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USEFUL AND PROFITABLE: HISTORY AND RACE RELATIONS AT THE MYORA ABORIGINAL MISSION, STRADBROKE ISLAND, AUSTRALIA,1892-1940

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The history of race relations in Queensland is dominated by harsh and repressive systems of control over Aboriginal people by church and government. Aboriginal labour was central to the maintenance of this system. Where Aboriginal people could find sources of labour external to the mission and government settlement system that allowed them some control of their finances and daily lives, they were able to alleviate the effect of this repressive system on their lives. This paper documents the history of the Myora Mission on Stradbroke Island, between 1892 and 1940. Aboriginal labour was essential for running the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. The need for labour gave Aboriginal people advantages in employment, diet, housing, clothing, religion, social cohesion and access to traditional lands that were not experienced by many inhabitants of other Queensland missions or government settlements. The history of Myora serves to illustrate the pragmatic, inconsistant and illogical nature of the reserve system, and demonstrates the intellectually corrupt basis on which it was founded. □
Race relations, Myora Mission, Quandamooka people.

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This is a record of a small Aboriginal community on a 20ha reserve on Stradbroke Island between 1892 and 1940. Myora (or Moongalba to Aboriginal people) is located 3.5km north of Dunwich (Fig. 1), on the northeast coast of North Stradbroke Is (or Minjerriba to Aboriginal people). South Stradbroke, North Stradbroke and Moreton Islands are large sand islands that form the western side of Moreton Bay, southeast Queensland. Dunwich is 35km east of Brisbane.

Unlike other Aboriginal reserves in Queensland at the time, Myora was not a rigidly controlled government or church institution. All aspects of behaviour were not highly regulated, accommodation was not compound-like, children were not separated from parents and corporal punishment was not the norm. At Myora there was no resident administrative hierarchy, no fencing and no dormitories. Buildings were set in a glade of trees, on a hill sloping gently to the beach (Figs 2 & 4). This setting assured residents of a plentiful supply of fresh water from Capembah Spring, while the abundant fishing grounds of Moreton Bay supplemented government rations.[1] There was a high degree of interaction between the residents of Myora and the non-Aboriginal world around them. Many Myora people had full and long-term employment. It was a place of neither isolation nor desolation. Examination of the history of the Myora Mission, and comparison with events on other Aboriginal settlements, contributes to an understanding of social and economic treatments of Aboriginal people in Queensland.

The term mission usually applies to a reserve run by a church or charitable institution. Settlements were government administered reserves. The term reserve applies to the land set aside for the purpose of establishing a settlement or mission.[2] Although Myora was only a mission between 1892 and 1896, it is still referred to as Myora Mission by the Aboriginal people on Stradbroke Island, and this term is used throughout this paper. The Aboriginal people at Myora were descended from the Noonuccal and Koenpul from North and South Stradbroke Island and the Ngugee of Moreton Island. Where events can associated with only one group they will be identified. Where the event refers to more than one group, is ambiguous or applies generally to Aboriginal people living on Stradbroke Island, they will be referred to as Quandamooka People as a way of acknowledging their diverse histories, but their common link to Quandamooka, or Moreton Bay and its Islands.

Two major factors determined the character of the relationship that Aboriginal people on Stradbroke had with the non-Aboriginal world around them. The first was a continuing association they maintained with their traditional lands. They were not confined in a reserve, and remained settled on or near their traditional lands, with access

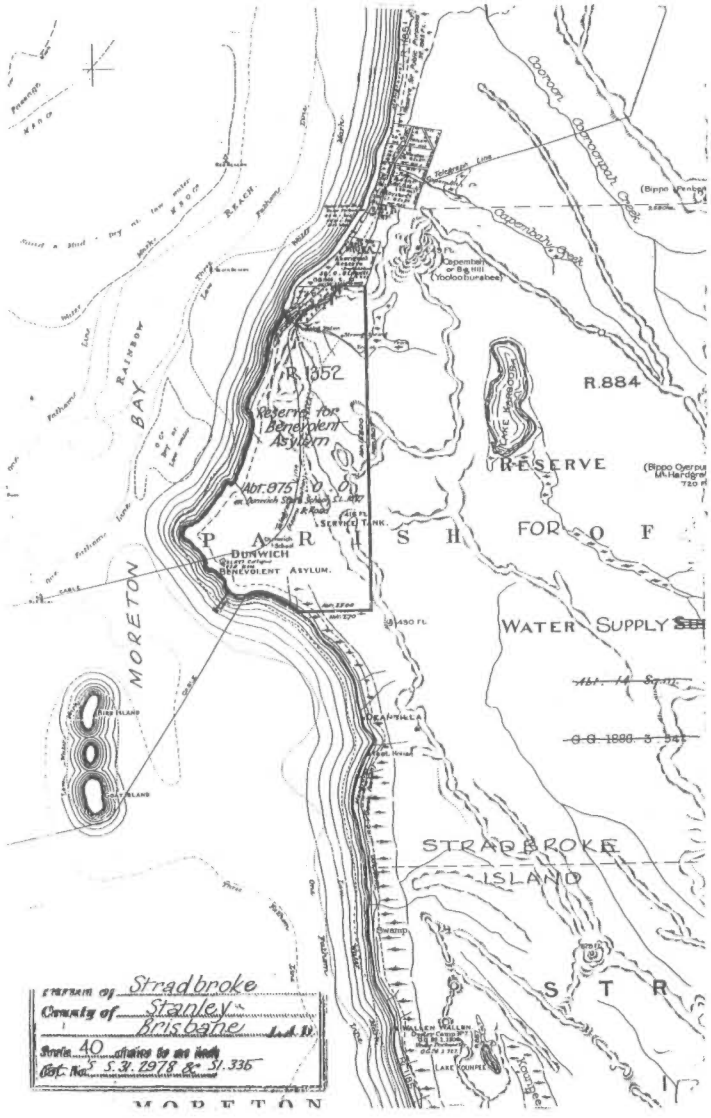

FIG. 1. Location of Dunwich Benevolant Asylum and Myroa Mission, Stradbroke Island (Stradbroke Island Cat. Nos: S 31. 2978 and S1. 335).

to abundant and diverse food resources. As a result they could not be controlled by the edict issued on other missions and reserves, 'work or starve'. Significant numbers of Quandamooka People were not removed from the Island, and Aboriginal people from other areas were not shifted to Stradbroke Island. This further assisted in the maintenance of social cohesion and identity. The second important factor was the establishment of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum in 1866. Throughout its history this asylum held large numbers of inmates: 1452 in 1901; 1253 in 1925; and 750 in 1935.[3] Its maintenance required access to cheap, permanent, labour. The Quandamooka People had been valued as a source of labour for various commercial ventures since the 1860's. The asylum, however, provided a constant source of employment over a long period for significant numbers of people. This gave them a measure of financial independence as well as created an interdependent relationship with a number of government agencies; an unprecedented position for Aboriginal people at the time. The need for labour gave Quandamooka People advantages in employment, diet, housing, clothing, religious practice, social cohesion and access to traditional lands not experienced by many Aboriginal inhabitants of other missions or settlements. Limited comparison with conditions on other reserves and missions serves to underscore the cynical, pragmatic, inconsistent and capricious nature of Aboriginal affairs during this period.

EUROPEAN CONTACT

The first known contact between Quandamooka People and took place in 1803, when Matthew Flinders, who was a passenger on the *Porpoise,* went ashore near Cylinder Beach, at the northern end of Stradbroke Island. He found the 'Indians were peaceably disposed, amusing us with dances in imitation of the kangaroo'.[4] In 1823, castaway timber-getters, John Pamphlet, Thomas Parsons and Richard Finnegan remained on Stradbroke Island for more than a month. According to Pamphlet, the Quandamooka people

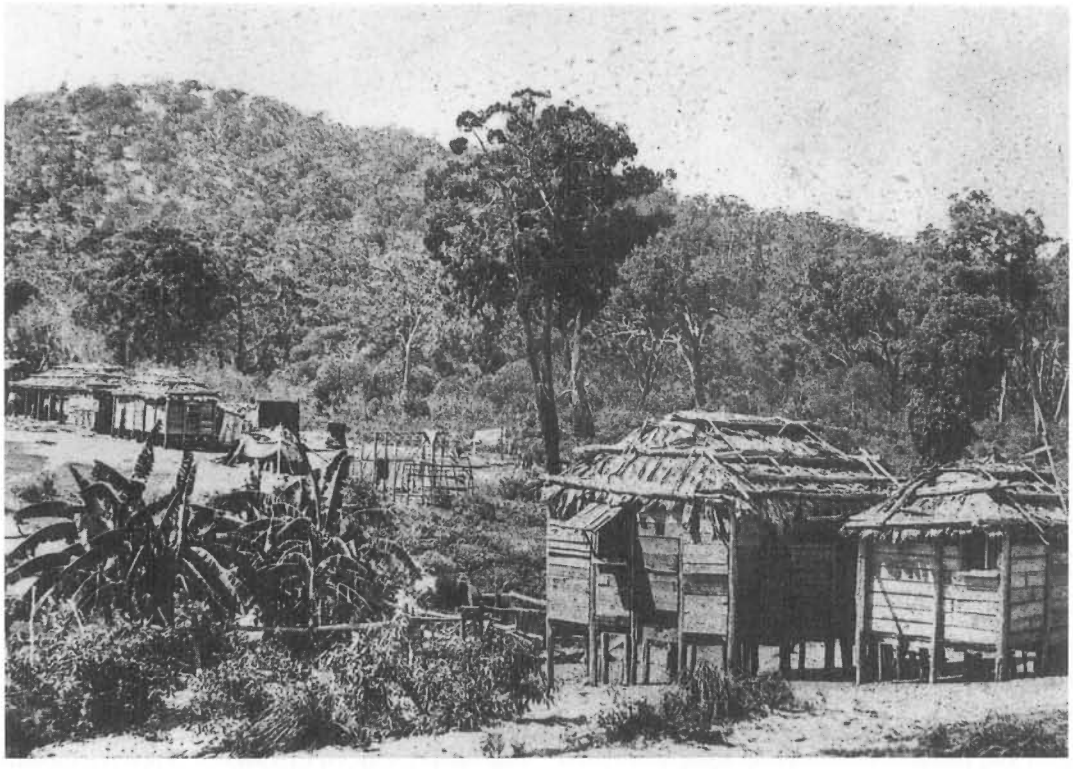

FIG. 2. Myora or Moongalba, 1891. (John Oxley Library)

provided accommodation in well-built huts, a fire for cooking, and as much fish as they could eat.[5] In 1827, a pilot station was built at Amity Point.[6] In the following year a cotton plantation, employing 30 men, was established at Moongalba near the site of the future Mission.[7] In the same year, a fortified storage depot, manned by convicts, was built at Dunwich.[8]

In 1843, Archbishop John Bede Polding sent four Passionist priests to establish a mission at Dunwich.[9] The priests observed that Europeans were already living in family situations with Stradbroke Island women. By the time the Passionists departed in 1847, they had baptised 200 children.[10]

Even as the Quandamooka People at Myora were adapting to, and working with Europeans, some believed that Aborigines were fast disappearing and Christian charity demanded that their demise be as painless as possible.[11] Other Europeans recognised the need to protect indigenous people.[12] Organisations such as the London-based Aboriginal Protection and Anti-Slavery Society, were concerned about the plight of Aborigines.[13] Despite best intentions, these societies saw the Aboriginal population as something to be 'worked on' and changed to suit European values. The Queensland Aboriginal Protection Association (QAPA) fitted the mould of these 'Protecting Societies'. Their inaugural meeting was held in Brisbane in 1888.[14] In 1890, the QAPA established a mission on Bribie Island at the northwestern end of Moreton Bay. A school with two dormitories and a teacher's residence was provided for 20 inmates.[15] From the beginning, financial difficulties were experienced by the Association. By September 1892, the Colonial Secretary, Horace Tozer, refused to meet demands from their creditors.[16] As well as a deficiency in funding, Archibald Meston described the site as 'mainly ti-tree swamps'.[17]

By 1892, with pressure to vacate Bribie Island, interest turned to Stradbroke Island. In October 1892, an area of 20 hectares was reserved for a mission station at Myora. In the following month, tenders were called to remove buildings from

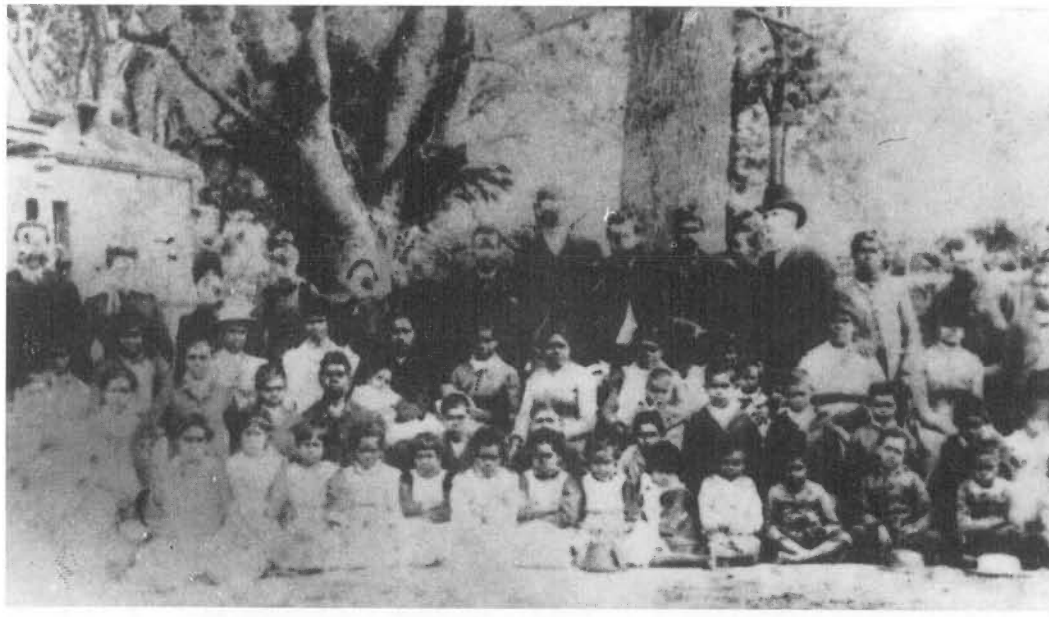

FIG. 3. Residents of the Myroa Mission with Government Members. (This is possibly the first photo of Mission residents). (Oodgeroo Noonuccal collection, MS University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL)

Bribie Island and re-erect them at Myora.[18] The staff and inmates were kept on adjacent Peel Island from November 1892, until the buildings were ready for occupation in May 1893[19] (Fig. 3). There is, however, no indication of how many were from the Bribie Mission and how many were from Stradbroke Island.

A DEATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In October 1893, Myora Mission was declared an industrial and reformatory school. James Ferguson was appointed Mission Superintendent. His wife, Sarah, was Mission Matron. The Government provided the salary of the teacher and regular. rations.[20] When the Reverend James MacPherson visited Myora in 1893, he remarked that 'under the new arrangements Mr Ferguson, the Superintendent will be able to detain and train the elder boys and girls and make them useful and profitable to the mission and to society'.[21] According to Rosalind Kidd, 'Aboriginal labour was essential for the cost-effectiveness of the missions, and was central to remedial ideology'.[22]

Myora Mission now experienced punitive conditions similar to those operating at Mapoon,[23] and Yarrabah Missions.[24] In spite of government support, the QAPA's finances remained uncertain and an appeal was made for help from the charitable public of Brisbane.[25] When Archibald Meston inspected the mission in 1895, he found it to be poorly managed.[26] James and Sarah Ferguson had left and, under their replacements Marie Christensen and Edwin Renshaw,[27]conditions had deteriorated rapidly.

The first news of problems at Myora came on 18 September 1896, when the Acting Medical Superintendent at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, Dr Patrick Moloney, performed a post-mortem on a 5 year old girl, Cassy.[28] As a result, Matron Marie Christensen was charged with murder, later reduced to manslaughter.[29] Five Myora residents were called as witnesses. They were not intimidated by court proceedings and had sufficient command of English to be capable witnesses. At the trial, the matron was found guilty.[30] Conditions at Myora Mission which led to the death of Cassy were known to the authorities prior to 1896. In particular, Archibald Meston had made suggestions in 1895 on means 'to prevent a repetition of the discreditable blunders that have characterised the past history of Myora'.[31]

The events of 1896 brought immediate changes. Two days after the trial of Matron Christensen, the Myora Mission ceased to be an

industrial and reformatory school.[32] With the removal of the Matron, the dormitories were closed, and the young inmates, 'orphans', were sent to Deebing Creek Settlement, near Ipswich. They arrived without blankets and with only one penny each per day for food.[33]

Despite the removal of the matron and the superintendent, Myora had only a tenuous hold on new-found 'freedom' and various models of more rigid control, such as those operating on Fraser Island, could have been followed.[34] Archibald Meston saw no advantage in spending money on an Island community controlled by a teacher (from the Department of Public Instruction) and an Acting Superintendent (from the Health and Home Department).[35] Two conditions at Myora mitigated against wholesome removal. The first was the demand for cheap Aboriginal labour by the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. The second was the realisation that the cost of maintaining every Queensland Aborigine in sequestered reserves was beyond the colony's finances.[36]

It also became apparent to the Home Secretary (Horace Tozer), Southern Protector Meston and Northern Protector Walter Roth, that Myora residents were able to take care of themselves and lived ' much more happily than in the old mission days, peace being rarely broken'.[37]

THE AUTHORITIES

Between 1897 and 1940 Myora Mission was under the control of four Chief Protectors. Their attitudes to the position they held, and to the Aborigines over whom they exerted almost total power, is summarised in their own words.

Archibald Meston, 1897-1904:

> No white man can command the fear and respect of the Australian black without an unmistakable manifestation of superior physical and intellectual force.[38]

Walter Roth, 1904-1906:

> The isolation of, and restricted intercourse between, the weaker race and the stronger, so long as the preservation of the former continues to be the goal for which we, as humanitarians, are striving.[39]

Richard Howard, 1906-1913:

> In intellectual capacity the Aborigines have been held to occupy a low position on the scale of humanity. Is there any evidence that they have advanced in any degree from the primal condition?[40]

John Bleakley, 1913-1942:

> The assimilation of these people of Aboriginal abstraction on sound lines into our community life is essential if their ultimate absorption into our race is to be achieved without disaster.[41]

The inconsistent and pragmatic nature of the implementation of their policies can be illustrated by comparing their attitude towards the Myora community Myora with the sentiments they express towards the general Queensland Aboriginal population.

In 1894, Archibald Meston had been commissioned by the Home Secretary, (Horace Tozer), to prepare a report on ways to alleviate the condition of the Aborigines .[42] On visiting Myora in 1895, he criticised the QAPA's overall management, suggesting that the mission be placed in government control and indicating ways to reduce costs. He made no suggestion that Myora should meet his criteria for '...the creation of reserves on which the Aborigines are entirely isolated from other contacts'.[43] This proposal became part of *The 1897 Aborigines Protection Act* that decided the fate of the majority of Queensland's Aborigines for the following 80 years. In 1897, Meston was appointed Southern and Central Protector and Commandant of Fraser Island, a position he held until 1904.[44]

Meston returned again to Myora in 1898, following complaints from Dr Patrick Smith, Medical Superintendent of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum and Acting Superintendent of the Myora Mission. Dr Smith had prepared for the Home Secretary, a list of misdemeanours committed by Mission residents. Smith proposed that all Aborigines and half-castes who were a nuisance to white residents be removed to Fraser Island. Meston then submitted a comprehensive report to the Home Secretary. In this he addressed matters of population mix, mission buildings and available employment. He also advised that those residents not employed should be sent to work on the mainland. Finally, he suggested that the residents avoid any action that offended Dr Smith.[45] Home Secretary Tozer replied, 'Provided the Aboriginals referred to are willing to be removed I approve of the recommendations subject to Dr. Smith's concurrence. I do not however sanction unnecessary interference with this Aboriginal Community, nor constraint to be imposed for purposes of removal'.[46]

A year earlier, Tozer had decided to 'transfer all Maryborough blacks to Frazer's Island'.[47] He may have been influenced by Meston's opinion that 'the settlement lives as peaceably as a white community would live in the same environment'.[48] Meston's opinions carried weight. He

had produced a number of reports and was considered by many to be an expert on Aborigines.[49]

In 1904 Walter Roth, an Oxford-educated medical practitioner and ethnologist who had been Northern Protector, replaced Meston in the combined positions of Northern and Southern Protector.[50] In the following year, the reserve was re-proclaimed from a 'Reserve for a Mission Station', to a 'Reserve for the use of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the State, Myora' (Fig 4).[51] In the same year the Government proclaimed 'Regulations for Maintaining Discipline and Good Order Upon a Reserve', which reinforced the 1897 Act.[52]

With these changes, Roth made his first visit to Myora Mission. He described the people at the mission as different from those on other missions in Queensland: 'They did not consider themselves Aboriginals, they did not want any protection, they wished their European friends and others to visit them at holiday time, they objected to the land they were on being a reserve, and they wished to remain unmolested as they were'.[53]

Roth favoured a non-interventionist policy for Myora, suggesting that the residents should be allowed to work out their own destiny.[54] Walter Roth resigned in 1906. The position was filled by Richard Howard until 1913, when John Bleakley began his long term in office which covered the remaining 27 years of the Myora Mission. He maintained a policy of assimilation, removing children whom he classed as 'quadroons and octoroons', from their parents and incarcerating them in Industrial Mission Homes.[55] There he hoped they would be absorbed into the white race, 'learning to think white as well as talk white'.[56] Bleakley was prepared to negotiate with Myora Elders, Sam Rollands and Mabel Brown when they appealed to him personally. In 1929, after he received letters from Rollands and Mabel Brown, he negotiated with his superiors to save the Myora Mission school from closure, arguing that the school ' met the needs of this community of old Moreton Bay families'.[57] In 1933, Protector Mrs E. Sullivan, reported on Myora Mission. The school, and the teacher, Alice Morrison, met with her approval. However, she noted with displeasure of seeing 'young girls ranging from three-quarter black to quadroon, disporting themselves at Dunwich'. Her final comment was that 'the birth rate on the Island is certainly not on the decrease as far as the Aboriginal population is concerned'.[58] The fear of miscegenation was ever present. Archibald Meston advocated that Aboriginal women be segregated from white men as 'the only effective way of stopping all further supplies of half-castes'.[59] This was impossible at Myora where the residents mixed socially with the white population, many of whom were already extended family.[60]

The Resident Superintendent was next in the hierarchy controlling missions and settlements. This position was filled only sporadically at Myora. After the closure of the dormitories in 1896 most supervision of the mission was performed by the medical superintendents at the nearby Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. An exception occurred when the school teacher held the position.[61] Medical practitioners held the most powerful position on Stradbroke Island. As well as in total control over the inmates of the Asylum, they were the major employers of Aboriginal labour from Myora and the Dunwich area. They experienced difficulties in controlling the Myora community, while at the same time performing the onerous duties associated with running the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[62] In comparison, on reserves like Palm Island where isolation and incarceration were practised, total control rested with the superintendent.[63]

Dr Patrick Smith was appointed superintendent in 1897 and held the position until his death in 1900.[64] His replacement, teacher William Scott, was not appointed superintendent until 1906. His tenure was brief, as he died in January 1906.[65] Myora was again without a superintendent for six years until Dr Linford Row was appointed in February 1912.[66]

Linford Row appears, from his correspondence, to have been mild-mannered and interested in the Myora residents. In 1915, Row became embroiled in a disagreement with the Chief Protector's office concerning blankets that were of such poor quality that he refused to issue them. The dispute led to his resignation as mission superintendent.[67] Before he resigned, Row had sanctioned the distribution of cast-off furniture from the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum to Myora. The Chief Protector's Office disapproved. Realising the Aboriginal Gang's value to the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, he met criticism with the comment: 'If the question of colour is to be made a bone of contention at this Institution I fear that considerable trouble will arise'.[68]

For seven years Myora was without an official superintendent. However, the medical superintendents at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, J. H. Macarthur, James Booth-Clarkson and Frederick Challands, corresponded with the Chief

FIG. 4. Undated photograph of the Myora Mission. (John Oxley Library)

Protector's Office concerning the requirements, and the behaviour of the Myora residents.[69]

In 1921, Philip Bensted was sent as teacher to the Mission. A year later he became superintendent. He took his duties seriously. Soon after he was appointed he enquired about an increase in salary commensurate with his greater responsibility. Six years later he was still waiting.[70] He did everything in his power to improve conditions for the residents of the Mission, 'his people'. His continuous badgering of the Chief Protector's Office appears to have had the opposite effect. Despite his pleading for two years to have the reserve fenced, nothing was done until his replacement arrived in 1930.[71]

When Philip Bensted resigned in 1929, Chief Protector John Bleakley decided that 'the small native village at Myora was in need of benevolent supervision'.[72] He chose a supervisor (rather than superintendent) a man 'who had given the best years of his life to the natives'.[73] Robert Morrison was a member of the Salvation Army and nearly 70 years of age when he took up the position. He had long experience on Aboriginal reserves, having been farm foreman at both Deebing Creek and Cherbourg.[74]

Morrison harboured few grand plans for Myora Mission. His daughter, Alice, took over the teaching duties and also most of her father's correspondence. According to some of his past pupils, Morrison was a gentle, kind man. He used to sing, but he had a croaky voice, 'it made us dark kids laugh' (Charlotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996). Real authority lay with Dr Frederick Turnbull at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, who saw the Aboriginal population as a necessary evil and a supply of cheap labour .[75]

The school teachers were last in the line of command. At Myora they were usually answerable to three masters; the Senior Inspector of the Department of Public Instruction, the Chief Protector of Aborigines and the Medical Superintendent of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. In most government settlements the school was the sole responsibility of the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

The proximity of the teacher's residence to the Mission houses meant that the teachers were not isolated from the community. Philip Bensted, for

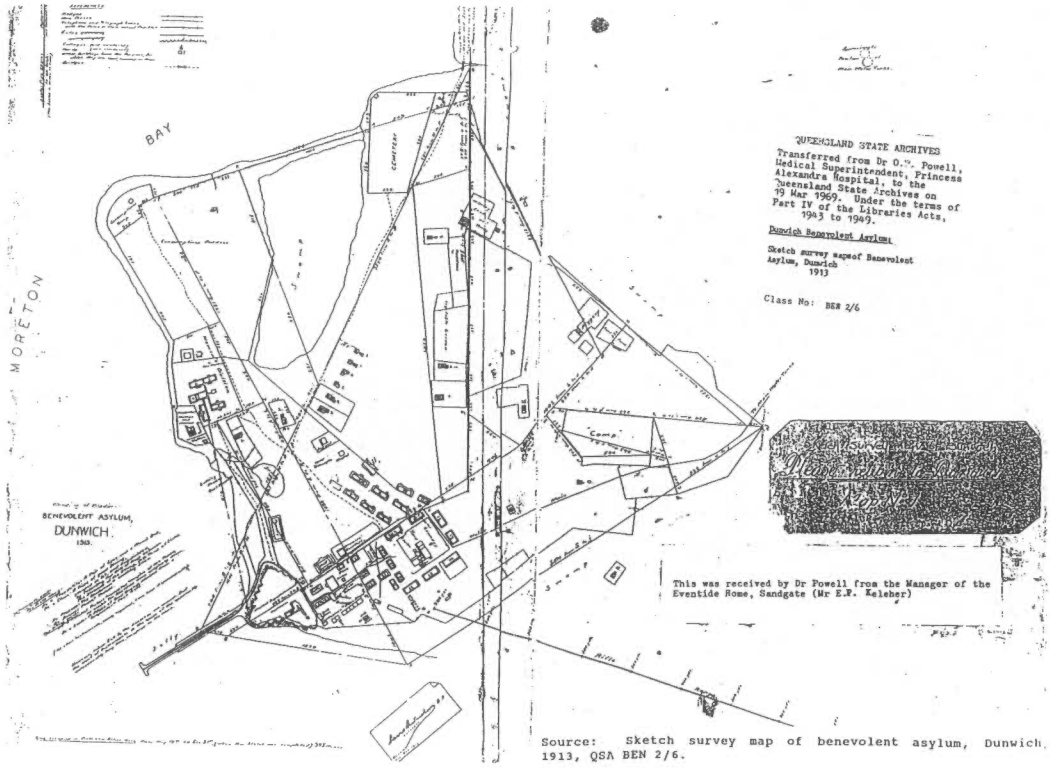

FIG. 5. Dunwich Benevolent Asylum: Sketch survey map 1913. (BEN 2/6, QSA).

example, when not teaching worked in one of the old dormitories. From there he could hear the Myora residents, as well as their friends from Dunwich, talking and playing in the school grounds.[76] Despite its lack of authority, the position of school teacher at Myora was important. Compared to teachers on reserves with a large and permanent staff, the Myora teacher was the only white resident on the Mission, and the first contact if there were any problems. Apart from the powerful cultural influence of the Aboriginal Elders, the teacher exerted the most influence on the community.

Although Myora residents were subject to three tiers of control, continuous interaction with European society shaped attitudes to authority. Chief Protector Walter Roth admitted in 1906 that administering the Act at Myora was, with its 'close association for years past with Europeans ... a matter of supreme difficulty'. In comparison, he found Aboriginal People in north Queensland isolated from white influence much more amenable to control by the Chief Protectors and mission staff.[77]

SHELTER

Despite three levels of control over the Myora Mission, residents lived in houses best described as 'unregulated'. There were only three government buildings: the large building which housed two dormitories and the school, the teacher's house and a two-roomed cottage.[78] However, some European housing was already in place prior to the establishment of the Mission. The Quandamooka People had been exposed to European housing since 1825, when the pilot station at Amity Point was established. A painting by Captain Owen Stanley shows one large and three small buildings with vertical timber walls, thatched roofs and well constructed chimneys at the station. Three years later a fortified storage

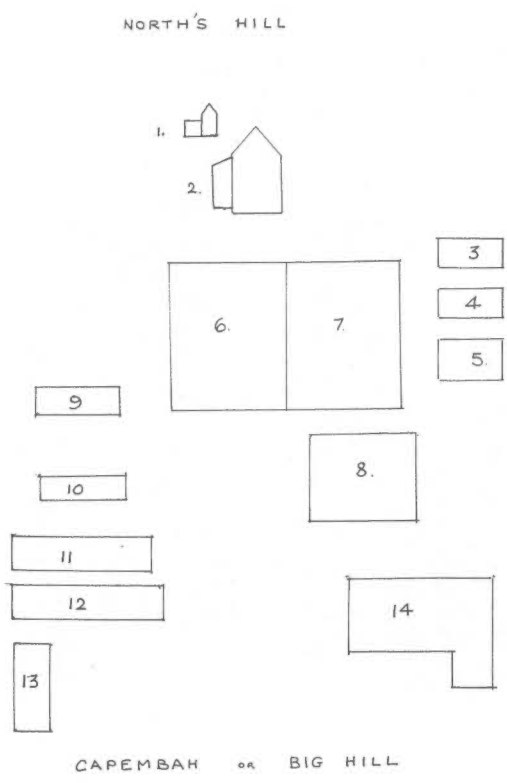

FIG. 6. Ground plan with key to buildings on Myora Reserve. 1. Charlie Moreton or Mookin; 2. Gurriwirribah and Maudie; 3. John Lifou and Dung-lee-bah with orchard garden and tropical fruit; 4. Mingelly; 5. Eendelly or Mary Compeigne; 6. Jack Newfong and Maggie with orchard garden; 7. George Finnock an Kindarra; 8. Sydney Rollands; 9. Peter Graham; 10. Rose Martin or Nu-ning-ha; 11. Myora Mission School; 12. Teacher's residence; 13. Myora Aboriginal cemetery; 14. Sam Rollands and Miboo with orchard Garden. (Fisher files, nd. MS 830700/8, UQFL. Redrawn by author)

depot and barracks had been built at Dunwich.[79] The substantial buildings comprising the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum were erected in 1866 (Fig. 5).[80]

At Myora and nearby, a variety of structures were constructed. Some small wooden dwellings had a single outer wall of horizontal boards of recycled timber, tin and bark roofing (Figs 4, 7 & 8). Less sophisticated structures were made of bark and saplings (Figs 2 & 4). The houses were clustered together on cleared ground surrounded by tall trees with Big Hill (Capembah) overlooking the mission (Figs 4 & 6). The village must have presented a welcome scene to the QAPA missionaries on their arrival from Bribie Island in 1892. In contrast, housing at Yarrabah Mission was merely 'a tent, a small shed of sapling walls and iron roof and an unfinished two-roomed cottage'.[81]

Neat bark houses impressed Archibald Meston in 1898. One family had built a two-roomed cottage of dressed pine, with iron roof, and painted the inside walls.[82] Neither the Department of Public Instruction nor the Chief Protector's Office would take responsibility for maintenance. As a result the small neat houses which Welsby had observed in 1907 had deteriorated by the 1920's.

When teacher, Philip Bensted, arrived at Myora he complained to the Chief Protector that the dwellings were sub-standard. He considered that most of the Myora men could repair their houses or build anew if second-hand weatherboards from the Queensland State sawmills and second-hand corrugated iron for the roofs were sent over.[83] His observation was correct. The Quandamooka People had been building their own European-style dwellings for over 50 years. Sam Rollands, Charlie Moreton and Jack Newfong built and regularly repaired their houses.[84]

House design was eclectic (Figs 4, 7 & 8). During the 1920's, Grannie Miboo lived in a garage shed of two rooms made out of flattened kerosene tins, with a bark roof. Percy and Agnes Query and their large family lived in a 20x16 ft, two-roomed, unlined house of galvanised iron and timber. (Phyllis Donovan, pers. comm., 1994 & Charlotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996).

Philip Bensted regularly demanded building materials from government bureaucrats to improve poor housing conditions. Eventually, the Under Secretary visited Myora and promised the residents materials from St Helena Penal establishment, abandoned in 1921.[85] Bensted followed up the matter, reminding the Chief Protector that 'the people here were definitely promised iron and timber by the Under Secretary and he would be glad to get it before the cold weather sets in'.[86]

After the materials arrived Bensted sent a request to the Chief Protector's Office for nails as Charlie Moreton and Percy Query were going to build a new house. The Chief Protector's Office was not prepared to supply the nails until the money arrived. The two men would not send the money without receiving the nails. A game of 'cat

FIG. 7. An example of Myora housing. (John Oxley Library)

and mouse' ensued between the teacher and the Chief Protector, the former demanding the nails, the latter 12/6 in advance. After three month's wrangling, Bensted pointed out to the Chief Protector that the houses belonged to the government and the nails should be supplied free.[87]The houses were eventually completed and were of such good quality that they were considered fit for removal to One Mile, between Myora and Dunwich, in 1941, after the Mission was closed.[88]

For those Myora residents who moved temporarily to One Mile to be closer to work, conditions were deplorable. Many were housed in tents without sanitation. The people at Myora lived in houses with sanitary facilities, although these had to be improved after a serious outbreaks of hookworm.[89] In 1921, Doctor Booth-Clarkson had notified Bleakley that 'proper sanitary precautions should be carried out'.[90] No work was undertaken to improve the outside closets until 1925 when £25 was deducted from the Aboriginal Property Protection Account.[91] Finally the closets were erected by Sam Rolands in the same year.[92]

Often, bureaucratic bungling rather than a lack of materials was responsible for delays in providing the residents with houses. Philip Bensted began negotiations to get Rose Martin a new cottage. Rose was eligible for a new house as her son Richard, who had been killed in France during the First World War, had lodged his deferred pay with the Chief Protector's Office. (Rose Borey, Richard Martin's niece, pers. comm., 1994).[93] Problems arose when building materials, left at Dunwich for months, were found to be incomplete. Finally Rose's old house was demolished and the materials used for the new building.[94]

Myora's housing offered opportunities for individuality. Family housing at the Cherbourg Settlement, was by contrast, much more regulated and uniform. There, houses consisted of two roomed dwellings fenced off from each other. Rita Huggins described them as 'little cells, all next to each other in rows.[95]

A number of wells at Moongalba provided a permanent source of pure water for the Mission. In 1926, when Jack Newfong dug the family's

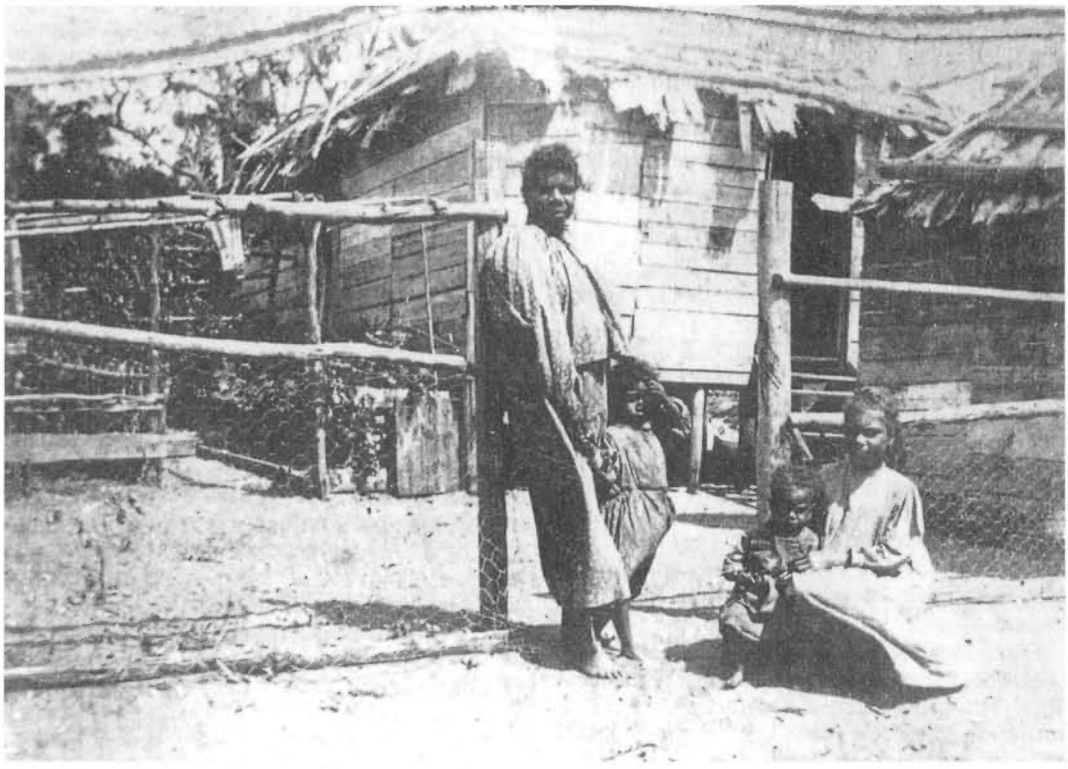

FIG. 8. An example of Myora housing. (John Oxley Library)

well, it was 15ft. deep, shored with timber and roofed with corrugated iron.[96] Getting the day's water supply was part of the daily routine and an occasion for social interaction. Margaret Iselin, lived with her family on the Mission. She recalls filling a kerosene tin from the well twice a day, as a child in the 1930's. This meant a scramble down the grassy banks to reach the steps at the side. She also remembered Myora women clothes washing near the wells, while taking care not to foul them with soapy water (Margaret Iselin, pers. comm., 1994). Having water tapped to the door was not necessarily an advantage. Cherbourg Settlement had a reticulated water supply but it was drawn, untreated, from Barambah Creek . This was used upstream by grazing cattle, and for swimming by the settlement's inmates. Often it was unfit to drink.[97]

Despite shortcomings in the quality of housing, parents were able to live with their children, not segregated in dormitories. The placement of children in dormitories was a common occurrence on missions and settlements. At Yarrabah Mission, near Cairns, Ernest Gribble persuaded parents place their children in dormitories. If children were not surrendered, they were denied schooling. Girls who remained unmarried might spend a lifetime in the dormitory.[97] At Taroom Reserve the girls' dormitory was surrounded by a high barbed wire fence and a padlocked gate.[99] Similar conditions operated at Cherbourg Settlement, where Nellie Sheridan was placed in the dormitory in 1920, aged 10. She could visit her mother on one day each month but she had to be returned to the dormitory by 5. 00 pm.[100] Ruth Hegarty remained a 'dormitory girl' until she married in 1951. She recalled sharing a room with 39 others. Hegarty maintained that she suffered a loss of identity from being classified 'a dormitory girl', and that this resulted in difficulties in white society. (Ruth Hegarty, pers. comm., 1993).

FOOD

The people at Myora benefited from 'natural' food available on Stradbroke Island and from its waters. In 1823, Thomas Pamphlet reported the Aborigines at Myora supplied him and his fellow

castaways with large quantities of whiting and an edible fern-root called 'dingowa'.[101] In 1843 James Backhouse observed Quandamooka women preparing roots for food. They were roasted, and then beaten to soften the fibres. He described the taste as 'like that of a waxy potato, but more gelatinous'. He also noticed shoals of mullet in Moreton Bay as well as porpoises and sharks, and that the waters abounded with oysters.[102] In the 1840's John 'Tinker' Campbell reported Aborigines using porpoises to herd shoals of fish into nets.[103]

The Dugong had always been part of the culture of the Quandamooka People.[104] According to Charlotte Richards the meat was strong and cut like beef, and the oil was used like a liniment for colds (Charlotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996). The oil was also issued to missions and settlements for the treatment of tuberculosis.[105] According to Stacia Tripcony, the people did not over-exploit the Dugong. Quandamooka People took what they needed, between May and August. [106]

Fernandez Gonzales commenced employing local Aborigines to net specimens of Dugong in 1859. The processing of Dugong for sale was well-established by 1892, when Thomas Welsby set up a boiling-down works near Myora.[107] In 1893, regulations were enacted to control the catching and smoking process. Licenses were issued only to fishermen who had a smoke-house and equipment for rendering the fat to oil.[108]

As well as traditional sea-foods the Quandamooka People had basic European food-stuffs distributed to them by the Medical Superintendent at the Asylum, as Local Protector. Myora fared well compared with many missions and settlements which were expected to survive on Archibald Meston's recommended diet of 'threepence a day in maizemeal and molasses, with a little fish or meat occasionally'.[109] Myora was guaranteed oyster beds which encompassed: 'the length of the shore-line at High Water Mark and extending seawards about 5 or 10 chains to Low Water Mark'.[110] When sea-foods were in over-supply, the community traded the catch for 'white-man's tucker'.[111]

In 1907, Tom Welsby considered that 'no human being can or should starve on Stradbroke Island'.[112] The residents also cultivated European fruits and vegetables. Sam Rollands and Miboo had 'eleven orange trees, nine mango trees, and bananas, lemons, guavas and sweet potatoes'. Jack Lifou and Dunglebah, as well as Jack Newfong and Kindarra, had an 'orchard garden'.[113]

Ted Ruska, a labourer at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, was partly paid in rations. His daughter, Oodgeroo, considered these were 'not enough to keep a bandicoot alive'.[114] Bensted may have aggravated this situation. He contended that the Myora residents had first claim where rations and food were involved.[115] This practice may have discriminated against the Ruska family who lived at Dunwich and whose children did not attend Myora Mission School. Nevertheless, they received meat, rice, sago, and tapioca, food which Oodgeroo said the seven children hated.[116]

Inmates of many Missions and settlements did not complain about lack of variety. They worried about obtaining sufficient food to survive. Mathilda Hollingsworth, who arrived at the Yarrabah Mission in 1915, said they were always hungry, and, at times, so desperate they would make a soup by boiling up mango leaves. Twenty years later the menu was still inadequate: 'Breakfast was porridge and a slice of bread; lunch was stew on a slice of bread lunch and dinner was a slice of bread with jam or syrup butter was unknown'.[117] At Cherbourg Settlement the rations were often insufficient to maintain health. Nellie Sheridan, a dormitory girl during the 1920's, stated the diet consisted of 'damper, brownie, pea soup and molasses'.[118] Clive Martin, Aboriginal activist and Myora resident during the 1930's, wrote to the *Australian Abo Call* in June 1938, describing the food at Cherbourg Reserve as very poor: 'the little children at present have not enough food'.[119] In contrast, Myora residents had access to a plentiful supply of nutritious food to supplement rations, which at times were more than adequate.[120]

The Myora residents were fortunate to have escaped the zealous attentions of Missionaries such as Harold Rowan at Lockhart River Mission. In line with John Bleakley's policy of self-sufficiency, Rowan was determined to 'industrialise' the Mission. He told the inmates that 'nothing to sell means no food or goods. They won't starve, but will most likely be uncomfortable hungry for a few days'.[121]

The rations were not supposed to be luxurious, but basic foodstuffs. Nevertheless, Phyllis Donovan recalled the weekly rations at Myora during the 1920's and 1930's: ' flour, sugar, tea, rice, porridge, bread and syrup, as well as a leg of mutton and some corned meat'. Owing to poor pasture land on Stradbroke Island, milk supplies to the Mission were often inadequate (Phyllis Donovan, 1994, pers. comm.). [122]

TABLE 1. Weekly ration comparison between Cilento's recommended rations and rations issued to the Landers and Rollands families.

Suggested weeks rations for a man, wife and two children	Landers family (1 adult, 5 children)	Rollands family (3 adults, 5 children)
2 lbs meat: liver, tripe, brains etc.; 5lbs mutton or beef	9lbs meat	20lbs meat
1/4lb cheese		
2 1/2lbs white flour; 2lbs wholemeal flour;	6 lbs flour	10lbs flour
1/2 dozen eggs (when cheap)		
2lbs rolled oats	2lbs rolled oats	3lbs meal (rolled oats)
1 1/2lbs split peas, 2- 3lbs onions, 1lb haricot beans	8lbs vegetables	20lbs vegetables
3lbs sugar	7lbs sugar	10lbs sugar
1lb jam	1 tin jam	2 tins jam
1 tin treacle or Golden Syrup	1 tin syrup (treacle)	
2 lbs dripping		
1/2- 1lb butter (according to price)	2lbs butter	2lbs (pounds) butter
10 1/2 pints milk	2 pints milk	5 pints milk
1/4 lb tea	1/2lb tea	1 1/4lb tea
	4lb loaves bread	17 loaves bread
		2lbs rice
	1lb salt	
		1lb sago
		5 tins condensed milk
	1 tin kerosene	2 quarts kerosene
	1/2 bar soap	2 bars soap
		2 candles
		3 dozen matches

During the 1930's Depression years, Myora residents were well-fed by general standards of the time. This is illustrated by comparing Dr Phyllis Cilento's booklet, *Square meals for the family*, in which she listed a recommended week's rations for a man, wife and two children, with rations issued to the Landers and Rollands families (Table 1).[123]

The cost of issuing rations to Myora became a burden during the depression. Families where the breadwinner was employed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum and received rations, caused a constant headache for the Chief Protector's Office .With costs for Myora rations reaching an average of between £150 to £200 per annum, the Health and Home Affairs Department, which controlled the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, called for an investigation. However, neither the medical superintendent nor the Chief Protector could agree. Dr Frederick Turnbull was in favour of abolishing the system of issuing a portion of the men's wages in rations. This was understandable as it placed extra responsibility on the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. On the other hand, the Chief Protector's office wished to avoid increasing the cash component of the wages, arguing that the men will 'have more ready money to indulge in gambling'. To support his argument, Turnbull contended that the men advised him they had no use for such items as oatmeal, rice, sago, flour and jam, or matches. It was also reported that each family received 12kg. of sugar per week.[124]

TABLE 2. 'Itemised list of rations as issued to the coloured workers at Dunwich, shewing [sic] price charged and the cost of same if purchased from Dunwich retail store'. (M. Daly, assistant manager Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, to CPA. 22 February 1938, A/58789 [309], QSA). Prices are given in shillings (/) and pence (d.).

Item	Ration Price	Dunwich Price
Butter	1/4d. lb.	1/6d. lb.
Flour	2d. lb	2d. lb
Jam	5d. Lb	5d. lb
Milk (condensed)	6d. tin	8d. tin
Rice	2d. lb	3d. lb
Salt	1d. lb	1d. lb
Sugar	3d. lb	4d. lb
Tea	1/6d. lb	1/10d. lb
Sago	2d. lb	3d. lb
Rolled oats	2d. lb	3d. lb
Soap	6d. bar	7d. bar
Syrup	6d. tin	7d. tin
Matches	5d. dozen	6d. dozen
Kerosene	4d. quart	5qt. quart

The matter of wages versus rations arose again in 1938, when the men were sufficiently disgruntled to send a deputation to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, E. M. (Ned) Hanlon.[125] He asked the Chief Protector if it would be more profitable to the government if rations were replaced by allowing the families to buy at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum's retail store.[126] The assistant manager of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, M. Daley, furnished a list which showed that the store had a mark-up on all items compared to the ration schedule (Table 2).[127] Distribution of rations continued. According to many

FIG. 9. Myora Mission School and pupils 1893-1896. (John Oxley Library)

residents who had been on the Mission during the 1920's and 1930's, rations were issued while the bread-winner was employed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[128] In 1931, at the height of the Depression, the Medical Superintendent Dr Frederick Challands was willing to pay Myora residents wages and rations.[129] Every effort was made to reduce running costs at Myora. Measures included preventing non-residents receiving extra Myora rations or 'eating the rations given to other inmates'.[130] In 1926, Philip Bensted advised Protector Mrs Sullivan that he had drawn rations for Cissie Walls, but she would be spending the remainder of her holidays at Bribie Island to keep expenses down at Myora.[131]

Bensted's correspondence with the Chief Protector's Office over such matters gives the impression of a bureaucratic nightmare. One incident involved a resident Mabel Roy whose friend, Eilene Edwards, visited her 'in time for midday dinner on Wednesday last, and left after midday dinner on Sunday last'. Bensted was expected to collect 10s from Edwards, the rate for one weeks lodging. He objected to this, as the woman had not stayed at the Mission for a full week.[132]

CLOTHING

The first Quandamooka person to wear European clothing was probably a crewman named Dicker, who was outfitted when he was employed by the Amity Point pilot, James Hexton, in 1827.[133]

Blankets had been distributed since European settlement in Australia. The quantity and quality depended upon the generosity of state governments and the Chief Protectors. In July, 1903, Archibald Meston boasted ' in the present and past two years I have saved £900 in the blankets alone. The change from double blankets to the rug will show a further profit'. In the same month, he refused Myora's request for more blankets as 'we are on the verge of summer'.[134] Walter Roth was more generous when he visited the Mission in 1905. Although he refused residents' requests for clothing, he offered to forward four pairs of blankets.[135]

FIG. 10. Children at the Myora Mission, 9 June 1896. (John Oxley Library)

The provision of blankets and clothing was a tedious part of running the Myora Mission. Reserves such as Cherbourg Settlement and Yarrabah Mission, held clothing supplies in a bulk store and issued them according to regulations. There was no store on the Myora Mission, but individual orders were sent by the teacher to the Chief Protector's Office in Brisbane. Items were supplied by either the State Store or from retail shops. As many of the clothes were for growing children, by the time they arrived at the Mission, some clothes were too small and had to be returned. Some orders were mislaid and others 'disappeared' in transit, leaving the waiting recipients in dire need.

At many institutions where total control was exercised, the inmates were issued with uniforms. The imposition of uniformity, whether in housing, food or clothing, is one way to isolate people from the rest of society.[137] Church missions usually relied on the goodwill of parishioners to clothe the inmates. Ernest Gribble, at Yarrabah Mission, sent regular requests for both ready-made clothing and dress materials, preferably to be made to his own design.[137] In December, 1918, *The Presbyterian Outlook* reported some embarrassment at the Aurukun Mission when donations were not forthcoming and visitors arrived to find the children 'clothed in sunshine only'.[138]

When Myora was under the control of the QAPA, the children wore a distinct uniform: long dark coloured dresses for the girls; knee-length breeches, long-sleeved jackets, ties and Eton caps for the boys (Fig. 9). The apparent high quality of the clothing is surprising considering the financial difficulties that plagued the Association. In 1896, with the demise of the QAPA, the standard of clothing diminished. Nevertheless, Myora children (Fig. 10) did not appear as poorly clad and deprived as those on the Mapoon Mission in 1895 (Fig. 11). Myora residents were issued with warm clothing in winter, as well as dress material for those women with sewing machines.[139] It was different for Ruth Hegarty, a dormitory girl at Cherbourg Settlement. She recalled that the girls owned nothing. Daily, ' to get clean clothes we just picked up what we could, any size, first in best dressed'. Hegarty described the arrival of new clothing ' like a Myer's sale, only no choice'. The dresses were all in the same design and print material' (Ruth Hegarty, pers. comm. 1994). Fred Clay, an inmate on Palm Island, could not forget the hessian trousers that were so 'bloody uncomfortable'.[140] A similar situation existed at Yarrabah Mission when Mathilda Hollingsworth arrived in 1915. No clothes were available and girls were given hessian bags to wash and wear.[141]

The cost of clothing issued to the Mission residents was deducted from the savings bank accounts of those in employment. Others, such as children who were state wards, were given blankets and clothing immediately.[142] Whether the clothing was free or paid for by the residents there appears to have been no difference between style,

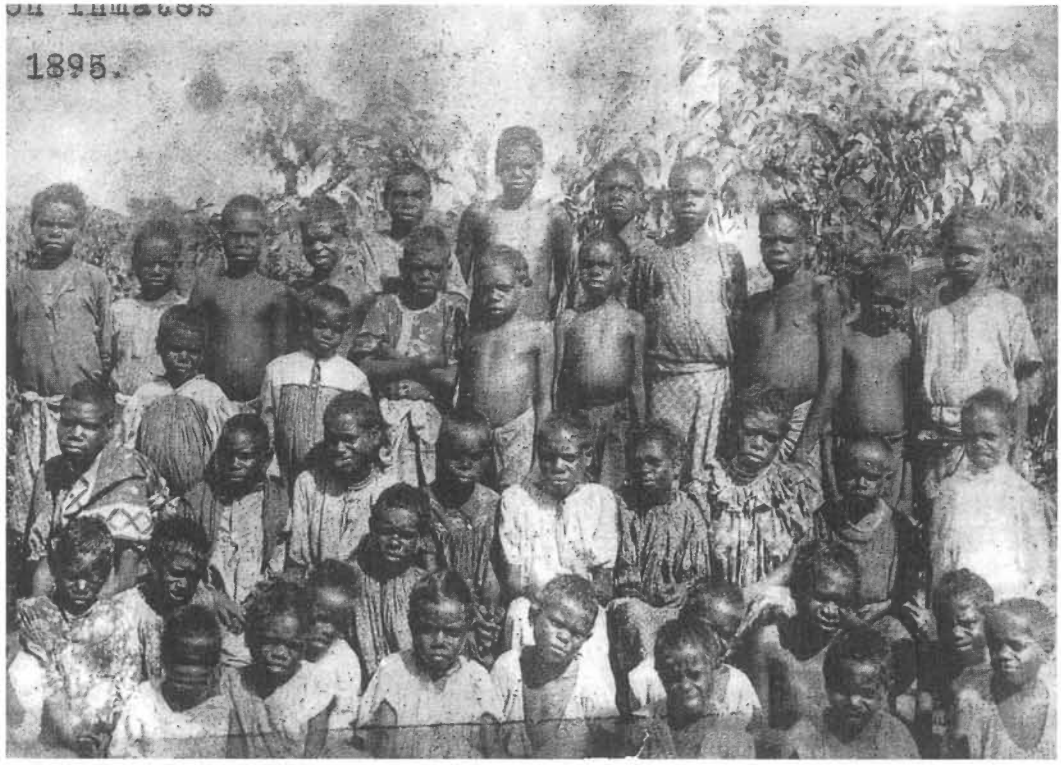

FIG. 11. Mapoon, 1895. (Queensland Museum)

or quality. As well as being reasonably well clad, Myora residents apparently retained individuality and dignity.

There was swift reaction when the residents felt discriminated against in regard to clothing. In 1932, Lavinia Moreton felt aggrieved when she was refused the Commonwealth Government's Baby Bonus (Fig. 12). This was a non-means tested sum paid to mothers to assist with the cost of baby clothes. Lavinia's application was refused because she was Aboriginal. She refused to accept the decision and began negotiations through the Female Protector Mrs Sullivan, to overturn the decision on the grounds that her sister Louisa had received the benefit.[143] Although the Commonwealth maternity allowance had been available since 1912, it had been ' routinely and unlawfully usurped since 1928 on missions and settlements'.[144]

Mabel Brown wrote directly to the Chief Protector's office with her requirements. As well as her own son, Mabel cared for her sister's four children, including twins, after their mother died in childbirth in 1927.[145] There were many requests and returns of clothing from Mabel Brown. In 1931, Chief Protector Bleakley, in a letter to the teacher, Alice Morrison, questioned Mabel Brown's Christmas clothing order as ' not a little extravagant'.[146] Nevertheless, the following year, he assured Morrison, that ' the Department was prepared to give every assistance to this woman and the children'.[147] Mabel Brown's request for the late Daisy Brown's twins, and for Mrs Rollands, dated 11 December 1931 was for:

> Edmund and Eilene Brown: aged four years: 2 pairs boy's knickers; 2 shirt waists; 1 boy's shirt; 1 boy's sweater; 2 girl's frocks; 2 princess slips; 2 pairs bloomers; 2 girl's singlets.
>
> Mrs Rollands: 1 E. O. S. [extra outsize] singlet; 1 E.O.S. Bloomers; 6 yards *Linfast* [dress material)].

It was inevitable that Alice Morrison became involved in the ordering or returning of clothing for the residents. Orders for large families, such as the Kinas and Moretons, could involve Alice in pages of jumbled and tedious detail. Clothing orders sent to Mrs Sullivan at the Protectors of-

fice from Alice Morrison between 22 and 29 December, 1930 were:

Ordered by Mrs Lavinia Moreton:4 yards of *Tobralco,* [dress material]; 2 singlets.
Ordered by Mrs Roberts: 1 pair knickers; 1 shirt; 1 shirtwaist.
Received by the Kina family: 4 pairs knickers [boy's shorts]; 4 shirtwaists.
Returned: 3 pairs knickers; 2 shirtwaists (A/58788 [03061], QSA).

Sam Rollands, was a special case. As the native policeman, he was outfitted in a tracker's uniform, including a khaki uniform for summer and serge for the winter.[148]

EDUCATION

The Myora Mission School, which operated from 1892 to 1940, was much more than a place of learning. It was the seat of authority, the venue for social events and the hub of the Aboriginal Community (Figs 13, 16 & 17). Unlike schools on missions and settlements where the pupils were removed from their culture, at Myora the 'Grannies' and the 'Aunties' were no more than a stone's throw away.

Myora differed from other Aboriginal reserves and missions in having qualified teachers appointed by the Department of Public Instruction, not the Chief Protector's Office.[149] Nevertheless, the education offered was limited to grade four level. It followed Walter Roth's edict that the focus should be 'discipline, obedience and routine'.[150] Rose Borey, who lived away from the Mission and attended Dunwich State School, considered that Myora pupils received an inferior education (Rose Borey, pers. comm. 1994.). According to Chief Protector Bleakley, teachers at reserves and missions were chosen for their experience in rural schools. The curriculum offered was inclined towards manual training on the premise that Aborigines could not aspire to more than menial jobs.[151] Teachers were also expected to act as Aboriginal protectors, and be 'jacks-of-all-trades'.

When the Myora Mission school opened in 1892 there were 20 pupils, some of whom may come from the Queensland Aboriginal Protection Association's mission on Bribie Island. Enrolments never passed 27 per year, with 11 the average. This was preferable to the crowded conditions at Cherbourg where, in 1909, Augusta Lipscombe was instructing 88 pupils. In the same year, at Myora, Sophia Bowers had 12 pupils.[152]

Numbers at Myora Mission School remained relatively static until the Dunwich Provisional school opened in 1904 and many of the fairer - skinned pupils were 'culled' from the predominantly dark enrolment at Myora.[153] It was presumed that lighter students were brighter and the authorities were surprised when this proved a fallacy.[154] Not all the pupils who attended Myora Mission School lived on the Mission. Some were from One Mile, others from Amity Point. Most 'outsiders' boarded with extended family mem-

9 November 1932, A/58789 [7816], QSA.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

MATERNITY ALLOWANCE OFFICE,

Brisbane, 24th November 1932.

To Mrs. Livy Moreton,
C/o Lady Bowen Hospital,
BRISBANE

I have to inform you that your claim for a maternity allowance has been rejected on the ground that Section 6(2) of the Maternity Allowance Act provides as follows:-

"Women who are aliens or are ABORIGINAL NATIVES of Australia, Papua, or the Islands of the Pacific, shall not be paid a maternity allowance."

(P.A.McGUIRE)
Deputy Commissioner of Maternity Allowances.

FIG. 12. Commonwealth of Australia Maternity Allowance Office form sent to Mrs Lavinia Moreton regarding her ineligibility for Baby Bonus: 9 November 1932. (A/58789 [7816], QSA)

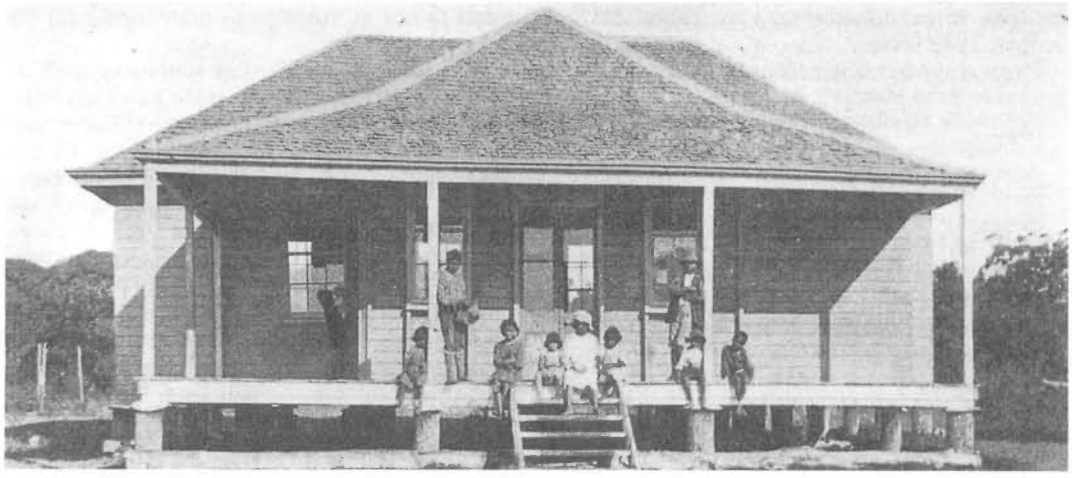

FIG 13. 'Myora state school, c. 1920's'. (John Oxley Library)

bers. They were all charged one shilling per night board to cover the cost of rations.[155]

During the 48 years that Myora Mission School operated there were seven different teachers. Some served up to 10 years. The first teacher, Atkinson Dunnington, transferred to Currigee on South Stradbroke Island in 1896.[156] Archibald Meston was favourably impressed by William Scott in 1898, as Scott had supplied his own teaching materials. This appealed to Meston's commitment to reduce administration costs.[157] When Senior Inspector W. Gripp visited the school in 1917, he considered the 11 pupils were 'well-behaved and apply themselves quietly, diligently and honestly to their tasks'. A level of 70% had been reached in most subjects, including reading, composition, spelling and arithmetic. Gripp also noted that the school library contained 185 books.[158] In comparison, when District Inspector Earnshaw visited Cherbourg in 1917, he concluded that the school was a failure in every respect.[159]

In 1921, Philip Lawrence Bensted became the last teacher to be appointed to Myora Mission School by the Department of Public Instruction. Bensted was admitted to the teaching service in 1915, holding teaching posts in small country schools at Magee Creek, Smithfield and Moorang.[160] Bensted proved to be different from his predecessors. While holding the position of superintendent as well as teacher, he became involved in every aspect of the Mission. He made an effort to improve the interior of the schoolroom by hanging a number of his ' valuable old prints, some old Aboriginal weapons and tappa cloth', on the walls.[161] Bensted was a Buddhist who had little sympathy for visiting evangelists and did not believe that the Myora residents needed a 'saviour'. He explained to the Chief Protector his policy was 'freedom to all religions and help to none'.[162]

Within six months of taking up his position in January 1921, Bensted had embarked on what was to become a crusade to improve the school grounds and to fence the property against human and animal trespassers. By July, he had planted six trees in the school grounds and erected tree guards to protect them from wandering livestock, reporting that local Aboriginal labour could keep the costs to a minimum.[163] A few months later he again wrote to the Chief Protector's Office attaching a measured drawing of the ground plan of the school, and the position of the proposed fence (Fig. 14). Within 12 months the fencing was in place.[164] This alacrity is explained by the fact that the cost of the work was deducted from the Aborigines Property Protection Account.[165] Thus the Myora residents unknowingly paid for fencing the school grounds.

The fact that Myora Mission did not fit comfortably into the category of missions and settlements meant that three different government departments were involved in maintenance. Firstly, the reserve was under the control of the Department of Lands (Fig 15). Secondly, between 1892 and 1930 the Mission's teachers were supplied by the Department of Public Instruction.[166] Thirdly, in 1930 it was discovered

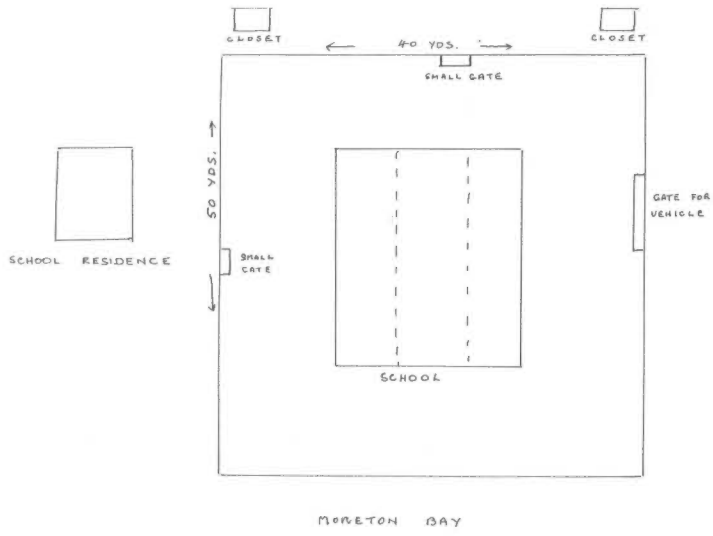

FIG. 14. Ground plan of Myora Mission School and teacher's residence drawn by teacher Philip Bensted. (Attached to A/58786 [5194], QSA. Redrawn by author)

that school buildings had been erected by the Home Department in 1892, and they were not the responsibility of the Department of Public Instruction.[167] Probably as a result of these anomalies the school buildings were allowed literally to fall apart.

When District Inspector W. Earnshaw visited Myora in late 1923, he concluded that overall the condition of the school was 'very fairly satisfactory'. He commented that the ages of the children, as well as the time they spent in each class was excessive compared with state schools.[168] This was unavoidable as Aboriginal children, like white children, were required by law to attend school from ages five to 13 or 14, although the education offered went to only grade four. However, the level attained was at the discretion of the teacher.[169] Schools with small enrolments were advantaged because teachers could devote more time to each student. At Myora, pupils attended school for a full day, unlike those at Yarrabah Mission where, during the 1920's and 1930's, inmates were fortunate if they received four hours tuition each day. The remaining time was spent labouring on the reserve.[170]

Encouraged by a good report on the school and the grounds, Bensted now began a campaign to have the reserve enclosed. His first obstacle was local pastoralist, Billie North. North had settled on a pastoral lease at Point Lookout in 1894, and in 1903 he won the contract to provide beef to the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. In the same year, he established a fish canning business next to Myora at Two Mile, building himself a house nearby.[171] Prior to Bensted's arrival, North had used the school reserve as a right-of-way from his house to the Moreton Bay Oyster Company's land (Fig. 15). He was annoyed when, in 1922, Bensted refused him access. North immediately notified the Lands Department of the situation explaining, 'this fellow Bensted the teacher even tried to stop me this morning on my way in, and I told him to go to a very warm place and rode on'.[172]

Bensted informed the Chief Protector's Office that he had the law on his side as it was an offence for unauthorised persons to enter Aboriginal reserves. To support his argument, he passed on the sentiments of the residents:'My people will be more happy and content as they much resent the intrusion of strangers, especially white ones, upon the Reserve. As you know the men are extremely, and unreasonably jealous of their women, and also much resent strangers being present when they are card playing'.[173] In spite of Bensted's endeavours, a fence did not eventuate. Instead, notices were posted on the boundaries, but these were ineffectual.[174]

Bensted realised that to maintain the viability of the Mission he must increase enrolments. With that in mind he began overtures in 1925 to have Willie Mackenzie, a widower with a large family of potential pupils, transferred from Cherbourg to Myora.[175] When this was unsuccessful, Bensted suggested that Willie's sister, Lily Kina should return with her family to Myora. He offered her a large house and assured her that Mrs Booth-Clarkson, the medical superintendent's wife, would employ Lily's daughter, Vivian, at 10/ per week.[176]

Bensted then attempted to 'poach' pupils from other establishments. In 1926, Chief Protector Bleakley questioned the teacher about the whereabouts of Ruby Moreton's son, Bruce, who had not returned from Myora to the Salvation Army Home at Indooroopilly after the Christmas holi-

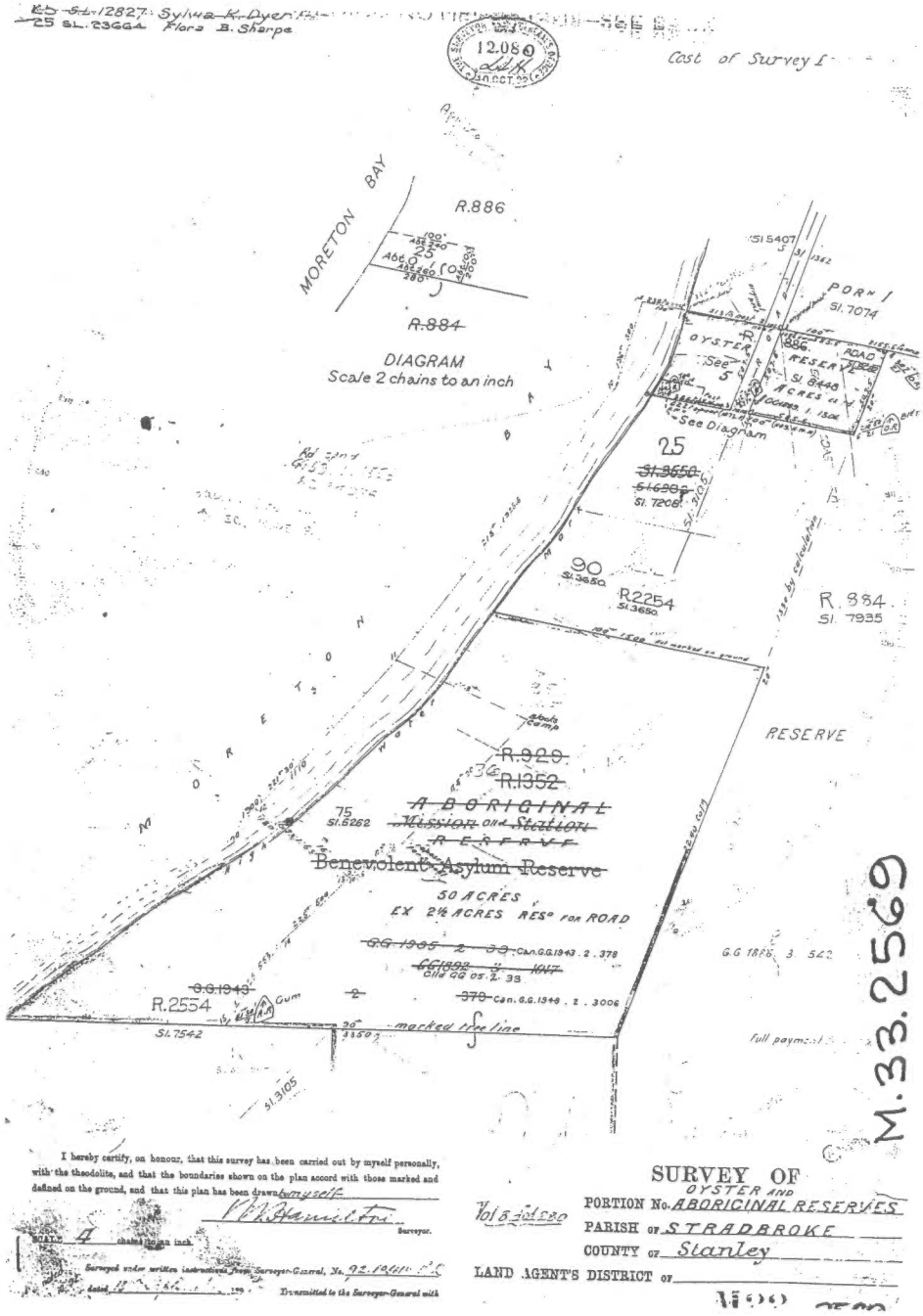

FIG 15. Myora Aboriginal Reserve: M. 33. 2569, R/929. Lands Department, Brisbane.

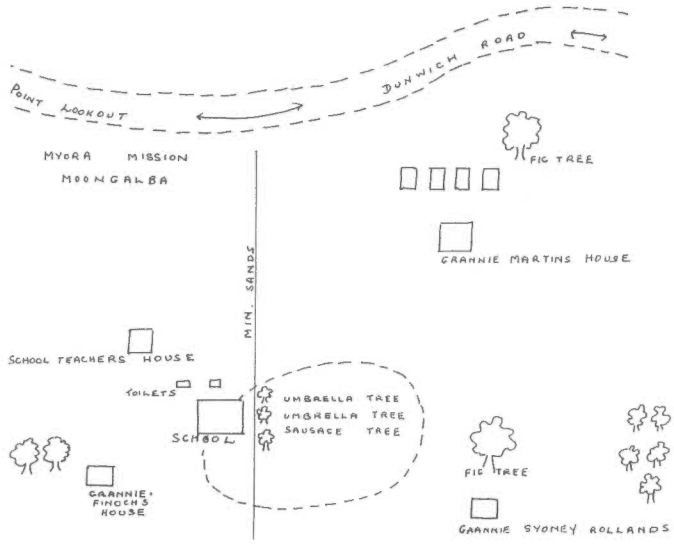

FIG. 16. Plan of Myora Reserve, "Myora Mission, Moongalba". Probably drawn by Oodgeroo after 1956 when sand-mining had commenced. However, buildings shown pre-date the closure of the Mission in January 1941. (nd. Oodgeroo Noonuccal collection MS UQFL. Redrawn by author)

days. The teacher, anxious to keep the boy, defended his position, stating that Bruce had improved in appearance and health since being at Myora. He added that the boy's mother lived in a good iron house and cared well for the boy. It was to no avail; the Chief Protector informed Bensted that Bruce was 'a registered inmate of a Home and must be returned there'.[177]

Disappointed at his failure to increase the enrolment at the school, Bensted vented his frustration in a letter to John Bleakley: 'I have repeatedly said it is very discouraging to have under twelve children on the roll and it is hard to spend all day with so few pupils. It is hard to have cold water thrown on all my projects. I am sure you are anxious to do your best in every way for my settlement but I live here year in and year out and know its immediate need and those of my people'.[178]

Besides disappointment, Bensted revealed in this letter how much he cared for and identified with the Myora Community. He was, however, discorouged by the small enrolment and the fact that it fluctuated little over twenty years (Appendices 1 & 2).

Despite worries and setbacks, Bensted hoped to remain at Myora. He applied to the Lands Department in 1927 for a lease of land behind the pumping station, where he wished to build his private residence. His application was unsuccessful as the land was in the water reserve under the control of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[179] Perhaps disappointment at being refused permission to purchase his chosen block of land, as well as receiving a small annuity, influenced Philip Bensted's decision to resign from the teaching profession in July 1929. The Department of Public Instruction immediately closed Myora Aboriginal school, ordering that pupils attend Dunwich school.[180] The closure of the school was a traumatic event for the Myora residents, causing great uncertainty. It was not only a matter of losing the teacher, but losing the centre of activities for the past 38 years. More worrying was the rumour that Mission residents were to be removed to Cherbourg.[181] Reaction to the crisis was swift.

Mabel Brown wrote letters on behalf of Sam Rollands (her stepfather) and the mothers of the Myora pupils. The first, written 9 September, 1929, was addressed to the Chief Protector, John Bleakley.[182] The second, written 10 September, 1929, was sent to Philip Bensted and signed 'your faithful friend, Mabel'. It was an emotional letter and dealt in detail with the crisis. Apparently Archibald McPhail, the Head Teacher at Dunwich State School, had arrived and removed maps as well as a blackboard. He informed Mabel he would return and dismantle the remaining contents of the school. Then, perhaps to intimidate the residents, he asserted he was be appointed the Superintendent of the Mission.[183] To reinforce the urgency of her appeal, Mabel sent Sam to Brisbane to see Bensted in the hope that he would accompany her father to the Chief Protector's Office. Rollands appears to have seen John Bleakley in Brisbane and discussed the crisis with him.

During Sam Rolland's absence, McPhail stripped the school of its contents. On 19 September, Mabel wrote again to Bleakley on behalf of her stepfather who was in great anguish. The let-

ter listed individual items which had been removed, including 'two large framed pictures of the King and Queen'. McPhail did not consult the community when he also removed 'two large hanging lamps which myself and others on Myora Reserve subscribe to get when ever we had dancing and the school breaking-up picnic'. Any of the effects not needed by Dunwich school were to be placed in a pile and Sam Rollands was ordered to burn them. He refused.[184]

Mabel wrote a third letter to Bleakley on 9 October. This was signed by her and six other Myora mothers; Mrs S. Rollands, Mrs A. Moreton, Mrs N. Roy, Mrs W. Nuggin, Mrs A. Query, and Mrs Lifou. The tone of the letter was firm, but reasonable. It pointed out that there were young children due to begin school in 1930 and they would be unable to walk two miles into Dunwich, particularly as snakes were to be found on the road. However, the parents were prepared to compromise by sending their children to Dunwich for a short period until a new teacher was employed for Myora Mission School.[185] Chief Protector Bleakley acted within three days of receiving Sam Rollands' letter. He appealed to the Under Secretary on behalf of the Myora residents, explaining they were 'greatly perturbed and clamouring to be allowed to remain in their old home on their own reserve and looked after and educated'.[186]

Reprieve came with Alice Morrison, an inexperienced and unclassified teacher, and the school re-opened in 1930.[187] Attending school at Dunwich may have been inconvenient, but removal to Cherbourg could have brought about the disintegration of the close-knit settlement. Alice and her father, Robert Morrison, who acted as Superintendent, were well-fitted for work with the Mission. The first school progress report submitted by the Morrisons is indicative of a genuine interest in the activities of the Myora residents.[188] Fencing was high on the list of their requests, and by February, 1930, both the school house and a small paddock were fenced. Also three calico 'Reserve Trespass Notices' were included in a parcel of official stationary.[189]

Despite a lack of professional training, Alice Morrison was an efficient teacher. When Protector Mrs Sullivan inspected the Mission, she reported favourably on the pupils' progress. They were 'very intelligent, speak nicely and are well behaved'. She added that their progress reflected on the quality of the teaching.[190] However, Charlotte Richards, who was at the school during the tenure of Philip Bensted and Alice Morrison, felt that 'Miss Morrison wasn't a proper teacher like Mr Bensted'. (pers. comm., 1996).

In 1936, the Dental Inspector was impressed with the children, informing the teacher that 'at Myora you have under your care a lot of nice children and very good looking too, and I am very interested in them on that account'.[191] Certainly Alice applied herself to the welfare of her charges. When the Dental Inspector suggested that she could help to eradicate dental caries in her pupils by ordering toothbrushes for the children, she acted at once. The toothbrushes were kept at school where she would see that the children cleaned their teeth before they left for home. Such was her success that two years later the Director General of Health, Raphael Cilento, congratulated Bleakley on the excellent dental health at Myora Mission School.[192]

The Department of Public Instruction was not so complimentary. After neglecting the school, and leaving Alice Morrison unsupervised for six years, the District Inspector reported that teaching aids were in short supply and Alice Morrison could not be expected to buy the necessary equipment out of her very small salary.[193] In 1938, the Inspector was particularly scathing about Alice's lack of punctuality, her poor grammar and her inability to draw a map.[194]

For the Morrisons, running Myora Mission became a family affair. If Alice was absent, one of her brothers, Bob or Mack Morrison, would be in charge (Estelle Bertossi, pers. comm., 1994.) Alice also received permission for her niece to attend Myora Mission School as she lived more than two miles from Dunwich, with the proviso that, being white, she receive a satisfactory education.[195] The community could appreciate Alice's request, as it mirrored the closeness of their extended families.

The school closed on 28 January, 1941 on the retirement of Robert Morrison. The last report stated there were 10 pupils, all 'clean in appearance, neatly dressed, well-mannered and obedient. Not at all shy, they respond well in oral work'. Despite the fact that the Department had neglected to supply the school with either school readers or library books, each child scored full marks for spelling and poetry. The Morrisons shared their own books with the pupils.[196] Everyone who knew Alice Morrison agreed that she was a kind and devoted teacher with a warm personality that compensated for her lack of academic qualifications. Ex-pupils, such as Margaret Iselin and Estelle Bertossi, remember

her bringing hot cocoa over to the school during the winter months.[197]

The school building had not been changed or maintained since its arrival from Bribie Island It was purpose-built as a school, of sturdy structure, with three rooms protected by an open verandah. The walls were timber, and the roof shingled. No major alterations were made before 1930. According to Paul Tripcony, 'the floors were well-dressed hardwood, most suitable for dancing'.[198] In 1930, the school building became the responsibility of the Chief Protector's Office. John Bleakley found the reserve badly neglected and the grounds overgrown with prickly pear. The school's roof had fallen away, and there was some decay in the timber. Bleakley noted that the enrolment was too small for the large building, and the old dormitories should be removed.[199] Bleakley also appreciated the value of cheap Aboriginal labour, and realised nothing could be gained by removing Aboriginal workers from permanent employment at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. He was also a staunch advocate of assimilating 'half-castes', rather than incarcerating them on controlled reserves.[200] By the middle of 1930, the old dormitories were demolished, the school roof was repaired and the building painted.[201] Despite the reduced size of the school building, it provided ample space for religious and social events.

RELIGION

Before 1908, when St Mark's Anglican Church was built at Dunwich, all services were conducted at Myora Mission and at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum's Victoria Hall by the minister from Cleveland (John Steele, pers. comm., 1994). In 1905, Protector Roth, found Myora men were all legally married, suggesting that these ceremonies were performed by visiting clergy.[202] Church services continued to be held in the school building. In 1910, the visiting Anglican minister, H. H. Green, reported that about 16 children attending services, while the adults preferred to 'idle about and play cards'.[203] Joseph Harvey, from the Brisbane City Mission, was more popular when he visited Myora. The congregation numbered 32. They were of 'all shades, and I think that something should be done to help them'.[204]

Religious choice was possible at Myora. Missions and settlements had 'captive' audiences for proselyting clergy. At Yarrabah Anglican Mission church services were held twice daily, with attendance obligatory.[205] The missionaries at Lockhart River, acting for both state and church, bickered about means and ends to obtain converts.[206] Philip Bensted, did his best to keep religious services away from the school. He evidently succeeded, as the Anglican minister held his services under a Moreton Bay Fig Tree.[207]

The Morrisons, as members of the Salvation Army, encouraged all religious ministers to visit the Mission. Their 1930 report mentions that the Anglican minister, W. P. Miles, had held services, and the Salvation Army's social secretary, Brigadier Scotney, and Major Graham, spent time at Myora.[208]

SOCIAL OCCASIONS

The school building was used for important occasions on the residents' social calendar, such as the Christmas Break-Up Dance, the Easter Dance, and Arbor Day festivities. Paul Tripcony described the 1914 Easter Dance (Fig. 17): 'A committee of residents were formed to organise the dance and social evening). The music was supplied by Aboriginal artists using two or three accordions. The committee served soft drinks such as lemonade and ginger beer, also cake and confectionery at the refreshment centre'.[209] The end of the school year was a momentous occasion. Sylvia Iselin recalled that her Aunty Mabel supplied two kerosene drums full of tea and coffee, and the women made sandwiches.[210] New clothes arrived from State Stores, and the teacher sent a list of suggestions for prizes to the Chief Protector's Office.[211] Prizes for the Myora Missions Chrismas Break-up, 1926, were:

> Beads; Skipping Ropes; Pencil cases; Tools; Handkerchiefs; Mugs; Toy blocks; Tops; Dolls; Ribbons; Books; Crayons; Combs; Marbles; Games; Money boxes; Pencils; Pens; Pocket knives; Musical boxes; Thimble; bangles; Rulers; Rubbers.
>
> No weapons of any such kind as guns, pistols, etc. No whistles, balls or fishing lines.

In August, Arbor Day was celebrated and gifts were distributed to all Myora children. The prizes were referred to as donations but they were purchased from the Aboriginal Property Protection Account although the recipients were unaware of this.[212]

Although the Morrisons had misgivings about holding dances for the residents, the custom continued. The Morrisons' report on the 1929 festivities was overshadowed by their obvious displeasure that, among the 90 revellers, there were 'two white men, and young half-caste girls

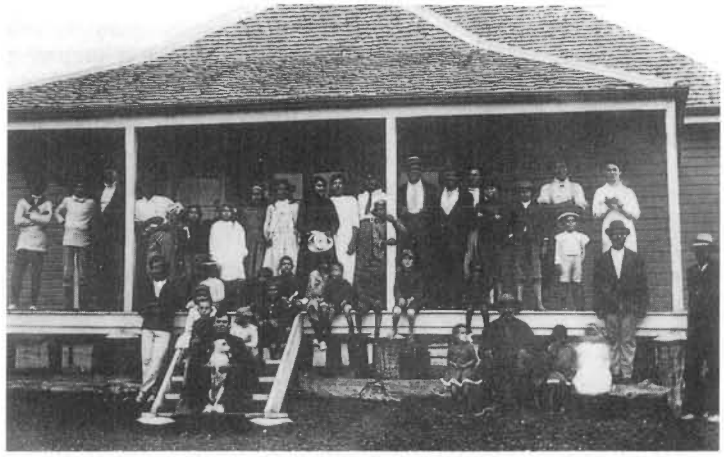

FIG. 17. 'Moongalba (Myora) school, c. 1913-1914. Getting ready for the Easter dance'. (Tripcony collection, MS 122, UQFL)

from Dunwich'.[213] Nevertheless, Myora community's regular social events continued until the Mission closed (Estelle Bertossi & Rose Borey, pers. comm., 1994).

It was impossible to segregate Myora residents from the social network of extended families and friends at Dunwich. In the evening, when their time was their own, it was unlikely that either the superintendent or school teacher was prepared to mount a patrol. Taroom Reserve, by contrast, had a 6. 00 pm curfew.[214] At Palm Island Settlement, curfew was 9. 00 pm and inmates could be placed in the lock-up for transgressions. Attempts were made to curb gambling by permitting no more than five people to congregate.[215] Myora residents would have objected strongly because card playing had been a well-recognised local pastime for many years. At Cherbourg: 'Each afternoon at five o'clock the girls were brought by the police to an area in front of the girls' dormitory. Single fellows would come from the settlement and meet the girls. Courtship was under the strict supervision of the police for about half an hour'.[216]

EMPLOYMENT

The bourgeois work ethic and the resulting sense of independence, had been familiar to the Myora Community since European contact. The Quandamooka 'Grannies', who were adept at basket-making, had sold or traded their wares since white contact. The children from the Mission would go into the swamps to collect the rushes called *ngoong-gair*, which were red at the roots, fading to cream at the stems.[217] This colour variation was utilised to produce very distinctive baskets. In 1836, when James Backhouse visited the island, he was so impressed with the women's work that he believed it was an error to conclude that the Aborigines were 'below all human beings in capacity'.[218] Some enterprising Myora residents, such as Gurri Nuggan and Peter Graham, were selling wildflowers to day-trippers by the time Tom Welsby arrived there in the early 1900's.[219]

Many reserves and missions, particularly Cherbourg, were made up of the 'remnants' of displaced Aboriginal families. This was not so at Myora where the people were predominantly from the Moreton Bay Islands. However, when their children reached the age of 14, they were forced to leave their families to work on the mainland. Once there they were vulnerable to ruthless employers. The ethos of the 'protection system' went hand-in-hand with exploitation.

The system worked like an employment agency, but employees worked for pocket money, if they were lucky. In 1916, Jane Roberts, who had been employed in Brisbane, told Superintendent Linford Row that she did not want to leave Myora and return to her job as she had received neither wages nor pocket money.[220] Another Myora resident, Charlotte Richards, said she will never forget the pain when she was sent away to Charleville to be a domestic servant. Charlotte was allowed home once a year providing she could pay her fares. She recalled that 'the most money I got was two shillings a week pocket money. I don't know what I earned, you see the Aboriginal Board kept our money' (Charlotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996).[221]

Regular paid employment became available in 1865, when local Aborigines were employed as cleaners and builders' labourers at the Quarantine Station. The following year, with the opening of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum the Quandamooka People became an indispensable workforce, known as the 'Aboriginal Gang'. The Dunwich Benevolent Asylum developed a pro-

prietary attitude to the Quandamooka People, particularly residents who worked at the piggery, bakery and dairy. Women from the Mission were employed as nursing assistants and domestics.[222]

In 1895, Archibald Meston proposed that Queensland's Aborigines could be placed on reserves that were not only self-supporting, but would provide cheap labour in towns and on pastoral properties. He envisaged 'hundreds of Queensland Aborigines available to do work for which we now import Papuans'. Most of their wages would be retained by the government, while their families lived on sequestered missions and reserves.[223]

Myora was different. Although the workers' wages were tightly controlled, most of the people worked in a variety of jobs and lived a 'normal' family life. In 1897, Meston noted that the residents were employed by local fishermen, as well as the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[224] Also, Billie North employed Myora residents at his fish-cannery and slaughter-house.[225] Apart from the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum and North's business ventures, the Moreton Bay Oyster Company was a major employer. The company was established in 1876 by Queensland Parliamentarians Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and Sir Arthur Palmer. They owned oyster beds at Myora Springs on Capembah creek and Moongalba.[226] As early as 1905, Chief Protector Roth reported that some of the men were earning up to £3 per week from oystering. This was one of the reasons they gave to Roth for not needing protection.[227] Many of the Mission residents were also employed doing maintenance work on the school buildings and grounds. The Prickly Pear Eradication Scheme was a source of employment for Mission residents Sam Rollands, Percy Queary and Charlie Moreton from 1919. The entire reserve was overgrown and Sam Rollands offered to 'cut out and burn the pear either on a weekly wage of £2.10, or a lump sum of £50.00.[228] Philip Bensted was always confident of finding work for new arrivals at Myora, particularly if the family would boost the school enrolment.[229] Fencing the school and reserve gave continuous employment to a number of the residents during Bensted's tenure. However, there was the stipulation that, as the pupils ' parents were unable to contribute to the cost, this must be met by the Aboriginal Property Protection Account.[230] This account became a contentious issue in labour relations between the Chief Protector's Office, and the Aboriginal work force for the remainder of the Mission's lifetime. The dispute involved the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, as the Aboriginal Gang's employer, and the Chief Protector's Office. By 1921 when the deductions were 7% from married men's wages, the Chief Protector's Office held over £10,000 in trust for Queensland's Aborigines.[231] The Aboriginal Gang at Myora regarded this as a misuse of its money and was not alone in questioning the legality of the deductions. In 1932 when George Bradbury and Cornelius O'Leary reported on Palm Island, Cherbourg and Woorabinda, they wrote that 'there is no authority in the Act, or Regulations, for making the deductions'. Despite this, the report proceeded to list the percentages of monies to be deducted and placed at the disposal of the Chief Protector's Office. They stated: 'No definite conclusions have ever been arrived at as to the ethics of the contribution. However the natives are evidently standing the deduction and no suggestion as to the alterations of rates is intended'.[232] Most of the 'contributors' were unaware of the rate of the deductions.

This was to change for the Aboriginal Gang employed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. These men became aware of wage rises to white workers through the Arbitration Court. In 1926 the Australian Workers' Union, made a half-hearted attempt to assist their Aboriginal members, without success.[233] Finally, in 1934 the Aboriginal Gang discontinued its membership of the union.[234] The dispute continued until 1940. It involved Aboriginal workers, Chief Protector John Bleakley, the Medical Superintendent at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, Dr Turnbull, and teacher Alice Morrison. Dr Turnbull was in a difficult position. He feared the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum could be faced with either a disgruntled workforce or no workforce. Turnbull informed the Chief Protector that 'the Gang' was well treated and received better pay 'than similar jobs by Department of Aborigines'.[235] Bleakley reminded Turnbull that the Asylum was not a charity and that, if white workers were employed, costs would be higher.[236] He stated that the Chief Protector's Office would not contribute to the upkeep of Dunwich employees, but would meet the cost of rations for 'indigent Aborigines at Myora'.[237] In April, 1937, the Aboriginal Gang advised the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum that they had been duped into signing the authority to have monies deducted, and they could not survive without their wages intact. Twenty-seven men signed the letter, more than half from Myora (Appendix 3).[238]

Two days later, in an attempt to resolve the matter, Alice Morrison wrote to the Chief Protector of Aborigines stating that 'the men were up in arms' and suggesting that someone from the Chief Protector's Office should visit Myora to sort out the problem.[239] In May, Dr Turnbull contacted the Chief Protector on behalf of 16 of the Aboriginal workers, pointing out that, while their cash wages had been reduced, 'a judge in the Arbitration Court recently allowed four shillings increase to Award workers'. By August he had to admit to John Bleakly that the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum could not carry on without the Aboriginal Gang.[240] In June, Turnbull informed the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Ned Hanlon that : 'They (the 'Gang') are quite intelligent and capable enough to handle their own money. Most of them are married and are of good behaviour and very industrious and do good work and are reliable and sober'.[241] In February, 1938, John Bleakley advised Ned Hanlon that deductions were to recommence, at the same time admitting that the Aboriginal workers received much below award rates of pay. Dr Turnbull informed Hanlon that two men had resigned and others were threatening to do so. The Myora people were aware of conditions of employment on the mainland and, in Turnbull's view, were becoming a threat to the smooth running of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[242]

The 'Gang' continued its demands until the men received the basic wage in 1944.[243] At the same time, the residents identified with the wider movement for Aboriginal rights. When Aboriginal activists Jack Patten and William Ferguson formed the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 to demand award wages, 28 members joined from Queensland. Eight were from the Myora Community.[244] When the Aboriginal Gang confronted their employers in 1937, they were more than 20 years ahead of the Gurindjis who walked off Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory in a similar cause.[245]

Several factors at Myora which sustained the residents during the long wage dispute: shared, similar socio-economic conditions; were themselves, or their extended families resident on the Mission; and a common 'foe'. Lucy Taksa refers to conditions similar to those operating at Myora as producing 'communal belonging'.[246]

Over the years, many residents left the island, including those who volunteered to fight in two World Wars. Many returned to live at Dunwich, close to the old reserve. According to Estelle Bertossi 'Many of us left the island but we always came back, we loved the community' (pers. comm., 1996).

THE COMMUNITY

Often called a mission, for much of Myora's history, this was a misnomer. Although the Mission was technically restricted to a confined area, in such a small, close-knit community it was inevitable that families were extended with the wider Stradbroke Island population, resulting in multi-layered relationships (Appendix 4). People had common bonds, living in close proximity, working together, and children being educated together. Further, entertainment like celebratory dances, included many Stradbroke residents and took place in a recognised community centre. Most importantly, the people lived on or near their traditional land with their Elders (Figs 16 & 18).

The cultural mix that resulted was observed by the Chief Protector, Archibald Meston, when he visited in 1898. He described 'a labyrinthic maze of cross-breeding of considerable interest to the ethnologist but highly undesirable as a racial element in the national population'. Despite abhorring miscegenation, Meston admitted that the children had 'fine physiques and attractive faces, and their intelligence is quite equal to that of the average children of Europeans'.[247]

According to Rose Borey, her grandfather, who was Portuguese, changed his name to George Brown and married Miboo from Moreton Island (pers. comm., 1996). Charlotte Richards recalled her grandfather, John Lifou, from Lifou Island, as 'a gentle man who always wore a waistcoat and a gold watch and chain'. Lifou, married a Noonuccal woman, Aggie Dungo-lee-bah (pers. comm., 1996).

Other Myora women married men from the islands of Rotuma in the Fiji group, Malaita, in the Solomons, and from New Zealand.[248] There was a Cornish element when the Tripcony family settled on Stradbroke Island in 1870. Their children married Quandamooka People and became part of the Myora Community (Bob Anderson, pers.comm., 1995).

Marrying 'out' of their people did not diminish the authority of the Quandamooka women. The Myora 'Grannies' retained a special position in the community (Fig 19). Tom Welsby, who was a regular visitor to Stradbroke Island, refers to 'Grannies', Mary Ann Carr, Lizzie Bulsey, Kindarra and Sydney Rollands, and records their visiting him at his home and office in Brisbane.

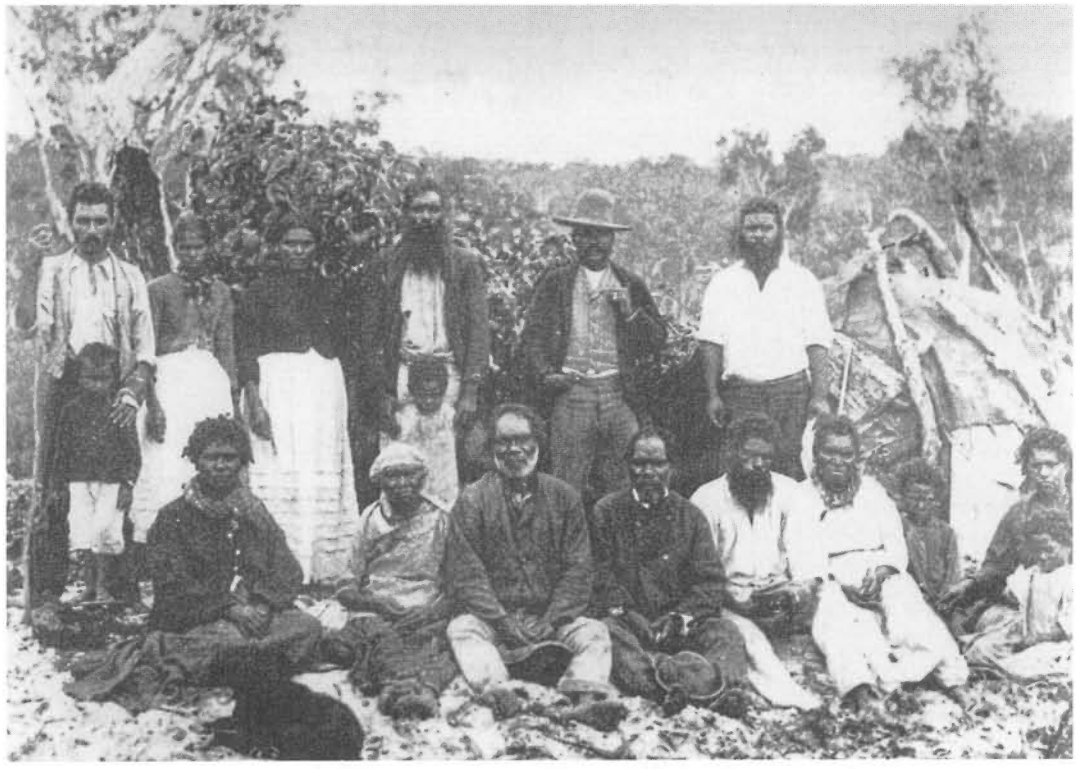

FIG 18. 'Stradbroke Island, c. 1894'. (John Oxley Library)

Welsby was particularly impressed by Mary Ann Carr who had been taken to Brisbane by the Anglican Bishop, Edward Tufnell, to be educated.[249] Lizzie Bulsey may have been the 'Lizzie' who had an intimate relationship with Gustavus Birch during some of the 30 years he spent on Stradbroke Island from 1844.[250]

The 'Myora Grannies' are remembered for the way they contributed to the maintenance of Aboriginal culture by storytelling. Both Charlotte Richards and Margaret Iselin recall being taken as children to Brown Lake where the 'Grannies' would 'talk in language to let the spirits in the Lake know we were coming into the water'. Even children whose parents moved away from the Mission returned to Brown Lake and Myora Cemetery to listen to traditional lore expounded by these women. Such spiritual activities as these continued, despite the fact that most of the residents expressed adherence to some Christian religion (Margaret Iselin, Charlotte Richards & Rose Borey, pers. comms., 1993, 1994, 1996).

A list of 'Grannies' names includes:

Maggie King; Rosie Campbell; Bessie Manager (Bourke); *Kindarra;* Sydney Rollands; *Miboo,* Margaret Brown; Lizzie Bulsey; Mary Ann Carr; *Nungelly; Eendelly,* Mary Ann Compeigne; *Nunungha,* Rose Martin; *Dungo-leebah,* Aggie Lifou; Maggie Nufong (Fisher files, MS 830700/8, UQL).

Aspects of the lives of Quandamooka People were changed by the arrival of Pacific Islanders. This was obvious in the way the Mission gardens were cultivated. John Lifou, Jack Newfong and Sam Rollands, all of whom had Islander heritage, cultivated European-style fruit and vegetable gardens. Other families still relied on gathering native fruits and berries (Estelle Bertossi, pers. comm., 1994). In 1928 Tom Welsby suggested there were only about six full-blood Aborigines on Stradbroke Island. This may have been an exaggeration as the 'last of the tribe' was a popular concept when writing about Aborigines.[251]

Both Archie Newfong and Charlotte Richards, when recalling Myora families such as the Kinas, Moretons, Martins, Jones and others, described them as 'just like one big happy family' (Char-

FIG 19. Myora Grannies with children and other family. (John Oxley Library)

lotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996).[252] Those who had been inmates of government settlements and later settled at Myora contrasted the life-style. Estelle Bertossi commented 'government-run Cherbourg contrasted sharply with Myora. At Myora we were so free, it was so beautiful' (pers. comm., 1993.).

Despite the egalitarian nature of Myora society, there was a hierarchy of residents who proved particularly able to communicate, as well as negotiate, with the authorities. Most notable were Mabel Brown and Sam Rollands. Sam Rollands was born in 1851, the son of one of the best known of the 'Myora Grannies', Sydney Rollands from Moreton Island.[253] He acted as native policeman at Myora for many years. His position was recognised in 1924, when he was paid £1 per month wages, and received the same kind of khaki uniform issued to police on other settlements. Chief Protector Bleakley valued Rollands' work by waiving repayments on his home as he had kept discipline at Myora for many years.[254]

Besides his official position as native policeman, Rollands was permanently employed on the reserve. In 1920, while the prickly pear eradication scheme was in progress he contracted to clear the weed from around the school for £5. The only complaint was that Rollands was prepared to put Dugong fishing ahead of other calls on his time, including pear clearing.[255] He was one of the best known Dugong fishermen on Stradbroke Island. Charlotte Richards remembered that he would fly a flag on the *Rona* to signal he had caught a Dugong (Charlotte Richards, pers. comm., 1996). According to Rose Borey, Rollands taught Tom Welsby the finer points of the catch, and of processing the mammal (pers. comm., 1994).

In 1931, Rollands, at the age of 80, was informed by the new Superintendent, Robert Morrison, that he required a permit to go Dugong fishing. The old man resented this new ruling and took his complaint to the Chief Protector in Brisbane.[256] Apparently Morrison was over-ruled by Bleakley, and Sam continued going out on his boat until he died in 1936

Tom Welsby wrote a fitting obituary to Sam Rollands: 'In disposition Sam was kind and unobtrusive. Yet he resented firmly the actions of

certain officious subordinates in the Aborigines Department and was not afraid to come to Town to visit the Home Office pleading at all times, and winning his cause, as well as that of the other coloured people'.[257]

Mabel Brown, was born in 1892. After her father's death, her mother, Miboo, married Sam Rollands. At age 14, when many children were sent to work on the mainland, Mabel managed to remain at home. Month after month the Superintendent complained that Mabel was 'idling ... and needs being kept out of mischief'. She protested, describing the work she performed during the Dugong season, helping with the boiling-down process.[258]

In time Mabel Brown became responsible for numerous members of her extended family, including her sister's four orphaned children. With the support of Philip Bensted, the determined Mabel prevented the babies being sent to an orphanage. The State Children's Department refused to assist the children as they lived on an Aboriginal Reserve.[259]

Mabel Brown and Lavinia Moreton acted as midwives for the Aboriginal women at Myora, Myora midwives were taken to Peel Island to deliver the babies of mothers suffering from leprosy. These infants were immediately removed to one of the State Homes (Phyllis Donovan, pers. comm., 1994; Rose Borey, pers. comm., 1994). Mabel also worked at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum laundering the nurses' uniforms, and it was there that the sisters instructed her in midwifery.[260]

In 1929 Mabel organised a farewell for the teacher, Philip Bensted. Mabel's report of the dance shows clearly the community spirit and the high regard in which Bensted was held: 'Many friends came forth to join the farewell from Big Hill, One Mile, Dunwich and Wynnum. It was proposed that Mr J. Borey give a speech on behalf of all the Myora residents and other friends who had subscribed for a presentation and to say how sorry we were to hear of him leaving the Reserve and to wish him the best of good wishes and health in his future home. We handed him his presentation of a Gent's shaving outfit on a nickel silver stand. All friends sang he is a Jolly Good Fellow. Songs and dancing went on until midnight'.[261]

Myora Reserve was closed in August 1943, when the land was transferred to the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[262] The school did not reopen to take pupils in January, 1941. Robert Morrison retired as Mission Superintendent at 80 years of age, and his daughter Alice transferred to clerical duties at the Office of the Director of Native Affairs in Brisbane. All the male members of the six remaining Myora families were employed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.[263]

In 1941, Dr Frederick Turnbull, Medical Superintendent at the DBA, reported the condition of the buildings and the viability of their removal. Some houses were still occupied by the Moreton, Query, Jones, Graham and Roberts families. As well as one unoccupied house, there was the teacher's residence and the school. Both the Graham and Roberts houses' were considered 'good for nothing'. Apart from the teacher's residence, which was to be used by a postal official, the remainder were dismantled and the timber used for housing at One Mile.[264]

Because of indecision on the part of the Department of Native Affairs and the Works Department, relocation was delayed until 1943. After the houses were relocated they were found to be out of alignment and on the edge of a swamp.[265] In 1946, before these problems could be rectified, the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum was moved to the unused RAAF base at Sandgate.[266] The people from Myora, One Mile and Dunwich were faced with a crisis. There was no employment on Stradbroke Island The government dismantled the power generating unit and removed the only means of transport, horses and carts. Fishing and oystering provided some income, but many had to leave the island. According to Margaret Iselin, 'these were very hard times, so all we could do was come together and help one and other' (Margaret Iselin, pers. comm., 1994).

This distressing situation was relieved in 1956, when sand-mining operations began on Stradbroke Island. With full employment many residents who had left their community for the mainland, returned to the island to establish the nucleus of the Minjerribah-Moorgumpin Elders Council (Margaret Iselin.pers. comm., 1994 & Estelle Bertossi, pers. comm., 1996). [267]

CONCLUSION

Aboriginal people in Queensland were decimated by the impact of European settlement, and many of the survivors were incarcerated in controlled institutions. In contrast, the Quandamooka People were not removed, and through a measure of economic independence, they maintained their social cohesion and their links with the land. They lived and worked with Europeans, and later with Pacific Island people. Yet, despite

this social and cultural mix, the Quandamooka People retained their identity and many of their traditional beliefs and practises.

The history of the Myora Mission underscores the hypocritical and pragmatic nature of government policies and legislation towards Aboriginal people in the period 1892-1940. The care and wellbeing of Aboriginal people was secondary in a system predicated on the availability of labour directed towards usefullness and profitability.

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259. Bensted to State Childrens' Department, A/58787, [4172], QSA. It is unlikely that a letter from the teacher would have influenced the Department without interference from the Protector.
260. *The Islander*, 23 March 1971.
261. Mabel Brown to CPA, 6 August 1929, A/58787, no letter number, QSA
262. *QGG*, August 1943, p.378.
263. CPA to Under Secretary, 10 June 1942, Dunwich batch, A/4684, [4721],QSA.
264. Turnbull to Under Secretary, 8 October 1941, Dunwich batch, A/4684, [9931], QSA.
265. Sender and recipient unknown, 21 December 1944, Dunwich batch, A/4684, beneath [9581], QSA.
266. Carter, et al, 1994, *Historic North Stradbroke Island*, p.58.
267. R.McMillan, et al,1984, 'Mining on North Stradbroke Island: Past, present and now', *Focus on Stradbroke*, Coleman, et al, eds. p.109. Alas, Margaret Iselin.pers. comm., 1994, Estelle Bertossi, pers. comm. 1996.

APPENDIX 1
MYORA PUPILS, 1893-194

Myora Aboriginal School Admission Register 1893-1941, A/45751, QSA. Only those pupils whose parents are shown to be living on Myora Reserve are listed. (Parts of the roll are in a very damaged condition.

Name	Parent's Occupation	Year Commenced
Fatiachi,Charlotte	baker	1893
Fatiachi, Colin	baker	1893
Fatiachi, Elizabeth	baker	1893
Fatiachi, Maggie	baker	1893
Lifou, Annie	butcher	1893
Lifou, Nellie	butcher	1893
Lifou, Eliza	butcher	1893
Lifou, Harriet	butcher	1893
Ferguson, John	superintendent	1893
Ferguson, Robert	superintendent	1893
Ferguson, Agnes	superintendent	1893
Ferguson, Elizabeth	superintendent	1893
Hamilton, Hannah	oysterman	1893
Hamilton, Rose	oysterman	1893
Pupils names missing 1894-1895		
Watts, Lillian	music teacher	1896
Syssy	unknown	1896
Sainsbury, Dorothy	unknown	1896
Blow, Marion	oysterman	1896
Curtis, Ida	stockman	1896
Tripcony, Charlotte	oysterman	1896
Bostock, Augustus	oysterman	1897
Kelly, Ina	not stated	1897
Jackson, Rose	not stated	1897
Brown, Daisy	oysterman	1897
Fatiachi, Flora	oysterman	1897
Campbell, Amelia	not stated	1897
Scott, Walter	teacher	1897
Manager, Martha	oysterman	1897
Scott, Edwin	teacher	1897
Monday, Ada	oysterman	1897
Martin, Bethel	oysterman	1898
Brown, Rose Mabel	oysterman	1898
Bulsey, Alexander	ploughman	1898
North, Bradley	unclear	1898
Henderson, Lily	stockman	1898
North, Cecil	unclear	1898
Williams, Gertrude	unknown	1898
Thompson, Leslie	not stated	1898
Rotomah, Daniel	orphan	1898
Fatiachi, Eva	oysterman	1898
Olsen, Olive	stockman	1899
Olsen, John	stockman	1899
Olsen, Andrew	stockman	1899
Tripcony, Albert	oysterman	1899
Tripcony, Sylvia	oysterman	1899
Wright, Jessie	oysterman	1900
Managaia, Maggie	oysterman	1900
Adams, George	unknown	1900
Brown, Ethel	widow	1900
Martin, Rose	selector	1900
Hill, Clarence	grocer	1901
Tripcony, Priscilla	oysterman	1901
Brown, Markwell	widow	1901
Manager, Benjamin	Widow	1902
Lifou, Edith	oysterman	1902
Kingsey, Thomas	widow	1902
Fai, Alphonsus	oysterman	1902
Thorpe, John	stockman	1903
Thorpe, Sarah	stockman	1903
Thorpe, Emily	stockman	1903
Graham, Frank	oysterman	1903
Graham, Albert	oysterman	1903
Dalton, Horace	oysterman	1904
Campbell, Katie	oysterman	1904
Campbell, Adolphus	oysterman	1904
Brown, Vera	oysterman	1904
Pickle, Lily	farmer	1904
Pickle, Willie	farmer	1904
Fatiachi, Eloise	oysterman	1904
Bowers, Angeline	widow	1904
Bowers, Elise	widow	1905
Dalton, Sylvia	oysterman	1905
Rollands, John	oysterman	1905
Moreton, Charles	oysterman	1905
Moreton, Edward	oysterman	1905
Lifou, Charlotte	oysterman	1905
Martin, David	oysterman	1906
Crouch, Frank	oysterman	1907
Crouch, Reggie	oysterman	1907
Dalton, Nellie	oysterman	1907
Lifou, Agnes	labourer	1907
Bell, Francis	labourer	1907
Crouch, Horace	oysterman	1907
King, Molly	labourer	1907
Costello, unclear	labourer	1907
Bowers, Leslie	teacher	1908
Martin, Clive	labourer	1908
Dalton, Joseph	labourer	1908
Enoch, Percy	labourer	1908
Gardner, Edward	labourer	1908
Lifou, Claudie	labourer	1909
Campbell, Leslie	labourer	1909
Pupils' names missing 1910		
Dalton, Alfred	woodcutter	1911
Dalton, Lucy	woodcutter	1911
Moreton, Olive	woodcutter	1911
Rollands, Violet	labourer	1912
Coulson, William	oysterman	1912
Coulson, Edward	oysterman	1912
Coulson, Muriel May	oysterman	1912
Coulson, Emily Maud	oysterman	1912

Name	Parent's Occupation	Year Commenced
Pupil intake from outside reserve 1913		
Thompson, Harry	oysterman	1914
Thompson, Andrew	oysterman	1914
Thompson, Douglas	oysterman	1914
Coulson, Leslie	oysterman	1915
Newfong, Ben	woodcutter	1915
Newfong, Lavinia	woodcutter	1915
Manager, Lavinia	widow/housewife	1915
Moreton, Sarah	woodcutter	1915
Coulson, Gladys	oysterman	1916
Nuggin, Thomas	labourer	1916
Moreton, Lucy	labourer	1916
Roberts, Kitty	labourer	1916
Newfong, Louisa	labourer	1917
Light, William	domestic	1917
Light, Antoni	domestic	1917
Pupil intake from outside reserve 1918		
Moreton, Henry	labourer	1919
Close, Phyllis	labourer	1919
Delaney, unclear	widow	1920
Delaney, Elizabeth	widow	1920
Delaney, Emily	widow	1920
Delaney, Cecilia	widow	1920
Pupil intake from outside reserve 1921		
Newfong, Jim Simon	labourer	1922
Bulsey, Coster Alex	labourer	1923
Nuggin, Marjorie	labourer	1923
Purcell, Arthur	labourer	1923
Purcell, James	labourer	1923
Cressbrook, Percy	labourer	1924
Dalton, uncertain	domestic duties	1924
Brown, Fraser	domestic duties	1924
Roberts, Claude	domestic duties	1924
Brown, Peggy	domestic duties	1924
Kina, Vivian	oysterman	1925
Kina, Marie	oysterman	1925
Kina, unclear	oysterman	1925
Pupils' names missing 1926		
Nuggin, William	labourer	1927
Pupils' names missing 1928-1929		
Query, Lorna	labourer	1930
Query, Charlotte	labourer	1930
Moreton, Donald	labourer	1930
Kina, Arnold	wood cutter	1930
Brown, Eugene	domestic duties	1930
Nuggin, Garnet	wood cutter	1931
Landers, Robert	drayman	1932
Landers, David	drayman	1932
Brown, Edmund	domestic duties	1933
Brown, Eilene	domestic duties	1933
Moreton, Mabel	woodcutter	1933
Landers, Gordon	woodcutter	1934
Landers, Andrea	woodcutter	1934
Query, Doreen	labourer	1934
Moreton, Charles	drayman	1935
Query, Margaret	Woodcutter	1936
Landers, Lillian	Woodcutter	1937
Jones, Margaret	Labourer	1937
Moreton, May	Labourer	1937
Query, Hazel	Woodcutter	1938
Moreton, Irene	Labourer	1938
Martin, Estelle	labourer	1938
Martin, Richard	labourer	1938
Pupils' names missing 1939		
Jones, Helen	Labourer	1940
Moreton, Shirley	Drayman	1941
Query, Lilian	Woodcutter	1941
Myora Mission School closed 28 January 1941		

APPENDIX 2

Myora Aboriginal School, teacher and pupil numbers, 1892-1929. (*Blue Book* Myora:1892-1929)

Year	Pupil No's	Teacher	Details
1892	20	Atkinson Dunnington	transferred, 1896
1893	25	William Scott	died, 1906
1984	22		
1895	15		
1896	19		
1897	17		
1898	25		
1899	27		
1901	22		
1902	23		
1903	17		
1904	13		
1905	15		
1906	15		
1907	14		
1908	12	Sophia Bowers	retired, 1910
1909	12		
1910	13		
1912	12	W. J. Bennett	retired, 1913
1913	13	J. G. Gleghorn	transferred, 1917
1914	14		
1915	15		
1916	15		
1917	15	N. A. Fletcher	transferred, 1920
1918	15		
1919	11		
1920	12		
1921	11	Philip Bensted	resigned, 1929
1923	15		
1926	15		
1927	12		
1928	12		

APPENDIX 3
WAGES DISPUTE

'We the under signed hereby decided, after conferring, not to sign the suggested Banking Sheet', 17 April 1937 (A/58789 [1034], QSA).

Gang	Dairy & Piggery	Horse Drivers	Casuals
E. Ruska, jnr.	B. Delaney	G. Martin	C. Enoch
E. Ruska, snr.	C. Campbell	C. Campbell	C. Bulsey
A. Martin	H. Costelloe	M. Borey	C. Iselin
Eric Ruska	C. Martin	A. Costelloe	A. Martin
S. Coolwell	G. Costelloe	E. Ellis	
C. Enoch	N. Brown		
S. Costelloe			
R. Close			
W. Martin			
R. Wainwright			
W. P. King			
R. Law			

APPENDIX 4
TOTAL LIVING ON ISLAND

Dunwich Benevolent Asylum Reserve File, Lands Department, Beenleigh repository, nd., possibly at the time of the closure of Myora Reserve 7 August 1943. The number on the list is 182 and the notation says 'Total living on Island'. * indicate white men.

Name	No. living here	Actually in residence
G. Borey	9	
A. Martin	9	
A. Burgess*	2	
J. Iselin	8	2 schooling in Brisbane
C. Campbell	8	1 working in Brisbane
T. Ruska	4	1 working in Brisbane
S. Coolwell	7	2 working in Brisbane
R. Close, Snr	7	
R. Close	6	
Miss M. Brown	3	2 working in Brisbane
G. Costelloe	1	
S. Costelloe		
F. Costelloe	4	
M. Costelloe	7	
B. Delaney	9	
S. Campbell	3	
L. Campbell	5	
P. Graham	1	
J. Newfong	2	
A. Newfong	4	
R. Kingston*	3	
B. Law	2	
A. Moreton	10	2 working in Brisbane
P. Query	9	
A. Jones	8	
Mark Brown	8	
R. Nott	3	
R. Wainwright	6	
M. Philips*	5	
J. Wiseman*	2	
B. Dixon*		
J. Murray*	4	
W. Martin	1	
Alf Martin Snr.	4	
H. Iselin	4	
Living past the Pumping Station		
R. Perry*	3	
W. Appo	4	
Alf Dyer*	1	