**Essays on Mount Crosby - Mount Crosby Reservoir**

If you look out from the high road at Colleges Crossing, you will likely see a shiny new structure on the side of Mount Crosby. That structure is the roof of the Mount Crosby Reservoir (recently made). The reservoir, which is known locally as "high level", was constructed in 1891-92 as an element of Alexander Stewart's Brisbane River Water Supply Scheme, which also included the Mount Crosby pumping station and a long cast-iron pipeline connecting the reservoir to the city.

Construction of the reservoir amid the great financial crisis of the 1890s was a feet of manual labour unlikely to be repeated in the modern day. Some sense of the effort can be gained from contemporary reports by visiting journalists, all keen to understand how long it would be until Brisbane's thirst would be quenched:

*February 1891: The excavation for the reservoir itself is 267ft long, 100ft wide, and 15ft deep and, when complete, it is estimated to hold 2,500,000 gallons of water. The required depth has now almost been reached, and the work of laying the concrete floor will be in full swing in a few weeks.*

*May 1891: The work of lining the reservoir with concrete will be heavy: A tramway has been laid from the river at the pumping station to the Mount, and up this is being hauled from the river bed by steam the sand that is required for making the concrete. The metal needed is being got close by, just above the reservoir, while 4000 casks of cement have been stacked, on the ground. Mr. Statham has at present between twenty and thirty men engaged on the job.*

*February 1892: The reservoir was quite a sight; being just finished it held no water, and to keep it cool and comfortable pending the getting up of steam at the Pumping Station men were engaged in watering is concrete sides with ordinary garden watering cans; for in this place of all others water was about the scarcest commodity to be found, it had all to be carted up from a creek half a mile down the hill.*

When finished, the reservoir stood proudly, but roofless, 450 feet above the river level; enough to ensure water pressure at all Brisbane premises could spray about 21 metres (or three stories) into the air. This standard was agreed at the time of the great fire of Brisbane (1864) and remains the aim of water distributors to this day.

And what of the roof? Well, the new roof is used to prevent any contamination of the stored water and it was designed and built in 2013, only 121 years after the reservoir - which I am certain accounts for why you only noticed it recently.

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