugar and cases of fruit. He could also watch his bullock teams, as they dragged

³⁶ 'Genealogy', p. 1.

³⁷ WP Diary, 23 March 1866.

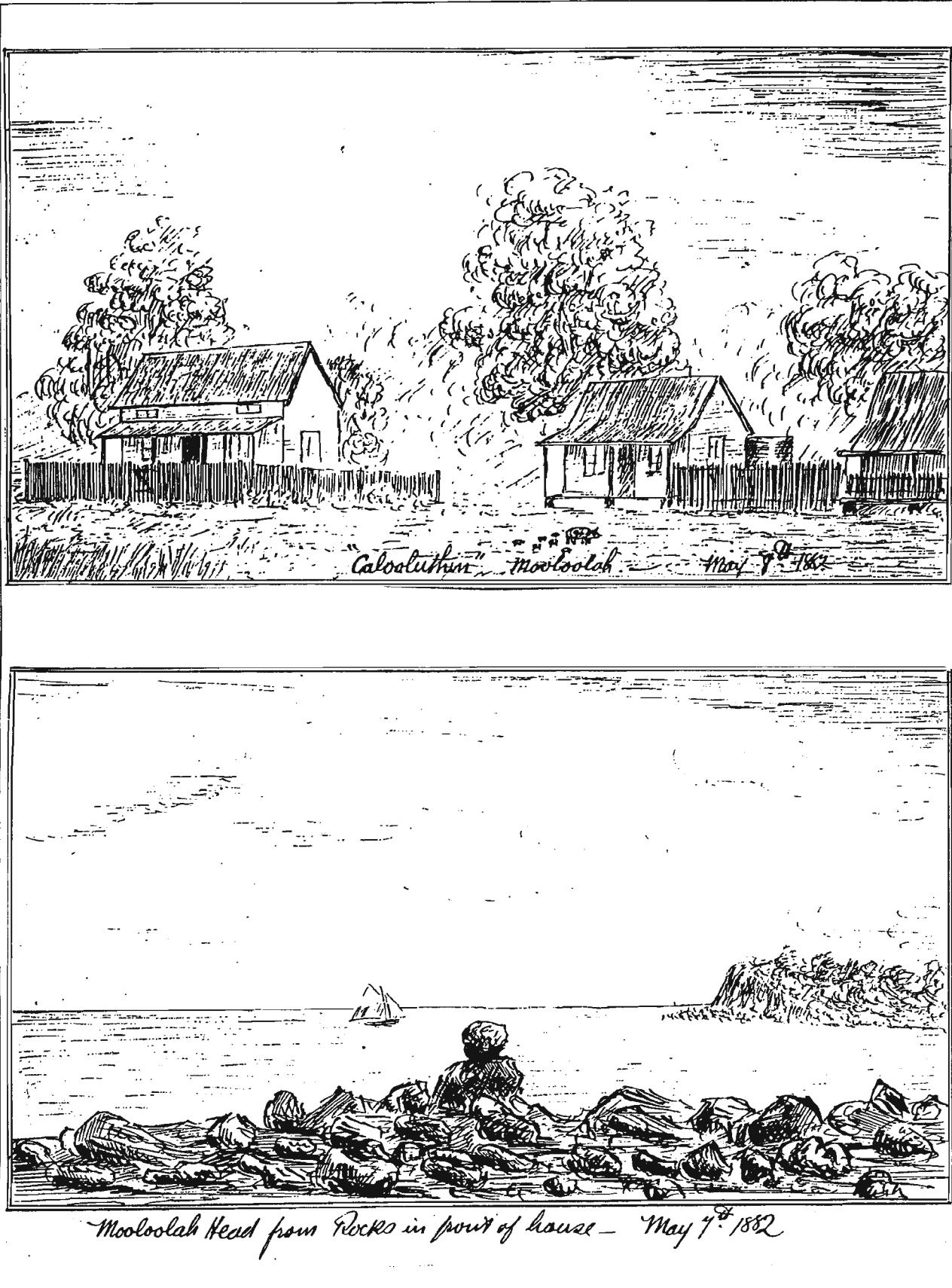
³⁸ WP Diary, 7 May and 7 June 1869.

³⁹ WP Diary, 28 March, 15 June and 14 November 1869; 1 April 1871.

⁴⁰ WP Diary, 12 January to 8 February 1872; 1, 2 and 3 February 1872.

⁴¹ WP Diary, 2 April 1871.

⁴² William Cowper, 'Verses Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk', 1782.



Illus. 21. Sketches at 'Coolooluthin' by Robert Pettigrew, 1882.

From boyhood, Robert Pettigrew spent much time at Mooloolah-Maroochy with his family, his friends, or on his own. During a visit in May 1882, he sketched 'Coolooluthin' and 'Wangothan', and the view of Mooloolah Head (Point Cartwright) from the rocks at Alexandra Headland. He also left a written record of the visit. Note the pigs.

logs along the sandy track from the Maroochy River, or rattled down the steep Buderim Mountain track beside the house. The Rev. Joseph Tainton, who collected the area's oral and written history during the 1960s, pictured Pettigrew, dressed in a long nightshirt, walking from 'Coolaluthin' down to the beach in the mornings to bathe in the surf.⁴³

During 1869, the first selectors moved to the Mooloolah area to grow sugar cane, taking up low-lying country along the river. Others settled on the volcanic soil of Buderim Mountain and the fertile flats of the Maroochy River, and supplied the BSM with logs as they cleared the forests. The district was isolated and depended on Pettigrew's ships, especially the *Gneering*, as its lifeline to Brisbane. Although his main interest continued to be the acquisition of timber, Pettigrew's diaries show how carefully he monitored developments in the district, and an early report refers to the 'many little acts of kindness' which the settlers received from him.⁴⁴ He visited their homes, noted their quarrels, and tried to assist them. In 1874, for example, he donated a piece of his Buderim land for a school, and supplied the materials to build it.⁴⁵ He leased land to some of the settlers and employed others as labourers or as bailiffs on his selections.⁴⁶ He followed with interest the establishment of two sugar mills, Dixon and Fielding's Mill (1876) and the Buderim Mountain Sugar Co. (1880),⁴⁷ and transported their bagged, brown sugar to Brisbane in his ships. In spite of this benevolence, his monopoly of land and transport caused resentment among some of the settlers, who questioned his charges and perceived a gap between their needs and the levels of service which he was able to provide.

⁴³ Joseph Tainton, 'Marutchi: The Early History of the Sunshine Country', unpub. typescript, 1976. p. 10.

⁴⁴ 'The Mooloolah District', BC, 12 March 1870.

⁴⁵ WP Diary, 1 April 1874; WP to J.Dixon, 7 August 1875; BC, 4 September 1875.

⁴⁶ He leased land to Joseph Dixon, and employed Dan Cogill and George Traill; his bailiffs included Mrs Anne Traill and Mrs Dunlop.

As settlers arrived in increasing numbers, the district's Aboriginal population declined. Pettigrew had long relied on Aborigines as guides when exploring or travelling. He took their presence and their ways for granted, and, like most colonists, believed that they would inevitably become extinct.⁴⁸ In 1869, when there were still 'many blacks about' at Mooloolah, he discovered that flour had been stolen from the engine shed. To discourage such thefts, he arranged for a brass 'king' plate to be made, and presented it, together with a flag, to Bingeeye, King of Mooloolah, and his wife, Queen Sarah. Then he bargained with Bingeeye to accept flour as payment for the clearing of paddocks.⁴⁹

He was more concerned about another decline – the loss of the forest resource that fed his industry – and during the early 1870s he set out, with his usual vigour, to promote the planting of trees. On Buderim Mountain, he cleared land, established experimental plots of bunya and hoop pine, beech and red cedar, and tried to persuade settlers such as Dan Cogill, Tom Smith and George Traill to look after the young trees. Like most of the settlers who battled the bush, these men were not convinced that planting trees was necessary, and on later visits, when Pettigrew checked how the trees were growing, the results were generally disappointing.⁵⁰

In Brisbane, recovery from the recession was slow at first. Bankruptcies, once set in train, took time to pass through the legal system. Not everyone who went to the goldfields became rich, and it was several years before those who acquired capital there began to invest it in other industries. In 1868 and 1869, Pettigrew ran the BSM at a loss; but by 1870 the wealth generated by gold was stimulating economic activity, and the BSM was

⁴⁸ *QDG*, 30 September 1863.

⁴⁹ WP Diary, 27 March, 6 June and 8 December 1869.

⁵⁰ WP Diaries, 3 February 1872; 20 June 1874; 2 May 1876; 6 April 1877; 13 June 1879; 7 December 1880; 22 June 1882; 19 April 1883; 18 May 1888; 26 November 1892.

profitable again.⁵¹ Having survived the recession better than most businessmen, Pettigrew set about expanding his operations and putting into practice some of the innovative ideas that had been occupying his mind. His interest in the sugar industry, fostered by contact with Louis Hope at Cleveland, C. B. Whish and George Raff at Caboolture, William Fryar and James Strachan on the Logan River and the settlers at Mooloolah-Maroochy, led to his involvement in the design of machinery for the small sugarmills that were needed on every plantation. In 1867 the workshops at the BSM had produced a sugar centrifugal machine, designed by the engineer James Strachan,⁵² which was claimed to be the first manufactured in the Australian colonies.⁵³ From 1870 to 1874, with the surge in sugar growing that followed economic recovery, sugar centrifugal machines were manufactured at the BSM.⁵⁴

In Maryborough in 1870, Pettigrew and Sim expanded their operations by acquiring the Union sawmill in lower Kent Street, which had begun milling timber from surrounding scrubs in 1861. Its first proprietors, Frederick William Gladwell and Robert Greathead (for a time Pettigrew's main rivals in the contest to capture the northern trade), had faltered after March 1864, when the mill was inundated by a flood that swept away workers' cottages, 600 logs, and a large quantity of sawn timber.⁵⁵

In 1866 Gladwell and Greathead also constructed a sugar mill near Maryborough. The following year, when they decided to dissolve their partnership, a quarrel over the division of their properties forced them into an acrimonious equity suit.⁵⁶ In 1868, their interests were acquired by a local businessman, John Meiklejohn, but his right to the sawmill was challenged in a second court case, and he did not gain ownership until

⁵¹ BSM Balance Books, 1870, pp. 243-245 and 1871, pp. 58-59.

⁵² Whish Diary, 12 October 1862. C.B. Whish described Strachan as 'an intelligent engineer'.

⁵³ QDG, 14 December 1867; MC, 21 December 1867.

⁵⁴ Pugh's Almanacs, 1870, p. 45; 1871, p. 39; 1872, p. 45; 1873, p. 37; 1874, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Kay F. Gassan, *The Pocket* (Maryborough: Wise Owl Publishers, 1997), pp. 105-106.

⁵⁶ Equity Case 105, SCT/U15, QSA. This case was heard in September 1868.

1870.⁵⁷ The damage to the business caused by these delays was exacerbated, in March 1870, by another destructive flood. The *Brisbane Courier* reported:

The Union Saw Mills are, or were, situated in this part of the town, and owing to the property being in chancery in an equity suit, no one seemed at all anxious to secure the timber ... Accordingly, a vast quantity of valuable wood has floated away, the whole of the machinery and houses are submerged, and much property has been carried away by the flood. The bailiffs were compelled to leave the concern to its fate, and an enormous depreciation of the value of the whole property has taken place, while much has been rendered totally useless.⁵⁸

In June 1870, Meiklejohn advertised the Union sawmill for sale or lease.⁵⁹ Visiting Dundathu in August, Pettigrew tracked him down at the Maryborough races and arranged to lease it for £300 per year.⁶⁰ A week later, Pettigrew and Sim took over and appointed Sim's brother James as manager.⁶¹ The Union mill cut mostly hardwoods and was developed as an adjunct to Dundathu, which cut only kauri pine and other softwoods.

After two years of operation, disaster struck. Just before 9 am on Tuesday, 6 August 1872, as fourteen men waited for the whistle to begin work, the sawmill's boiler blew up. The business manager, James Deacon, and a visiting wood turner, John Rankin, were killed instantly. Richard Johnston, the fireman responsible for the boiler, died after reaching the hospital, and by Friday four other men had died of their injuries. Volunteers organised by Richard Bingham Sheridan, the Collector of Customs, formed a bucket chain and 'cooly and gallantly' extinguished the spreading fire.⁶² The mighty explosion, close to town, drew a crowd to the site, and onlookers were shocked at the severity of the men's injuries.

That afternoon, the Police Magistrate opened an inquest at the house of the general manager, James Sim, and continued it the following day at the Court House. Pettigrew,

⁵⁷ MC, 31 January 1868 and 2 April 1870.

⁵⁸ BC, 21 March 1870.

⁵⁹ MC, 30 June 1870.

⁶⁰ WP Diary, 10 August 1870.

⁶¹ MC, 16 August 1870.

⁶² BC, 10 August 1872.

informed by telegram of the disaster, arrived by steamer that afternoon, in time to attend part of the inquest. For the next three weeks, evidence was heard intermittently from eye witnesses and a number of engineers who had previously repaired the pump and boiler at the sawmill.⁶³ In the aftermath of the explosion, a committee was set up to raise money for the widows and children of the victims. Maryborough was plunged into mourning – and recriminations. Local sensitivity was such that, when Pettigrew advertised in the *Maryborough Chronicle* with the intention of thanking the people of Maryborough, he succeeded only in offending them:

To the Inhabitants of Maryborough.

We have to return you our sincere thanks for the assistance you have rendered to us in saving our property from fire, and otherwise, in the late, deplorable calamity.

We shall not offend your feelings by thanking you for the prompt assistance rendered to suffering humanity. It shows a right and proper state of the community that when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. ‘Bear ye one another’s burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ’ is the advice of the great apostle of the Gentiles; and in this you have acted rightly.

We are, gentlemen, yours most sincerely, Wm Pettigrew, Wm Sim.⁶⁴

The pious tone of this letter drew a number of scathing replies. ‘One who wants no Thanks for fulfilling a Christian and Humane Duty’ considered it insulting, libellous and blasphemous, and added, ‘I don’t believe Mr Sim ever put his name to the precious document.’ ‘One of the Rescued’ asserted that ‘the public would have preferred that the letter should be less priestly in its tone of approbation and more simple in its gratitude’, while ‘Pecksniff, Jun.’ considered it hypocritical:

... for amid the groans of the wounded and dying and the bitter tears of the widows and orphans, you pay a trifle to insert a few lines in our local journals, and from your own point of view you stand up before the world *sans peur et sans reproche* and moreover filled to the very brim with the precepts of St Paul. Trusting that you may

⁶³ MC, 8, 17 and 27 August 1872.

⁶⁴ MC, 10 August 1872.

long continue in this happy frame of mind, and hoping the Lord may preserve you from destruction by damaged boilers and incompetent engineers.⁶⁵

The Union explosion was the first of three fatal boiler accidents that occurred in Queensland sawmills within twelve months. Six weeks after the Maryborough disaster, the Calliope Saw-Mills near Gladstone blew up, killing one man and injuring two others.⁶⁶ A year later, five men were killed when a boiler at McGhie, Luya and Co.'s Cootharaba sawmill on the Noosa River exploded.⁶⁷ The Cootharaba disaster resulted in a government inquiry, chaired by the Surveyor-General, A. C. Gregory, which recommended improvements in the regulations governing the design and supervision of steam boilers.⁶⁸

Pettigrew ordered a new boiler for the Union sawmill from John Walker and Company, a Ballarat engineering firm which in 1868 had established a foundry in Maryborough to manufacture machinery for the Gympie goldfield.⁶⁹ He was planning to build the railway at Tin Can Bay that he had envisaged on his visit in 1865, and he considered the possibility that Walker and Co. might manufacture a locomotive engine for the line.

Having been involved in railway construction in Ayrshire, Pettigrew had long advocated railways as a solution to the colony's transport problems, and he used every opportunity to make his views known. In 1863, as a surveyor turned timber merchant, he gave evidence before the Legislative Council concerning a suitable route for the proposed railway between Ipswich and Toowoomba.⁷⁰ However, the specific proposals he had made from time to time – such as the line along the beach between the Maroochy and

⁶⁵ MC, 13 August 1872.

⁶⁶ BC, 4 October 1872. This explosion occurred on 21 September 1872.

⁶⁷ GT, 30 July, 2, 9 and 16 August and 3 and 13 September 1873; JUS N37 73/153, QSA. Two of the men killed at Cootharaba, Phelim and Patrick Molloy, were brothers of Thomas Molloy, who died at Maryborough.

⁶⁸ 'Report of Board of Steam Boiler Explosions', 31 March 1874, *QVP*, 1874, pp. 1047-1050.

⁶⁹ WP Diary, 7 August 1872.

⁷⁰ BC, 27 August 1863. Pettigrew gave evidence before the bar of the Legislative Council on 26 August 1863.

Mooloolah Rivers – were designed to serve short-term needs, and he favoured cheap, temporary railways as opposed to the expensive, permanent structures that the government had been building since 1865.⁷¹ Putting his ideas into practice, he experimented with light lines to move sawn timber around in the yards of his mills at Brisbane and Dundathu.⁷²

He was also interested in engines. In April 1870, a rubber-tyred, steam traction engine imported by his Bowen political rival, G. E. Dalrymple, was tested by the BSM engineer, Percival Hiley, who drove it from Harris's wharf up the steep, corduroyed slope of Margaret Street to George Street, pulling a load of twenty-one tons. Pettigrew, who then drove it down George Street to Parliament House,⁷³ mentioned this trial in a lecture 'On Railways' to the Philosophical Society, in which he outlined his proposal for low maintenance, timber railways and considered in detail the design of their routes, rails, sleepers and engines. Emphasising the quality and durability of Queensland hardwoods, he presented the model of a wooden railway bridge, which had been made in his workshops by Patrick Donovan.⁷⁴ On 23 March 1871, using some of the material prepared for this talk, he gave evidence to the Commission Inquiring into the Proposed Extension of the Western Railway.⁷⁵

In July 1872, following more study, he lectured at the School of Arts on 'The Steam Engine'. The text of this lecture has not survived; but according to the *Brisbane Courier*, it was thoroughly prepared, 'filled with many interesting facts', and illustrated with a model and diagrams drawn on the blackboard. Because of its 'excess of minute details', it

⁷¹ 'Cheap Railways for Queensland', *GT*, 29 June and 30 July 1870. This topic was widely debated.

⁷² 'On Railways', *BC*, 13 November 1870.

⁷³ *BC*, 5 April 1870; WP Diary, 5 April 1870; *GT*, 13 April 1870.

⁷⁴ 'On Railways' in *Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Queensland*, Vol. I, 1859-1872; WP Diary, 14 June and 8 September 1870.

⁷⁵ Report of the Commission Inquiring into Proposed Extension of the Western Railway, *QVP*, 1871, p. 675.

was ‘more scientific than popular’, but ‘to incipient engineers, and the like, it must have proved exceedingly interesting and valuable’.⁷⁶

All this investigation, discussion and exposition of ideas led to Pettigrew’s next achievement – his own, privately funded railway in the remote forests at Tin Can Bay. Having outlined the plan in his lecture ‘On Railways’, he described the result in his evidence to the Select Committee on Roads [and] Tramways in May 1874.⁷⁷ The Cooloola Railway was a practical expression of his belief that special-purpose railways could be constructed and maintained cheaply, and would perform profitably. The track took a year to build and was a joint effort by Pettigrew, who surveyed the line, and William Sim, who constructed it. Sim, whose management of Dundathu had been efficient and profitable, contributed some of the funds for the project by paying Pettigrew £3,750 for a further quarter-share in Pettigrew and Sim.⁷⁸ The firm acquired a steam tug, the *Hercules*,⁷⁹ in which, in October 1872, Pettigrew set out for Tin Can Bay.

Timber-getters had begun dragging logs from the Thannae Scrub, south of Woolann, to a rafting ground on Cooloola Creek; and from a high bank, where the creek broadened to form a deep, tidal pool of black water, Pettigrew began to survey a line inland.⁸⁰ He then asked John Walker and Company to build a steam locomotive, named *Mary Ann* after his and Sim’s daughters, seven-year-old Mary Ann Pettigrew and seventeen-year-old Mary Ann Sim. When the locomotive was launched in Maryborough in July 1873, he ordered seven copies of its photograph, and sent them, with explanatory letters, to Governor Normanby, the Minister for Works, the editor of the *Courier*, ‘liberal’ politician Charles

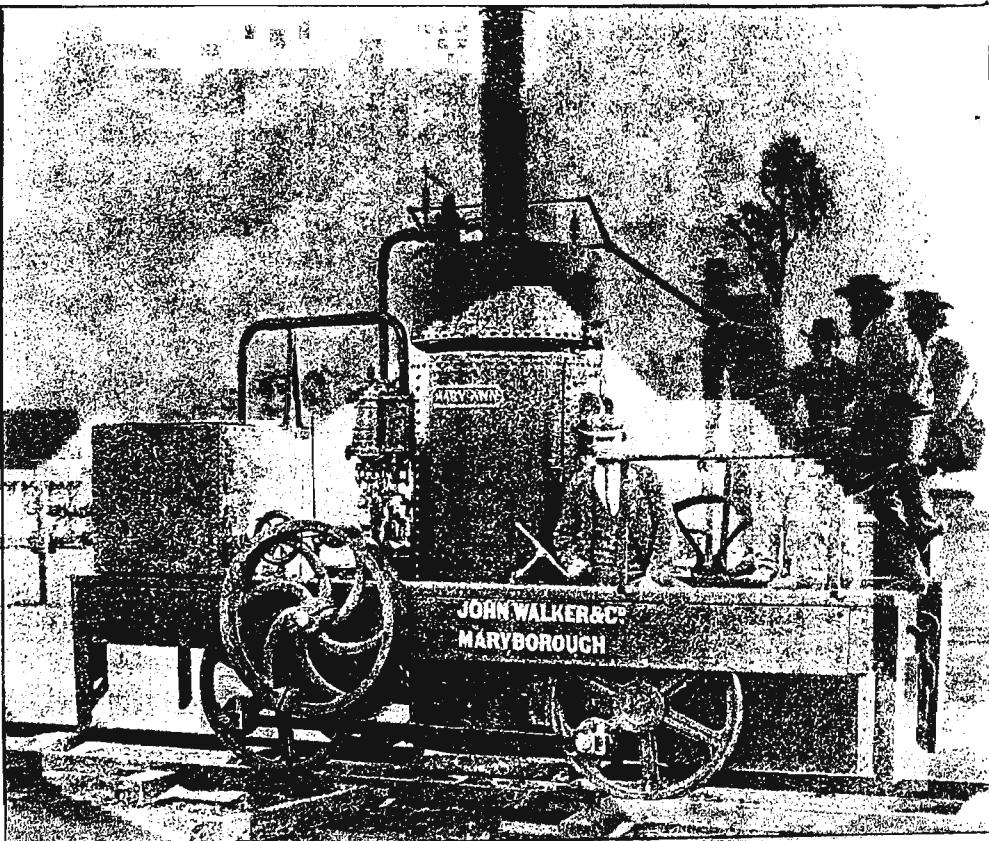
⁷⁶ BC, 26 July 1872.

⁷⁷ Select Committee on Roads, Tramways etc., April-May 1874, QVP, 1874, pp. 13-15 20 May 1874.

⁷⁸ WP Diary, 11 September 1871.

⁷⁹ MC, 10 August 1869. The side-wheel paddle steamer *Hercules*, 80 feet long and 75 tons, was built at Maryborough in 1869, especially to tow rafts of timber. She served Dundathu sawmill from 1872 to 1893.

⁸⁰ WP Diary, 16 to 31 October 1872.



Illus. 22.

The Mary Ann

The 'Mary Ann', Queensland's first locally built steam locomotive, photographed in Bowen Street, Maryborough, on 30 June 1873. Left to right: William Sim Jnr, William Sim Snr, Robert Sim, Captain Blue, James Sim Tertius.

Lilley, journalist T. P. Pugh, architect F.G.D. Stanley and engineer John Sinclair.⁸¹

During 1873, Sim and his men constructed the first three-and-a-half miles of the line to Pettigrew's specifications. They mounded the sand and packed it firmly around cypress pine sleepers, then laid long, four-and-a-half by three inch spotted gum rails on edge in grooves cut into the sleepers, and fixed them in place, three feet three inches apart, with nine inch wooden wedges.⁸² In October, when the railway was ready to begin operations, the Sim family entertained thirty of Maryborough's leading citizens to two days of lavish celebrations at Tin Can Bay. Pettigrew, who was busy in Brisbane, did not attend, but Sim told the gathering that 'Mr Pettigrew was at one with him in all these works'.⁸³

⁸¹ WP Diary, 29 July 1873; GOV/A6, 1873, p. 261, QSA; *Brisbane Courier*, 14 August 1873.

⁸² Kerr, 'The Calooli Creek and Thannae Railway', pp. 14-20; Bates, *Welcome Back, Mary Ann*, pp. 6-8.

⁸³ 'Opening of the Kaloola Railway', MC, 1 November 1873.

Congratulating Sim on his achievement, Andrew Heron Wilson,⁸⁴ of the rival sawmilling firm Wilson, Hart and Bartholomew, said that he was impressed with the effective manner in which the work had been carried out, and the way that the railway would cheapen the cost of transport.

A few weeks later, William Sim was accidentally killed while unloading logs from a truck at the Cooloola Creek terminus.⁸⁵ On receiving the news, Pettigrew boarded the first available ship for Dundathu and took charge of arrangements. Sim was an admired man, and his funeral procession, half a mile long, was the largest seen in Maryborough to that time.⁸⁶ His grave in the Maryborough cemetery was marked by a tall stone, designed by Pettigrew, on which were carved the company symbol of a circular saw, the leaves and cones of the kauri pine, and an ominous Biblical warning: ‘Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.’⁸⁷

Six months later, Pettigrew visited the site where Sim was killed, adjusted machinery, took measurements of the line, and headed back to Dundathu with two rafts in tow.⁸⁸ His association with the Sims continued, the firm becoming known as Pettigrew and Company. Ann Sim had been left to care for four sons and five daughters, ranging in age from twenty-two to four, and Pettigrew accepted responsibility for the family’s welfare. Since the two oldest sons, James Tertius and William Simpson Sim, were not considered experienced enough to take over, William Menzies, a Scot from a timber family in Forres, who had worked for William Sim since 1865, was appointed manager at Dundathu. In March 1875, Menzies cemented his place in the firm by marrying Sim’s eldest daughter,

⁸⁴ A. H. Wilson (1844-1906) came from Ayr and like Pettigrew was educated at the Ayr Academy. He started his Maryborough sawmill in 1866 and was an M.L.C. from 1883 to 1906.

⁸⁵ Inquest by George Faircloth, PM, 22 November 1873, JUS/N38 73/247, QSA.

⁸⁶ MC, 22 November 1873.

⁸⁷ Mark 13:33.

⁸⁸ WP Diary, 2 to 6 May 1874.

Mary Ann, and becoming a partner.⁸⁹ Menzies proved to be a competent manager, and the settlement at Dundathu, with its sawmill, shops, school, church and cemetery, continued to flourish.⁹⁰ Pettigrew visited Maryborough several times a year to give advice, ‘do the books’, and declare dividends at the Dundathu and Union mills.

Sim’s death and the destruction of the Brisbane Saw Mills by fire for the second time in 1874 postponed extensions to the Cooloola Railway until October 1875, when Pettigrew returned and began to survey the line from its inland terminus deeper into the forests.⁹¹ In Maryborough he ordered a second, more powerful locomotive from John Walker and Co. This engine, named *Dundathu*, was shipped to Tin Can Bay the following September to replace the *Mary Ann*, which, after three years’ work, went back to Walkers foundry for repairs and alterations.⁹²

While surveying further extensions during 1876, Pettigrew encountered serious difficulties. Leaving the flat, coastal country behind, he entered the ridges and gullies of the sand dunes, which he planned to level with cuts and fills. Then, pushing the line up a long gully, he found himself at the foot of a sand ridge, 200 feet high. An extensive stand of kauri pine, known as the Broutha Scrub, lay in a completely enclosed valley on the other side of the ridge, and there seemed to be no way of taking the line up its steep face and down the equally steep slope on the other side. He tried a number of approaches to this problem, and finally, on 21 November, noted in his diary an ingenious solution: ‘Going to use engine on top.’⁹³

On top of the ridge, he installed a stationary steam engine. The railway track came up the

⁸⁹ WP Diary, 26 March 1875.

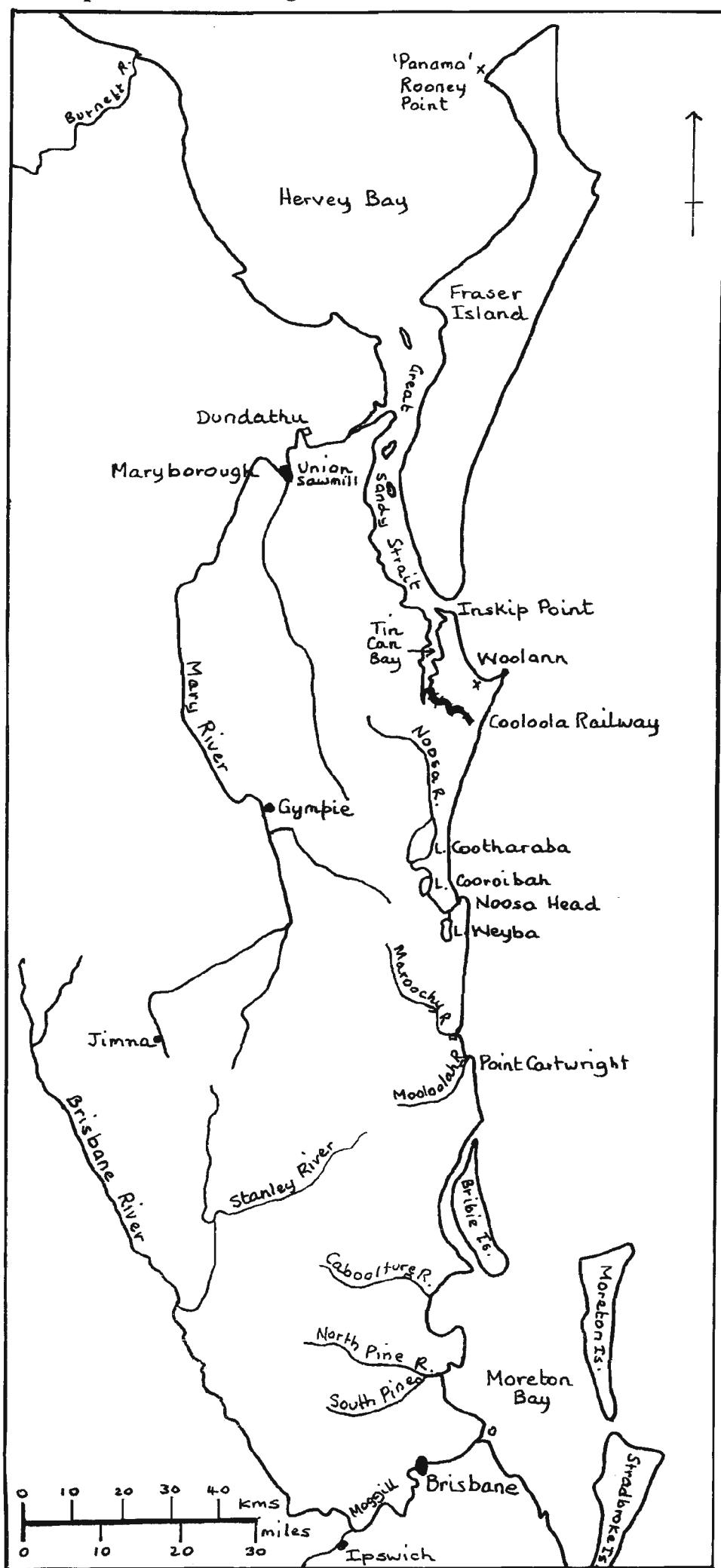
⁹⁰ *Maryborough Almanac*, 1875; *BC*, 9 July 1872; *MC*, 12 November and 2 December 1878 and 8 January 1885; Charles G. Lenthall and Ronald K. Ramsay, *Down the Mary River* (Maryborough, 2001), pp. 65-67.

⁹¹ WP Diary, 27 October to 1 November 1875.

⁹² *MC*, 23 September 1876; WP Diary, 20 September and 6 November 1876.

⁹³ WP Diary, 20 September to 6 October and 20 November to 1 December 1876.

Map 11. Pettigrew's Interests North of Brisbane



ridge on a sidecut, crossed it, and ran down into the Broutha Scrub on an embankment. The *Mary Ann* was used within the Scrub to haul loaded wagons to the foot of the ridge, and the *Dundathu* took them from the other side of the ridge to the coast. A loaded wagon was kept on top at all times, and, when another wagon arrived, it was fastened to the one on top. The stationary engine controlled the movement of the wagons, as the top one travelled down the slope, hauling the lower one up. Using this method, timber-getters spent the next seven years extracting kauri pine logs from the depths of the Broutha Scrub.⁹⁴

In 1868, Pettigrew rejoined the Brisbane Municipal Council, where the turnover of aldermen that began in 1866 had continued unabated, some aldermen serving for very brief periods. In 1867, the number of nominations barely equalled the number required, and the following year the Governor had to appoint men to fill several vacancies.⁹⁵ Curiously, in view of the ruinous effects of the recession on the fortunes of men who were affluent enough to serve as unpaid aldermen, the *Brisbane Courier* interpreted the reluctance of candidates to nominate as evidence of public apathy.⁹⁶ In October 1868, when Alexander Brown Pritchard,⁹⁷ the appointed alderman for the East Ward, became insolvent and resigned, Pettigrew was asked to replace him. He took his seat, unopposed, in November, and the following February, after an opposing nomination was declared invalid, he was returned without a ballot.⁹⁸ John Hardgrave, who had been Mayor in 1868,

⁹⁴ Elaine Brown, 'Colonial Enterprise: Pettigrew and Sim's Dundathu Sawmill, 1862-1893', in John Dargavel and Brenda Libbis, eds, *Australia's ever-changing forests IV* (Canberra: ANU and Australian Forest History Society, 1999), pp. 239-246; Brown, *Cooloola Coast*, pp. 142-154.

⁹⁵ BC, 6 February 1867 and 5 February 1868.

⁹⁶ BC, 6 February 1867, 5 February 1868 and 3 February 1869.

⁹⁷ Alexander Brown Pritchard (1825-1898) was a Brisbane merchant, trustee of the Brisbane Grammar School and M.L.A. for Brisbane.

⁹⁸ BC, 3, 4 and 9 February 1869; WP Diary, 2 February 1869.

was elected Mayor again, this time on his own casting vote.⁹⁹

Pettigrew found that, although the composition of the Council had changed, factionalism was rife, and he was still a target for allegations of ‘jobbery’. No sooner was he elected than William Coote wrote to the *Brisbane Courier*, attacking three aldermen who had supplied materials for the Town Hall – an importer, a timber merchant and a provider of stone – who were easily recognised as William Brookes, William Pettigrew and Joshua Jeays.¹⁰⁰ Since Brookes and Jeays were no longer on the Council, Pettigrew was clearly in Coote’s sights. Pettigrew sought advice and was assured that his actions were legal,¹⁰¹ but criticism continued during the year, culminating in December with a motion from Alderman Barnett that Pettigrew’s and Robert Porter’s seats be declared vacant because they had ‘become engaged or interested in certain contracts or employment with by and on behalf of the Council’.¹⁰² At the next meeting the motion was discussed, Pettigrew noting in his diary that ‘Barnett’s motion declaring my seat and Porter’s vacant [was] not passed.’¹⁰³

In 1870, he was again returned unopposed. Then, as the most experienced of the aldermen willing to do the job, he was elected Mayor. The *Brisbane Courier*, while expressing some reservations, supported his candidature, commenting that he would be ‘a credit to the mayoral chair, and ... [would] perform the duties honestly and impartially’:¹⁰⁴

[Mr Pettigrew] is regarded as peculiar in temperament, and there may be some grounds for coming to such a conclusion, but he is a pains-taking, practical, shrewd, and common-sense man, who has resided here for more than twenty years, whom everybody knows, and in whom people generally will have confidence, no matter how

⁹⁹ BC, 18 February 1869. John Hardgrave (1826-1906), born in Ireland, arrived in Brisbane from Sydney in 1844, and prospered in the boot trade, afterwards styling himself ‘gentleman’. Although Pettigrew found Hardgrave ‘bounceable’ at times, the two families were linked when Hardgrave’s son Phillip married Margaret Pettigrew.

¹⁰⁰ BC, 5 March 1869.

¹⁰¹ BC, 6 December 1871

¹⁰² BMC Minutes, 20 December 1869.

¹⁰³ BMC Minutes, 4 January 1870; WP Diary, 4 January 1870.

¹⁰⁴ BC, 5 February 1870.

much they may differ with him on minor grounds. Mr Pettigrew has also been a member of the Council for some years, with occasional intervals, and we cannot recollect that any substantial charge was ever brought against him, which would warrant an objection to his being elected to the mayoral office. He is a large employer of labour, and has shown himself, even in the most adverse of times, one of our most enterprising citizens.¹⁰⁵

The contest for mayor was between Pettigrew and Francis Beattie,¹⁰⁶ who had been elected to represent the Fortitude Valley Ward in 1869. Pettigrew won easily, with six votes to Beattie's three, and immediately applied himself to the role, spending an afternoon at the Town Hall combing through the Council's minutes and wages figures for 1868 and 1869.¹⁰⁷ Although he made seven trips away from Brisbane – to Sydney, Maryborough and Mooloolah – during the year, he missed only two of the Council's fortnightly general meetings, and served on four committees – Improvement, Legislative, Bridge and Town Hall – during his term. Aware of the authority conferred by the office of Mayor, he controlled the meetings tightly, sometimes to the annoyance of the other aldermen.¹⁰⁸

With a population of nearly 15,000 and immigrants continuing to arrive, the Brisbane of which Pettigrew was chief citizen in 1870 had growing pains. The floods, fires and economic problems of the 1860s had slowed development, and after a decade of municipal government, the town was still a settlement of scattered buildings and 'metalled' streets, where fundamental needs in transport, water supply and drainage had been only partly addressed. When Pettigrew rejoined the Council, the Town Hall was still not paid for, and the tall poles of the collapsed wooden bridge were a constant reminder of Brisbane's dependence on the slow ferries, punts and boats of river transport. The supply of piped water was not assured until 1871, when a reservoir was built near the old wind-

¹⁰⁵ BC, 7 February 1870.

¹⁰⁶ Francis Beattie (1829-1886) was born in Scotland and, after many years as a sailor, settled at Fortitude Valley as a hatter in 1862. In a long political career, he served as Mayor and Chairman of the Booroodabin Divisional Board, and was MLA for Fortitude Valley from 1874 to 1886.

¹⁰⁷ WP Diary, 16 February 1870. A piece of the paper on which Pettigrew summarised these accounts still sits between the pages of the 1870 BMC Minute Book.

¹⁰⁸ WP Diary, 14 March 1870; 30 January 1871.

mill on Wickham Terrace. In the healthy climate that Pettigrew had praised from the time he arrived in the colony, sanitation was neglected, complaints about Brisbane's 'fevers and stinks' were increasing, and death rates were high, especially among the young.¹⁰⁹

A few showy buildings gave evidence of the colonists' faith in the future: the gracious Government House, the massive Parliament House, the Town Hall, with its 'cut stone façade of considerable pretensions',¹¹⁰ and the solid National School, where several hundred Brisbane children were receiving a sound primary education. In Queen Street, a new General Post Office was planned, and substantial brick or stone shops and hotels were rising in the spaces left by the fires of 1864. The Petrie Terrace Gaol, the new Brisbane Grammar School (where Pettigrew's son Robert was enrolled at the age of seven), and the cluster of military buildings that became Victoria Barracks overlooked the town, while the community's religious divisions were marked by the tall walls and steep roofs of numerous small churches.

Pettigrew's year as Mayor of Brisbane was free of allegations of 'jobbery' and less turbulent than might have been expected. The main issues facing the Council in 1870 were, as they had been since 1863, the unfinished Bridge and the costly Town Hall. Pettigrew worked hard on these matters, and by the end of his term the Council had successfully negotiated funding for the completion of the Bridge and the refinancing of the Town Hall.¹¹¹ In March, a flood almost as high as in 1864 swirled down the river, weakened the roadway on North Quay, flattened the plants in the Botanic Gardens, and left the town's hollows filled with debris and muddy water.¹¹² While Pettigrew's men cleaned up the BSM, the Council shouldered the task of repairing the damage to the town.

¹⁰⁹ Enid Barclay, 'Fevers and Stinks: Some problems of Public Health in the 1870s and 1880s', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1971, pp. 3-12.

¹¹⁰ Garran, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, p. 371.

¹¹¹ WP Diary, 12 May 1870 and 23 March 1871; BMC Minutes, 14 February, 12 May, 26 September, 7 and 21 November, 19 December 1870 and 16 January 1871.

¹¹² WP Diary, 11 March 1870; BC, 16 and 21 March 1870.

An unfortunate incident occurred in April when, while attending a fire in Mary Street, Pettigrew came into conflict with a fireman who refused to obey his orders. Apart from the shock of having his authority challenged, he may have been unusually anxious because the fire was in the Queensland Club, next door to Jane McKergow's home. The *Brisbane Courier*, however, saw him as 'over zealous', and recounted with relish the 'rather amusing incident', in which 'our Chief Dignitary did not appear to advantage':

The fireman on duty at the upper hydrant when the fire was about its highest was accosted by the mayor and told to turn off the water; but the man, who was evidently well-up in his duties, refused to obey the order, whereupon he was threatened with direful penalties for his obduracy. The fireman, rather riled at this officious interference, informed his worship that he 'didn't care a d- who he was', but would only turn the water off when ordered to do so by his superior officer. The mayor took the answer in dudgeon, and immediately sang out lustily for the police. A member of the force made his appearance, but could not exactly see on what charge he was to apprehend the recalcitrant fireman, and declined to take him into custody, and thus considerably saved the mayor from fixing himself on the horns of a dilemma.¹¹³

Pettigrew detected a personal motive behind this 'scurrilous paragraph'.¹¹⁴ 'Courier taught rebellion,' he wrote in his diary. 'Rev J. Love said to be writer.'¹¹⁵ Consulting the Council's bye-laws, he was reassured that the mayor had an over-riding power to give orders at the scene of a fire, and there was a fine of up to £10 for disobeying him. At the next Council meeting, the aldermen were treated to his version of events. He said that he had ordered the man at the pipe to turn the water off in order to fix an additional hose, and when the man refused several times, he, knowing the power he had, said that he would prosecute him. He added, however, that he would not do so without referring the matter to the Council, and would leave it in their hands. He thought that the man had probably been instructed by someone who did not know their duty; and, apart from that incident, every member of the Brigade had given good service.

¹¹³ BC, 4 April 1870.

¹¹⁴ BC, 5 April 1870.

¹¹⁵ WP Diary, 3 April 1870. James Love was the minister at Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church.

The aldermen handled their agitated mayor with considerable tact, agreeing that he had 'great power under the bye-laws'. Alderman Hardgrave, however, said that he believed it would be better if the mayor gave orders through the superintendent; and Alderman Beattie, who had just taken over as Superintendent of the Fire Brigade but had not been present at the fire, explained the need for a chain of command, and excused the fireman on the grounds that he had not long joined the Brigade, and was 'doubtless very anxious to acquit himself creditably by scrupulously obeying the orders of a superior officer'¹¹⁶

Among the smaller matters attended to by Pettigrew as mayor was the continuing problem of coinage. In an attempt to stimulate trade during the difficult days of the recession, some



Illus. 23.

William Pettigrew, Mayor of Brisbane, 1870¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ BC, 5 April 1870; BMC Minutes, 4 April 1870.

¹¹⁷ Photo courtesy Brisbane City Council.

merchants had issued copper tokens, redeemable in their businesses.¹¹⁸ John Pettigrew in Ipswich was one who issued handsome pennies and half-pennies, with the Queensland coat of arms on one side and the name of his firm on the other. Because of a chronic shortage of small denomination coins, these tokens had become accepted as a means of exchange beyond the businesses that produced them – for example, in payment of ferry fares. In September 1870, when the Government announced that these tokens would no longer be accepted by Government officers ‘on public account’, Pettigrew called a meeting, at which views were expressed by ‘affected parties’ on the need to increase the supply of coins in circulation. He then led a deputation to the Colonial Treasurer to argue that the tokens were a ‘public convenience’, but the Government remained immovable.¹¹⁹

Pettigrew represented the Council at a number of social events, beginning on 18 March with what he called the ‘Mayor’s feed’, a banquet at the Town Hall in honour of St Patrick’s Day.¹²⁰ This function was attended by the Governor, Colonel Samuel Wensley Blackall, a charming Irishman, who, since his arrival in August 1868, had endeared himself to all classes of people with his ‘genial disposition and irrepressible *bonhomie*’, his interest in the colony, and his acceptance of Queensland as ‘home’.¹²¹ The Governor also attended the Caledonian Ball in August, and Pettigrew was pleased to propose that the Council ‘compliment’ him with another ball in September.¹²² This event, however, was postponed until Blackall returned from a six-week trip to North Queensland, from which time his relationship with Pettigrew took an unexpected turn.

¹¹⁸ George D. Dean, ‘A Thumbnail History of Numismatics Pertaining to Queensland’, *RHSQJ*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1972-73, pp. 52-53.

¹¹⁹ *BC*, 22, 23, 24 and 30 September 1870; *GT*, 24 September 1870.

¹²⁰ *WP Diary*, 16 and 18 March 1870; *BC*, 18 March 1870.

¹²¹ *BC*, 4 January 1871. Colonel S. W. Blackall (1809-1871) was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and served in the Army and held public offices in Ireland before entering Parliament as the Member for Longford (1847-51). He was Lt Governor of Dominica, Governor of Sierra Leone and Governor-in-Chief of West African settlements before coming to Queensland. According to Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 59, Blackall had ‘much charm of manner’ and was ‘a tactful Administrator at a difficult period of our history’.

¹²² *BMC Minutes*, 29 August 1870; *BC*, 30 August 1870; *WP Diary*, 31 August 1870.

For many years, Pettigrew had been one of the men who took responsibility for the Presbyterian burial ground at Paddington, where his brother David McKergow was buried.¹²³ In 1864 he had been appointed one of its trustees,¹²⁴ and in 1870 he was also appointed a trustee of the new Brisbane General Cemetery at Toowong.¹²⁵ At the first meeting of the Trust, Pettigrew and Samuel Walker Griffith, then a young barrister at the beginning of a distinguished career, were asked to draw up the rules and regulations for the new cemetery.¹²⁶

When Governor Blackall returned from the north, he knew he was terminally ill. On 18 November, he and his aide-de-camp, Captain George Verney, paid Pettigrew a private visit at the BSM.¹²⁷ Blackall expressed a wish to be buried at the top of a high ridge in the new cemetery at Toowong, and when he died, six weeks later, Pettigrew, as Mayor and trustee, was involved in arranging his funeral. The streets of Brisbane were closed, and business virtually ceased for the day. Three parties of Volunteer troops turned out to fire their guns and give the old soldier a military farewell. His cortege, led by the Volunteer Band, moved from Government House to St John's Church of England in William Street for a funeral service conducted by Bishop Tufnell. Thousands of people lined the long route to the new cemetery, where Blackall's became the first lonely grave.¹²⁸ His monument, a tall stone spire, facilitated by Pettigrew and erected by public subscription the following year, still dominates the cemetery.¹²⁹

¹²³ MBC, 5 August 1854; 'Report Regarding the operations undertaken at the Paddington Cemeteries', *QPP*, 1914, Vol. 2, pp. 407-419.

¹²⁴ WP Diary, 6 April and 19 July 1864 and 24 July 1886.

¹²⁵ WP Diary, 10 October 1870.

¹²⁶ E.W.H. Fowles, comp., *The Brisbane General Cemetery: Handbook of Public Information*, 1924, p. 24. In 1893, after the death of John Petrie, Pettigrew became Chairman of the Cemetery Trust and remained a trustee until 1904. Samuel Walker Griffith (1845-1920), a brilliant student, became a barrister and later Chief Justice of Queensland and Australia. He was also a politician, holding ministerial positions and the premiership of Queensland, and was instrumental in the achievement of Federation.

¹²⁷ WP Diary, 18 November 1870.

¹²⁸ BC, 4 January 1871.

¹²⁹ WP Diary, 31 January and 13 October 1871. This spire is similar to the Wallace Tower in Ayr.

Pettigrew's last duty as mayor, in January 1871, was to visit Toowoomba for the opening of the railway to Warwick. Although he had travelled widely in the colony for twenty-two years, this was his first trip to the Darling Downs. No railway connected Brisbane and Ipswich, so the Brisbane aldermen travelled to Ipswich by coach, then boarded a train for the slow haul up the range. That evening, at a banquet given by the Mayor and Corporation of Toowoomba, speaker after speaker, including Pettigrew, emphasised the need to complete the railway line from Ipswich to Brisbane, so that the products of the Downs could flow profitably to the capital and its port. Pettigrew raised a laugh when, referring to himself as 'the verdant alderman', he claimed that 'if the grass was allowed to grow in Brisbane streets, it was not because he believed in it ... but because the Corporation could not help themselves'. The next day the party travelled on the new line to Warwick and witnessed the celebrations there.¹³⁰

On 6 February 1871, Pettigrew chaired his last meeting as mayor. Facing an election, he prepared an address and conducted a successful meeting. 'I am not a popular man, and never will be,' he told the electors. 'I am always offending someone or other. But I will insist on doing what I believe to be right and what is for the interest of the ratepayers of the East Ward.'¹³¹ His address was dominated by comparative figures on expenditure and arguments for financial responsibility, and the only actions for which he claimed credit were the application of blue and white metal to some of Brisbane's streets, and their repair after the March floods. He was re-elected easily, and his friend, the cabinet-maker and undertaker Francis Murray, was elected Mayor.¹³²

During 1871, the issue of 'jobbery' surfaced again, this time raised by Pettigrew himself against Francis Beattie, the popular representative of the Valley Ward, who had acquired

¹³⁰ BC, 17 and 23 January 1871.

¹³¹ BC, 11 February 1871; WP Diary, 10 February 1871.

¹³² BC, 15 February 1871.

an interest in the lease of the municipal wharf at Petrie's Bight.¹³³ The Council treated this possible breach of the Municipal Institutions Act as a test case; but, when it was heard in December 1871, the Police Magistrate and four JPs found in favour of Beattie.¹³⁴ Pettigrew noted in his diary that two of the JPs, Cowlishaw and Barnett, had told his friend James Campbell before the hearing that the bench was 'packed',¹³⁵ presumably meaning that the JPs had made up their minds before the hearing. The Council then took the case to the Supreme Court, which found against Beattie, and he resigned rather than face seven years' disqualification from becoming an alderman.¹³⁶ When he attempted to contest the election in February 1872, however, Francis Murray would not accept his nomination.¹³⁷

This issue irreparably damaged the already strained relations between Pettigrew and Beattie, who retaliated by alleging that 'among the members of the Corporation there never had been one who received as much of the ratepayers' money as Alderman Pettigrew' and advocating that he be prosecuted.¹³⁸ The divided Council, having received an opinion from barrister Charles Lilley that Pettigrew had a case to answer, and keen to be seen not to favour either party, uneasily postponed the prosecution to give Pettigrew a chance to resign.¹³⁹ Having a contrary legal opinion, he held firm, and in the end avoided prosecution by declining to send an account for the timber which he had recently supplied to the Council.¹⁴⁰

Beattie remained bitter. In 1873 he stood against Pettigrew in the East Ward, and, after a vigorous campaign, defeated him by forty votes. Pettigrew thanked 'those who had

¹³³ BC, 21 November 1871.

¹³⁴ BC, 5 December 1871.

¹³⁵ WP Diary, 4 December 1871. The other two JPs on the case were Pugh and Petrie.

¹³⁶ WP Diary, 8 and 15 December 1871.

¹³⁷ BC, 12 February 1872.

¹³⁸ BC, 21 November 1871.

¹³⁹ BC, 19 December 1871.

¹⁴⁰ BC, 5 and 9 January 1872.

supported him ... as well as those who had opposed him and ... put him in a position to attend to his own business; ... for the time he formerly devoted to public duties was now available for concerns of a more private nature'.¹⁴¹ As in 1866, leaving the Council freed him to expand in new directions, and during the next four years he poured his energy into building the Cooloola Railway, attending to his interests at Mooloolah, and rebuilding the BSM after the 1874 fire.

He did not, however, withdraw from involvement in the community. In 1873, as a former Mayor, he was appointed to the newly formed Local Board of Health; and, in the light of that experience, he lectured the Philosophical Society on 'The Sanitary Condition of Brisbane' in December 1874. Commenting ironically that he and the other members of the first Board had been replaced because they made themselves 'too efficient in the discharge of [their] duties', he spoke bluntly about the political aspects of health reform:

Aldermen are unfit to become members of Boards of Health, because, if they do their duty efficiently, they will offend the majority of their constituents, and so will not be re-elected, and those who wish to retain their seats as Aldermen will take care to leave things much as they are.¹⁴²

Fully aware of the difficulties of improving sanitation, Pettigrew believed that 'nothing less than an Act of Parliament [would] be of any avail in making people keep their places in a clean and healthy state'; but, as usual, he put forward practical suggestions. Using the example of the drains at his home in William Street, he proposed a system of filtration and drainage that would take care of the run-off water and 'slops' that were creating 'offensive exhalations' in the city's gutters. He estimated the costs of installing and cleaning such drains, and advocated the planting of trees to 'obviate ammonia or other offensive gasses' and the use of a perforated copper plate in the bottom of sinks to trap

¹⁴¹ WP Diary, 11 February 1873; BC, 4, 5, 8, 11 and 13 February 1873.

¹⁴² 'The Sanitary Condition of Brisbane' in *Transactions of the Queensland Philosophical Society*, Vol. 2, 1878, 24 December 1878; QPD, 1 October 1884, pp. 138-146.

'loose rough stuff'. In the debate on the disposal of noxious human wastes, he favoured the use of earth closets of the type that had been invented by the former Colonial Architect, Charles Tiffin,¹⁴³ and opposed the idea of a system of sewerage, as proposed by the engineer William Coote.¹⁴⁴

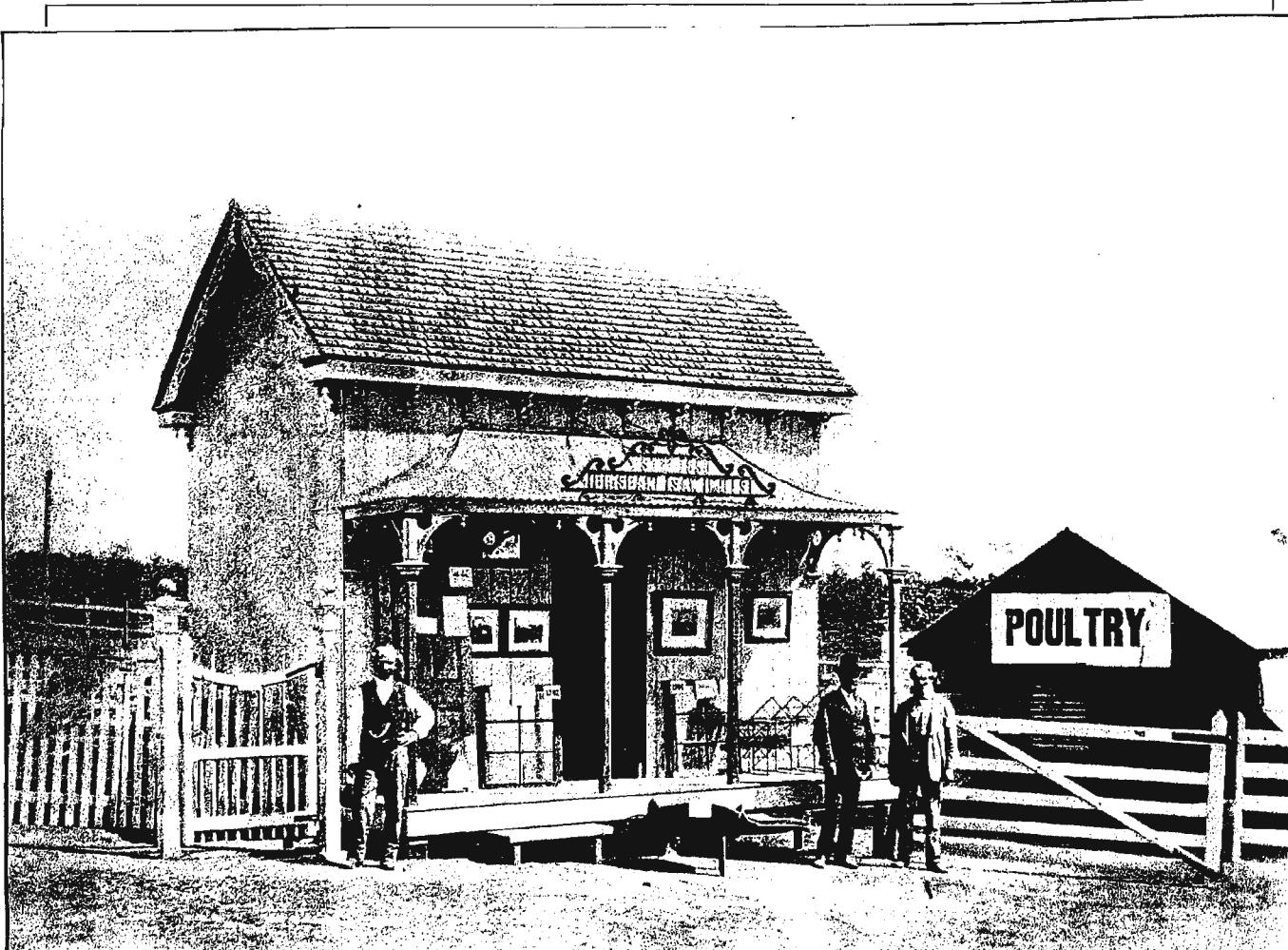
He also sought to promote the use of Queensland's fine cabinet timbers. The carpenters' shop at the BSM turned out products ranging from gates to household joinery; but when a skilled cabinet-maker, John Wilson Carey, set up a steam joinery in William Street, Pettigrew employed him to make furniture. A surviving example of Carey's work is a small, beautifully crafted davenport, featuring samples of thirty-seven Queensland timbers and carved by Matthew Fern with the head of Margaret Pettigrew, aged fourteen. Made in 1873, it was originally intended as a gift for Robert Pettigrew in Scotland, but was given by Robert to Margaret, and so remained in Queensland.¹⁴⁵

Samples and displays of Queensland products, including timber, had been sent to various overseas and inter-colonial exhibitions since the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. During the prosperous 1870s, the idea of staging a local exhibition gained ground, and in 1875 Pettigrew joined the newly formed National Agricultural and Industrial Association. For its first 'show', held at new Exhibition Grounds at Bowen Hills in August 1876, he built a small cottage, in which he displayed products made of timber, including Margaret's davenport, a model railway bridge, examples of turnery made by an employee, David Henry, doors and casements made by his foreman carpenter, Andrew Thornton, and sawn planks and slabs of blue gum, pine and cedar.

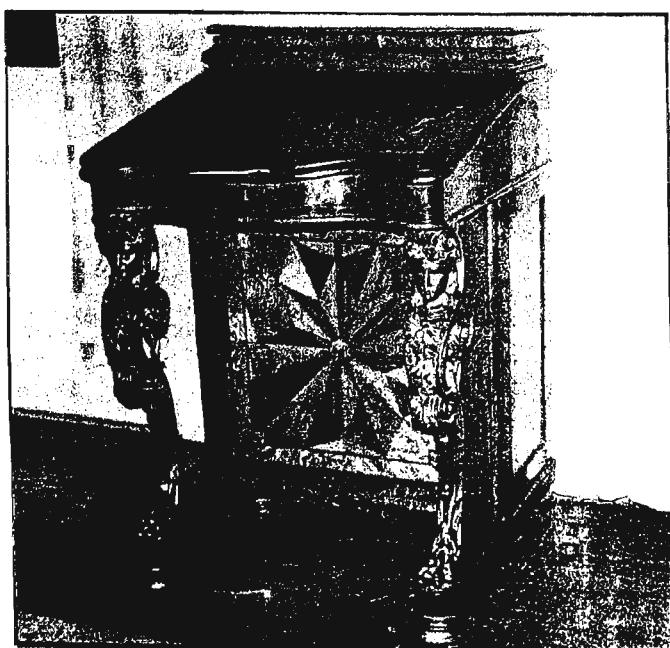
¹⁴³ C. Tiffin, 'On Earth Closets', 27 August 1866 in *Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Queensland*, Vol. 1, 1859-1872 (Brisbane: MDCCCLXXII).

¹⁴⁴ W. Coote, 'On the Sewerage of Towns', 4 June 1861 in *Transactions*, Vol. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Queenslander*, 23 August 1873; Eckhoff, 'The Late Hon. William Pettigrew', pp. 12-13; Kevin Fahy, Christina Simpson and Andrew Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* (Sydney: David Ell Press, 1985), pp. 85-86 and Plate 515. This davenport is now held at 'Miegunnyah', the museum of the Queensland Women's Historical Association at Bowen Hills.



Illus. 24. The BSM Display at the First Brisbane Exhibition, 1876¹⁴⁶



Illus. 25. Margaret Pettigrew's Davenport, 1873

¹⁴⁶JOL Neg. No. 176965

In addition, he designed and built a light, wooden footbridge, which crossed the carriage drive that led to the main pavilion. Its span, fifteen to twenty feet above the road, was a double arch of planks, supported by stout posts and reached by inclined step-ladders at either end. The top planks, which bowed upwards, and the lower planks, which bowed downwards, were joined at the ends and separated in the middle by a frame of scantling. The strength of the bridge was demonstrated on opening day, when crowds of people climbed up to view the opening ceremony, ‘with no appreciable deflection’ in the span.¹⁴⁷

Pettigrew received first prizes for this footbridge, a self-closing gate, a farm gate, and a navvy’s wheelbarrow, second prize for another farm gate, and was highly commended for his mouldings and architraves. In another section, he won first prize for his wheaten meal, second prize and a highly commended for his maize meal, and a commendation for his ‘finely dressed’ bag of rice meal.¹⁴⁸ Following further prizes in Brisbane in 1877 and 1878, he sent a cedar hall door with side panels, and a cedar and pine mantelpiece to International Exhibitions in Sydney in 1879 and Melbourne in 1880.¹⁴⁹ He visited an Exhibition at Sydney during a business trip in March 1880, and committed himself to attending the annual Brisbane Exhibition and taking his turn at judging and collecting the entrance money.¹⁵⁰

Pettigrew’s extensive knowledge of timber enhanced his reputation as Queensland’s leading timberman. In May 1875, he undertook an official survey of the timber along the projected railway line from Maryborough to Gympie, and his notes on this survey survive.¹⁵¹ In September 1877, he presented a paper to the Philosophical Society entitled

¹⁴⁷ BC, 28 August 1876.

¹⁴⁸ BC, 24 August 1876.

¹⁴⁹ Fahy and Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, pp. 90 and 91.

¹⁵⁰ WP Diary, 29 July 1879; 20 July 1880; WP Diary, 9, 10 and 11 March 1880.

¹⁵¹ ‘Survey from Dundathu across Saltwater Creek bridge on road towards Maryborough 1½ miles then West towards bend Mary River, up road and proposed Railroad to Gympie. To report for timber reserve’; WP Diary, 23, 27 and 28 April, 10 to 17 May and 1 June 1875.

'The Habitat and Peculiarities of Some of our Timbers', in which, clearly and succinctly, he defined the 'forest', 'scrub' and 'brush' lands of coastal South-East Queensland, gave the scientific, Aboriginal and common names of 'useful' trees, and described the timbers and their uses. By way of illustration, he displayed samples of wood from his own collection. He advocated the need for experiments to see what else could be done with the different timbers, and mentioned some of the people with whom he had discussed timber – A. C. Gregory, the Surveyor-General, Walter Hill, the Curator of the Botanic Gardens, and his friends Tom and John Petrie, and George Raff.¹⁵²

For his advocacy and practice of planting trees, however, Pettigrew was regarded as eccentric. To most colonists, it was inconceivable that Queensland could run out of timber; but to Pettigrew, who had creamed the forests and complained about waste for twenty years, it was inevitable. Disquiet about forest management began in the early 1870s,¹⁵³ and a Parliamentary Committee examined the issue in 1875. As one of fifteen witnesses who gave evidence to this Committee, Pettigrew observed that red cedar was in short supply, and stated that he would like to see the creation of large timber reserves and an end to wasteful practices such as 'freshing'.¹⁵⁴ Acknowledging the problems of uncontrolled cutting, the Committee recommended the proclamation of reserves, the supervision of timber-getters by forest rangers, and the creation of a Forest Conservancy Board. Nothing eventuated from this report, and the next twenty-five years saw the struggle of a few people – including Pettigrew and several other sawmillers – to develop public awareness of the need for forest conservancy.

¹⁵² *The Habitat and Peculiarities of Some of our Timbers*, read before the Philosophical Society, 2 September 1877, (Brisbane: J.C. Beal, Government Printer, 1878.) In a spare 1864 diary, Pettigrew listed trees and their characteristics and pasted in slivers of timber by way of illustration.

¹⁵³ Frawley, Forest and Land management in North-East Queensland 1859-1960, pp. 52-53; L. T. Carron, *A History of Forestry in Australia* (Sydney: ANU Press, 1985), p. 96.

¹⁵⁴ *Report of a Select Committee on Forest Conservancy* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1875). Pettigrew gave evidence on 29 June 1875. 'Freshing' was sending logs down streams after heavy rain had created a 'fresh' or rise in the water level.

In 1871, with the departure of the Rev. James Love and the arrival of the Rev. Colin McCullough, Pettigrew and his family reappeared on Sundays in their pew at the Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church. In September, Pettigrew attended a church meeting and again made clear his views on harmoniums.¹⁵⁵ Always appreciative of a good sermon, he expected a high standard of learning in Christian ministers,¹⁵⁶ and found that McCullough – earnest, intelligent and eloquent – met his standards. Sharing a friendship based on their theological and literary interests, McCullough and Pettigrew were among a small group of Presbyterians, chiefly from the Wickham Terrace congregation, who in 1876 established a college for young men studying for the ministry in Queensland. During the college's fifteen-year existence, Pettigrew served on its Council and contributed generously to the funds that not only erected a building known as Divinity Hall in the grounds of the Wickham Terrace Church, but also financially supported theological students. A library was installed and public lectures were arranged, some of which were published in a magazine, *The Divinity Hall Record*.¹⁵⁷

Divinity Hall anticipated the establishment of a university and theological colleges in Queensland by thirty years. Although it served a need, it was not well supported in the wider Presbyterian community, where some ministers and congregations reacted with 'jealousy, suspicion and recrimination'. Dissension on the college Council (where Pettigrew sat with Charles Ogg) and continuing differences between the Council and the church's General Assembly created further difficulties – but a number of young ministers eventually owed their training to Divinity Hall.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ WP Diary, 26 September 1871.

¹⁵⁶ WP Diary 3 February 1850. After hearing a sermon by the Rev. Samuel Baker, the minister sent out by Lang on the *Chaseley*, Pettigrew wrote in his diary, 'Want of learning in a minister is not right'.

¹⁵⁷ *The Divinity Hall Record* (Brisbane: Gordon and Gotch, 1879); *Gympie Miner*, 12 December 1879.

¹⁵⁸ Bardon, *Centenary History*, pp. 34-42.

Also in 1876, Pettigrew helped to establish the *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, a newspaper which, as its name suggests, had an aggressively Protestant editorial bias.¹⁵⁹ His earlier investment, the more conventional *Queensland Daily Guardian*,¹⁶⁰ had ceased publication in 1868, a victim of the recession and several damaging court cases. From 1876 to 1887, the office and printery of the *Queensland Evangelical Standard* were in the former Orr and Honeyman's store at the BSM, and its printing press was powered from the sawmill. Pettigrew's diaries record some of the subscriptions which he sold to friends and acquaintances.¹⁶¹

The limited social circle in which Pettigrew's family moved was reflected in the first marriages contracted by its colonial-born generation. Pettigrew's McKergow nieces, Mary and Jane, both married bank clerks from Scottish immigrant families. In 1874 Mary married James Davies Wilson, but three years later she died, after giving birth to a daughter, who also died. Jane, the strongest of the McKergows, married Duncan McDiarmid in 1877 and produced seven children. In 1875 Pettigrew's step-daughter, Amelia (Millie) Davis, married James Wilson's brother, Robert Watson Wilson. Pettigrew employed Robert as a clerk at the BSM from 1875 to 1880, and later he entered the public service as a tide waiter in the Customs Department.¹⁶² In the mid-1880s, the Wilsons built 'Rosecliffe', a timber house overlooking the Brisbane River at Dutton Park. Millie's fondness for her step-father is reflected in the name of her only son, William Pettigrew Wilson, who, with his sisters, Esther and Dora, grew up as part of the extended Pettigrew family.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Morrison, 'Religion and Politics in Queensland', pp. 465-470.

¹⁶⁰ BC, 21 May 1868 and 15 October 1869.

¹⁶¹ WP Diary, 13 November 1876; 1 August 1878; 28 March 1879.

¹⁶² A 'tide waiter' was a customs officer who boarded ships on arrival and enforced customs regulations.

¹⁶³ William Pettigrew Wilson served as a Police Magistrate in a number of Queensland country towns.

Box 5.

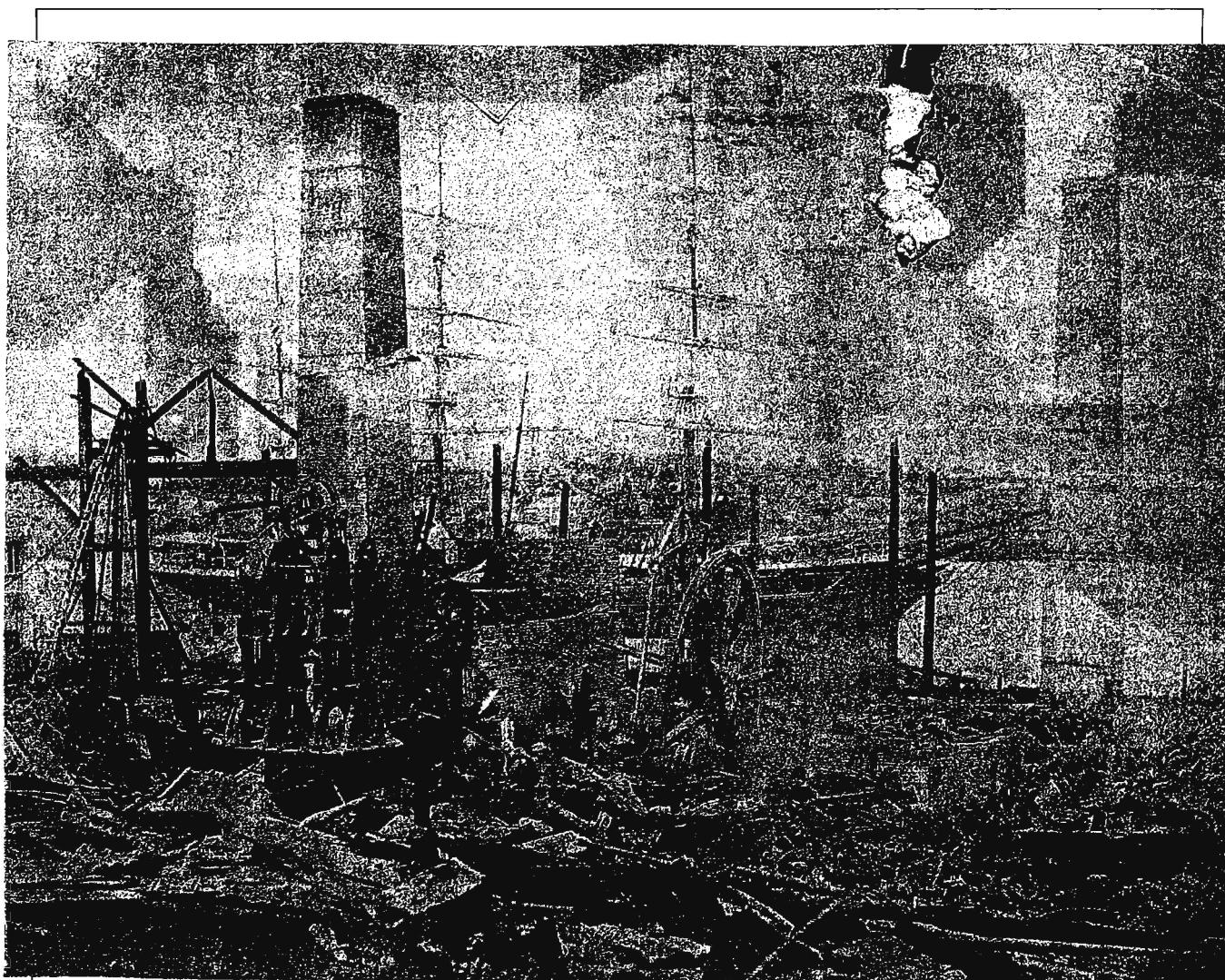
THE FAMILY OF AMELIA ELIZA DAVIS

<u>AMELIA ELIZA DAVIS</u>	m.	Robert Watson Wilson
1855-1941	1875	1849-1918
Esther Amelia 1876-1902	William Pettigrew 1879-19??	Dora Watson 1887-19??

In the midst of progress and prosperity, and at a time when Pettigrew was preoccupied with settling the affairs of the Sim family at Dundathu, the second BSM was destroyed in a spectacular fire on Sunday, 18 October 1874. Coming out of a service at Wickham Terrace Church just after noon, Pettigrew and his family gazed towards the river, where a tremendous pyramid of flame and smoke invaded the sky. A stiff breeze favoured combustion, and within an hour, despite the efforts of the Fire Brigade (led by Superintendent Francis Beattie), the fire had devoured the sawmill, its timber stacks and the cedar shed. By pitching timber into the river and pulling down outbuildings, teams of men managed to prevent the fire from spreading to the long storage shed on Orr and Honeyman's block. The 'Mill House' and adjoining cottages were saved, but their rooms were spoiled by the water played into them, and the Pettigrews' furniture was damaged during its rapid removal from the house. Fire caught the foretopsail of the *Gneering*, which was moored at the mill wharf. She was moved into the river and her hull was saved by cutting down the burning mast. At the height of the blaze, the rigging of the ship *Zoroaster*, a hundred yards away, also caught fire, but her crew managed to extinguish the flames. The *Brisbane Courier* assessed the likely results of the disaster:

Much sympathy is expressed on all hands for Mr Pettigrew, who, by sheer industry and force of character, has triumphed over many difficulties and reverses following on a similar destruction of his mill on the same ground, which occurred some seventeen years ago, and, as it happened, also upon a Sunday.

His workmen will be in some cases direct sufferers from the fire, as some of them had tools to the value of as much as £10 in the building. This fire will make its consequences felt throughout the community. Not only will the immediate loss resulting from the withdrawal of the £600 or so of wages which Mr Pettigrew distributed weekly, fall on the community, but the supply of timber already insufficient to meet the demand will now be utterly inadequate to enable contractors and others to continue the numerous buildings in course of erection in every part of the city. Not only Mr Pettigrew's hands will be at once deprived of employment, but it is to be feared that throughout the building trade an enforced bill will be occasioned and numbers of men now in full employment will have to be turned adrift for a while. There is probably no establishment in Brisbane which could not have been better spared at the present time.¹⁶⁴



Illus. 26.

The BSM after the 1874 Fire

Photo: Anne Harbers

¹⁶⁴ BC, 19 October 1874.

This time there was no question of arson. The fire had started near the maize kiln, where a slight smouldering had been drawn to Pettigrew's attention by the watchman before the family left for church. The maize kiln was connected with the corn-grinding mill over one of the boilers, but, since corn husks and rubbish occasionally came in contact with the boilers and created smoke, Pettigrew saw nothing unusual and told the watchman to keep an eye on it. A little after noon, the watchman noticed that the woodwork around the maize-kiln had ignited. After futile attempts to extinguish the fire, he ran to raise the alarm, returning to find the main building ablaze.

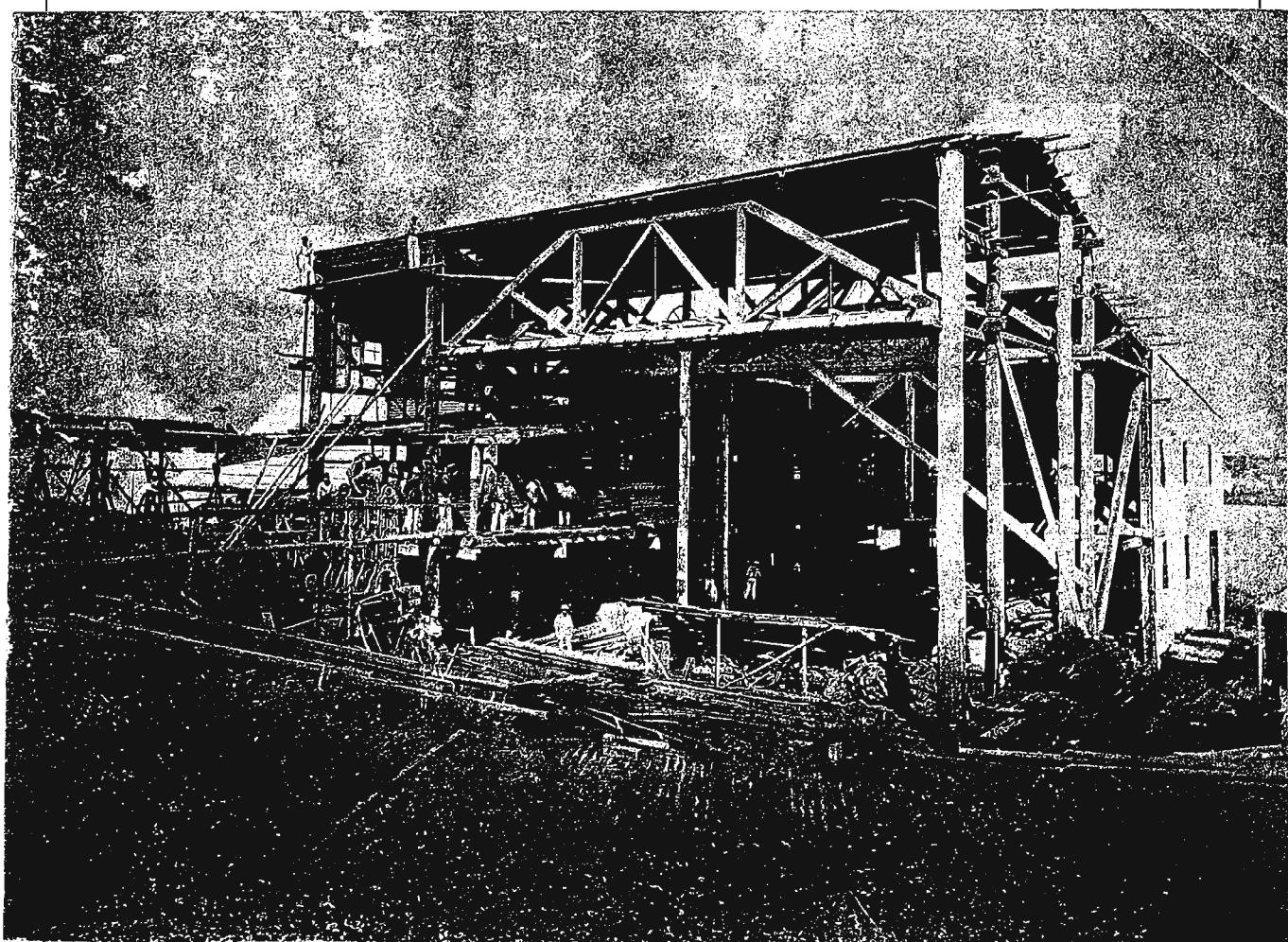
Surveying the ruin, Pettigrew counted the cost. The buildings, machinery, cormmill and timber were valued at between £20,000 and £30,000, but were insured for only £1360. Some of the machines could be salvaged, but the iron of two of the three steam engines had been cracked by the water played on them by the Fire Brigade. The Pettigrew family had to move back into the scorched and sodden 'Mill House' and make the best of their situation.

Pettigrew's comments on his loss were typically matter-of-fact. 'On the 18th of October 1874 on Sunday about noon the Brisbane mill took fire and was burned down,' he wrote in 1899. 'Trade was good at the time, and I designed it anew and had the design carried out.'¹⁶⁵ Cleaning up the mess and rebuilding began immediately, and two months later the saws were working again.¹⁶⁶ The complex of buildings that made up the third BSM eventually covered seven allotments in William Street, as well as all four corners of William and Margaret Streets and much of Short Street. The sawmill, a huge shed with sides and roof of corrugated, galvanised iron, was rebuilt on Pettigrew's original allotment. A grain mill and an engineering shop extended across allotment 1, which

¹⁶⁵ 'Moral Force', Notes on Fortitude immigrants, 1899, p. 4.

¹⁶⁶ WP Diary, 14 December 1874.

Pettigrew had finally managed to purchase from Thomas Coutts in 1872.¹⁶⁷ The Binsteads still refused to sell him allotments 3 and 4, on which there were two cottages, storage sheds, a blacksmith's shop and the mill's earth closets. Steampipes crossed both these blocks, and a railway ran from the sawmill to a wharf on allotment 4. A large carpenter's shop was constructed on the river bank on allotment 5, which Pettigrew had purchased in 1872, after the bankruptcy of the merchants Orr and Honeyman.¹⁶⁸



Illus. 27.

Rebuilding the BSM, 1876

Photo: Anne Harbers

¹⁶⁷ WP Diary, 19 December 1872.¹⁶⁸ BSM Balance Book 1871-1875, pp. 83 and 147.

In April 1874, just before the fire, Pettigrew had purchased allotment 6, originally the property of Thomas Dowse. The railway system was extended to Dowse's wharf and an old stone store, which was slowly sinking into the mud on the riverbank. Also in 1874, Pettigrew had purchased allotment 7 from Mary Mayne, the widow of Patrick Mayne, with whom he had served on the Brisbane Municipal Council. Part of this land, which contained a house, was levelled to make a second timberyard.¹⁶⁹ The main timberyard, which he had acquired during the recession of 1866, was on the corner of William and Margaret Streets, diagonally opposite the sawmill. On the high ground of the sawmill corner, Pettigrew set up new offices and two old boilers, which he kept filled with water in case of emergencies. Dobson's lease, on the opposite corner, was not affected by the fire and still contained a boiler and pipes, workers' cottages, and a garden. The fourth corner sloped steeply down to Short Street, where, also unaffected, stood the brick store and three workers' cottages.

Different sections of the BSM were reconstructed during 1875, and by 1876 Pettigrew was fully back in business. In order to build this bigger and better complex, however, he borrowed money from Ann Sim, and although he had repaid her by 1884, rebuilding proved to be the worst business decision he ever made. The fire cost him his dominance of sawmilling in Brisbane. The Birley Brothers' mill at Kangaroo Point and timber shipped from Dundathu could not fill all outstanding orders, and a number of other firms seized the opportunity to take a share of the trade. In the two years following the fire, McGhie, Luya and Co. constructed a mill on the corner of Stanley and Sidon Streets, South Brisbane, almost opposite the BSM. Robert Dath and William Henderson started their Bulimba sawmill in Fortitude Valley. The Carmichael brothers, Alexander, James and Charles, who had also worked for Pettigrew, expanded their woodturning workshop

¹⁶⁹ BSM Balance Book 1871-1875, p. 248.

in South Brisbane into a sawmill. Charles and John Patterson built the Bon Accord mill at Indooroopilly, and Pettigrew's enterprising friend James Campbell¹⁷⁰ established his first sawmill at Capalaba. By 1877, ten sawmills, including the rebuilt BSM, were operating in Brisbane, and the timber trade was, for the first time, subject to intense competition.¹⁷¹

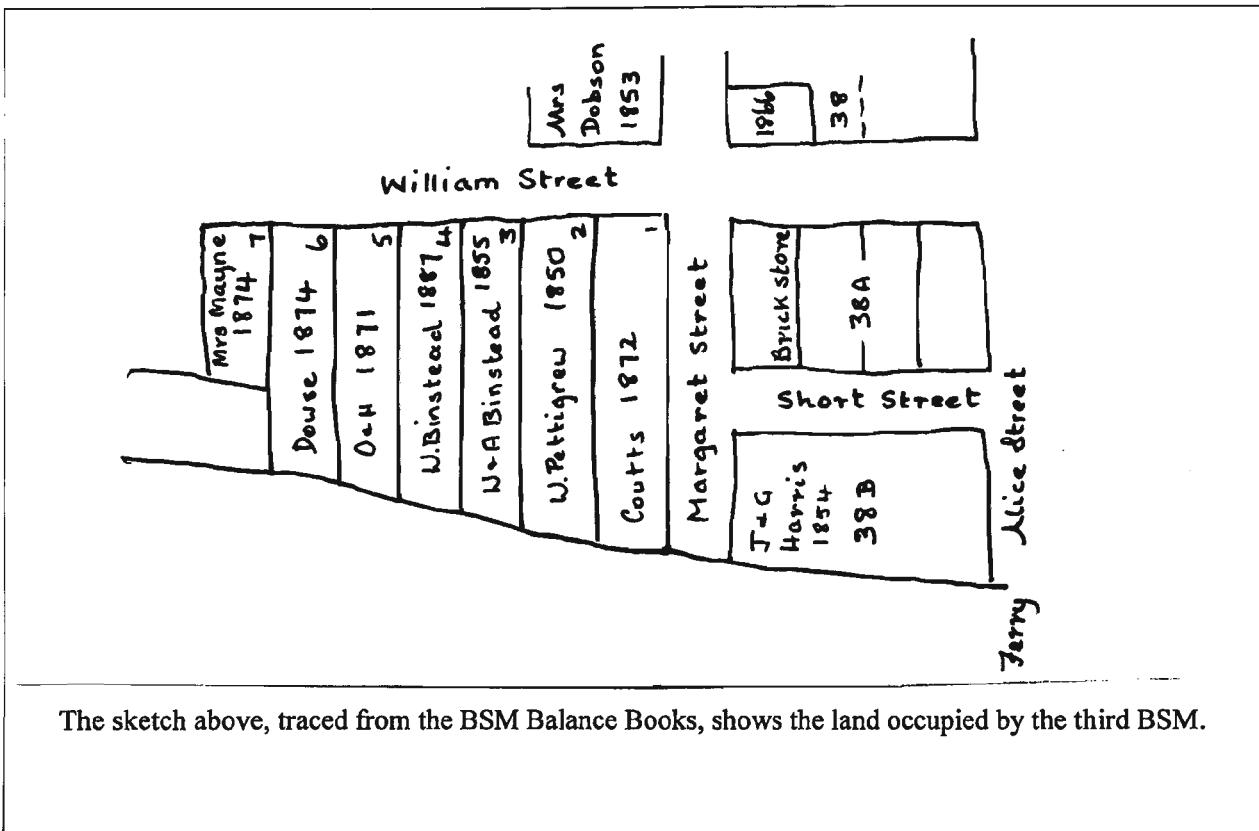
In 1899, with the benefit of hindsight, Pettigrew wrote of his decision to rebuild:

Could I have had the knowledge that I now possess, I would have sold the lot as old iron, and taken up some other occupation, or lived on my means. The fact of my starting again caused the starting of any number of saw mills ... The Queensland National Bank assisted to start any number of them. The consequence was by and by that sawn timber fell in price, and sawmill machinery could be got for next to nothing. To erect my mill I had to borrow some money and the interest of that could not be got out of sawing timber.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Craig Gubby, *Campbellville and Cedar Days* (Brisbane: Dept. of Primary Industries, 1994), p. 15. James Campbell (1830-1904), a plasterer, arrived in Brisbane with his wife from Perthshire, Scotland, in 1853 and set up a building supplies business. Later he and his sons became proprietors of many sawmills, including one at Albion, Brisbane. From 1881 to 1889 they operated a mill at Campbellville on Coochin Creek.

¹⁷¹ John Kerr, Forest Industry Heritage Places Study: Sawmills and Tramways, South Eastern Queensland, Brisbane: Queensland Department of Environment, 1998.

¹⁷² 'Moral Force', p. 4.



The sketch above, traced from the BSM Balance Books, shows the land occupied by the third BSM.



Illus. 28.

The Third Brisbane Saw Mills, 1876

The Brisbane Saw Mills, reconstructed after the 1874 fire, viewed from South Brisbane. From left to right, along the riverbank, are Thomas Dowse's wharf and stone store (allotment 6), Orr and Honeyman's wharf and store (5), Binsteads' allotments (4 and 3), used for storing timber and containing the blacksmith's shop and earth closets, the sawmill (2) and the grainmill (1). On the high bank behind the mill can be seen the two-storey wing of the 'Mill House' and the backs of other houses that face William Street.

Photo: Anne Harbers

7. THE HON. WILLIAM PETTIGREW M.L.C., 1877-1892

During and after 1877, while still fully involved in sawmilling, Pettigrew was captured by more matters outside business, returning to public life in political roles that consumed his time and energy, and accepting additional family responsibilities that tested his patience and tact. The next sixteen years was a rewarding period, characterised after 1884 by new challenges and directions. Beneath the buoyant Queensland economy, however, troubles were brewing that became noticeable in 1889 and worrying by 1891. Pettigrew and other businessmen carried on regardless until 1893, when their confidence was shattered by record, devastating floods and a full-blown economic depression.

In February 1877, Pettigrew returned to the Brisbane Municipal Council as a representative of the East Ward, replacing his friend James Campbell, who, having ousted Francis Beattie in a lively campaign in 1876,¹ became ‘annoyed’ with one of the aldermen and asked Pettigrew to take his place.² In accepting the position, Pettigrew stated that in the past he had been ‘subjected to a great deal of annoyance by members of the Council’ and ‘would not stand so much harassing again, as he was getting too old’.³ The *Brisbane Courier*, which had incorrectly asserted that he would stand against Campbell,⁴ interpreted his speech as meaning that he would only take a seat if he could do so without a contest, and implied that the lack of opposition merely reflected public apathy.⁵ This time Pettigrew remained an Alderman for eight years, unopposed except in 1881, when he was elected with a large majority.⁶

¹ BC, 10 February 1876.

² WP notes, 17 September 1902. In this note, Pettigrew hinted that Campbell was ‘annoyed’ by Alderman John Bale.

³ BC, 7 February 1877.

⁴ BC, 6 and 7 February 1877.

⁵ BC, 7 February 1877.

⁶ BC, 20, 21 and 22 January and 2 February 1881.

When he returned to the Council, changes were in the wind. The *Local Government Act* of 1878 created councils in Brisbane's spreading suburbs, and the *Divisional Boards Act* of 1879 brought local government to country districts. With the desire for local control came pressure to break up the Brisbane Municipal Council, and in 1887 South Brisbane became a separate local authority. Pettigrew's long-held belief that the East Ward was unfairly treated in the provision of services led him to advocate its separation, but he failed to gain support for this move.⁷ His opposition to the widening of Adelaide Street to improve access to Fortitude Valley put him at odds with the other aldermen, and especially his latest adversary, the Valley's gritty representative, John McMaster.⁸ Pettigrew objected not only to the expense of this project but also to the inconvenience it caused Dr William Hobbs, who in 1879 petitioned Parliament for compensation for the demolition of two of his houses in Queen Street and excavations that left his home in Adelaide Street (now the Deanery of St John's Cathedral) perched on the edge of a cliff.⁹ In 1883 Pettigrew was involved in a long and embarrassing row over the election of a mayor, over which, in the end, he was forced to back down.¹⁰ Increasingly frustrated, he resigned just before the 1885 election, ending a total of fifteen years of conscientious, if sometimes controversial, service to the people of Brisbane.¹¹

The Caboolture Divisional Board, created in 1880, stretched from Redcliffe as far north as the Maroochy River. Since Pettigrew owned considerable property in the area covered by the Board, he sought election to it and served for three years, travelling to the Good

⁷ Leavitt, 'The Hon. William Pettigrew, M.L.C.' in *Australian Representative Men*, pp. 196-197.

⁸ John McMaster (1830-1924), another Scot, arrived in Brisbane in 1854 and kept a store in the Valley. He was an alderman in the 1870s and from 1905 to 1921, five times Mayor of Brisbane, M.L.A. for Fortitude Valley three times between 1885 and 1908 and M.L.C. from 1899 to 1901. Pettigrew found him a formidable opponent.

⁹ 'Report of the Select Committee into the Case of William Hobbs', 5 October 1880, *QVP*, 1880, Vol. 2, pp.1393-1412; *BC*, 21 January 1881. William Hobbs (1822-1890), surgeon-superintendent on the *Chaseley*, practised as a doctor in Brisbane and was M.L.C. from 1861 to 1880.

¹⁰ *BC*, 12, 14, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28 February and 2 and 6 March 1883.

¹¹ *BC*, 21 January 1885.

Templars' Hall at Caboolture for monthly meetings and often staying overnight. His experience in local government enabled him to guide the new members through the election of a Chairman (his friend George Raff), the establishment of committees, and the appointment of a Clerk, an overseer, and men to carry out land valuations. He took the liberty of providing chairs for the members to sit on, and initially persuaded them to order tile drains to 'secure' the roads. In 1881 he served as Chairman, controlling the meetings as tightly as he had controlled the Brisbane Municipal Council in 1870 – which may explain why he was voted out as Chairman in 1882.

Petition after petition arrived before the Board on the issue that roused the rate-payers of the Division – the bad state of the roads. Road gangs were soon at work; but tiles for the drains which Pettigrew had advocated lay unused on the Caboolture wharf, and his moves to dredge the Mooloolah River, build a railway from Mooloolah to Maroochy, place a drinking trough on the Gympie Road and produce maps of the Board's three subdivisions were unsuccessful. By the time he left the Board early in 1883, however, plans were under way for the building of a 'Board Room and Dwelling House'.¹²

On 12 May 1877, Pettigrew took a seat in the Legislative Council, an honour which permitted him to style himself 'The Honourable William Pettigrew, M.L.C.' His appointment, together with those of Irish medical practitioner Kevin Izod O'Doherty,¹³ Brisbane businessman George Edmondstone,¹⁴ and Ipswich storekeeper John Clarke

¹² WP Diary, 1-3 and 11 February 1880; Minutes of the Caboolture Divisional Board, 11 February – 15 October 1884, 2 CAB/D, QSA.

¹³ Kevin Izod O'Doherty (1823-1905), an Irish patriot, was transported to Tasmania for 'seditious libel' in 1848. After returning to Ireland to complete his studies, he arrived in Brisbane in 1862 and practised as a doctor, speaking out on measures to improve health. An M.L.A. from 1867 to 1873, he was M.L.C. from 1877 to 1885.

¹⁴ George Edmondstone (1809-1883), a Scottish Presbyterian, arrived in Brisbane in 1840 as a free settler, prospered as a butcher and served as an alderman on the Brisbane Municipal Council (1859-66), as Mayor (1863-64), as M.L.A. (1860-77) and as M.L.C. (1877-83).

Foote¹⁵ was an attempt by the new ‘liberal’ premier, John Douglas,¹⁶ to balance the often obstructionist Council with men sympathetic to his ideas. Douglas, with whom Pettigrew had worked in the Caledonian Society for many years, negotiated these appointments with the new Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy. According to historian Justin Harding, who located confidential letters from Kennedy to the Colonial Office, the Governor was ‘decidedly miffed’ by the ‘social status of the new appointees’¹⁷ – an attitude that was justified neither by the past achievements of the four new members nor by the contributions they were to make in the Council.

For the next seventeen years, whenever Parliament was sitting, Pettigrew walked around the corner from the sawmill to the Legislative Council chamber to contribute to the deliberations of the Upper House. Knowing that he was not a great orator, he made a point of speaking only on matters which he knew something about – immigration, public health, railways, ship design, local government and forest conservancy – and, in comparison with his own early political speeches and the fluid utterances of some of the other members (including his brother John, who was having a lively time as the Member for Stanley in the Legislative Assembly), his contributions tended to be well-prepared, factual and brief. During his first speech, he moved an amendment to the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Bill, calling it ‘a bill to abolish sisters-in-law’; but, on being told by the Postmaster-General, Charles Stuart Mein, that his joke was ‘very feeble’, he withdrew the

¹⁵ John Clarke Foote (1822-1895) arrived with his brother James in 1850 and, after pastoral and teaching experience, entered a partnership with Benjamin Cribb in a large store in Ipswich known as Cribb and Foote. A trustee of the Ipswich Grammar School, he served as M.L.C. from 1877 to 1895.

¹⁶ John Douglas (1828-1904), a well-educated squatter of aristocratic descent, served as M.L.A. from 1863 to 1880, held a number of ministries, and was Premier from 1877 to 1879. From 1885 to 1904 he was Government Resident on Thursday Island.

¹⁷ Justin Harding, ‘A Tale of Two Chambers: Bicameralism in Queensland 1860-85’, *RHSQJ*, Vol. 17, No. 6, May 2000, pp. 258-260. Considered obstructionist by later Labor governments, the Legislative Council was abolished in 1922. Its ornate meeting chamber in Parliament House, now splendidly restored and used for official functions, has changed little since Pettigrew sat there.

amendment.¹⁸ As time passed, he was able to use his knowledge of the workings of Parliament and his increased acquaintance with politicians to the advantage of people who sought his advice.

In November 1877, Pettigrew's half-brother Robert died, aged eighty-one, at 'St Medden's House', Troon, Scotland. Robert's wife had died three years earlier, and his personal estate was left to his Pettigrew Wilson nephews, John and Robert.¹⁹ 'St Medden's House' was purchased by Robert Pettigrew Wilson, but the farm Tarshaw, being entailed, went to William Pettigrew in Australia.²⁰ '[So] Robert has at length gone the way of all flesh,' John Pettigrew wrote to William from Ipswich. 'He was an old man in years – but young in strength – J P Wilson & a Lawyer have written me full particulars, [and] so far as I am concerned I am satisfied. You are now Laird of Tarshaw. May you long enjoy the title ... I suppose it must be worth some £300 a year to you.'²¹

At about the time Sir Arthur Kennedy appointed Pettigrew to the Legislative Council, John's wife Grace gave birth to a son. In a good-humoured gesture, her husband named the baby Henry Arthur Kennedy. Elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1873, John had been an active and vocal supporter of Arthur Macalister, and was appalled when in 1876 Macalister resigned the premiership and for nine months it was taken by the ineffectual George Thorn Jnr.²² John Douglas, who succeeded Thorn, was Premier for not quite two years, and during that time John Pettigrew developed diabetes. A large, fleshy man, sixteen stone in weight, he had always shown a tremendous zest for life. During 1877, he lost weight, broke out in boils, and began to tire easily and feel weak. Early in 1878, he confessed to William that he was 'getting tired of Parliament' and would be 'glad to be

¹⁸ QPD, Vol. XXII, 1877, p. 36.

¹⁹ Will of Robert Pettigrew Jnr, 1878, SRO Edinburgh. Robert Pettigrew died on 3 November 1877.

²⁰ J. Pettigrew Wilson to WP, 14 November 1877; R. P. Wilson to WP, 1 July 1879.

²¹ John Pettigrew to WP, 23 March 1878.

²² QPD, 1876, pp. 197-206, 237 and 322; Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 79.

decently out of it'.²³ During the year, he found it increasingly difficult to attend the Legislative Assembly, and his last major contribution to debate was in June.²⁴

John died on 10 December 1878, aged only forty-six. According to his obituary in the *Queenslander*, he 'refused to allow that his case was serious' and continued to work in his business until the Friday night before his death.²⁵ The *Queensland Times* described him as 'an Ipswich identity – one without whose broad, Doric²⁶ speech and pungent wit, the town would hardly be what it is'. It also referred to his 'indomitable energy' and 'strong common sense, hatred of shams by whatever name they might be called and goodly share of mother wit'.²⁷ William came from Brisbane to lead the funeral procession with John's eldest son, sixteen-year-old John Albert Edward, known, like the Prince of Wales after whom he was named, as Bertie.

John's untimely death created long-term problems for his widow and children, and plunged his brother into an often irksome responsibility that lasted almost the rest of his life. John was a wealthy man, with assets that included his Ipswich store and extensive investments in land, houses, farms and other businesses. His will provided that his estate should be managed by four trustees – his brother William, widow Grace, brother-in-law Richard Gill²⁸ and business manager William Field. If the valuation of the estate came to more than £10,000, two-thirds of the surplus was to be invested for the children in freehold property, bank shares, or government securities, and their portions paid to them when they came of age. One-third was to be similarly invested to support Grace Pettigrew. Each of John's daughters received £500, and the family home in East Street

²³ John Pettigrew to WP, 23 March 1878.

²⁴ QPD, 20 June 1878, p. 561. He also spoke briefly on 16 August 1878, QPD, p. 1165.

²⁵ *Queenslander*, 16 November 1878.

²⁶ 'Doric', referring to dialect, means 'rustic'.

²⁷ *Queensland Times*, 12 November 1878.

²⁸ Richard Gill (1823-1913), for many years the Ipswich Post Master, arrived in Brisbane in 1843 and established a saddlery and clothing business in Ipswich in 1854. His second wife, Mary Anne Agnes Boyd, was Grace Pettigrew's sister.

went to the three children of his first wife, Elizabeth Twine. Grace could live in any other of John's houses, and she chose one named 'Beulah'. Bertie was to be trained as a clerk in the store and offered a partnership when he came of age. He could buy the business, if he wished, when his youngest brother turned twenty-one.²⁹

The problems with the will that soon became apparent related to John's thriving general store in Brisbane Street, Ipswich, which was second in size to the emporium of Cribb and Foote. John had stipulated that this, his core business, should be managed as if it was worth £10,000, and that its debts were not to rise above £2,000. Since, at the time of his death, its assets were £18,389 and its liabilities £6,000, the trustees found these requirements unrealistic. When they attempted to reduce the business, its profit declined so much that, in order to keep it afloat, they themselves had to incur the liability of a bank overdraft. Unable to bear this burden, William Field resigned as manager in 1880 and as trustee in 1884.³⁰ The involvement of Gill and Pettigrew continued only because they felt a responsibility towards John's widow and children.³¹

After Field's resignation, the trustees appointed a new manager, Donald Mackay, and considered the advisability of sending Bertie to a different business to continue his training.³² Gill, who had most to do with the family, warned Pettigrew that there would be 'trouble' with Bertie and his sister Lizzie,³³ and 'trouble' was not long in coming. In January 1881, on a visit to Melbourne, Bertie put his age up to twenty-one and married his step-mother's niece, Victoria Rebecca Andrews Boyd. Gill was furious and wrote Bertie a stern letter, threatening him with a job behind the grocery counter and telling him

²⁹ Will of John Pettigrew, 1878, 1736, QSA; Memos J. Pettigrew's will, 1878.

³⁰ WP Diary, 19 and 21 August 1880; W. Field to WP, 6 July 1884, in 'Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill', 1884, p. 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³² R. Gill to WP, 2 November 1880.

³³ R. Gill to WP, 21 February 1881.

that his wife and her relatives would not be welcome in Ipswich.³⁴ Nothing could be done about the marriage, however, and in time a subdued Bertie returned, with his wife, to his family and the store.³⁵

During the four years of Donald Mackay's management, the store's turnover increased by fifty percent, but its profits continued to decline. It became clear that, if nothing was done to alter the provisions of the will, the trustees would have to resign, and there would eventually be no business left for the family to inherit. The courts could offer no solution,³⁶ so in 1884 the John Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill, which gave the trustees permission to sell or wind up the business and invest the money in other securities, was brought before Parliament. Pettigrew helped to organise the bill, but took no part in presenting or debating it; and, although he was Chairman of Trustees, it was Richard Gill, together with his solicitor son James Howard Gill, who appeared before the six man committee of inquiry that examined it.

The committee, chaired by the Member for Bundamba, James Foote,³⁷ heard evidence from the Gills, John Albert Edward Pettigrew and Donald Mackay. Bertie, who had worked as bookkeeper in the business for five years, said that he preferred to take a salary rather than exercise his right to a partnership, and thought that it would be better to wind up the business and have the proceeds than wait fourteen years until his youngest brother turned twenty-one.³⁸ Donald Mackay said that he was sure the business could not be conducted on 'the lines laid down by Mr Pettigrew', and explained that, in order to engage in business during times of expanding settlement, storekeepers had to keep large

³⁴ R. Gill to J.A.E. Pettigrew, 8 February 1881.

³⁵ R. Gill to WP, 21 February 1881.

³⁶ WP Diary, 18 January 1880.

³⁷ James Foote (1829-1895), a storekeeper and industrialist, was Mayor of Ipswich in 1870 and a Member of the Legislative Assembly three times between 1873 and 1893.

³⁸ 'Minutes of Evidence', pp. 14 and 15.

stocks of goods and lend money to their customers, and would lose trade if they refused to extend credit for long periods. ‘When settlers go on the land’, he said,

... the storekeeper has to find the money to pay the first year’s rent and to keep them as they struggle on upon their selections from year to year, until they get their deeds at the end of five years. I am very sure that were it not for that system there would not be half the settlement there is in the district. The storekeepers of Ipswich settled West Moreton. ... they found the capital.³⁹

The committee agreed unanimously that the bill should be passed. James Foote piloted it through the Legislative Assembly, and W. H. Walsh, the squatter whom Pettigrew had accused of ‘vainglory and bounce’ twenty years earlier, presented it in the Legislative Council. During the debates,⁴⁰ some speakers expressed concern at the seriousness of interfering with the provisions of a will, and the ‘conservative’ Leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas McIlwraith,⁴¹ attempted to score political points by blaming the trustees and calling their actions ‘reprehensible’. The Attorney-General, however, pointed out that the similar Tooth Estate Enabling Bill had set a precedent. He was supported by the ‘liberal’ Premier, Samuel Griffith, who lucidly explained that English legislation giving courts the power to amend an unworkable will had not yet been adopted in Queensland, and declared that the intention of the bill was to ‘benefit the family’ and not to ‘compel the trustees to carry on the estate so as to ruin them’. The bill was passed, and it came into effect on 14 October 1884.

Ten weeks later, on New Year’s Day 1885, the leased building in which John Pettigrew and Co. operated was destroyed by fire.⁴² Insurance covered both building and stock, and Pettigrew and Gill were able to recover over £9,000, some of which they invested in

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15 and 16.

⁴⁰ *QPD*, 1884, Assembly, pp. 97, 386 to 389, 641, 733 to 734, Council, pp. 113-114.

⁴¹ Sir Thomas McIlwraith (1835-1900), another Scot from Ayr, had, like William and John Pettigrew, been educated at the Ayr Academy.

⁴² WP Diary, 1 January 1885; BC, 2 January 1885.

shares in the Queensland National Bank.⁴³ When Annie Pettigrew came of age in June 1885, the three oldest children asked the trustees to sell the family home in East Street. Their wishes were carried out, the house fetched £795, and the money was divided among them.⁴⁴ With a partner, solicitor Alexander Drysdale, Bertie started another general store, known as Pettigrew and Co.; but it was an inopportune time to start a new business, and in 1889 the partnership went into liquidation.⁴⁵ In 1895, armed with a letter of recommendation from the Queensland Premier, Hugh Nelson, to the Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest,⁴⁶ Bertie sought and obtained work in far-off Perth, and later settled, with his family, in Melbourne.

Pettigrew and Gill's management of the John Pettigrew estate can be traced through the correspondence that survives, chiefly Gill's letters to Pettigrew. As with his correspondence with Dr Lang, Pettigrew kept copies of his responses to Gill on important matters, so it is possible to follow some of their decision-making. When the education of Maggie Pettigrew became an issue in 1888, for example, Gill wrote to Pettigrew:

Mrs John Pettigrew has been speaking to me about her daughter Margaret, now 16 years of age, who has been for some time past at school at Sandgate, and has certainly been thereby very much improved in many ways, but unfortunately she is still very, very backward in her education as far as ordinary studies are concerned, and her mother to remedy this proposes to send her to Mrs O'Connor's school at Oxley, and has asked me if the trustees will pay a portion of the cost out of the girl's own funds. She proposes that the trustees will pay £50 per year and herself to pay the balance. Of course we have the power to do this if we think it desirable, and as the girl is now on a visit to you I should be glad if you – without any appearance of doing so – would by conversation and otherwise try and form an opinion on the matter and let me know the result.

And Pettigrew replied:

As you suggest[ed] ... I had a talk with Miss Margaret, and soon found out what you state about her chances of picking up her education. Some people have the gift of picking up one sort of facts and others another; and there are other people who are

⁴³ R. Gill to WP, 5 May and 13 July 1885.

⁴⁴ R. Gill to WP, 17 April and 4 and 5 June 1885; Account 27 May 1885 and Receipt, 19 June 1885.

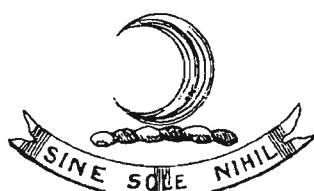
⁴⁵ R. Gill to WP, 17 May 1887; SCT/CA61, 1889, QSA.

⁴⁶ Hugh Nelson to Sir John Forrest, 10 July, 1895, collection of Elizabeth Pettigrew, Ipswich.

dull at picking up any of them. Margaret wants encouragement in learning, a little pushing and a little coaxing – these often go a long way in helping youngsters on. In the school she was at in Sandgate, neither of these were used with her. “She is not smart – so let her be.” That was the idea that seemed to be applied to her. That is past and the consequence we are required to remedy ... I do not consider Mrs P is blameless in leaving Margaret for such a length of time at such a useless school as the one in Sandgate is. This Mrs O’Connor is said to be a better teacher; so far so good. Margaret is desirous of going there and I think it best that she should do so. I think however ... that Mrs P should contribute more than half the cost. ... if Mrs P pays 6/10 the trustees may appropriate 4/10 ... To that I am agreeable.⁴⁷

When Robert Pettigrew turned twenty-one in March 1883, his father made him a partner and gave him a ten per cent share in the firm of W. Pettigrew and Son. To celebrate the event, Pettigrew declared a holiday at the mill and paid for his friends and employees to travel by train to Sandgate, where they spent the morning running, jumping, tossing the caber and playing cricket, before enjoying a ‘sumptuous spread’ in the newly completed Sandgate Town Hall. Robert Scott, one of the firm’s longest-serving workmen, presented Robert with a silver mounted emu’s egg and an illuminated address,⁴⁸ featuring the Pettigrew coat of arms and motto, the firm’s stark symbol of frame saws crossed over a circular saw and surrounded by samples of jointed wood, and, by way of contrast but in keeping with Robert’s character, delicately painted flowers and fairy wrens. Scott, who had known Robert from birth, told the 200 guests that the young man had always been ‘very straightforward and urbane in his conduct towards his father’s employees’. He also praised Pettigrew, saying he was ‘an employer they ought to be proud of, and a colonist Queensland ought to be proud of’.⁴⁹

Illus. 29.



The Pettigrew coat of arms features a sun in eclipse. The motto *Sine sole nihil* means ‘Nothing without the sun’.

⁴⁷ R. Gill to WP, 26 July 1888; WP to R. Gill, 30 July 1888.

⁴⁸ The illuminated address, engrossed by Mr Fairbairn, is held by Allan Pettigrew.

⁴⁹ BC, 30 March 1883.

It was taken for granted that Robert would enter his father's business, and when he left the Brisbane Grammar School at the age of fourteen, he was put to work to learn all aspects of the timber trade. He shared many of his father's interests, such as reading and boating; but he was also artistic – a painter, a sketcher in ink and pencil, a maker of coloured illuminations, and a competent photographer. In surviving papers, his neat, round handwriting and careful diagrams contrast with his father's spiky hand and often scratchy calculations. At the BSM, he designed attractive patterns for the fretwork panels and curved verandah decorations that became popular during the 1880s.⁵⁰ A pleasant, lively young man, he was an Acting Lieutenant in the Moreton Mounted Infantry;⁵¹ and, when rowing became a popular sport and the Sim brothers at Dundathu were winning championships, he sponsored a rowing club for BSM employees.⁵² As part of Robert's training, Pettigrew sent him on journeys – to Sydney and Melbourne, and frequently to Mooloolah – to do business on his own. Lacking his father's drive, Robert accepted his father's dominance, and the relationship between them was close and respectful.

With Robert to take charge at the BSM, Pettigrew was able to absent himself from Brisbane more frequently and travel more extensively. In July and August 1883, he obtained leave from the Legislative Council⁵³ and undertook a six-week business trip to the ports of far North Queensland – Cooktown, Port Douglas, Cairns, Townsville and Mackay – checking the work of his agents and noting civic and religious progress in each settlement. On the return voyage, he called at Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Dundathu.⁵⁴ In February 1885, accompanied by his daughter Mary Ann, he went to Bowen and Townsville by steamer and made a railway journey to the goldfield at Charters Towers.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ BC, 26 May 1884. The French curves used for these designs are held by Allan Pettigrew.

⁵¹ Brian Rough, comp., *General Orders of the Queensland Defence Force for 1885*, p. 49.

⁵² BSM Balance Books, 1885, 1887, p.59; 'Amongst the Early Rowers', MC, 3 September 1923.

⁵³ QPD, Vol. XXXIX, 28 June 1883, p. 190.

⁵⁴ WP Diary, 30 June to 10 August 1883.

⁵⁵ WP Diary, 14 to 26 February 1885.

When Robert came of age, he faced a decision about the future of Tarshaw, the Scottish farm which his father had inherited and which would next go to him. By the 1880s, the title 'Laird of Tarshaw' meant less than it had in Scotland⁵⁶ and nothing at all in Australia. Ownership of the farm, although it produced revenue, was an inconvenience to Pettigrew, who, having no intention of returning to live in Scotland, had disposed of the other properties inherited from his father⁵⁷ and invested the money in his Queensland businesses. Robert consented to forgo his inheritance, and in 1884 the entail was lifted by the Scottish courts.⁵⁸ The farm was sold for £4,500, and, with some of the proceeds, Pettigrew and Son built their third ship, a wooden screw steamer named *Tarshaw*.⁵⁹

The *Tarshaw*, 110 feet long and 106 tons, was Pettigrew's pride and joy. She was built for the trade to Maroochy and Noosa, complementing the ageing *Gneering* and *Tadorna Radjah*, which were still satisfactory for bay and river work, but not so reliable in the open sea. Designed to 'draw as little water as possible, while at the same time taking a large cargo', she had three-and-a-half times the capacity of the *Tadorna Radjah*.⁶⁰ 'Warranted to steeplechase over sandbanks',⁶¹ she was remarkably (though not always) effective in crossing the shallow Maroochy River bar.⁶² In May 1884 Pettigrew leased the riverbank below allotment 7 in William Street and on it raised a large shed, where a team of men under the BSM shipwright, Matthew Miller, built the *Tarshaw* to his design. She was stoutly constructed of the best hardwood he could obtain, and 'trenailed, copper-fastened and sheathed with she-pine'.⁶³ Her engines, made at the Town Head Works of J. & A. Taylor, the firm in Ayr which, since 1853, had supplied much of Pettigrew's

⁵⁶ Strawhorn and Boyd, *Ayrshire*, p. 37.

⁵⁷ Sasines, 3776, 10 April 1868; 1240, 14 December 1871, SRO.

⁵⁸ Register of Places, Tarshaw, 6942, 24 July 1884; 7291, 21 October 1884, SRO.

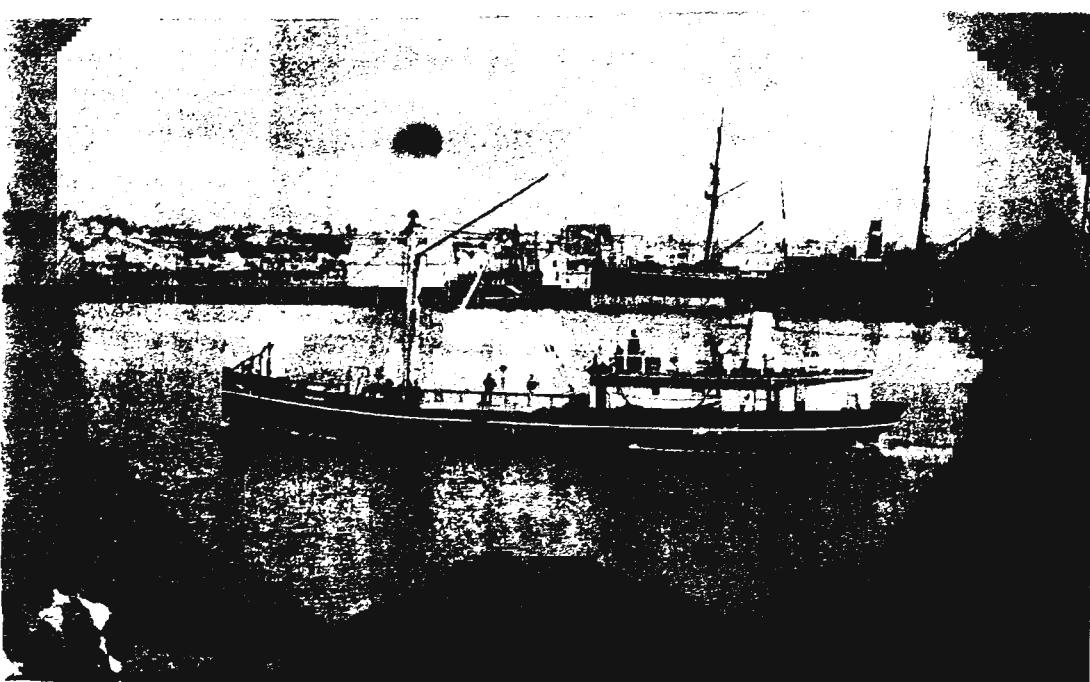
⁵⁹ WP Diary, 13 February 1884; John Taylor to WP, 21 June 1898; BSM Balance Book 1885, pp. 81 & 96.

⁶⁰ Memo Book, BSM, pp. 280-285.

⁶¹ 'Men of Mark', *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897.

⁶² Tainton, 'Marutchi', p. 5; WP Diary, 8 February 1889.

⁶³ BC, 8 March 1886; Memo Book, BSM, p. 280. A trenail is a pin of hardwood used for securing planks.



Illus. 30.

The *Tarshaw*

Photo: Anne Harbers

machinery, were fitted by the Brisbane engineering firm of Evans, Anderson and Phelan. On 6 March 1886, the Pettigrew family gathered to launch the *Tarshaw*. Mary Ann smashed a bottle of champagne against the bow and Margaret cut a rope to trigger an ingenious mechanism that sent the ship ‘gliding’ into the river.⁶⁴ The next four months were occupied with fitting out the ship, installing her boilers and engines and conducting trials, and in mid-July she made her first trip to Maroochydore. Captained by Robert Thompson, then John Williams, and after 1892 by Charles Seaborg,⁶⁵ the former captain of the *Tadorna Radjah*, the *Tarshaw* took over the regular coastal run, carrying supplies to the settlers and bringing back timber, sugar and produce. The smaller *Tadorna Radjah* ‘dodged’ up the Maroochy River to Peter Stevens’s wharf, a mile downstream from Low’s inn at Yandina.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ WP Diary, 6 March 1886; BC, 8 March 1886.

⁶⁵ Captain Seaborg made scale models of the *Tadorna Radjah* and the *Tarshaw*, which are now in the possession of Keith and Allan Pettigrew.

⁶⁶ Moreton Mail, 15 August 1887.

The *Tarshaw* was part of Pettigrew's strategy to adapt to changing circumstances in the Mooloolah-Maroochy district during the 1880s. When Henry and Mary Willson sold up and moved to Brisbane in 1878, Pettigrew replaced them with John and Lydia Potts, recently arrived English immigrants, who brought with them four adult children and seven grandchildren.⁶⁷ John Potts managed the big store at Mooloolah, and also sold goods from a smaller store beside his house. On the headland, which became known as Potts Point, he developed a farm, using seaweed as fertilizer to grow fruit and vegetables, and keeping pigs, which became notorious for foraging on neighbouring properties.⁶⁸ His son-in-law Tom Smith took up land on Buderim, grew sugar cane, and drew timber for Pettigrew. On their visits for holidays or to buy logs at Mooloolah and Maroochy, members of the Pettigrew family usually stayed at 'Coolaluthin' and paid Mrs Potts to cook for them.⁶⁹

When John Potts died in 1890, Pettigrew attended his burial in the Buderim Cemetery.⁷⁰ Located beside the Buderim Mountain road, this cemetery was on land which Pettigrew had exchanged in 1880 in for the unsuitable site of the district's first cemetery near the coast, which he added to Margaret Pettigrew's Portion 27.⁷¹ Potts's death signalled the end of 'Coolaluthin'. After his wife Lydia went to live with a daughter, the unoccupied houses on the headland fell into disrepair, and by 1895 they were derelict.⁷²

The discontent of local settlers with Pettigrew's monopoly of trade at Mooloolah came to a head in 1880, when a petition was sent to the Minister for Lands complaining about Pettigrew's charges and asking the government to resume some of his land for public

⁶⁷ Potts family history, John F. Burrows to Elaine Brown, 25 October 2000.

⁶⁸ Tainton, 'Marutchi', p. 9; WP Diary, 30 May 1884. See Robert Pettigrew's drawing, p. 205.

⁶⁹ Tainton, p. 10.

⁷⁰ WP Diary, 14 and 15 August 1890.

⁷¹ Berenis Alcorn, 'The First Cemetery in Maroochy Shire: The Mooloolah Cemetery 1870-1880', unpub. typescript, 1994.

⁷² WP Diary, 15 October 1895, 11 December 1896, 28 January 1897, 8 November 1897.

wharfage purposes. The first of the fifty-eight names on the petition was that of James Low, but the names of the Potts family, Charles and Thomas Chambers, and some of the other settlers with whom Pettigrew had close connections were absent.⁷³ A report by C. B. Whish, then an Inspector of Road Surveys, indicated that the settlers had a genuine grievance and suggested two areas, totalling five acres, that might be resumed.⁷⁴ But the matter ended because the tenure of the land was freehold and Pettigrew declined to sell it. In his letter rejecting the government's request to buy the land, he stated (somewhat irrelevantly) that it was news to him that the provision for wharfage at Mooloolah was inadequate, and that he planned to enlarge the store to accommodate an expected increase in crops. He enclosed a map, showing the sandbank that prevented the *Gneering*, on her fortnightly visits to Mooloolah, from reaching the store, and suggested that 'if the Government wish to expend money in improving the place ... a slight expense in training walls would keep another channel open', but 'how it would be remunerative would be a very different question'. The *Gneering*, he explained, anchored just inside the mouth of the river, while a punt conveyed goods to and from the store. Logs, which were stored on the land near the store, were either rafted to the ship or transported alongside the punt. He was certain that the road reserve was wide enough for a road, as well as a future railway line, and he thought that the Caboolture Divisional Board (of which he was then a member) had plenty of other uses for their money. Finally, he voiced his suspicions about the motives of the complainants:

The reason for all this trouble to the Government is not given, and would not look well on paper, but I believe it to be that certain parties wish to use my store, wharf, ground etc without paying for the use thereof. My charges when compared with Brisbane are high, but by no means unreasonable – far less extortionate.⁷⁵

⁷³ Petition to the Minister for Lands, 13618, 1 November 1880, QSA.

⁷⁴ C. B. Whish to Under Secretary for Public Lands, 4 January 1881.

⁷⁵ WP to Secretary for Public Lands, 25 January 1881.

Not long after this, however, a cheaper alternative to Pettigrew's service was provided by the arrival in the Maroochy River of oystermen, who used small sailing vessels called cutters to transport their perishable product to Brisbane. When some farmers chose to transport their sugar on these cutters, Pettigrew's Mooloolah-Maroochy trade was considerably reduced.⁷⁶

During the early 1880s, the government was under pressure to build a railway along the coast from Brisbane to Gympie, and in September 1882, the Brisbane Branch of the Railway League asked Pettigrew, George Raff and Abraham Luya to inspect a route proposed by the surveyor Charles Beevor Steele. Their report suggested several deviations, notably one which would have brought the railway to the coast at Mooloolah, taken it through a cutting between Buderim Mountain and the sea, and then up the valley of the Maroochy to rejoin Steele's route. Although the report argued that the sole reason for the deviation was to avoid the many creeks and ranges to the west of Buderim, it was obvious that much of the line would cross Pettigrew's Mooloolah and Maroochy lands and fulfil his long-held vision of a railway through the area.⁷⁷

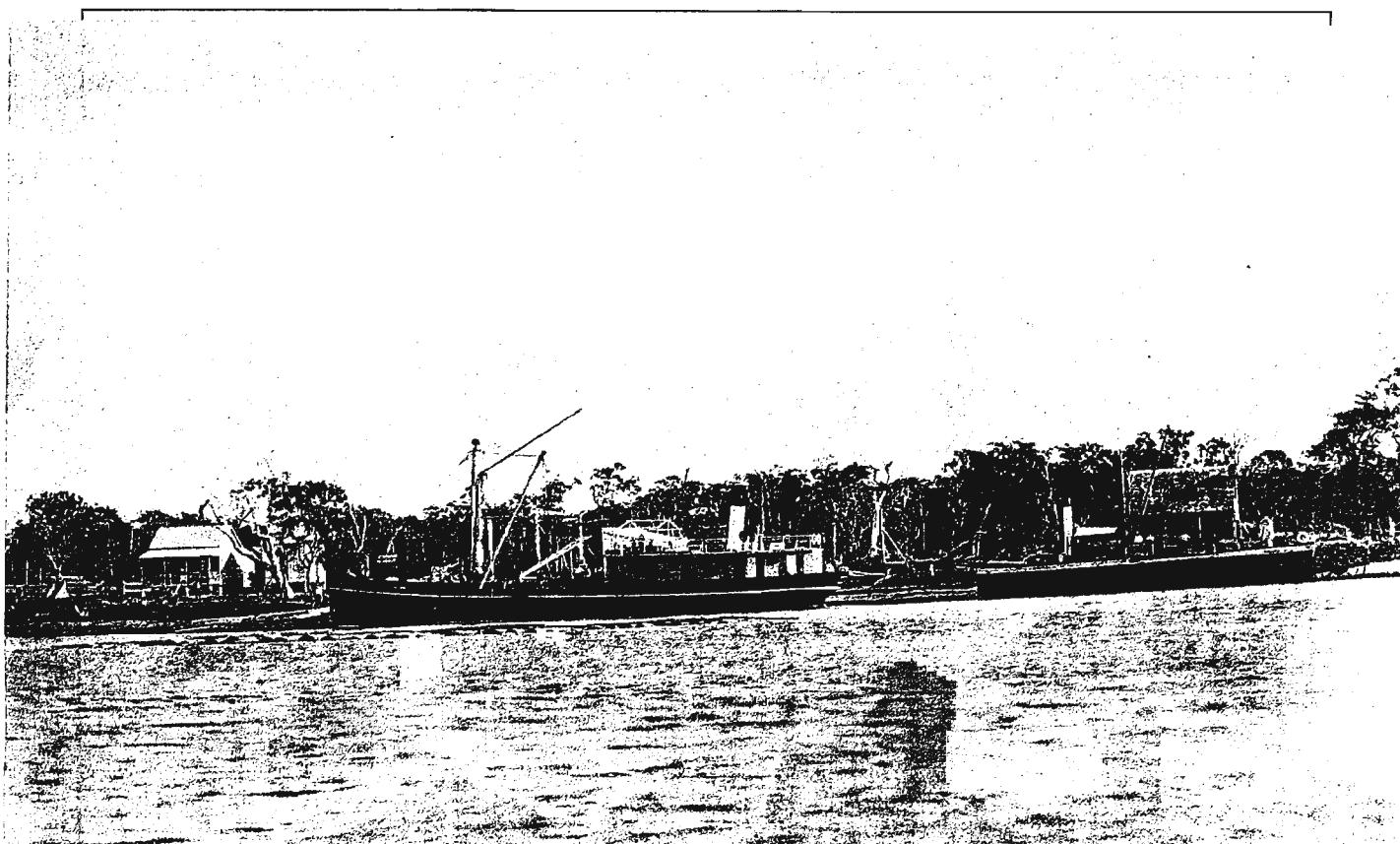
It is interesting to speculate how different the history of the Sunshine Coast might have been if the deviation that favoured Pettigrew's interests had been chosen – but it was not. The railway followed a relatively straight route from south to north, passing west of Buderim Mountain. Pettigrew accepted that, once this direct line was built, his depot at Mooloolah would become redundant. Although in 1881 he had refused to sell any land at Mooloolah, when the construction of the North Coast railway began in 1887, he sold his Mooloolah 'wharf, store and the road thereto' to the Caboolture Divisional Board for

⁷⁶ Memo Book, BSM, p. 256; Diary of Reuben Probert, 28 March and 9 October 1884, 10 and 31 January 1885, in private possession of Berenis Alcorn. Cutters were small, one-masted sailing vessels.

⁷⁷ 'Report of Committee appointed by the Brisbane Branch of the Railway League to examine Mr Steele's coastal railway route', 22 September 1882, *GT*, 1 November 1882; *QPD*, 8 December 1887, p. 156.

£500.⁷⁸ After the line reached Caboolture in June 1888,⁷⁹ ending the usefulness of his depot there, he instructed his storekeeper to pull down the store and move it to Maroochydore, where it was reconstructed as a sugar shed.⁸⁰

From the mid-1880s, with the prospect of adding the *Tarshaw* to his fleet, Pettigrew turned his attention to his properties on the Maroochy River. In 1884 he sent carpenter Hamilton Hume to Maroochydore to build two houses,⁸¹ one for his overseer, Hamilton Muirhead, the other for the Captain of the *Tadorna Radjah*. In December 1884, a group of farmers, still dissatisfied with Pettigrew's service, tried to establish a 'Maroochie



Illus. 31. The *Tarshaw* (left) and the *Tadorna Radjah* at Maroochydore, 1888.

This photograph, by Robert Pettigrew, shows Pettigrew's timber depot on the south bank of the Maroochy River, where later he built his sugar shed and sawmill. The Captain's house is on the left and the overseer's house on the right. A raft of logs floats in the river.

Photo: Anne Harbers

⁷⁸ WP Diary, 24 December 1887; BSM Balance Book 1888-1890, p. 37.

⁷⁹ BC, 18 June 1888. The railway reached Yandina in 1889 and Gympie in 1891.

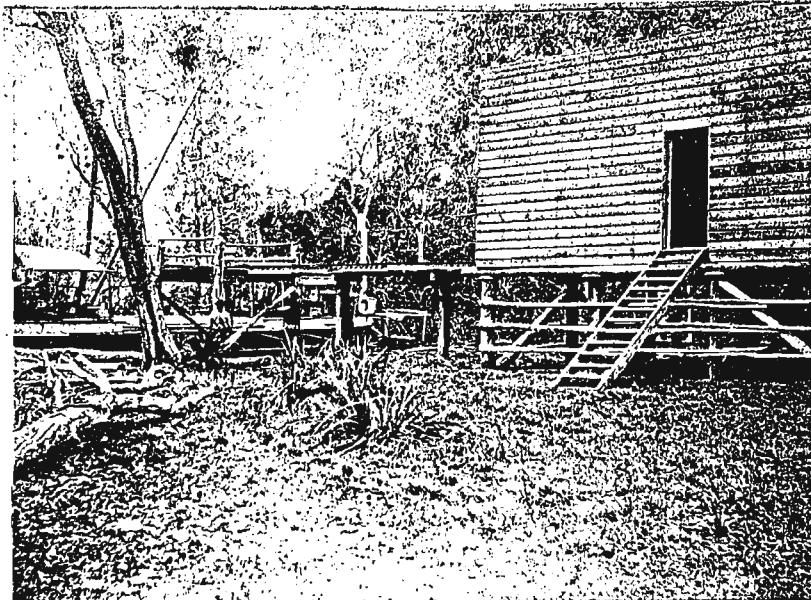
⁸⁰ WP Diary, 5 December 1888.

⁸¹ WP Diary, 25 June and 11 August 1884.

Steam Navigation Company'. Although seventy-two settlers signed up for shares, the company was wound up only five months later, presumably because, owing to a drop in the price of sugar, the necessary capital was not forthcoming.⁸²

In 1886, with the *Tarshaw* available to do the coastal run, Pettigrew set out to develop the south bank of the Maroochy River, spending a great deal of the next five years on various projects. On Portion 6, which he had selected in 1872, he extended his timber depot, sank a well, dug drains and built a wharf. In 1887, he built a store at Peter Stevens's wharf near the head of navigation, and the following year, in response to a request from John Fielding,⁸³ he went to considerable trouble to build a store on Eudlo Creek, a tributary of the Maroochy. Choosing a site on the creek that was accessible to many of the farms, he sent two of his carpenters to Maroochydore in March to erect the store. Since the creek was impassable in two places, he asked the government to deepen the channel.⁸⁴

Illus. 32.



Eudlo Creek Store

The store, the wharf, and in the creek the *Tadorna Radjah*, photographed by Robert Pettigrew in 1888.

⁸² Memorandum of Association, Supreme Court register, No. 75, Book 3, 24 December 1884; BC, 16 May 1885; Gregory, *Making Maroochy*, p. 30.

⁸³ WP Diary, 29 March and 14 April 1885. John Fielding, a *Fortitude* immigrant, was a proprietor of one of the sugar mills at Buderim. Fielding's fellow proprietor, Joseph Dixon, was also his son-in-law.

⁸⁴ WP to Treasurer, 1 October 1887, TRE/A35, In-letter 3924/1887, QSA.

Receiving a refusal, he fitted up a large timber punt as a dredge and undertook the work himself.⁸⁵ During 1889 and 1890, he advertised a service to 'Maroochie, Eudlo Creek and Petrie Creek',⁸⁶ but the venture was not viable and he closed it late in 1890.⁸⁷

Responding to increasing settlement along the Maroochy River during the 1880s, Pettigrew developed a dairy farm on Portions 8 and 25, which he had acquired from Charles Chambers in 1883. This experiment was another example of his willingness to lead. The invention of refrigeration and cream separators had given dairying new potential, but Pettigrew's isolated farm at Maroochydore was already in place when the Department of Agriculture set up its promotional 'travelling dairies' in 1889.⁸⁸ In 1888, he checked that the boundary fences were in order and obtained an agreement from

Illus. 33.



Photographs by Robert Pettigrew

⁸⁵ Treasurer to WP, 30 November 1887, TRE/A35, 1611/1887, QSA; Memo Book, BSM, p. 256; WP Diary, 10 November 1887; 12 March, 21 April, 17 and 27 May, 21 July, 26 September 1888.

⁸⁶ BC, 11 October 1890.

⁸⁷ WP Diary, 24 March 1891.

⁸⁸ L.G. Ashton, ed., *Dairy Farming in Australia*, Queensland Edition (Commonwealth Department of Commerce and Agriculture, 1951), pp. 6 and 10; J.F.F. Reid, 'Half a Century in Queensland Agriculture: Story of the Department of Agriculture and Stock', *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, July 1947, p. 7.

George Doyle, who had been one of his timber-getters at Moggill since the 1870s, to lease the Maroochy Flat for five years and work the farm with his wife Julia and their children.⁸⁹ He then constructed a house, dairy, calf pen, piggery, butcher's shop, stockyard and milking shed.⁹⁰ Doyle overlanded some cattle and bought others locally to make up a herd.⁹¹ Before the Doyles had been at Maroochydore for six months, however, they became discontented and returned to Brisbane, leaving two of their sons to work the dairy until Pettigrew could make other arrangements.⁹²

Pettigrew's final venture at Maroochydore was a sawmill – the sixth that he designed and built. During the 1880s, the pattern of sawmilling had changed. To cope with the ever-increasing distances over which logs were drawn to the large, central mills, and to take advantage of the lower cost of transporting sawn timber, mills were constructed close to the forests that fed them and relocated when the resource was exhausted. In his 1884 diary, Pettigrew noted the establishment of ten mills south of Brisbane – at Mudgeeraba, Coomera, Tamborine, on the Logan River, and on Nerang, Bonogan and Cedar Creeks.⁹³ He started building the Maroochy sawmill in 1889, the year that James Campbell abandoned his mill at Campbellville on Coochin Creek after ten years of operation; and in 1890, he noted that the Lahey Brothers had opened a mill in the Blackall Ranges.⁹⁴ In the Maroochy district, he faced competition from small mills already established by George Etheridge at Eumundi and Richard Heddon at Diddillibah.⁹⁵

In June 1889, Pettigrew marked out a site on the riverbank on Portion 6,⁹⁶ and in September a team of ten men, led by the dependable Matthew Miller, began work. In six

⁸⁹ WP Diary, 26 August and 5 September 1888.

⁹⁰ BSM Balance Book 1889, p. 114; Memo Book, BSM, p. 328.

⁹¹ WP Diary, 16 November 1888, 28 January and 9 April 1889.

⁹² WP Diary, 20 to 21 and 31 May and 18 June 1889.

⁹³ WP Diary, 21 to 25 July 1884.

⁹⁴ Gubby, *Campbellville in Cedar Days*; WP Diary, 1 October 1890.

⁹⁵ Kerr, *Sawmills and Tramways*, p. 152.

⁹⁶ WP Diary, 18 June 1889.

weeks, they stood eight posts, erected roof trusses, and made concrete foundations for the boilers and stone foundations for the chimney. Then Pettigrew ran into difficulties with finance, and the work had to stop.⁹⁷ An unseasonal flood in December swept logs, punts, and the materials that had been left on the river bank out to sea.⁹⁸ Another flood, in January 1890, was followed by record floods in March, and work did not begin again until August.

Pettigrew spent most of the next ten months at Maroochydore, supervising the building of the sawmill and its associated structures. He returned to Brisbane for brief periods to attend Parliament and family events, and on one occasion to mortgage the sawmill machinery, the *Tarshaw* and the *Tadorna Radjah* to the Union Bank so that work could continue.⁹⁹ Later, when the bank asked for more security, he handed over the deeds of three of his blocks of land at Alexandra Headlands and Maroochydore.¹⁰⁰ At first he travelled back and forth on the *Tarshaw*, but in February 1891, when the seas were too rough, he used the railway, travelling from Eagle Junction to Woombye, then riding a horse to Maroochydore.¹⁰¹ As the line extended north, train travel to and from Brisbane became an option for him and his workmen. On a number of occasions during the following months, he took the *Tadorna Radjah* upstream to Stevens' wharf and rowed a small boat to Yandina, where he caught the train to a convenient station in Brisbane and, if necessary, 'tramped' home.¹⁰² In April 1891, he went by train and connecting coach to Maryborough and returned the same way to Brisbane.¹⁰³

At Maroochydore, Pettigrew stayed with different families, or slept in an old office that

⁹⁷ WP Diary, 5 September and 7 to 10 October 1889.

⁹⁸ WP Diary, 19 December 1889.

⁹⁹ WP Diary, 13 April 1891.

¹⁰⁰ WP Diary, 4, 17 and 18 August 1891. He mortgaged Portions 2, 25 and 62.

¹⁰¹ WP Diary, 12 February 1891.

¹⁰² WP Diary, 2, 14, 17 and 30 March, 16 and 29 April, 13 and 29 June 1891.

¹⁰³ WP Diary, 16 – 17 and 23 April 1891.

had been transferred from the BSM, paying the wife of the captain of the *Tadorna Radjah* to cook his meals.¹⁰⁴ When there on a Sunday, he would gather a congregation of about thirty people in the sugar shed and hold Divine Service, delivering the sermons himself.¹⁰⁵

The Maroochy sawmill was constructed by Matthew Miller and a team of men from the BSM, assisted by local labourers and a Buderim carpenter, Harry Board. Tom Smith's horse team was used for heavy hauling jobs.¹⁰⁶ Timber-getter Henry Keil supplied the round timber, and Etheridge's and Heddon's mills much of the sawn timber. From Brisbane, the *Tarshaw* brought the boiler, cases of machinery, and supplies of bricks, cement, pipes and galvanised iron. The mill was fitted chiefly with surplus machines from the BSM, but Pettigrew also imported an American bandsaw, which was used instead of frame saws. Another innovation was a windmill, which pumped fresh water from a well adjacent to Cornmeal Creek into a high tank, from where it gravitated along a pipeline to a slabbed well near the boilers.¹⁰⁷ Both the bandsaw and the windmill needed a great deal of adjustment, and Pettigrew noted in his diary the 'trials of patience' involved in getting them to work properly.¹⁰⁸

Compared with the BSM, the Maroochy mill was small. About a dozen men had regular work, and extra hands were employed at peak periods such as loading. The manager, John Henry, had worked for Pettigrew since 1872. A widower, he brought with him to Maroochydore two sons, William and David, and his father, John senior, who had worked at the BSM since 1866. William Rowlands, who had replaced Hamilton Muirhead as the overseer at Maroochy in 1889, became the clerk at the mill. Sawing timber began in March 1891, and in July large rafts of logs began arriving from timber-getters

¹⁰⁴ WP Diary, 4 December 1890; 5 March 1891.

¹⁰⁵ WP Diary, 2, 12, 16, 30 November, 14 and 21 December 1890 and 4 January 1891.

¹⁰⁶ WP Diary, 6 September 1889; 19 December 1890.

¹⁰⁷ Tainton, 'Marutchi', p. 104.

¹⁰⁸ WP Diary, January and February 1891.



Illus. 34.

Employees at the Maroochy Sawmill, 1890s

Front row, l. to r.: John Lunn (engineer); David Henry (bandsaw); John Henry (manager); E.R. (Ted) Parry (raftsman); John Henry Snr; Middle row: Frank Guy (yardman); Bob Dunning (tailer-out); Dick Nicholls (yardman); Michiah Parry (setter-up); J.H. (John) Parry (winch man); William Rowlands (storekeeper); Back row: John Jones (saw bench); Bob Manners (saw-sharpener); Bill Rowlands (planing machine). Absent: John Miller (fireman), Amos Snowden (planing machine).

Photo: Anne Harbers

upstream.¹⁰⁹ A travelling crane on the wharf pulled the logs out of the water and loaded them onto trolleys to be railed into the mill. On 17 December, John Snook, an employee who had helped to build the sawmill and whose wife was working Pettigrew's dairy, was accidentally killed when the wharf crane collapsed into the river. The next day, after an inquest conducted by Gustav Reibe, a Buderim settler, Pettigrew officiated at Snook's burial in the Buderim Cemetery.¹¹⁰

In the background of all this activity, small groups of dispossessed Aboriginal men, women and children moved around the district, sometimes working for the settlers in exchange for rations and cast-off clothing. Pettigrew paid particular attention to the

¹⁰⁹ WP Diary, 14, 15 and 16 July 1891.

¹¹⁰ WP Diary, 17 December 1891 and Notes, May 1892.

annual distribution of government blankets to Maroochy Aborigines on Queen Victoria's birthday, and the names of some recipients are recorded in his diaries during the 1880s.¹¹¹

During the late 1870s and early 1880s, Pettigrew's Maryborough interests were capably managed by William Menzies and the Sim brothers. They kept in touch by telegram, letter, and occasional visits to Brisbane, and Pettigrew continued to make his presence felt at Dundathu several times a year. Although his relationship with Ann Sim was cordial, and he carried out his responsibilities towards her children, his association with the younger Sims lacked the warmth of his friendship with their father. As time passed, members of the Sim family increased their shareholdings in Pettigrew and Co., until they owned more than two-thirds of the business.¹¹² Pettigrew continued to give advice, but was content to play the role of partner, tacitly acknowledging the Sims' contribution to the firm's achievements.

The health of William Menzies had long been questionable.¹¹³ In 1881 he developed tuberculosis and on 18 February 1882 he died, leaving his wife Mary Ann with two small sons and an income from his share of Pettigrew and Co.¹¹⁴ James Sim Tertius and William Simpson Sim took over the management of the Dundathu and Union mills, and survived the first rumblings of industrial unrest when their sawmill hands struck for an 8-hour day in July.¹¹⁵ Both men were prominent in civic, social and sporting affairs well into the twentieth century, and W. S. Sim served as Mayor of Maryborough in 1908.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ WP Diaries, 16 May 1881; 6 May 1884; 23 May and 6 June 1886; 11 May 1887; 25 April 1889.

¹¹² WP Diary, December 1892. In an undated summary of the assets of the 'Dundathu business' in the Anne Harbers collection, Pettigrew noted that his share was 15/54 parts and was valued at £6,381.

¹¹³ WP Diary, 24 and 25 July 1875; 17 March and 2 August 1877; 29 July 1878.

¹¹⁴ MC, 21 February 1882. In 1883 Mary Ann Menzies married the Maryborough boatbuilder Peter Anderson, but she died in 1886.

¹¹⁵ MC, 18 July 1882.

¹¹⁶ MC, 30 October 1926; MC, 22 March 1929; George E. Loyau, *A History of Maryborough from 1850 to 1895* (Brisbane: Poole, Outridge & Co., 1897), p. 326. James Sim was known as 'Tertius', meaning 'third', because he had an uncle (James junior), a grandfather (James senior), as well as a cousin, of that name.

In July 1877, Pettigrew went with James Sim Tertius to the Cooloola Railway and surveyed an extension across Cooloola Creek and north to a new coastal terminus at Poverty Point.¹¹⁷ The following year he surveyed an extension inland to a terminus at the Pot Hole, the lowest part of the Broutha Scrub.¹¹⁸ After Sim had laid the track, the completed line was between eight and nine miles long. According to Pettigrew, who spoke proudly about his ‘line at Tin Can’ in the Legislative Council, the railway cost about £1000 per mile to build and was a technical and financial success.¹¹⁹ When the stand of kauri pine in the Broutha Scrub was exhausted in 1884, he paid a final visit to the railway and measured the girth of remaining trees ‘to compare at some future time’.¹²⁰ The locomotives *Mary Ann* and *Dundathu* were sent back to Dundathu and put up for sale, but remained there on the riverbank and were destroyed by fire in 1893.¹²¹

The success of the Cooloola Railway as a means of drawing logs from inaccessible places and over difficult terrain encouraged other sawmillers to build light railways. Through the swampy country surrounding McGhie, Luya and Co.’s Cootharaba sawmill, for example, horse-drawn trucks carried logs along tramways raised on mounds,¹²² while at Ramsay Brothers’ Mungar sawmill on the Mary River, a locomotive named the *Dragon*, also built by John Walker and Co., pulled timber along five miles of hardwood rails.¹²³

With the closure of the Cooloola Railway and increased competition from other Maryborough sawmills, Dundathu lost the prominence it had held since the 1860s.¹²⁴ The Wilson Hart mill, established on the riverbank opposite the town centre in 1866, was destroyed by fire in 1881 and rebuilt close to the town. In June 1883 a newcomer,

¹¹⁷ WP Diary, 25 and 26 July 1877.

¹¹⁸ WP Diary, 21 to 30 October 1878.

¹¹⁹ QPD, Vol. XXII, 1877, pp. 212-214.

¹²⁰ WP Diary, 3 to 8, 17 to 19 and 24 March 1884.

¹²¹ ‘Down the River’, MC, 8 January 1885; WP Diary, 29 December 1893.

¹²² BC, 7 July 1877; BC, 22 August 1878; *Queenslander*, 17 April 1886.

¹²³ MC, 26 November 1878.

¹²⁴ Mackay Mercury, 12 July 1882.

Richard Matthews Hyne, opened his National Saw and Planing Mills just downstream from the Union sawmill, prompting Pettigrew to note, ‘Hyne’s mill started 6 weeks ago selling very little Wages small.’¹²⁵ The improved technology and equipment in the new mills gave them an advantage in throughput and efficiency over older mills such as the Union and Dundathu.¹²⁶

In 1886, with the lease of the Union sawmill due to expire, Pettigrew and Co. bought two allotments on the opposite side of Guava Street.¹²⁷ In January 1888 Pettigrew designed a new mill, which, together with a branch railway line and a new wharf, was constructed and opened later that year. This, the fifth sawmill Pettigrew had designed, was named Urara, an Aboriginal word for the spotted gum tree, *Eucalyptus maculata*.¹²⁸ The wisdom of the move and the strength of the new buildings was demonstrated during the record flood of 1890, when, although sawn timber was washed away, the Urara mill escaped serious damage. Hyne’s sawmill, next to the Union site and in the middle of the racing current, was devastated.¹²⁹

As inner Brisbane became noisier and more congested during the 1880s, many of its residents moved to the suburbs that were springing up along the roads and railway lines that radiated from its centre. But Pettigrew stayed on in William Street, where for thirty years he had lived conveniently, next to his sawmill, only a short walk from his activities at the Town Hall and Parliament House, and close to the wharves where he boarded the ships that took him to other parts of the colony. Most of all, he was tied to the area by his representation of the East Ward on the Brisbane Municipal Council.

¹²⁵ WP Diary, 8 August 1883. Ironically, of all the sawmills operating in the 1880s, Hyne’s is the one that has survived into the 21st century.

¹²⁶ Lambert Hyne, ‘Timber Industry’, MC, 1931.

¹²⁷ WP Diary, 8 August 1886; MC, 13 August 1886.

¹²⁸ WP Diary, 21 January to 3 February 1888; MC, 14 July 1888 and 20 March and 2 April 1889.

¹²⁹ J.R.L. Hyne, *Hynesight: A history of a timber family in Queensland* (Maryborough: J.R.L. Hyne, 1980), pp. 30-35; Loyau, *A History of Maryborough*, p. 172.

The other inhabitants of William Street were as diverse as its buildings. At the end nearest Parliament House, in a set of terrace houses named ‘Portland Place’, lived Lady Eliza O’Connell, widow of the prominent official, Sir Maurice O’Connell. Various BSM employees occupied Pettigrew’s cottages in Margaret and Short Streets, and the family of Abraham Street, the ostrich feather dyer and cleaner, were long-time occupants of a cottage next to the ‘Mill House’. At the Queen Street end, the rector of St John’s resided next to his church, while across the road thousands of newly arrived immigrants sheltered in the Immigration Depot before moving to other parts of Queensland.¹³⁰

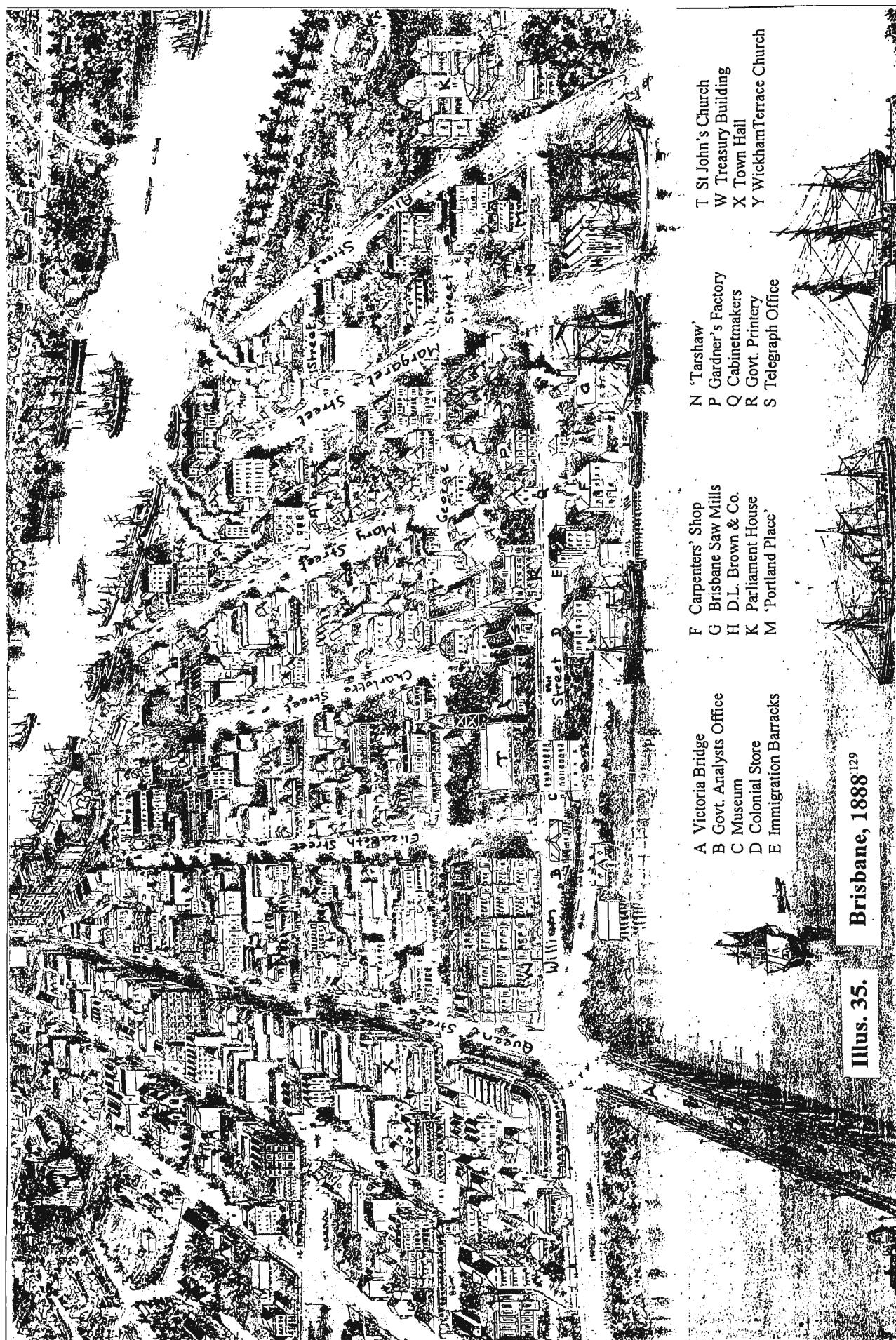
The old street retained its mixture of functions; but, as the offices of government spread into buildings along William and George Streets, the noisy, smoky BSM, which occupied an acre and a half of ground, became something of a nuisance. In 1888, a writer describing William Street refused to look beyond the Government Printing Office, commenting,

At this point the historical interest ceases, as a few steps further brings one in front of Gardner’s Lemonade Factory, an extensive establishment of the most aggressively utilitarian kind, and obviously fitted with all the most recent machinery.¹³¹

Next door to Gardner’s factory was the smaller but equally ‘utilitarian’ steam joinery of the cabinetmaker John Wilson Carey, which in 1885 was taken over by Richard Offer. The BSM, having been in existence since 1853, might have had some claim to ‘historical interest’, but the only ‘historic’ buildings acknowledged by the writer were the Military Barracks, Colonial Secretary’s office and Colonial Stores, which remained from convict days, the United Evangelical Chapel (1851), St John’s Church of England (1854) and the Immigration Depot (1866).

¹³⁰ *Queensland Post Office Directories, 1883-1900.*

¹³¹ Garran, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, p. 373. The same amnesia surfaced a century later. In 1991 the Brisbane History Group produced a heritage tour booklet for colonial George and William Street, in which the BSM’s extensive buildings, although illustrated, are neither identified nor discussed.



¹²⁹ Enlarged from the *Illustrated Sydney News*. JOL.

The Queensland Museum (later the State Library), with its ‘fine and chaste pillared front of cut freestone’ and its ‘unadorned brick’¹³³ back wall overlooking the river, opened its doors in 1880. Here the Philosophical Society met before merging, in 1883, with the newly formed Royal Society.¹³⁴ Pettigrew became a life member of the Royal Society in 1885, but his only recorded contribution was a short paper, ‘On the Curative Properties of the Cunjevoi’. Presenting a specimen of the plant (root, leaves and fruit), he stated that it was a ‘well-ascertained fact among the residents in the Parishes of Mooloolah and Maroochi, to the north of Brisbane, that if a person is stung by contact with the leaf of the ‘stinging tree’ (*Laportea gigas*, *Wedd.*) and the affected part afterwards rubbed at intervals during an hour or so with the leaf of the Cunjevoi, the pain will cease and not return’. He cited the case of Mrs Trail, mother-in-law of the Mooloolah postmaster, who had been cured after patiently applying the leaves of the cunjevoi to a case of bad bruising.¹³⁵

During the 1880s, attractive ‘timber and tin’ houses, in the verandahed, climatically adapted styles that are now termed ‘Queenslander’, appeared in Brisbane’s spreading suburbs. From 1878, when Pettigrew became Chairman of Directors of the City and Suburban Building Society, occasional notes in his diaries refer to the meetings and business of that Society.¹³⁶ His building society connections were no doubt helpful when, from 1880 to 1890, he became involved in constructing five family homes: ‘Tarshaw’, ‘Arrawatta’, ‘Rosecliffe’, ‘Nungurrum’ and ‘Kenilworth’.

In 1880, he decided to build a new house for his family on the corner of William and

¹³³ Garran, *Picturesque Atlas*, p. 373.

¹³⁴ Marks, ‘History of the Philosophical Society and the Royal Society’, pp. 29-30.

¹³⁵ ‘On the Curative Properties of the Cunjevoi, *Colocasia Macrorrhiza*, Shott’, by the Hon. W. Pettigrew, M.L.C., *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland*, Vol. 2, 1885, pp. 211-213. *Laportea gigas* is now named *Dendrocnide excelsa*. The idea that the juice of the cunjevoi is a cure for the sting of the stinging tree is still current in places where both plants occur.

¹³⁶ WP Diary, 3 June 1878; BC, 31 May 1887.

Margaret Streets diagonally opposite the sawmill. The site, which had been a timber-yard since 1866, was higher than William Street, and the house was reached through a brick and timber fence by steps set into the bank on which it was built. Named 'Tarshaw', this two-storey house, with its portico entrance, a verandah along its lower storey, and shuttered upper windows, was traditional in design and solidly in keeping with Pettigrew's increased status. It was masonry, not timber, because the regulations stemming from the 1864 fires required inner city buildings to be brick or stone. The 'Mill House' was altered to become offices for the BSM, and the old offices on allotment 1 were pulled down and re-erected at Maroochydore.

At 'Tarshaw' on 15 December 1881, Margaret Pettigrew was married by the Rev. Colin McCullough to Philip Hardgrave, the solicitor son of John Hardgrave, with whom Pettigrew had served (not always harmoniously) on the Brisbane Municipal Council. A family story relates that Margaret met Philip at a party at Newstead House, the grand home of the merchant George Harris, who in 1854 had built his wharf and store in Short Street, next to the BSM.¹³⁷ With help from Hardgrave and Pettigrew, the young couple built 'Arawatta', a plain, two-storey, timber house in Montague Road, West End.¹³⁸ In time they produced a family of three sons, Leo, Oswald and Herbert, and two daughters, Margaret and Stella.

Box 5.

THE FAMILY OF MARGARET PETTIGREW

<u>MARGARET PETTIGREW</u>		m	Philip Hardgrave	
1859-1942		1881	1857-1940	
John Leopold 1883-1941	Oswald Percy 1884-19??	Amelia Mary 1887-1887	Margaret Lydia 1888-1975	Herbert Montague 1890-1980
				Stella Evelyn 1894-19??

¹³⁷ MBC, 31 March 1854; Stella Smith, Pettigrew Papers, RHSQ. George Harris and his family lived at Newstead from 1863 to 1888. When Harris became insolvent in 1876, the Short Street property passed to D. L. Brown and Co.

¹³⁸ WP Diary, 11-12 June 1880; BSM Balance Books, 1882.

The Pettigrew family occupied ‘Tarshaw’ for only seven years. Pettigrew’s resignation from the Brisbane Municipal Council in 1885 freed him to leave the inner city, and the following year he commissioned Alexander Brown Wilson,¹³⁹ the architect brother of his son-in-law Robert Wilson, to design a fashionable timber Queenslander on land he had owned since 1866 near the Eagle Junction Railway Station. He named this splendid house ‘Nungurrum’ after one of the Glasshouse Mountains. Its wide verandahs and high pitched roof were decorated with iron lace, and its grand entrance, bow windows, spacious rooms and beautiful furnishings reflected its owner’s worldly success. The trains that passed through the backyard of ‘Nungurrum’ did not bother Pettigrew, who was becoming increasingly deaf. He had chosen the locality because of its convenience, and from the time the family moved there in December 1887, railway timetables appeared in his diaries. ‘Tarshaw’ was put up for sale, but because of its unfashionable city location and a disagreement with the auctioneer James Dickson over problems with a potential buyer that nearly resulted in a court case, it was not sold until October 1888.¹⁴⁰

At first the family at ‘Nungurrum’ included Charles, Robert and Mary Ann. Then in February 1890, at the age of twenty-seven, Robert married Annie Reeves Wakefield and for his bride built ‘Kenilworth’, a smaller timber Queenslander, next door to ‘Nungurrum’ in Old Sandgate Road (now Bonney Avenue). Their wedding gift from the employees at the BSM was an unusual silver clock in the shape of a frame saw. The mechanism of the clock moved a saw blade up and down, and a small figure at the sawbench represented Robert himself.

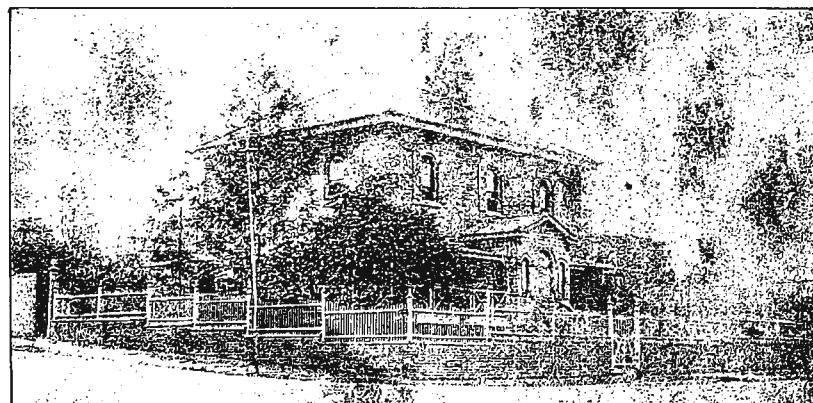
¹³⁹ Alexander Brown Wilson (1857-1938). See Donald Watson and Judith Mackay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century* (Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994), pp. 208-210.

¹⁴⁰ WP Diary, 8, 15 and 26 October 1888. Sir James Robert Dickson (1832-1901), auctioneer, company director and politician, served in a number of ministries after 1876 and was Premier 1898-99. During the 1890s ‘Tarshaw’ was occupied by tenants and became a boarding house, before being purchased by the government. It was demolished about 1960.



'The Mill House'
(left wing) 1850
(right wing) 1862

'Tarshaw', 1881



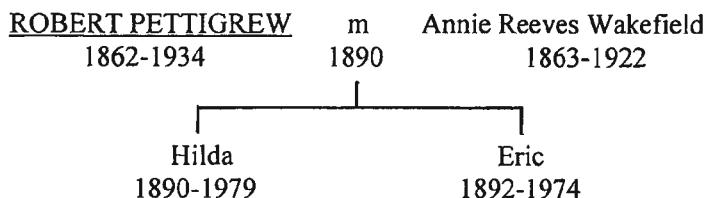
Illus. 36.

'Nungurrum', Eagle Junction, 1887

Annie's parents, Hiram Wakefield and Margaret Birch, had arrived in Brisbane as children in the early 1850s, and after their marriage kept a hotel, 'Osbourne House', at the popular seaside resort of Sandgate,¹⁴¹ where the Pettigrews sometimes holidayed.¹⁴² In the booming 1870s, Hiram pursued his trade as a plumber, and prospered as an importer of iron and a manufacturer of such useful devices as the metal stump caps that protected wooden houses from the ravages of termites.¹⁴³ He was involved in local government and served as the Member for Sandgate in the Legislative Assembly from 1885 to 1887. Robert and Annie's marriage was thus a union of two colonial families associated in politics and the building trade – one with the 'timber', the other with the 'tin', of vernacular architecture. A daughter, Hilda, was born in 1890, and a son, Eric, in 1892.

Box 7.

THE FAMILY OF ROBERT PETTIGREW



Three years earlier, Annie's older sister, Mehetabel (Meta) Wakefield, had married Robert's cousin, David McKergow, who then worked as a clerk in his father-in-law's business. In February 1893, while floods raged in Brisbane, thirty-four-year-old David died of tuberculosis in Townsville, in the care of his sister Jane and brother-in-law Duncan McDiarmid. His brother John McKergow, also a clerk, had succumbed to tuberculosis in 1881 at the age of twenty-nine, and their mother Jane had died in 1883 of chronic bronchitis. Meta McKergow and her young daughter Ida remained close to the Pettigrew family.

¹⁴¹ Hiram Wakefield (1837-1905). The Birch family arrived on the *Caroline* in 1853 and the Wakefields on the *General Hewitt* in 1854. 'Osbourne House': BC, 16 December 1866.

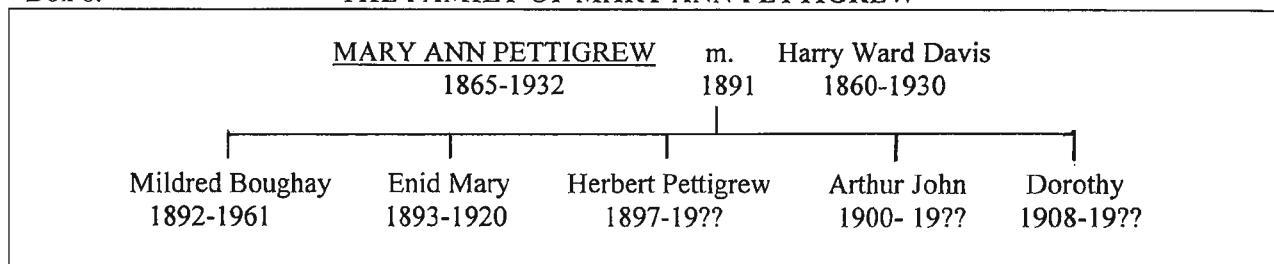
¹⁴² WP Diary, 16 March 1866, 28-29 January and 11 February 1871.

¹⁴³ Ian Evans, et al. *The Queensland House: History and Conservation* (Mullumbimby, NSW: Flannel Flower Press, 2000), p. 43.

A year after Robert's wedding, Mary Ann Pettigrew married Harry Ward Davis, the handsome cousin of her half-sister Millie. Harry had emigrated from London and in 1881 joined the Bank of New South Wales in Brisbane as a clerk. In 1892 he was appointed bank manager in Bowen, a post he held for fifteen years.¹⁴⁴ Four Davis children, Mildred, Enid, Herbert and Arthur were born at Bowen.

Box 8.

THE FAMILY OF MARY ANN PETTIGREW



At Eagle Junction, Pettigrew became involved in the establishment of the Albion Park Presbyterian Church. As an elder of that congregation, he helped to build the first Scots Church, a wooden building that was opened on the corner of Lisson Grove and Balmain Streets in 1889.¹⁴⁵ By moving to the suburbs, he avoided becoming embroiled in a split in the Wickham Terrace congregation, which resulted in a continuing church on Wickham Terrace and the founding of yet another congregation, known as St Andrew's, by the Rev. Colin McCulloch. Official church histories refer only to 'misunderstandings' between McCullough and 'a portion of his congregation', and by the 1880s newspapers no longer aired the petty details of church quarrels, so it is not clear what went wrong for this talented man.¹⁴⁶ His resignation from Wickham Terrace in May 1887 was dealt with by

¹⁴⁴ Record of career of Henry Ward Davis, supplied by Westpac Banking Corporation, 25 September 1997.

¹⁴⁵ WP Diary, 7 February, 11 March, 11 July 1889. The Albion Park congregation later moved to Bellevue Terrace, Clayfield, and established the present Scots Church.

¹⁴⁶ Hay, *Jubilee Memorial*, pp. 19-20; Bardon, *Centenary History*, pp. 218-219. Hay, writing less than ten years after McCullough's final resignation, refers to his 'zeal', 'eloquence', 'high ministerial character', 'scholarly attainments' and 'commanding personality'.

the Brisbane Presbytery, which conducted a poll of church members.¹⁴⁷ Pettigrew recorded no information about the matter, apart from writing in his diary that he had sent a ‘memo to members Wickham Terrace re liar and resignation McCullough’, which may indicate that McCullough’s problems related to his opposition to Charles Ogg and the Ann Street Presbyterian Church Bill.¹⁴⁸ It is clear, however, that the loss of McCullough left a gaping hole in the work of the church, foreshadowing the end of the college at Divinity Hall, of which he had been made Principal in 1885, and also marking the demise of the *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, which ceased publication in December 1887.¹⁴⁹

The crisis occurred not long after the Wickham Terrace congregation, having outgrown its Backhouse church, had replaced it with an ornate Gothic building. Pettigrew supported the replacement of the old church;¹⁵⁰ but, after years of complaining about the stuffiness of churches, he insisted on contributing his own ideas on its design in a letter on ‘Ventilating Churches’, which was published in the *Queensland Evangelical Standard* and produced as a pamphlet. His plan, which was ignored, sounds remarkably modern. He envisaged a building which, by correct orientation and the placing of doors along both sides, would receive adequate fresh air, whatever the wind direction. Ventilation would then be achieved by the updraft of air created by the presence of warm bodies and openings in the floor and roof. The ceiling, consisting of wide boards placed apart, with the gap covered by a narrower board, would be low, so that people could hear the speaker to the best advantage. The trustees of churches in densely populated parts of the city were advised to cultivate gum trees in their grounds in order to ‘get pure air’.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ BC, 15 June 1887.

¹⁴⁸ WP Diary, 21 June 1887.

¹⁴⁹ McCullough resigned in 1889 and returned to England, but his congregation survived and in 1905 built the present St Andrew’s Church on the corner of Ann and Creek Streets. See Bardon, *Centenary History*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵⁰ WP Diary, 23 April 1882; BC, 22 February 1883.

¹⁵¹ ‘Ventilating Churches’, *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, 17 September 1886.

During 1888 a private member's bill, the Ann Street Presbyterian Church Bill, was placed before Parliament for the purpose of resolving the long-standing issue of the four allotments in Creek Street that had been granted to the Ann Street congregation in 1862. Seeking to regularise a situation which had grown increasingly unsatisfactory as the years passed, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church advised the Rev. Charles Ogg in 1884 to 'get the deeds rectified and put into proper form'.¹⁵² The bill provided that the trustees (all but one now dead) should be replaced, and permitted the new trustees to sell the property and purchase more suitable land for a new church, manse and school. The measure was opposed by the Rev. Colin McCullough and ten other Presbyterians, on the grounds that the original grant had been made to the Ann Street congregation as part of the recognised Synod of Australia, which, as a Free Church, it was not.

In October 1888, a Select Committee examined Charles Ogg, who presented the early minute books and much of the relevant correspondence. Ogg told the Committee that the Free Church was not opposed to state aid – a view that was contradicted by another witness, John Anderson.¹⁵³ The former Surveyor-General, A. C. Gregory, who had dealt with the original grant, spoke of the 'diversities' within the Presbyterian Church, and explained that, in fact, 'special care' had been exercised in granting the land.¹⁵⁴

Pettigrew gave evidence to a second sitting of the Committee in August 1889. He was well-prepared, but his attempt to speak at length and in detail was cut short by committee members. Asserting that the Creek Street land had been obtained under false pretences, he was adamant that it was intended only for a school, but that Ogg had told the Deacon's Court that it had to be for a church. 'Did you protest?' asked his old Municipal Council

¹⁵² 'Report from the Select Committee on the Ann Street Presbyterian Church Bill', 19 July 1889, *QVP*, Vol. 4, 1889, p. 748.

¹⁵³ *QVP*, 1888, Vol. 3, Part 2, pp. 951-952 and 954.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 953.

rival John McMaster, who was a member of the Committee. ‘I know your energy in these matters: you do not leave things standing when it is necessary to take an active part.’¹⁵⁵

In October 1889, Pettigrew put his side of the matter to the Legislative Council, explaining the issues clearly and speaking at times with emotion. Responding to his speech, the Hon. Peter MacPherson ironically congratulated him on ‘the very best speech he ever delivered in [the] Chamber’, with its ‘vein of sentiment, pathos, poetry, religion and purity’, but observed that ‘it was rather amusing to hear a cast-iron, true blue Presbyterian talking about mammon’.¹⁵⁶ Pettigrew’s main approach, however, was legalistic, and involved much reading of the *Church of Scotland Act* and the rules of the Presbyterian Church. By revealing factual inaccuracies in the preamble to the bill, Pettigrew, A. C. Gregory and Alexander Raff were able to achieve some amendments, but Members of Parliament were more interested in solving problems than in taking sides in an old quarrel, and the bill was passed.¹⁵⁷

Of the other battles which Pettigrew fought in the Legislative Council, the most contentious was in public health. In 1884, informed by his experiences as an alderman, a member of the Central Board of Health and a cemetery trustee, he spoke at length on the Health Bill. Although in favour of such a measure, he complained that the bill said nothing about the ‘want of fresh air’ in Brisbane, and he argued, as he was to do again the following year, against the ‘notorious’ subdivision of land into eight to sixteen perch allotments, which was causing overcrowding and disease in some parts of the city.¹⁵⁸ His chief concern, however, was ‘sewerage and drainage’, and on this he spoke a number of times, reiterating his position and becoming more peppery as it became clear that most of

¹⁵⁵ ‘Further Report’, 2 September 1889, *QVP*, 1889, Vol. 4, pp. 749-752.

¹⁵⁶ *QPD*, 17 October 1889, p. 279.

¹⁵⁷ *QPD*, 1889, Vol. LVII, p. 2561.

¹⁵⁸ *QPD*, 1 October 1884, p. 138.

the other members were not receptive to his ideas. By the Third Reading, he was so frustrated that he moved an amendment that the bill, instead of being called ‘a measure to make better provision for securing and maintaining Public Health’ should be called ‘a Bill to provide for people dying about half faster than they are in the habit of doing’.¹⁵⁹

Pettigrew’s position on sanitation was quite logical, although, as often in matters where he held a fixed opinion, he overlooked dimensions of the problem that others wished to consider. He began by criticising the bill’s general definitions of ‘drains’ and ‘sewers’ and offered definitions of his own. A ‘drain’, he said, was for the conveyance of water alone; a ‘sewer’ was a drain or channel for the conveyance of water and ‘filth’. He believed that ‘filth’ should be returned to the earth, and argued that, if it was put into water and removed through underground drains, it would simply become a bigger problem somewhere else. He was in favour of the dry earth closets that had been introduced in Brisbane, and opposed to the cesspools and water closets that the bill permitted. Admitting that the earth closet system was ‘not effectually carried out in all cases’, he said that, by persuading, coaxing and fining people, they would eventually ‘be induced to carry out the system in careful and thorough manner’.¹⁶⁰ He referred to his own family’s good health, which he attributed to the system of drains he had installed at the ‘Mill House’.¹⁶¹

The Postmaster-General (again C. S. Mein) pointed out that the bill would apply throughout Queensland, and accused Pettigrew of not being able to see ‘anything outside the four corners of the municipality of Brisbane’. He said it was ‘fortunate for the inhabitants of William Street that the hon. gentleman’s late residence was on a slope towards the river’, and predicted that Pettigrew’s system of drainage might in future years lead to typhoid.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 October 1884, p. 153.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 October 1884, p. 141.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Pettigrew countered with the assertion that ‘it was one of the grand laws of nature that what was objectionable to the animal system was life to the vegetable system’, and said he supposed that the grapes which grew on his property ‘absorbed some of the gases’.¹⁶²

When the *Health Act* was amended in 1886, Pettigrew again spoke firmly against the system of sewerage that some members were advocating:

If sewage is used to get rid of filth, the sewage goes to some place. If it goes into the river it annoys the neighbours, and if it is taken down to the Bay it will very likely be a nuisance to the people of Sandgate. The best thing to do with filth of all sorts is to convert it into its natural state. Put it in the earth and let it grow up in trees and make food for man and animals again.¹⁶³

In his advocacy of earth closets, Pettigrew ignored the fact that the sanitary-carts that trundled through Brisbane’s streets disposed of their ordure outside the city boundaries, causing a ‘nuisance’, for example, to the people of Kelvin Grove.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, views such as his on the disposal of night-soil prevailed in Brisbane well into the twentieth century. By the 1960s, only twenty percent of the greatly expanded city had been sewered, and it was amidst great controversy that the job was eventually completed by Mayor Clem Jones.¹⁶⁵

When the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Bill came before the Legislative Council in 1885, Pettigrew argued strongly that, for the ‘health and well-being of the community’, in a country where there was plenty of land, allotments should be at least thirty-two perches.¹⁶⁶ The Council passed his amendment, but when the bill was sent back to the Assembly, the change was over-turned.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 147.

¹⁶³ *QPD*, 29 September 1886, p.126.

¹⁶⁴ Barclay, ‘Fevers and Stinks’, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶⁵ John R. Cole, *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985* (Brisbane: William Brooks, 1984), p. 196.

¹⁶⁶ *QPD*, 21 and 22 October 1885, pp. 151, 154-161 and 164-167.

¹⁶⁷ *QPD*, 20 October 1887, p. 118.

With the passing of more restrictive industrial laws and increasing demands by workers for better wages and conditions, carrying on an industry was becoming more complicated. The supposed good relationship between the Pettigrews and their employees was tested in 1886, when James Collinge, a joiner who was injured while using a planing machine, sued the firm for compensation of £3000. This action was made possible by the passing, earlier that year, of an *Employers' Liability Act*, by which employers became liable for injuries due to faulty machinery or negligence by a supervisor.¹⁶⁸ Although Collinge claimed in court that the 'various trade societies' were not 'supporting this accident',¹⁶⁹ according to Pettigrew it was funded by 'a combination of carpenters and joiners'.¹⁷⁰ An expensive exercise, the case was heard in the Supreme Court before the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Lilley, and each side was represented by a solicitor and two barristers.¹⁷¹

Collinge had arrived in the colony in May 1885, and, after working at Birley Brothers sawmill at Kangaroo Point, was employed at the BSM as a joiner in January 1886. At 1.20 pm on 16 March 1886 he had an accident while using a hand planing machine in the carpenters' shop, losing the thumb and three fingers on his right hand. He was treated in the hospital until 23 April and as an outpatient until July by Dr Ernest Sandford Jackson, who gave evidence that he would be unable to work again at his trade.

The case turned on whether the planing machine was defective, and whether the firm was negligent in not having a man directly supervising its machines. In the final outcome, both these faults were attributed to the Pettigrews. A model of the planing machine was used in court to explain its operation, and the jury went to the BSM to examine the actual

¹⁶⁸ Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, pp. 470-471.

¹⁶⁹ BC, 2 September 1886.

¹⁷⁰ WP, notes Re: Self.

¹⁷¹ Pettigrew's son-in-law, Philip Hardgrave, instructed Patrick Real and Thomas Joseph Byrnes for the defence, while the plaintiff was represented by Virgil Power and Edwin Lilley, instructed by solicitor Andrew Joseph Thynne.

machine. Evidence was given that there had been earlier accidents, but witnesses were divided on whether or not the machine was defective. Those from outside the BSM and two who had worked there testified that the machine was defective, while ten BSM employees, including three who had lost fingers in accidents, declared that there had been no problems with it. Much of the evidence was hearsay, revealing antagonisms among the witnesses and differences in their recall of what had been said after the accident. One, for example, was said to have complained to ‘the old man’ (i.e. Pettigrew) about the machine, ‘but it was no use’. Pettigrew denied that he had heard any complaints.

After a three-day trial, the four man jury could not agree on a verdict, and Chief Justice Lilley said he would hear the case again. A second, two-day trial, which produced additional witnesses on both sides and long speeches from the Judge and the barristers, resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff, and the awarding of £750 damages, with costs.¹⁷² Pettigrew, who prided himself on his fairness as an employer but believed that carelessness was usually the cause of accidents, reacted angrily and remained aggrieved. In private, he alleged that the complainant was guilty of ‘false swearing’;¹⁷³ and, referring to the case while speaking in Parliament on a new Employers’ Liability Bill, he alleged that the man had ‘[gone] to a machine on which he was not employed, and which he knew nothing about, never having wrought it before, and [altered] it so as to make it very dangerous to work’. In the light of his experience, he advocated capping the amount of compensation to be paid to accident victims and limiting the time during which a case could be brought, claiming that in this case vital evidence (the piece of timber the man had been planing) had been inadvertently destroyed.¹⁷⁴ Years later he gave another account of the accident, saying that he believed he was ‘punished’ because he ‘did not put

¹⁷² Collinge v Pettigrew and Son, BC, 25, 26 and 27 August and 1 and 2 September 1886; WP Diary, 16 August and 9 September 1886.

¹⁷³ BSM Balance Book, 1887, pp. 189 and 252.

¹⁷⁴ QPD, 5 and 6 October 1886, pp. 144-147 and 164-167.

a man to keep fools away from such machines'.¹⁷⁵ Certainly, the £1700 court costs and compensation swallowed the BSM's profit for 1886, and Pettigrew later claimed that this loss was a factor in the subsequent decline of his business.¹⁷⁶ In the aftermath of the Collinge case, he established a fund to insure against future accidents by setting aside small contributions from his workmen's wages.¹⁷⁷

On the question of hours of work, Pettigrew was unsympathetic to the idea of an eight-hour day, even though he had granted it to his carpenters and joiners during the agitation of the early 1860s. When an Eight-hour Bill reached the Legislative Council in 1889, it was overwhelmingly rejected at the Second Reading.¹⁷⁸ During the debate, Pettigrew told the Council that his workmen had never asked for shorter hours, but managed fifty hours a week – nine hours for five days and five hours on Saturdays. He considered that the measure would interfere with the flexibility needed in working his sawmill, and also be an 'endless source of annoyance', a 'cause of quarrels between masters and men', and a 'grand thing for benefitting the lawyers'.¹⁷⁹ (In several speeches, Pettigrew revealed that he was not fond of lawyers and resented having to 'fork out' for their benefit.)¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, when the Members Expenses Bill came before the Council in 1886, he admitted that, while he had earlier disagreed with the payment of members, because 'men who can only talk without thinking would go into the House for mere payment', he had changed his mind, and now thought that members should be paid for their expenses and even for their services. When this bill became law, members were paid two guineas a sitting.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ WP, notes Re: Self.

¹⁷⁶ BSM Balance Book, 1886, p. 256; 'Moral Force', No. 11, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ WP Diary, May 1886; 'A Pioneer of Industry'.

¹⁷⁸ Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 472.

¹⁷⁹ QPD, 28 August 1889, p. 148.

¹⁸⁰ QPD, 1877, p. 255 and 6 October 1886, p. 165-166.

¹⁸¹ QPD, 1 September 1886, p. 63; Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 294.

The timber industry remained at the heart of Pettigrew's concerns, and he wove references to the importance of trees and forests into many of his speeches. His advocacy of forest conservancy began soon after his appointment to the Council in 1877, when, speaking on the proposed railway from Maryborough to Gympie, he referred to the need for a timber reserve between the Glass House Mountains and Gympie.¹⁸² Measures for the 'conservancy of forests' were promised by the Douglas government at the beginning of the 1879 session; but when Pettigrew later asked when the bill would be introduced, the answer was that Parliament was too busy with other matters.¹⁸³ A bill was presented to the Legislative Assembly in 1880 but went no further. In 1881 Pettigrew, complaining (as he had done before) that the country was being denuded of red cedar trees, asked again about the bill. He estimated that 10,000 cedar logs had lain on the ground in the Blackall Ranges for up to eight years, and he also spoke about the forests of the north, between Cardwell and Cooktown, where not all the cedar cut down had been removed. He said that he approved of the government's decision to put a duty of two shillings per 100 feet on the export of cedar, but considered that, if the duty had been six or eight shillings, the money raised might have been used to cultivate 'cedar, beech and other trees'.¹⁸⁴ Correspondence in the *Brisbane Courier* in 1882, to which Pettigrew contributed, showed that the duty on cedar was not popular with timber-getters and some other timber merchants, and it was withdrawn.¹⁸⁵ After his visit to North Queensland in 1883, Pettigrew spoke of the need to conserve the northern scrubs. Cutting down the forests, he said, might make fast money, but he did not want to see money in the hands of half-a-dozen people – he wanted to see it 'distributed fairly and equitably amongst the people generally'. He also opposed the introduction of coloured labour, arguing that white men

¹⁸² QPD, 30 August 1877, p. 212.

¹⁸³ QPD, 17 July 1879, p. 109.

¹⁸⁴ QPD, July 1881, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸⁵ BC, 2,5,6,12,14 and 16 September 1882.

could live, work and stay healthy in the tropics.¹⁸⁶

In 1883 Pettigrew was joined in the Legislative Council by his Maryborough rival, Andrew Heron Wilson, and in 1888 in the Legislative Assembly by two other sawmillers, Abraham Luya and Richard Hyne. All four men pursued forest issues, but still the government dragged its feet. In 1890, while supporting a speech by A. H. Wilson on the importance of replanting forests, Pettigrew praised the efforts of Archibald McDowall, the Inspector of Surveys in Maryborough, who, since 1882, had been experimenting with kauri pine plantations on Fraser Island. 'To invest money in growing timber,' Pettigrew told the Council, 'is one of the best things that could be done for the good of the country.'¹⁸⁷

As sawmillers faced the problems of declining resources, dry seasons, increased costs of transport, more restrictive regulations, and competition from cheap timber imported from New Zealand and America,¹⁸⁸ they saw the need to co-operate. In June 1883, for example, seven Brisbane sawmills issued an agreed list of prices for pine, hardwood and beech.¹⁸⁹ In August 1884, Pettigrew called a meeting of sawmillers to discuss the challenges faced by the industry.¹⁹⁰ Another co-operative effort was the Queensland United Saw Mills Fire Insurance Co., which historian and statistician John Kerr has called 'the world's most optimistic insurance company'.¹⁹¹ Registered on 24 June 1885, with Pettigrew, Luya, A. H. Wilson, Robert Dath, Henry Jordan, and the Ipswich sawmillers Josias Hancock and Richard Seymour as directors, this company was wound up in 1891.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ *QPD*, 6 February 1884, p. 54.

¹⁸⁷ *QPD*, 2 July 1890, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸⁸ *QPD*, 1888, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ 'List of Terms for Sawn and Dressed Timber', 14 June 1883, issued by Birley Brothers, McGhie, Luya & Co., Joseph Hogan, Dath, Henderson, Barthlomew & Co., Patterson Brothers, James Campbell & Sons and William Pettigrew.

¹⁹⁰ WP Diary, 25 August 1884.

¹⁹¹ Pers. com. John Kerr.

¹⁹² A/21378, QSA.

In 1884 two of Pettigrew's most experienced employees – his chief engineer, Percival Hiley, and his foreman carpenter, Andrew Thornton – left the BSM to build, with others, an up-to-date new mill, the Victoria Bridge Saw-mills, in Stanley Street, South Brisbane.¹⁹³ The mill operated for less than a year before it was wound up, sold and reconstructed at West End.¹⁹⁴ Hiley and Thornton left the company, but did not return to work for Pettigrew. Their failure illustrated only too well how competitive the timber industry had become.

After 1884 the number of bankruptcies increased,¹⁹⁵ but banks continued to lend money freely and often on insufficient security. Even the solid Union Bank was willing to oblige when Pettigrew, with misplaced optimism, mortgaged his ships and properties in order to construct the Maroochy sawmill. For forty years, he had built his businesses by borrowing and repaying money, and riding the 'ups and downs'. Although the economic signs were ominous at the end of 1892, Pettigrew could not have predicted that, within twelve months, all his businesses would lie crushed under the weight of exceptional circumstances.

¹⁹³ BC, 7 April 1885; BSM Balance Book 1884-1888, p. 285.

¹⁹⁴ WP Diary, 1 December 1884; BC, 6 March 1886.

¹⁹⁵ GT, 23 January 1890.

8. EBB TIDE, 1893-1906

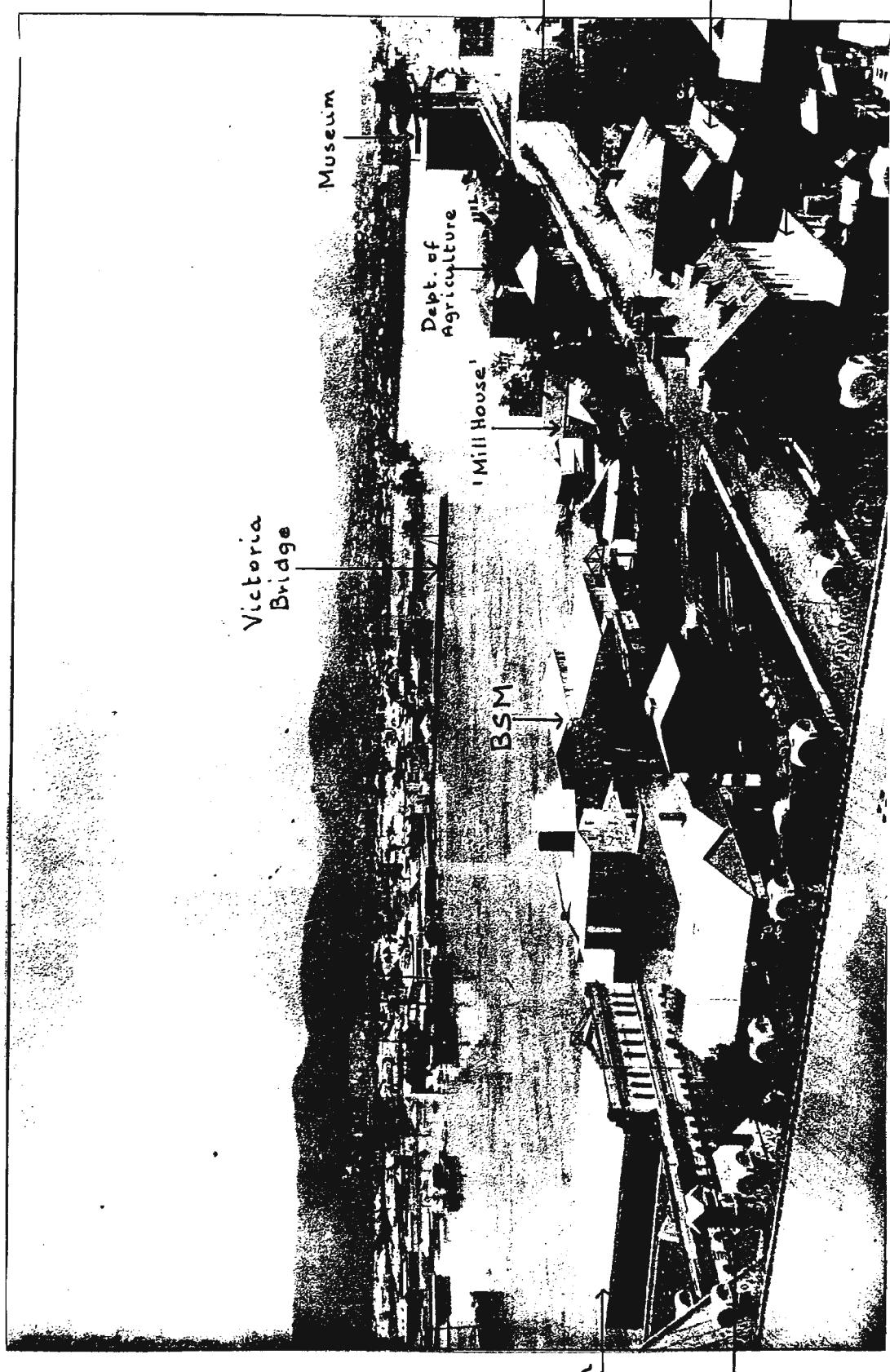
There was no worse year in the history of the colony of Queensland than 1893. Its events were, according to *Pugh's Almanac*, 'as extraordinary and practically unknown to present inhabitants of Queensland as they were destructive and calamitous.'¹ Drought in the west and record and recurring floods in the south-east were followed by a series of bank crashes, precipitating an economic crisis from which the colony and its people took many years to recover. For William Pettigrew there was no worse year in his life, and by the end of it he must have felt as plagued as the Biblical Job. The natural and economic disasters of 1893 cost him much of his wealth, and were the beginning of the end for his various enterprises. The death of his wife took its toll on his personal well-being.

In ominously hot January weather, Brisbane was hit by a severe gale that blew down houses and trees and caused boats to drag at their moorings. On 1 February, a tropical cyclone caused exceptionally heavy rain to fall at the source of the Brisbane and Mary Rivers, and floodwaters poured down both streams. For three days, the waters rose in Brisbane and Maryborough to unprecedented heights, sweeping buildings, crops and animals out to sea. All communication – by road, rail, telegraph or ship – was disrupted, and all activity except attempting to save lives and property ceased. The lower floor of Margaret and Philip Hardgrave's home in Montague Road was six feet under water, and the family retreated to the upper storey.² On 5 February, the Railway Bridge at Indooroopilly was washed away, and the following day, as the waters slowly subsided, debris that was piled against the northern end of the Victoria Bridge caused half its structure to collapse. A number of people drowned while playing in the floodwaters or attempting to rescue others.

¹ *Pugh's Queensland Almanac*, 1894, p. 74.

² Pers. com. Don Hardgrave, who saw the flood mark on the downstairs walls many years later.

Illus. 37.



William Street, viewed from the roof of Parliament House during the 1893 flood³

The BSM was inundated as never before. Floodwaters rose twelve inches above the lower floor of the offices in the old 'Mill House'. The drying shed and the carpenters' shop were swept away, and Thomas Dowse's old stone store collapsed under the pressure of water and debris. Receding waters revealed a tangled mess of bricks, stones, timber, mud and damaged machinery. As the cleanup began, more rain fell. A second flood peaked in Brisbane on 13 February and then subsided. But heavy rain continued to fall, and the river rose a third time, peaking on 19 February only ten inches below the earlier record height.⁴

Illus. 38.



The *Tadorna Radjah* sinking in the river off the BSM during the 1893 flood.⁵

With business at a standstill, the Pettigrews assessed their losses. The BSM was inoperable and the *Tadorna Radjah* had disappeared. The old steamer had been brought

⁴ BC, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 27 February 1893; GT, 6, 7 and 9 February 1893.

⁵ JOL Neg. No. 117769.

alongside the wharf after being damaged above the waterline when the *Belle*⁶ bumped into her during the first flood. During the third flood, she filled with water, broke her ropes, drifted into the stream and sank, rolling over and over and coming to rest on the bed of the river not far from the bank at South Brisbane where she had been built. Some months later she was raised, but her hull was ruined by cobra, and Pettigrew could salvage only her boiler and engines, which he sent to the Maroochy sawmill to be cleaned and used there.⁷

During the deluge, the Maroochy and Mooloolah Rivers had overflowed their banks, drowning livestock, ruining crops, and forcing settlers onto the roofs of their homes.⁸ For weeks afterwards, the beaches were covered with wreckage brought back by the sea, including heaps of pine logs, which had been lying in rafts in the river near the Maroochy sawmill.⁹ The mill was a mess and the drains were blocked, but John Henry and his men cleaned up, and after the floods were able to increase production to supplement the output of the crippled BSM.

The news from Maryborough, when it came, told of losses for Pettigrew and Co. The floods caused havoc at the Urara sawmill, where the waters rose fourteen feet six inches over the floor, a shed stacked with dressed timber and an office containing the account books and two iron safes were carried downstream, and damage was estimated at between £2000 and £3000. The Urara mill buildings and machinery survived, but on the other side of Guava Street, Hyne's National Sawmills and Walkers' shipyards had all but disappeared.¹⁰

⁶ BC, 23 February 1883. The *Belle*, 100 feet long and 250 tons, was a stern-wheel paddle-steamer built for Barker and Barnham, two of Pettigrew's timber-getters, and was launched at Sandgate in 1883.

⁷ Memo Book, BSM, p. 243.

⁸ GT, 9 and 11 February 1893.

⁹ Alexander George Low (1873-1963), *Reminiscences*, p.12, typescript, ed. Audienne Blyth, Yandina.

¹⁰ GT, 9 and 11 February 1893; Hyne, *Hynesight*, pp. 33-35.

From the high bank at Dundathu, members of the Sim family watched the waters rise to inundate the sawmill, sweep away some of the houses, and completely cover the farms on the low-lying land downstream and on the opposite side of the river. When the floods receded, buildings and timber were caught up in trees,¹¹ and debris, including wheels, silk dresses, mattresses, sofas and pianos, was strewn across the surrounding countryside.¹² The company's schooner, the *Marchioness of Lorne*, had sunk in the Mary River and was a write-off,¹³ but the sawmill itself survived.

No sooner had Brisbane returned to an appearance of normality than the economic crisis that had been looming struck – and struck hard. During April and May, four southern banks – the Commercial Bank of Australia, the Australian Joint Stock Bank, the New South Wales Government Savings Bank and the London Chartered Bank of Australia – suspended payments. In Queensland the axe fell on 15 May, when the Queensland National Bank closed its doors. Two days later the Royal Bank closed, plunging John Pettigrew's family into deep trouble, because, between 1885 and 1892, Pettigrew and Gill had invested a considerable portion of their funds in 'safe', partly paid, Royal and Queensland National Bank shares.¹⁴ Business came to a standstill again as the authorities toiled to work their way out of the crisis. By June, some of the banks had been restructured and had reopened, and an inquiry was under way into the problems of the Queensland National Bank; but the damage was so fundamental that the economy did not recover its former strength in Pettigrew's lifetime, and from 1893 onwards, his businesses were in an obvious state of decline.

¹¹ *GT*, 9 February 1893.

¹² James Sim Snr to William James Sim, 24 February 1893 in Lenthall and Ramsay, *Down the Mary River*, p. 54.

¹³ *GT*, 21 February 1893. The *Marchioness of Lorne*, 82 feet long and 78 tons, was purchased by Pettigrew in 1875 and transferred to the Sims in 1882. She was named after Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Louise, who had married the Scottish Marquis of Lorne.

¹⁴ R. Gill to WP, 5 May 1885, 10 September 1885, 23 May 1887.

Amelia Pettigrew's health had been of concern for some time when, on 30 August at 'Nungurrum', she suffered a stroke. Pettigrew, distraught, summoned Margaret Hardgrave, who immediately sent for Dr Bancroft.¹⁵ Offering no hope for his patient's recovery, Bancroft supplied a nurse to look after her. Millie Wilson arrived that evening, and the next day other members of the family gathered to await the inevitable. Amelia died early on the morning of Friday 1 September, and later that day, in a ceremony conducted by the Rev. John Downey, the minister at Scots Church, she was buried in the Toowong cemetery.¹⁶ The next day, her handicapped son Charles was taken to the Woogaroo Asylum to be cared for at Pettigrew's expense.¹⁷ The following Wednesday, Margaret and Millie came to 'Nungurrum' to sort their mother's 'things', and a week later Pettigrew paid Dr Bancroft's account. For the next month, his diary was left blank, and when recording resumed, the normally firm handwriting was shaky. He had suffered a debilitating attack of influenza, from which he took a long time to recover.¹⁸

After Amelia's death, Pettigrew sold 'Nungurrum', distributed its furnishings among members of his family, and moved next door to live with Robert and Annie. A large room was built for him off the verandah at 'Kenilworth'. Early in December, he went to Maroochydore on the *Tarshaw* with Margaret and Philip Hardgrave and their children, and spent a week inspecting the sawmill with manager John Henry, walking over 'Margaret's ground' with Philip, and writing up the herd book at his dairy farm.¹⁹ His grand-daughter Margaret Eckhoff later recalled her family's holidays at Maroochydore,

¹⁵ WP Diary, 6 and 15 September 1893. Dr Joseph Bancroft (1836-1894) arrived in Queensland in 1864, practised as a physician and surgeon, devoted himself to medical and scientific research and was a distinguished member of the Philosophical and Royal Societies. However, since he practised with Doctors Thomas and Peter Bancroft, it is unclear which of the three attended the Pettigrews.

¹⁶ WP Diary, 30 August and 1 September 1893.

¹⁷ WP Diary, 2 September and October 30 1893; WP to Curator in Insanity, 23 October 1893, CUR/Q108 1446 QSA.

¹⁸ WP Diary, 11 to 23 October 1893; WP to Curator in Insanity, 23 October 1893.

¹⁹ WP Diary, 5 to 11 December 1893. 'Margaret's ground' was Portions 27 and 110. The herd book is in the possession of Allan Pettigrew.

when they stayed in the Captain's cottage beside the sugar shed, her brothers pushed her on a trolley along the line from the sawmill to the wharf, and they rowed across to Goat Island to walk on the deck of the old *Gneering*, which Pettigrew had beached, stripped and abandoned in 1892.²⁰

The year was nearly over when disaster struck again. In heatwave conditions on Christmas Day, the Dundathu sawmill burnt to the ground. The mill had closed for the Christmas week, most of its employees had gone away, and James Tertius and William Sim were holidaying with their families at the nearby beach resort of Hervey Bay. The fire broke out under a planing machine in a new section of the mill and was first noticed late in the afternoon by George Cooke, the teacher at Dundathu School. He raised the alarm, but, of the five men left on the premises, only three were able-bodied enough to try to prevent the fire from spreading. They shifted some of the dressed timber and then tried to move machinery, but the flames were so fierce that they managed to save only a few saws and some belting. Water was usually available at the mill, but with operations closed down, the pumps were not working. In any case, the long-unused emergency hoses proved to be rotten. Finding the telephone dead, Cooke rode to Maryborough to summon the fire brigade, but its officers considered the exercise futile and refused to make the journey to Dundathu. Burning unchecked for five hours, the fire consumed the mill.²¹

Pettigrew received the news by telegram on 27 December. The next day, in extreme heat, he took a train from Eagle Junction to Maryborough and booked in at the Customs House Hotel. At Dundathu, he made an inventory of what was left.²² The hamlet of workers' houses and the homes of the Sim family on the ridge above were intact, but the mill was a

²⁰ Eckhoff, 'The Late Hon. William Pettigrew'; Memo Book, BSM, p. 262; WP Diary, 25 and 29 July 1892 and 26 October 1894.

²¹ MC, 26, 27 and 29 December 1893; *Wide Bay and Burnett News*, 26 December 1893; *Queenslander*, 30 December 1893.

²² WP Diary, 7 to 30 May 1893. The temperature was 41°C (105°F) in the shade.

smoking ruin, a few charred posts emerging from the ashes and wreckage that covered the machinery.

The loss of Dundathu was devastating for Pettigrew and the Sim family. Although the sawmill's output had declined after the Cooloola Railway closed, and competition from newer mills was eroding its profits, the proprietors had re-roofed the main building after a gale in February 1892, renovated the mill after the 1893 floods, and installed new planing machinery in order to produce a more valuable product.²³ With money tight, however, Pettigrew had not renewed the insurance on Dundathu,²⁴ so their loss was total. In the economic climate of 1893, the mill could not be rebuilt, and Pettigrew and Co. faced certain bankruptcy.

During 1894, while the liquidation of Dundathu worked its way through the legal system, Pettigrew lived quietly with Robert and Annie at 'Kenilworth', searching for solace in his religion.²⁵ The BSM's sawmill and grain mill were rebuilt, but operated on a reduced scale. The Maroochy sawmill took on new functions, such as the production of broom handles,²⁶ and the *Tarshaw* continued to trade to Maroochydore. After 1893, however, all business slowed. In spite of the sale of property and the restructuring of their activities, the burden of debt under which Pettigrew and Son laboured continued to increase.

Early in 1894, Pettigrew wrote to Richard Gill, explaining his changed situation and offering to resign as a trustee of John Pettigrew's estate. 'I am deeply grieved at the contents of your letter. It is hard after a lifetime of hard work,' Gill wrote in reply, also assuring Pettigrew that his resignation would not be necessary.²⁷ Grace Pettigrew, having lost most of her capital, took boarders into her home, and one of these, the Church of

²³ WP Diary, 27 February 1892; MC, 27 December 1893.

²⁴ WP Diary, 5 January 1888.

²⁵ WP Diary, 18 March 1894. On Palm Sunday he read Taylor's sermon, 'An open door for little strength'.

²⁶ Robert Pettigrew's notebook, n.p.

²⁷ R. Gill to WP, 28 March 1894.

England curate Henry Edward Whittington, married her daughter Maggie in 1897.²⁸

Since a bankrupt cannot be a member of Parliament, Pettigrew resigned his seat in the Legislative Council on 23 June 1894, just before the session began.²⁹ In July, he attended meetings in Maryborough and Brisbane, where the creditors of Pettigrew and Co., which had liabilities of £47,529, agreed to liquidate the company by arrangement rather than in insolvency, and a trustee was appointed to wind it up.³⁰ In spite of his heavy debts and the misfortunes of 1893, Pettigrew's assets still exceeded his liabilities, and in October he was granted his discharge.³¹ James Tertius and William Sim were not so fortunate; but out of the liquidation they managed to save the Urara sawmill, which operated as Sims Ltd until it burnt down in 1930.³² The steamer *Hercules*, a leaking hulk, was put up for sale. It attracted no offers and was broken up in 1896.³³ The Dundathu site was bought by the government in 1900, and its remaining buildings were set up as a quarantine station.³⁴

In 1895 Pettigrew turned seventy. He hung on to business at the BSM, and remained involved with the building society and the Presbyterian Church. His opinions on the timber industry were still sought and respected,³⁵ and his biography appeared annually in *Pugh's Almanac* until 1896. As his public life diminished, he spent more time with his family, which by then included eleven grand-children. When his step-son Charles Ward Davis died of pneumonia on 10 October 1895, Pettigrew took Robert, Margaret, Millie and Robert Wilson out to the Woogaroo Asylum to farewell him. The undertaker John Hislop was engaged to bury him beside his mother in the Toowong cemetery, where the

²⁸ 'Mrs Grace M. Pettigrew's opinion', 8 June 1896; Grace Pettigrew to WP, 14 September 1897. The Whittings moved to Hobart and then to England, where their descendants live.

²⁹ WP Diary, 21 June 1894.

³⁰ WP Diary, 5 and 18 June 1894; SCT/CA 227 1894, 19 June 1894, QSA.

³¹ WP Diary, 10 October 1894.

³² The Sims Ltd sawmill burnt down on 21 June 1930.

³³ Ronald Parsons, *The Port of Maryborough* (Magill, S.A.: Ronald Parsons, 1976), pp. 69-70.

³⁴ Lenthall and Ramsay, *Down the Mary River*, pp. 61-63.

³⁵ 'Our Timber Resources', GT, 28 February 1895.

Rev. David Mitchell, of the Park Presbyterian Church, South Brisbane, conducted a grave-side service. Forty-five-year-old Charles died, as he had lived, in the obscurity that hid his affliction.³⁶

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the colonists of Queensland began to reflect on their achievements. In September 1896, the Mayor of Brisbane, Robert Woods Thurlow, had the ‘happy idea’ of organising a reunion of present and former aldermen of the Brisbane Municipal Council. A cruise on the steamer *Natone* to the Aquarium building at Queensport was followed by a banquet, at which John Hardgrave, as the oldest surviving mayor, and Pettigrew, as the oldest surviving alderman, were accorded places of honour on either side of Mayor Thurlow. In response to a reminder that he had been elected mayor in 1869 on his own casting vote, Hardgrave made a jovial speech; but Pettigrew, perhaps roused by John McMaster’s tales of past battles over Frog’s Hollow and Duncan’s Hill, returned to his old theme, grumpily defending the East Ward against the ‘depredating inclination of the Valley and Kangaroo Point Wards’, and yet again expressing himself ‘desirous of seeing ward representation on the basis of rates.’³⁷

The year 1898 was exceptionally wet. It began with three big floods in January, February and March. Each flood inundated the BSM, and for three months little productive work was done. No sooner were the drains cleaned out, the mud scraped from the floors, the timber restacked and the boilers fired, than flood-waters flowed through the buildings again. By mid-April the sawmill was back in operation, but the lack of output had damaged the firm’s already shaky finances, and three months later officials from the Union Bank took possession of the account books. On 13 July, Pettigrew received a demand for the immediate payment of the £32,304/18/8 which he owed the bank.

³⁶ WP Diary, 11 and 12 October 1895; Inquest file, JUS/N236 318 1895, QSA.

³⁷ BC, 14 September 1896.

Whereas in 1894 his assets had exceeded his liabilities, allowing him to liquidate his share in Dundathu with little effect on his other operations, the drop in property values resulting from prolonged depression now meant that the value of his assets fell far short of the amounts he owed on mortgage.³⁸

This time there was no way out. On 15 July 1898, he sent a telegram to John Henry, and the next day the Maroochy sawmill closed, its employees hardly able to believe that Pettigrew, who had survived so many crises before, had finally gone out of business. On 26 July, he signed a petition of insolvency, and the next day he took a train to Woombye and hired a horse to ride to Maroochydore, where he paid off his men and made an inventory of the ‘odds and ends’ at the sawmill.³⁹ In September, the Union Bank permitted Captain Seaborg to hire the *Tarshaw* and make two trips to Maroochydore, allowing Pettigrew to dispose of the furniture in his cottage, and his dairy herd and farm equipment. After returning to Brisbane with cargoes of timber and boxes of library books, crockery and personal effects, the *Tarshaw* was sold to the Broadsound Meat Company for £1,250.⁴⁰ James Campbell and Sons, one of the few firms to survive the 1890s depression, bought the Maroochy sawmill for £600 and reopened it, but by 1905 had closed it permanently and removed the machinery.⁴¹

The Union Bank arranged for George Charles Windsor Willcocks, a contractor who had successfully built railways in Queensland, to lease the BSM. Willcocks needed timber for various jobs, including one that paved Brisbane’s main streets with blocks of wood.⁴² Thus, while the insolvency proceeded, Robert Pettigrew acted as manager of the BSM

³⁸ WP Diary, 7 and 13 July 1898; Liquidation No.1689, SCT/CA 282, 1898, QSA. The firm’s debts, which amounted to £38,344/1/0, were secured by assets valued at £23,327/9/9.

³⁹ WP Diary, 27-29 July 1898.

⁴⁰ WP Diary, 20 July 1898, 10-22 September and 28 September to 3 October 1898; G. Roderick McLeod, ‘Two Brisbane Shipowners of the Last Century’, *RHSQJ*, 1973, pp. 35 and 42.

⁴¹ Berenis Alcorn, *The Maroochy River and its People* (Nambour: Maroochy River Catchment Area Network, 1994) p. 17; Kerr, *Sawmills and Tramways*, p. 153.

⁴² Memo Book, BSM, p. 108; RP’s Notebook, scrap of paper dated 11 April 1898.

and his father assisted him. At seventy-three, Pettigrew was becoming accident-prone. In November 1898, he hurt his foot when a board fell on it, and in January 1899, he scalded his fingers at the boiler so badly that he had to visit Dr Bancroft to have the injury dressed.⁴³ But he and Robert kept the BSM going until Saturday 4 March 1899, when they both received notice to leave.

Father and son spent the next week in the offices at the old 'Mill House', sorting the materials that had accumulated during forty-five years of business.⁴⁴ Drayloads of furniture, books and equipment were carted out to 'Kenilworth', and a mass of unwanted papers was burnt in the fireplace of the former children's nursery on the top floor. Pettigrew carefully set aside what he wanted to preserve. He gave his Parliamentary books and papers to his friend Robert Bulcock,⁴⁵ the Queen Street merchant who had taken his place in the Legislative Council; and he walked down William Street to the office of the Colonial botanist, Frederick Manson Bailey,⁴⁶ and offered him a collection of several hundred specimens of Queensland timbers. In 1892 Bailey, a fellow member of the Royal Society, had named a North Queensland rainforest tree *Dysoxylon Pettigrewianum* in recognition of Pettigrew's 'deep interest in Queensland timbers'.⁴⁷

At a chance meeting outside the Bank of New South Wales, George Willcocks told Pettigrew that he was willing to continue to employ Robert and himself at the sawmill. After discussions with the Pettigrews' solicitors, Ruthning and Jensen, arrangements were made for Robert to manage the mill and for his father to re-design some of the

⁴³ WP Diary, 3 September and 14 November 1898; 1 January 1899. This was either Thomas or Peter Bancroft.

⁴⁴ WP Diary, 4 and 6 March 1899.

⁴⁵ WP Diary, 4 March 1899. Robert Bulcock (1832-1900) followed his *Fortitude* brothers, William and Benjamin, to Queensland in 1855 and established himself as a seed and produce merchant. A devout Methodist and a philanthropist, he was appointed to the Legislative Council on 23 August 1894.

⁴⁶ WP Diary, 6 March 1899. Frederick Manson Bailey (1827-1915) came to Brisbane in 1861 and was appointed Colonial Botanist in 1881. The specimens given to Bailey by Pettigrew are now housed at the Queensland Forest Service depot at Salisbury, Brisbane. Pers. com. John Huth, 1998.

⁴⁷ Bailey, F.M. *Contributions to the Queensland Flora*, Botany Bulletin No. V, Department of Agriculture Bulletin, No. 18 (Brisbane: Government Printer, May 1892), p. 9.

processes, Willcocks paying half their salaries, and the mortgagees (the estate of Thomas Walker) the other half.⁴⁸ Robert and Willcocks agreed on how the mill's sixty men and boys would be deployed,⁴⁹ and from March to June 1899, the Pettigrews became employees in their former business.

Pettigrew began work on the designs; but, however diminished in size and output, the sawmill represented his life's work, and he found it distressing to watch men appointed by Willcocks take control of the processes he knew so well. In neat handwriting and without comment, he described in his diary the changes that were taking place at the mill. When he sought discussions on his work with the busy Willcocks, however, he felt he was ignored, and it was not long before differences arose between him and the new foreman, Albert Chivers.⁵⁰

The bankruptcy of Pettigrew and Son took more than their sawmills and ships. In April 1899, Robert and Annie had to leave 'Kenilworth', their comfortable home in Old Sandgate Road, and move, with Pettigrew and the children, to rented houses, first in Spring Hill and then in Teneriffe.⁵¹ Living again close to the city, Pettigrew attended a service at the Ann Street Presbyterian Church for the first time in thirty-six years. Charles Ogg had died four years earlier, the Rev. W. S. Frackleton was now the minister, and no one at the service had been around when Pettigrew left the church in 1862.⁵²

While working for Willcocks, Pettigrew helped to organise celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Dr Lang's ships, the *Fortitude*, the *Chaseley* and the *Lima*.⁵³

⁴⁸ WP Diary, 4 March 1899.

⁴⁹ 'BSM under G.C.W.', Robert Pettigrew's Notebook, 1890s, n.p.

⁵⁰ WP Diary, 14 March to 2 June 1899.

⁵¹ Robert Pettigrew's Day Book, 1898-1910; WP Diary, 3 April and 20 November 1899. Leichhardt Street, Spring Hill (4 April to 28 Nov. 1899) and Gibbon Street, Teneriffe (21 Nov. 1899 to 3 April 1900).

⁵² WP Diary, 16 April 1899. Charles Ogg died on 10 April 1895.

⁵³ WP Diary, 4 April 1899. Pettigrew had unsuccessfully tried to organise a reunion in 1870, the year he was Mayor. See WP Diary, 16 December 1870.

The chief organisers of this jubilee were younger members of the Cribb and Grimes families, who had arrived in the colony as children and were now prominent in business and politics. Using information from survey forms sent out by the secretary, Samuel Grimes, the Member for Oxley, Pettigrew, methodical as ever, compiled statistics on the survival of the immigrants and the whereabouts of their descendants.⁵⁴

On Saturday 1 May 1899, the anniversary of the *Chaseley*'s arrival in Moreton Bay, 'old colonists' and their families converged on the riverside recreation reserve at Goodna, a site chosen to reflect the original dispersal of the Lang immigrants between Brisbane and Ipswich. About 300 people travelled by train from Brisbane to Goodna, meeting there another contingent who arrived by train from Ipswich. For Pettigrew, the occasion and its setting – just upstream from Woogaroo – stirred memories dating back to his first trip up the river in the old steamer *Experiment*, only a few days after his arrival in Brisbane.

The celebrations were favoured with delightful weather. During the morning, the older people reminisced, while younger members of their families played a variety of games. After a picnic lunch, the crowd assembled in a specially erected marquee to listen to the speeches. The Member for Bundamba, James Clarke Cribb,⁵⁵ who had been expected to preside, sent last-minute apologies, and Pettigrew was asked to chair the meeting. He began by asking George Holt to lead the singing of 'The Old Hundredth', just as he had done at Gravesend in the presence of Dr Lang.⁵⁶ He then spoke about Lang's reasons for organising the emigration, his own role as surveyor to 'the Lang clan', and the fates of the *Fortitude* immigrants. He recalled his experiences with the *Lima* immigrants, and the

⁵⁴ 'Fortitude' Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney. Samuel Grimes (1837-1902), a son of William Grimes, arrived on the *Chaseley* and became a successful sugar and arrowroot farmer.

⁵⁵ James Clarke Cribb (1856-1926) was a son of Benjamin Cribb, who arrived on the *Chaseley* and founded a large general store in Ipswich.

⁵⁶ 'CB' in Pettigrew Papers, QWHA. George Holt (1828-1928), a nephew of Robert Cribb, was in turn a riverboat operator, a baker and a farmer at Blackwall, near Ipswich. He lived to be 100 years old.

'greedy, unchristian man' who had insisted on his full entitlement of land.⁵⁷

John George Cribb, a son of Robert Cribb, then spoke about the influence of Lang and his immigrants on the development of Queensland, and quoted James Johnston's estimate that, if other immigrants drawn by the 600 arrivals of 1849 were included, Lang had been responsible for introducing more than 2000 people to the colony.⁵⁸ Samuel Grimes read letters of greeting from seven of the original immigrants, who were unable to attend the celebrations.⁵⁹ His brother George Grimes supported Lang's claim that his emigrants were like the American Pilgrim Fathers, and asserted that the arrival of Lang's three ships was as important to Queensland as the *Mayflower*'s arrival was to America.⁶⁰

The meeting recorded its 'admiration of the patriotic and statesman-like efforts of Dr Lang to secure that the foundation of the future colony should be laid by the introduction of free, industrious and religious immigrants' and its conviction that 'had the proposals of Dr Lang been adopted, the influence on the new colony for good would have been incalculable'. After singing 'God be with you till we meet again' and thanking the trustees of the Goodna Reserve, the picnickers boarded their trains to return home.⁶¹

By the end of May 1899, Pettigrew had had enough of his new role at the BSM and decided to take a holiday. Early in June, he left Brisbane on a coastal steamer bound for Bowen, where Mary Ann and Harry Ward Davis lived in the residence attached to the Bank of New South Wales in Herbert Street. For ten weeks he involved himself in their

⁵⁷ Job Pratten. See Ch. 3, p. 92.

⁵⁸ John George Cribb (1830-1905) was a bank manager. James Johnston (1820-1876), a gardener who arrived on the *Lima*, worked for David McConnel and later became a pioneer cotton and sugar planter and a politician.

⁵⁹ James Roper, *Fortitude*, Tenterfield; J. W. Thompson, *Chaseley*, nearly 80; Mrs Lewis, *Lima*; William Stanley Hall, *Chaseley*, Sydney; Mrs W. Barlow, *Lima*, New Zealand; Mrs John Cannon, *Fortitude*, Kangaroo Point.

⁶⁰ George Grimes (1835-1910) arrived on the *Chaseley*, and with his brother Samuel was a successful sugar and arrowroot farmer and sawmiller. The Grimes family were devout Baptists.

⁶¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 May 1899; *Brisbane Telegraph* 3 May 1899; *Queenslander*, 13 May 1899, p. 878.

lives – gardening, repairing furniture, accompanying Mary Ann on her round of social visits, and getting to know his grand-children. He took an interest in Bowen's municipal arrangements, advocated the use of windmills to pump water from the Don River, and made a list of the tropical fruits displayed at the Agricultural Show.⁶²



Illus. 39. Bank of New South Wales, Bowen⁶³

Then a telegram arrived from Robert. There were problems with the machinery at the mill, and Willcocks wanted him to return to Brisbane and become foreman.⁶⁴ Boarding the next available ship, Pettigrew arrived in Brisbane on 24 August at 8.30am, and was at work an hour later. The foreman and the engineer had left, and during his absence ‘some extraordinary things’ had been done to the main engine.⁶⁵ He repaired the damage as best he could, and kept the machinery operating. At the end of 1899, when his last surviving diary ends, he was still working at the BSM, but by April 1900, the mill had closed, and George Willcocks was preparing to set off on a trip to Britain.⁶⁶

⁶² WP Diary, 6 June to 18 August 1899.

⁶³ JOL Neg. No. 182774.

⁶⁴ WP Diary, 19 August 1899.

⁶⁵ Memo Book, BSM, p. 86.

⁶⁶ ‘Send-off to Mr G.C. Willcocks’, BC, 5 May 1900.

Meanwhile, Robert had secured a new job. John Simpson, a pioneer of the Blackall Range district, who for many years had supplied the Pettigrews with timber, asked him to build and manage a sawmill at Beerwah, on the north coast railway line.⁶⁷ When Robert and his family moved to Beerwah early in April 1900, Pettigrew went to live with Margaret and Philip Hardgrave at Montague Road. Here, inspired by the success of the jubilee celebrations, he prepared material for a proposed book on Dr Lang's emigrants by the journalist William Lees,⁶⁸ and began to research and write his own 'Genealogy'.

At about this time, the Queensland Government was at last preparing to establish a Forestry Branch within the Lands Department, and surveys were needed to determine what timber remained after seventy years of indiscriminate harvesting. In April 1900, the Land Commissioner, William Watts, wrote to Pettigrew, offering him the job of inspecting a timber reserve in the Blackall Ranges, between the upper Maroochy and upper Mary Rivers.⁶⁹ Pettigrew was acquainted with the area, which was just over the range from the selection which Robert had held near Mt Eerwah. On 24 April, he took a train to Eumundi and set out on what was to be his last survey. He was supplied with riding and pack horses, saddles, hobbles, a bell, provisions and a tent, and was paid £2/2/- per working day for his time in the field.⁷⁰ In another of the full-circle events that were a feature of Pettigrew's later years, his assistant was Arthur Jones, an experienced bushman and a son of his early timber-getter and guide, Richard Jones.

For three weeks, seventy-four-year-old Pettigrew traversed the steep, forested catchments of Belli and Woota (Cedar) Creeks, meticulously filling a notebook with measurements

⁶⁷ WP Diary, 17 November 1897 and 10 July 1899; Gubby, *Campbellville and Cedar Days*, pp. 4-7.

⁶⁸ WP Diary, 9 October 1899. The book on Dr Lang's immigrants was never written, but some of the material prepared for it is held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

⁶⁹ WP Diary, 11 August 1897; Land Commissioner to WP, 7 April 1900, Pettigrew Papers, RHSQ. The Forestry Branch was established in August 1900.

⁷⁰ Land Commissioner to WP, 17 and 24 April 1900.

of remaining bunya and hoop pines and eucalypts, and reporting weekly on his progress.⁷¹

In mid-May, Jones brought him a letter from Watts, instructing him to put his horses on the train and return to Brisbane.⁷² Ranger F. W. Lade, whose work he had been doing, had resumed duty, and he was no longer needed.⁷³ He later submitted a detailed report, for which he received from Watts a letter of thanks and the observation that ‘the report contains some very useful information’.⁷⁴

During the next two years, Pettigrew’s life slid into unaccustomed quietness. He divided his time between the families at Montague Road and Beerwah, summarised his books, and continued the thankless task of managing John Pettigrew’s estate. ‘I never hear of you, and don’t know what you are doing,’ wrote Richard Gill in November 1900. On this letter Pettigrew ruefully pencilled the words, ‘Killing nut grass at Margaret’s.’⁷⁵

Gill had resigned as a trustee of the Pettigrew Estate in 1897, after the Queensland National Bank, the collapse of which had cost him ‘every shilling’ he possessed, refused to consider a proposal by which the estate could pay outstanding calls on its shares.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, he continued to keep the estate’s records, reported regularly to Pettigrew, and worried a great deal about the family’s poverty. Although Gill’s grasp of the estate’s affairs remained steady, his long letters of explanation to Pettigrew during this period reveal that Pettigrew’s mind was losing its sharpness, and at times he was inclined to be unreasonable. On one occasion, when he wanted to stop payments to Margaret Whittington because she had not paid a call on her Queensland National Bank shares, Gill was moved to exasperation, writing:

⁷¹ This notebook is held by Allan Pettigrew. Drafts of the letters and his final report are held by the RHSQ.

⁷² Land Commissioner to WP, 16 May 1900.

⁷³ Land Commissioner to WP, 28 May 1900. Frederick William Hamilton Lade (b. 1871) was one of the two first Forest Rangers to be appointed.

⁷⁴ Land Commissioner to WP, 2 July 1900.

⁷⁵ R. Gill to WP, 23 November 1900. ‘Nut grass’ is a lawn and garden weed, difficult to eliminate.

⁷⁶ R. Gill to WP, 16 February 1901; R. Gill to WP, 19 June 1897.

... I disagree with you, and that utterly. Exodus, Zachariah and Matthew have nothing to do with the matter. You are governed by the law of the land, and that you are, in the case of Margaret, setting at defiance. She has 13 shares in her own name. What right have you to stop her money on that account?⁷⁷

His relationship with John's youngest son Harry Pettigrew, who worked as a draper's assistant at Finney, Isles and Company's store in Brisbane, also deteriorated. Harry had come of age in 1898 and received what was due to him. After displeasing Pettigrew by also refusing to pay calls on his Queensland National Bank shares, he expressed a wish to be involved in the administration of his father's estate.⁷⁸ This, as Gill explained to him, was not possible, because his uncle and his mother were the sole trustees, and the estate could not be finalised until after his mother's death.⁷⁹ After writing Pettigrew an 'impudent' letter, describing him as 'obstinate', Harry vented his feelings in a letter to Gill:

... I wish to have the estate wound up as soon a date as possible. I have written to W.P. asking him to tender his resignation by return as he is a grand man to have the looking after of a deceased brother's children. I wish him to sever his connection with us as he is no good.⁸⁰

In return, Gill offered Harry this advice:

I think matters would perhaps be improved if when addressing your uncle you were to adopt a different tone. Your letters to him have been not only uncivil, but grossly offensive, a style which is not likely to advance your interests. Your letters to myself are not models of politeness.⁸¹

'[Harry] will get some of the pride taken out of him some day if he lives long enough,' Pettigrew commented to Gill, and he could not help adding, 'Pride goeth before

⁷⁷ R. Gill to WP, 29 May 1901. Pettigrew took the view that debts must always be paid, regardless of circumstances.

⁷⁸ R. Gill to WP, 19 February 1901; Harry Pettigrew to R. Gill, 28 July 1901.

⁷⁹ R. Gill to Harry Pettigrew, 10 August 1901; R. Gill to WP, 16 February 1901. Grace Pettigrew died on 13 October 1907.

⁸⁰ Harry Pettigrew to R. Gill, 28 July 1901.

⁸¹ R. Gill to Harry Pettigrew, 10 August 1901.

destruction ...⁸² Harry moderated his insulting tone.⁸³ He was in poor health, already suffering from the heart disease that took his life in 1909, at the age of thirty-two.

January 1901 marked the end of two eras – the Colony of Queensland became a State of a federated Australia, and the death of Queen Victoria ended a reign of sixty-four years. As the coronation of King Edward VII was celebrated the following year, the ageing Gill, overwhelmed by the severe drought, the leaking roof of his house and his fading eyesight, wrote pessimistically to Pettigrew:

The present weather makes me feel very anxious about the future. I fear there are dreadful times in store for us all. It's not any one class that will suffer but all classes, and yet people are fooling away money on celebrations; they will want it bye and bye. During the last two months my sight has become so bad that I can hardly see to write even my name. Lord have mercy on me.⁸⁴

Pettigrew was more stoical. ‘Having food and raiment,’ he wrote in 1901, quoting the Book of Timothy, ‘let us therewith be content.’⁸⁵

The consideration shown to William and Robert Pettigrew by George Willcocks, John Simpson, William Watts and Richard Gill, during times that were difficult for everyone in Queensland, indicates the sympathy many people felt for them. In April 1902, the following paragraph appeared in the *Telegraph* newspaper:

Testimonial to Mr Pettigrew.

Some friends of Mr Pettigrew have resolved to make an effort to raise a sum of money for his benefit. To that end, circulars have been sent to a number of Mr Pettigrew’s old friends. We are in receipt of a communication from two Queensland members of the Federal Parliament, who write expressing their sympathy, and suggesting the best way to reach the desired end. They say: “We have come to the conclusion that it would be better to assure Mr Pettigrew of a fixed income, and with that view, we have decided to make two of say 30 or 40 subscribers of £5 each per annum, thus 30 would give an income of £150 per year; 40 would give say £200 per year. We think there should not be very great difficulty in obtaining at least 30

⁸² WP to R. Gill, 13 June 1901; Proverbs 16:18.

⁸³ Harry Pettigrew to WP, 15 August 1902.

⁸⁴ R. Gill to WP, 23 June 1902. The ‘present weather’ was the record drought of 1899-1902.

⁸⁵ 1 Timothy 6:8, *Fortitude* Papers, Mitchell Library.

sympathisers with Mr Pettigrew, having regard to the fact that Mr Pettigrew was one of our most valuable and enterprising pioneers, and whose career has been creditable, honourable, and beneficial to Queensland.⁸⁶

It is not known whether anything came of this plan or whether Pettigrew was willing to accept the charity of his friends. Late in 1902, however, he made his final move, travelling north to spend his declining years with Mary Ann and Harry Ward Davis at Bowen. The paper trail of his writings ends at this point, but a single, surviving letter, written to his son-in-law Philip Hardgrave in October 1905, reveals that, at the age of eighty, his hand-writing was firm, his mind was clear, and he was still looking to the future.⁸⁷ In this letter, on the subject of the future water supply of Brisbane, he argued the case for building a ‘dam, pond or lake’ at the ‘head of the Stanley branch of the Brisbane River’, which he had first visited in 1851, while surveying the runs of Moreton Bay with Dr Simpson. Nearly fifty years after his death, the dam he envisaged was completed and named Lake Somerset.

On Sunday 28 October 1906, Pettigrew died of pneumonia, at the age of eighty-one. The next morning, in a well-attended grave-side service conducted by James Kirke, a Presbyterian home missionary, the ‘founder of the late Brisbane sawmill, the pioneer mill of Queensland’ was laid to rest in the dry, barren ground of the Bowen cemetery. His obituary in the *Port Denison Times* was copied from *Pugh’s Almanac*,⁸⁸ and most other newspapers noted his passing in a simple paragraph.⁸⁹ Only *The Herald*, a church newspaper, carried his photograph and an assessment of his contribution as a ‘Queensland Pioneer’ and ‘father of the Queensland timber industry’.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ *Telegraph*, 12 April 1902.

⁸⁷ WP to Philip Hardgrave, 27 October 1905. Collection of Anne Harbers.

⁸⁸ *Port Denison Times*, 30 October 1906.

⁸⁹ BC, 31 October 1906; GT, 1 November 1906; *Queenslander*, 3 November 1906.

⁹⁰ ‘W.C.’, ‘A Queensland Pioneer: The Late W. Pettigrew’, *The Herald*, 9 November 1906. ‘W.C.’ may have been Pettigrew’s friend, William Clark.



Illus. 40. William Pettigrew's Grave, Bowen Cemetery, 1996

At the Toowong cemetery in Brisbane, where Pettigrew had been a trustee for more than thirty years, his name was added to his wife's headstone. And on sloping ground, just below the tall spire that marks the hilltop burial of Governor Blackall and surrounded by a cluster of his family's memorials and the graves of many of his associates, the name William Pettigrew stares out, as modest and plain as the man himself, over the city which he helped to build.



Illus. 41.

Pettigrew Family Graves, Toowong Cemetery, 1997

Governor Blackall's monument is in the background.

9. IMPROVING THE FUTURE

When their village rears itself on the banks of the stream, and the curling smoke, seen from afar, shall point out to the traveller the peaceful abodes of this 'band of brothers'; when the trees of the forest shall be laid prostrate, and the stubborn earth be forced to yield in abundance the necessities and luxuries of man – the admiration of the beholder will be excited and he will say, 'These men deserve success, for they make it dependent on their own exertions.'

Moreton Bay Courier, 10 March 1849¹

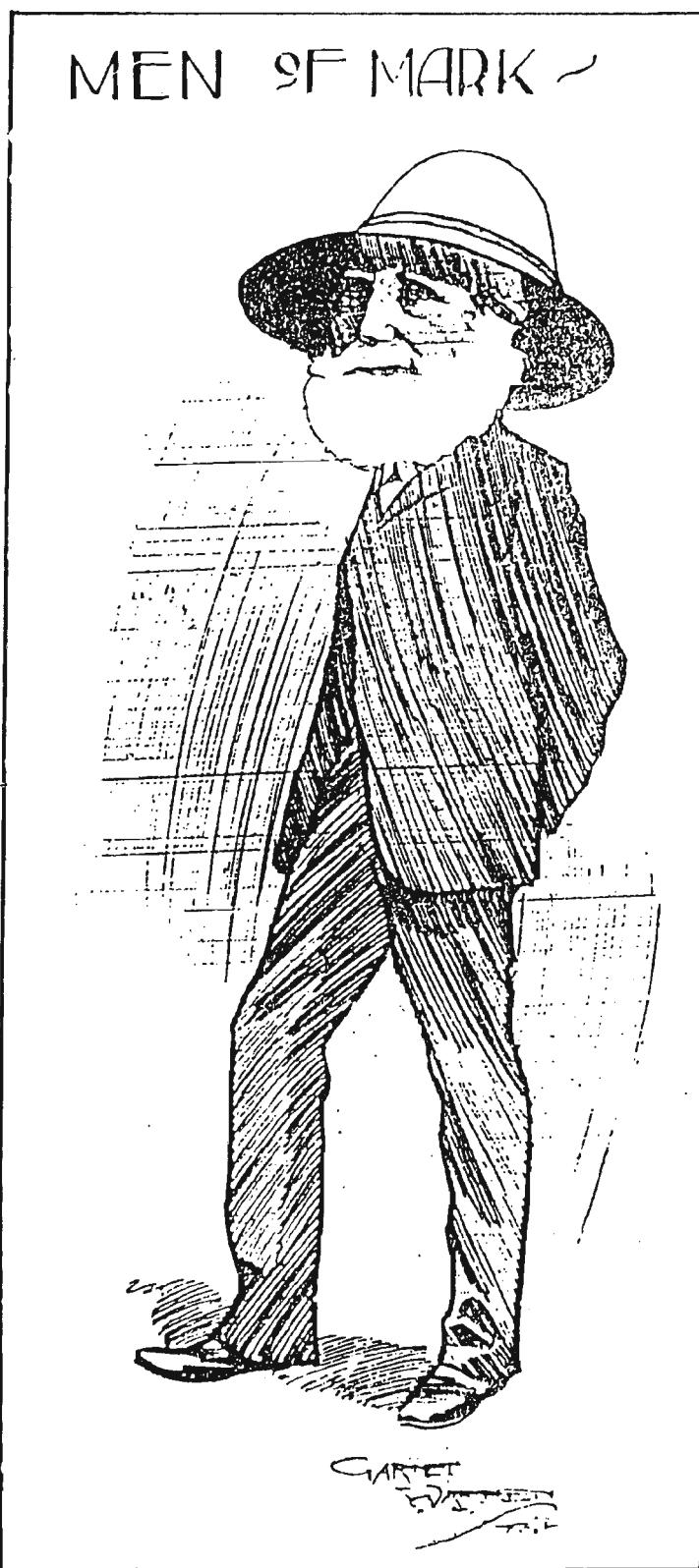
When the *Fortitude* immigrants arrived in Brisbane in 1849, the *Moreton Bay Courier* praised their industry and intelligence and glowingly predicted their success. By the end of the colonial period, in spite of setbacks, the broad terms of this vision had been fulfilled. Brisbane in 1901 was a thriving city, and Queensland, with half a million people,² was a stable, self-governing State within a new nation. (See map p. vi.) Although the small towns that had been established along the forested coast were still accessed chiefly by ship, four thousand miles of railway had been laid, and more was planned. Wool remained the chief export, but beef-production, grain-farming, sugar-growing and dairying were well established, and mining was making men rich.

William Pettigrew, whose life I have investigated for this thesis, was one of the most successful of the *Fortitude* immigrants. In a career of tireless activity, he contributed to Queensland's economic, political and cultural development in both urban and rural areas, set the pace in the exploitation of timber resources, and left behind a multitude of domestic and public structures that contained the products of his enterprise. The rich texture of his life arose from both the individuality of his character and the diversity of his many involvements and interests. As the first person to survey the runs of Moreton Bay, map the coastal rivers north of Brisbane, design and build sawmills,

¹ 'Dr Lang's Plan of Emigration', *MBC*, 10 March 1849.

² *Our First Half Century*, p. 198.

Illus. 42.



'Brim full of pluck and saturated with ideas. Lost on some of them; gained on most.'
Queenslander, 12 June 1897.

railways and machinery, and speak and write about the importance of forests, he was admired during his lifetime as a ‘most valuable and enterprising pioneer’.³ Although his businesses collapsed and he died poor, this study has shown that the assessment of his contemporaries was not misplaced, and justifies my aim to restore him to the prominence that he once enjoyed.⁴

In this final chapter, I will assess Pettigrew’s character, discuss his chief contributions to shaping the colony, and consider some of the opportunities for further studies in colonial history that my investigations have opened up.

Pettigrew the individual

William Pettigrew was one of those emigrant Scots who thrived when transplanted to a foreign land. Like the exotic Scotch thistle that grows greenly in Australian paddocks even during dry weather, he was tough, adaptable, prickly, and impossible to ignore. Luck favoured him for much of his long life, but it can also be said that the young man who stepped ashore at Petrie Bight in 1849 carried within himself the qualities that formed the basis of his success as a colonist: exceptional vigour, robust health, a strong character, a disciplined mind, and a creative spirit. And it was with these personal assets, rather than his expensive surveying equipment, that the reserved young Scot fulfilled his ambition to ‘improve the future’,⁵ became a confident public figure, and then, when overwhelmed by adversity, a stoical old man.

The characteristics that set Pettigrew apart from most of his contemporaries were his independence, his resilience, and his ability to look to the future – qualities for which he was both praised and disparaged. Having high ethical standards and the courage of

³ *Telegraph*, 12 April 1902.

⁴ See aims of this study , Ch. 1, pp. 7-8 and 11.

⁵ See Ch. 3, p. 87.

his convictions, he could be an uncompromising opponent, but whether he was 'resolute' or 'obstinate' depended very much on the attitude of the person reporting the circumstances. As a public figure, he did not seek popularity or preferment, but reserved the right to speak his mind, a stance which earned him some admiration, but also made him enemies and limited the extent of his influence. As a visionary, he often found that his enthusiasm for innovation (perhaps seen as obsessiveness) was not enough to persuade others to his point of view, and many of his ideas were developed only when he implemented them himself.

Although careful with money, Pettigrew gave generously to causes in which he believed. Sharing with his brother John a hatred of 'shams',⁶ he carried out his 'acts of kindness'⁷ as unobtrusively as possible in the small communities in which he moved. Lacking John's sociability and 'wit',⁸ he found little pleasure in social life, and in this regard it is instructive to consider not only the organisations which he supported, but also those which he avoided. He did not join the prestigious Queensland or Brisbane Clubs, for example, although membership would have given him many advantages. Unlike John and many of their friends, he was not a Freemason and so could not exercise the considerable influence that came with that connection.⁹ Instead, he joined organisations with an intellectual or promotional emphasis, such as the Philosophical Society and the National Association, and made his contribution as a dependable treasurer or an active committee-member.

The success of Pettigrew's closest relationships reflects a stable personality. He had the capacity to employ good workmen and keep them loyal, to create a satisfying

⁶ See Ch. 7, p. 247.

⁷ See Ch. 6, p. 206.

⁸ See Ch. 7, p. 248.

⁹ Dave Lauder, 'Freemasons and Freemasonry in Queensland: 1859-1989', *RHSQJ*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, February 1990, pp. 33-40.

family life and to enjoy lasting friendships. Given the material losses of his later years and the delayed acceptance of many of his ideas, Pettigrew's most tangible and enduring legacy has been his family, core and extended, which is now providing citizens of the sixth generation. It was one of the ironies of his life that, after showing little gratitude towards his father's trustees, he became a patriarch, burdened with similar responsibilities for his brothers' and other families. In total, he took responsibility for twenty-five children: his own three, his wife's three, David McKergow's four, John Pettigrew's six and William Sim's nine. For a man as conscientious as Pettigrew, the consequences of the loss of his own wealth on his son, of the collapse of the John Pettigrew estate on his nephews and nieces, and of the destruction of the Dundathu sawmill on the Sim family must have been hard to bear. When nothing else was left, his family became his future, and in their continuation he still exists.

A thoughtful approach to health enabled Pettigrew to live to a ripe old age, avoiding the diseases, alcoholism and lunacy that afflicted many of his fellow colonists. A man of temperate habits, he scorned drunkards and boasted of the sobriety that prevailed among his sawmill employees;¹⁰ but in 1885, when accused by a fellow Legislative Councillor of being a 'rabid teetotaller', he admitted that he 'took his grog, but did not take that much that he made a beast of himself or injured his property'.¹¹ He enjoyed his food, much of which, as a man who understood the care of plants and animals, he provided for his family fresh from his grain mill, his orchard and his gardens.

The slow pace of colonial travel – the horseback rides, sea voyages, coach and train journeys – together with constant writing and practices derived from his religion, such

¹⁰ BC, 8 March 1886.

¹¹ QPD, Vol. XLV, 28 October 1885, p. 191.

as prayer and Sunday rest, allowed time for reflection and reduced stress in a man who was by nature restless and impatient. Men in industry often spend so much time solving practical problems that they have little time for contemplation, but Pettigrew managed to combine an active outer life with a reflective inner life. His diaries and papers reveal in extraordinary detail the reading, observing, measuring and calculating by which he strove to understand and impose order on his world. His capacity for deliberation and discernment shines through his writings, making it necessary to respect and consider carefully everything he had to say.

Genuinely devout, regular in religious observance, and well-read in theology and church history, Pettigrew lived by the stern precepts of Presbyterian Calvinism – puritanical beliefs which tended to isolate him in a community where most people did not share his notions of piety.¹² His propensity to quote the Scriptures freely was regarded as an irritating eccentricity, and there was a judgemental streak in his personality which meant that he did not forgive or forget those whose actions he considered unprincipled or dishonest. Religious people are often mistrusted by those who do not share their outlook. To some of his contemporaries, Pettigrew may have been the ‘preciously respectable Langite’ and ‘epitome of Calvinist self-righteousness’ detected by John MacKenzie-Smith.¹³ To others, he was justified in defending his principles.

Although the expression of Pettigrew’s strong views on religion, race and class was gradually moderated by his need to do business with all comers,¹⁴ there is no evidence that he changed his early opinions. Indeed, aspects of the sectarian, racial and social

¹² ‘Men of Mark’, *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897; *BC*, 10 August 1870.

¹³ Mackenzie-Smith, *Moreton Bay Scots*, pp. 195-196. See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁴ In the *Courier*, 10 February 1862, Pettigrew wrote: ‘It is not to my interest at any time to damage any man’s character, particularly one who deals with me.’

intolerance that characterised both Pettigrew and the colonial period are still embedded in the attitudes of many Australians. Like most settlers, Pettigrew assumed that the Aboriginal race would die out,¹⁵ and during his lifetime nothing occurred to change that belief. His opposition to the introduction of coloured labour and his opinion that white men could live and work in the tropics¹⁶ were views that prevailed when the White Australia policy was established at the time of Federation. His hostile encounter with working class aspirations in the 1886 Collinge case,¹⁷ however, gave notice that rising trade unionism would soon disrupt the ‘town liberal’ versus ‘conservative squatter’ politics of which he was a part. But by 1893, when the labour movement moved openly into the political arena, his days of influence were over. Preoccupied with his own survival and lacking a public forum, he left few indications of his reactions to the turmoil of the 1890s.

His attitude to Federation is an unfortunate gap in the record, leaving unanswered the question of whether he, who fought for Separation in the 1850s, maintained his belief in separate development for Queensland. His views might help to explain the enduring perception that Queensland, with its convict origins, barbarous frontiers, scattered population and parochial culture, was (and is) ‘different’ from the other Australian colonies and, furthermore, a place of little consequence and less interest. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a proposition worth testing, that the Queensland colonists’ battle for separation from New South Wales in the 1850s, being more contentious than the moves for self-determination in any of the other Australian colonies, contributed to this perception of ‘difference’, both within and outside the colony.

¹⁵ In ‘A Trip to Noosa and its Lakes’, *QDG*, 30 September 1863, Pettigrew stated that Noosa should be ‘left to the aboriginal inhabitants so long as they exist, which, I presume, will not be much over another ten years ...’

¹⁶ See Ch. 7, pp. 285-286.

¹⁷ See Ch. 7, pp. 282-284.

In Pettigrew's character there is a striking contradiction. How could a man who was so rigid in his political and religious views be, at the same time, so adaptable and innovative in business and industry? Perhaps the answer to this puzzle lies in his Scottish background and Calvinist upbringing. It is disconcerting to discover how thoroughly he displayed the characteristics that are described in two studies of Scottish Australian settlers – Margaret Kiddle's *Men of Yesterday* and Malcolm Prentis's *The Scots in Australia*. Kiddle, whose work surveyed many Queensland Scots (but not Pettigrew), used words which described him well: canny, reserved, disciplined, temperate, inventive, entrepreneurial, civic-minded, stubborn in pursuit of a principle, high thinking, plain living, personally kind, disarmingly honest and relentlessly persistent.¹⁸ According to Prentis, the Scots, traditionally wanderers, were hard-working, respectable, patriotic, serious-minded, family-minded and adaptable, with a sentimental streak (after Robert Burns) and a droll, low-key, subtle, dry, self-deprecating 'sense of humour of sorts'.¹⁹

Prentis described the 'practical', 'commercial' and 'scientific' emphasis of the Scottish education that shaped Pettigrew, and asserted that Calvinist Christianity, which permeated Pettigrew's outlook on life, produced in its followers piety, frugality, moral seriousness, respect for learning, worldly asceticism and a high view of statesmanship and civic affairs, and reinforced the ideals of democracy and the importance of education.²⁰ Prentis also noted the emergence, from the Agrarian Revolution in lowland Scotland, of the 'professional farmer of dogged human will', who emphasised sound business methods and applied science to agriculture²¹ – a description that fits Pettigrew's upwardly mobile father, Robert Pettigrew.

¹⁸ Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890*.

¹⁹ Prentis, *The Scots in Australia: A Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland 1788-1900*.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 15.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 16.

If Robert Pettigrew was a beneficiary of the Agrarian Revolution in Scotland, then his son can be seen as a beneficiary of both the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions. A man of many competencies, William Pettigrew brought from Scotland not only his ‘clever brain and active hands’,²² but also his knowledge of the developments in farming, industry, transport and surveying that were stimulating the economy of Ayrshire during his youth. In the colony, he applied and extended this knowledge, designing better ways of accomplishing agricultural and industrial tasks, and embracing new techniques and inventions. He planned projects thoroughly, proceeded with them wholeheartedly, and was prepared to acknowledge his mistakes. His vision, optimism, enthusiasm, willingness to learn – and especially his persistence – enabled him to picture, plan, organise, act, and turn his dreams into reality – in human and natural environments that were fraught with difficulties.

Although better educated than most immigrants of his time, Pettigrew was willing to carry out manual labour and put up with inconvenience in order to achieve his goals. He was adept at using tools, fashioning objects and operating machinery, and he rarely asked his employees to do something that he could not do himself. His surveying and map-making skills stood him in good stead as an explorer, and his discoveries, especially of timber resources, were quickly followed up. His powers of observation were acute, and wherever he went he absorbed knowledge by listening and talking to others. A self-taught engineer²³ and architect,²⁴ he successfully applied his inventive mind to the design and repair of machines, sawmills, ships, railways and bridges. As a businessman, he led by example, allowing his energy – and often his capital – to stimulate others. Although most of his machinery was of necessity

²² *The Herald*, 9 November 1906.

²³ BC, 26 May 1884.

²⁴ Watson and Mackay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 143.

imported, he gave work, whenever possible, to local blacksmiths and iron-founders, and in his sawmills he trained many of the men who later expanded the timber industry and became his rivals.

Pettigrew's contributions to colonial Queensland.

In the community of immigrants that was colonial Queensland, Pettigrew remained culturally aligned with his Scottish roots. Among the networks through which he operated was an informal network of Scots, who, although less than ten percent of the population,²⁵ occupied a disproportionate number of leadership roles.²⁶ When Pettigrew employed Scots, or met them in business, in politics, in church, and in organisations such as the Caledonian Association, the homeland connection was an instant bond. The Scottish network, however, was not free of tension, and was sometimes fractured by animosities of the kind that this study has exposed in Pettigrew's intermittently disruptive relationship with the Presbyterian Church. Although his church connections remained strong, his record of devotion to the church and its institutions appears somewhat blemished by the inflexibility of his attitudes and by personal antagonisms, such as his thirty-year quarrel with Charles Ogg.

Another important network was the Pettigrew family, with its tradition of mutual support. This study has shown that Pettigrew was not a penniless immigrant, whose success depended entirely 'on his own exertions'. The expenses of his emigration and the capital for his first sawmill were generated from his father's achievements in Scotland, and his funds were later boosted by injections of capital from family

²⁵ Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, p. 123, has a table showing that the percentage of Scots in Queensland was 7.6% in 1861, 6.7% in 1871, 4.4% in 1881, 5.2% in 1891 and 4% in 1901.

²⁶ 'Astonishing the number of Scotchmen there are among Brisbane men of mark,' stated the *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897. Seven of the fifteen colonial premiers (Arthur Macalister, R. R. Mackenzie, John Douglas, Thomas McIlwraith, Hugh Nelson and Anderson Dawson) were of Scottish origin.

sources. At times he depended heavily on the assistance of his half-brothers, Robert Pettigrew in Scotland and David McKergow in Brisbane; and although the partnership with his brother John Pettigrew was unsuccessful, he and John remained useful to each other. He was also fortunate in retaining the affection of his daughters and his son Robert, who took responsibility for him in his old age.

Pettigrew's long participation in politics involved him in the colony's most influential networks and made him a part of its ruling elite. Since he saw this involvement as a duty which cost him time and money, he was usually able to weather the 'downs' of political popularity, including election losses and allegations of 'jobbery', with a degree of equanimity. His various political careers appear to have given him guiding rather than dominating roles in the colony's development – except perhaps in 1870, when, as Mayor of Brisbane, he was able to solve the long-standing problems of financing the Town Hall and the Brisbane Bridge.²⁷

Pettigrew's political aspirations should not be a surprise, since his family background and sound education had prepared him well for the role of community leader, and his unusual abilities were evident from the time of his arrival in the colony as Dr Lang's agent. As a youthful 'fighter of the fifties',²⁸ he assisted more senior Lang immigrants in their efforts to improve the colony's prospects, and his courageous reaction to the fire which destroyed the first Brisbane Saw Mills in 1853 earned him lifelong respect. By the 1860s, he had learned to mix with all kinds of men, and was as much at ease camping with his timber-getters in the bush as attending levees at Government House. Despite his leadership in private enterprise, however, the difficulties of his 'peculiar

²⁷ See Ch. 6, p. 221.

²⁸ See Ch. 3, p. 95 and Ch. 4, pp. 141.

temperament'²⁹ delayed his formal entry into politics, and he was thirty-seven years of age before he experienced his first electoral success.

As an appointed member of the Legislative Council, Pettigrew was a minor player in the Queensland Parliament, yet his speeches there provide insight, not only into his way of thinking, but also into the history of on-going issues in health, forest conservancy and industrial relations. Read with the benefit of hindsight, the Parliamentary debates involving William Pettigrew in the Legislative Council and John Pettigrew in the Legislative Assembly are an excellent source of biographical and historical information, revealing human characteristics ranging from vanity and small-mindedness to good sense and commanding vision, and reflecting the slow pace of ideological change and the extent to which human foibles can influence political decision-making.

On a broader canvas, Pettigrew's attitudes reflected the over-arching optimism of the British Empire during the Victorian era. He continued to exhibit the patriotic pride and loyalty noted by Governor Bowen in 1860,³⁰ and his service to government and zeal in business expressed a commitment to make the British political and economic systems work in the colony. Believing in freedom and opportunity for all, he saw himself as a 'liberal', but this, as the *Queenslander* pointed out in 1897, only referred to politics.³¹ His social and religious views were decidedly conservative.

For most first and second generation colonists, the tie with Britain was so strong that many returned 'home', permanently or at intervals. But Pettigrew was a determined

²⁹ See Ch. 6, p. 219.

³⁰ See p. 144. In 1860, after attending the meetings that established a volunteer defence force, Pettigrew took the required oath of allegiance; *MBC*, 8 and 11 September 1860. He welcomed the visits to Brisbane of Queen Victoria's son Prince Alfred in 1868, and when her grandsons Princes Albert Victor and George visited in 1881, their photograph appeared in the Pettigrew family album.

³¹ *Queenslander*, 1 June 1897.

settler. Having made the colony his home, he set out to make it habitable, seeing his ‘adopted land’ through European eyes and with the bias of his training in Scotland. As a surveyor, he explored and mapped its mountains, creeks and rivers. As a farmer, he noted soil, water and grass, and ardently observed the weather. As a sawmiller, he focused on the useful timbers of the scrubs and forests, and learned how to use them.³² In all these roles, his efforts contributed significantly to the colony’s development, but were not recognised officially because he usually acted as a private citizen.

Although Pettigrew was never licensed as a surveyor, his surveying skills underpinned many of his achievements. His early work with Simpson and Warner in the Moreton Bay District made him familiar with the countryside and gave him confidence in the bush. His maps and notebooks, together with the official assessments of forest resources which he made in 1875 and as an old man in 1900, reveal his painstaking competence as a surveyor. In the 1860s, when he set out in his own ship to explore and map the coast north of Brisbane, his discoveries led to an expansion of the timber industry and new settlements on the Mary, Mooloolah, Maroochy and Noosa Rivers. In the 1870s, his practical contribution to the Cooloola Railway was his skilful survey of the line.

Pettigrew retained his early interest in farming and grazing, although it was secondary to his other concerns. In his gardens and orchards, he experimented with the selection, propagation and acclimatisation of plants. His attempts at drainage, which in Ayrshire had converted boggy wasteland into good farmland, proved to be less beneficial in the

³² Pettigrew’s one peculiar blind spot was a lack of interest in the novel and abundant wildlife of the bush. He mostly noted ‘detestable’ creatures – fleas, jumper ants, and the hawks that ate his chickens. Then there was the black swan on Lake Cootharaba, which he ate. He rarely mentioned common birds and animals.

mineral-deficient coastal soils of Queensland than he had hoped.³³ More successfully, he contributed to the sugar industry by manufacturing machinery, and to grain-farming by operating an efficient grainmill at the Brisbane Saw Mills.³⁴ In a community where the introduction of steam power only dented the demand for animal power, he continued to own and rely on horses and bullocks, and his interest in animal husbandry culminated in his short-lived dairy farm at Maroochydore.

Pettigrew's career as a sawmiller is emphasised in this study, because it was as 'the father of the Queensland timber industry' that he made his greatest contribution to the colony. Having witnessed industrial development in Ayrshire, he was a well-informed advocate of steam power, and by establishing Brisbane's first steam sawmill, he became a spearhead of technological change. Economic considerations were always a part of his calculations, and in each of the five sawmills³⁵ that he subsequently designed, he strove for increased efficiency. His abiding interest in industrial progress is revealed in his comments on machines, boilers and ships in the BSM Memo Book, and also in the advertisements for new machinery and diagrams of his rivals' sawmills that are scattered through his diaries and papers.

Pettigrew's activities in the development of sea and land transport were responses to both the progress of steam technology and the needs of his industry. It was a sign of the times that, only three years after his arrival in Brisbane on the cumbersome sailing ship *Fortitude* in 1849, his brother John arrived in Melbourne on the first Australian voyage of Brunel's revolutionary iron steamship *Great Britain*.³⁶ The old paddle-steamer *Experiment* was plying the waters of the Brisbane River when Pettigrew

³³ Some of Pettigrew's hand-dug drains can still be traced at Maroochydore.

³⁴ Pettigrew imported some grain, and also obtained supplies locally and from the Darling Downs. James W. Keachir to WP, 29 March 1883.

³⁵ Two more versions of the BSM and the Dundathu, Urara and Maroochy sawmills.

³⁶ See Ch. 4, p. 111.

arrived, and only a year later he recorded his interest in fitting steam engines into ships in a discussion with Taylor Winship, the builder of a second riverboat, the *Hawk*.³⁷ By the mid-1860s, Pettigrew's need for manoeuvrable vessels that could transport unwieldy logs in narrow waterways prompted him to convert the *Gneering* to steam power and to construct the *Tadorna Radjah*. Both these ships were paddle-steamers, but the *Tarshaw*, built twenty years later, was a technical advance – a screw steamer. Although this study has not investigated the soundness or otherwise of Pettigrew's 'wave-line theory' of design (which seems to have been regarded as one of his eccentricities³⁸), there is no doubt that his three steamers were sturdy, reliable, and commercially successful.

The slowness of land transport was a major hindrance to development within the colony, and Pettigrew, forced to walk or ride horses for long distances, saw railways as an obvious solution. Disagreeing with government policies on railway construction and frustrated by government inaction, he set an example to other businessmen by constructing his own, purpose-built railway and steam locomotives.³⁹ For its time and in its place, and in concept and execution, his Cooloola Railway was an extraordinary achievement.

Steam power overhauled wind and animal power only slowly; but, by the time Pettigrew retired, the logs that arrived at sawmills in rafts and ships or on bullock wagons were supplemented by logs carried efficiently on trains. It is ironic that one of the reasons for the final demise of the BSM in William Street was its lack of direct access to the public rail network.

³⁷ WP Diary, 2 February 1850.

³⁸ The *Queenslander*, 12 June 1897, commented: '[Pettigrew has] got some queer notions about shipbuilding: turned out several curiosities.'

³⁹ See Ch. 6, pp. 211-218.

Pettigrew paid attention to every aspect of the timber industry, becoming proficient at locating, extracting, processing, transporting and marketing timber. An authority on Queensland timbers, he was always looking for better ways to treat, prepare, use and promote them. By 1886, because of the range of his products, the geographic spread of his suppliers, his sawmills and his markets, and his role as a major employer of labour, he was described as ‘a timber merchant in a very large way of business’.⁴⁰

Sawmilling, however, has always been a jarringly noisy, dusty, dangerous industry, and in colonial Queensland, sawmillers, even dressed as ‘timber merchants’, lacked the prestige of squatters, planters and mine-owners. By sticking to sawmilling and its associated transport systems, Pettigrew (unlike his brother John, who, in addition to retailing, invested in the pastoral, sugar and mining industries) found himself outside the colony’s dominant economic groups. Although the timber industry developed more workplaces and employed more workers than any other processing industry, its ability to create wealth and employment was not appreciated, chiefly because only a small proportion of its product was exported. ‘Timber was always important – but underrated,’ commented Judith Powell, after her recent appraisement of the timber industry of South East Queensland for the Regional Forest Agreement.⁴¹

This thesis challenges the assumptions that the timber industry was less important than other industries and that timber merchants were less influential than other capitalists, but it must be admitted that the cutting and milling of timber remained a low status industry, a transitory but necessary exploitation carried out in order to clear land and build infrastructure. Speaking in 1970, the sawmiller E. S. Hancock quoted

⁴⁰ Pugh’s Almanac, 1886, p. 418.

⁴¹ Pers. com. Dr Judith Powell. See Judith Powell, *People and Trees: A Thematic History of South East Queensland with Particular Reference to Forested Areas, 1823-1997* (Brisbane: Queensland CRA/RFA Steering Committee, 1998; Judith Powell, *Travel Routes, Forest Towns and Settlements* (Brisbane: CRA/RFA Steering Committee, 1998).

the author of an article written in 1905, who called the timber industry 'Australia's Cinderella' and observed that, while agricultural and pastoral pursuits were glorified in Australian literature and art, timber, for all its material and monetary contribution to building the country, was not considered 'romantic' by poets and painters:

The Australian may live in a wooden house, in a wooden town, walk on a wood paved street, travel in a wooden carriage over wooden sleepers and wooden bridges; ship his goods from wooden wharves, shear, refine and manufacture in wooden sheds, enclose his land in wooden fences, and look forward to making his exit in a wooden coffin, and yet remain blind to the tremendous significance of it all because he has not read it in print.⁴²

Pettigrew's fellow colonists, bent on clearing land and constructing buildings, destroyed and consumed timber with little thought for the future. But Pettigrew looked ahead and – although this can be interpreted as a sawmiller's self-interest – advocated reforestation and the conservation of the forests that fed his industry. His views were ignored, and by 1906, when Parliament belatedly passed the *State Forests and National Parks Act* for which he had long argued,⁴³ the forests of south-east Queensland had been so ruthlessly exploited that accessible supplies of softwoods were almost exhausted. It is ironic that Pettigrew's unpopular advocacy of the planting of trees and his futile pleas for improved forest management now give him belated standing as an early environmentalist.

Pettigrew's contribution to the colony's built environment flowed chiefly from his role as a sawmiller, but also from his involvement in building societies and his interest in design. Numerous nineteenth century Queensland buildings still contain framing, wall and floor timbers, windows, doors, fretwork panels and verandah decorations that were produced in Pettigrew's sawmills – anonymous timbers, which invite

⁴² F. Corkling, 'Australia's Cinderella', in E. S. Hancock, 'The Queensland Timber Industry: Early History and Development', *RHSQJ*, Vol. IX, No. 1, 1969-1970, p. 170.

⁴³ See Ch. 7, pp. 285-286. Pettigrew died in October 1906 and the Act was passed in November.

investigation. One such building is ‘Koongalba’, John Low’s home at Yandina, which has been documented by its present occupants.⁴⁴ Another is Parliament House, for which Pettigrew supplied beech flooring timber in 1866.⁴⁵ The homes that Pettigrew erected for his family – from the expanded cottage of the ‘Mill House’, to the plain masonry of ‘Tarshaw’, to the suburban timber vernacular of ‘Arrawatta’, ‘Rosecliffe’, ‘Nungurrum’ and ‘Kenilworth’ – illustrate adaptive stages of nineteenth century domestic architecture in relation to climate, materials, function and layout.⁴⁶

In general, the ‘ups and downs’ of Pettigrew’s businesses reflected the times in which he lived. His initial success as a sawmiller was based on being the first to exploit an apparently unlimited resource at a time of economic expansion; and his continuing dominance of the industry was due to his business acumen, ability to manage men and machinery, and willingness to work ‘hands-on’ and take risks. On the surface, his failures were the results of natural disasters beyond his control – the fire of 1893 in the case of Dundathu, and the floods of 1890, 1893 and 1898 in the case of Pettigrew and Son. Beneath these failures, however, lay a cycle of growth, maturity and decline in the industry that he had pioneered. For the first twenty years, equipped with capital and a new technology, he held a near-monopoly of sawmilling in Brisbane, enabling him to generate profit, expand his businesses and ride out the recession of the 1860s. The fire at the BSM in 1874⁴⁷ was a turning point, and the period that followed, although apparently prosperous, was one of rapidly growing competition and more modest profits. His attempt to adjust to changes in sawmilling during the late 1880s⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Audienne Blyth, *John Low’s House and Family, Yandina: Koongalba 1894-1994* (Nambour: Audienne Blyth, 1994). John Low, a son of Pettigrew’s friend and business associate, James Low, built ‘Koongalba’ when he married in 1894.

⁴⁵ BSM Balance Book, 1866, p. 21.

⁴⁶ See Ch. 4, pp. 130-131, Ch. 7, pp. 271-273 and photos, p. 274.

⁴⁷ See pp. 235-240.

⁴⁸ See p. 262.

was over-optimistic and badly timed. By 1890, when he was borrowing heavily to build the Maroochy sawmill, competition in the timber industry was fierce. During the dramatic drop in economic activity that followed the depression and floods of 1893, his decline was rapid, although his reputation for reliability was such that the Union Bank, with which he had dealt for nearly fifty years, allowed his debt to blow out to intolerable levels before foreclosing in 1898.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The need to keep this thesis disciplined in length and format has meant that many aspects of Pettigrew's life and work have been dealt with more briefly than they deserve. Almost every paragraph of the biography raises questions that require further investigation and issues that could become studies in themselves. Some inquiries arise directly from Pettigrew's activities. His contribution to the timber industry, for example, could be expanded to examine the significance of his inventions and designs,⁵⁰ his efforts to promote Queensland timbers,⁵¹ and his connection with places such as Moggill,⁵² Mooloolah-Maroochy and Maryborough, practices such as reforestation,⁵³ and policies such as timber regulation,⁵⁴ forest conservancy and industrial relations. His activities also raise issues about the negative aspects of colonisation, such as the dispossession of Aboriginal people and the detrimental, long-term effects on the natural environment of the uncontrolled exploitation of resources.

⁴⁹ See Ch. 8, pp. 297-298. In 1898 Pettigrew gave his 'causes of insolvency' as: 'Keen competition in trade – the number of sawmills being by far beyond the requirements of the trade. Depression in trade. Destruction of property and loss of timber by floods.'

⁵⁰ See pp. 96, 106, 121-122, 146, 166, 193, 197, 199, 216, 239, 247.

⁵¹ See pp. 229-232.

⁵² Ian Cameron, *A Green and Pleasant Land: An Account of the Pullenvale-Moggill District of South-East Queensland* (Pullenvale: Ian Cameron, 1999), pp. 29 and 34.

⁵³ Peter Holzworth, 'Archibald McDowall and Nineteenth Century Forest Conservancy in Queensland', *RHSQJ*, Vol. 17, No. 10, May 2001, pp. 461-479.

⁵⁴ 'The Introduction of Special Timber Licences in Queensland', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 10, May 1969, pp. 24-26.

Other inquiries arise from Pettigrew's interactions with individuals and groups. There is a need for more full biographies of Queensland colonists,⁵⁵ especially of those in the small pool of men from whom colonial leaders were drawn. The unexamined lives of men who influenced Pettigrew – Stephen Simpson, George Raff, Richard Gill and George Willcocks, for example – arouse the curiosity of any interpreter of the colonial 'milieu'. Without a better understanding of Robert Cribb, Charles Ogg and William Coote, how can a balanced view of their quarrels with Pettigrew be reached? There is also a need for studies of the several generations of colonial families who formed the basis of Queensland's present population.⁵⁶ Pettigrew's part in the saga of Dr Lang's 'great emigration to Cooksland',⁵⁷ in particular, points to the need for a study of the fates of all the Lang immigrants and their families – a study which could test their claim to be equated with the *Mayflower* voyagers of North America,⁵⁸ and assess their influence on the ethos of the developing colony.

Seen from afar, as an abstraction, Pettigrew was one of a group of predominantly British, Protestant, male immigrants, who successfully colonised a region of subtropical Australia during the second half of the nineteenth century. Seen up close, through the detail of his diaries, letters and photographs, he was man of initiative and action, whose personal history provides insights into the processes of that colonisation and maps the inter-connectedness of the small society to which he belonged. His paper legacy has enabled me to picture him in many of the circumstances of his life: turning his back on the bleak coast of Ayrshire, bending over the machinery in his busy sawmills, plotting his maps in the cabin of the *Gneering*, addressing the

⁵⁵ See Ch 1, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁶ The usefulness of family histories is demonstrated in two intricate Queensland examples: Dornan and Cryle, *The Petrie Family*, and Lorna McDonald, *Over Earth and Ocean: The Archers of Tolderodden and Gracemere* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1999).

⁵⁷ See Ch. 1, p. 47.

⁵⁸ See Ch. 8, p. 302.

Legislative Council, holidaying with his family at peaceful ‘Coolooluthin’, tending his garden at ‘Nungurrum’, and rowing up the Maroochy River to catch a train at Yandina – an admirable, self-contained man, striving to ‘improve the future’ and to make his success ‘dependent on his own exertions’.

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