

Life at Mayfields in the late 1800s

This information comes from Kerry Edmondstone, who worked on the research for the Inglewood State School's 150th Anniversary. Mayfields is her family property, where they have lived here for 40 years. Before that Kerry's father (Allan Biggs) owned it. He purchased it from Huttons who bought it from the Fletcher family.

The original house of Mayfields was directly on top of the river bank and after a very significant flood they decided to move it to another part of the farm across the highway. The Edmondstones have built their house in a completely different spot.

The name Mayfields was originally the name of the entire area before they changed it to Omanama. Omanama is 21 kilometres from Inglewood so it's most likely our ancestors would have gone to school out around here. The Omanama school was called Brigalow Gully School. They seemed to set up lots of small schools around a central location, usually on a farm, as people couldn't travel quite so easily.

Information extracted from these comments and documents:

The name "Omanama" was given to the area previously known as "Mayfields" when the railway line was opened in 1907. It has been suggested that "Omanama" is an aboriginal name for either the head or tail of a snake. Brigalow Gully was/is an area a few miles west towards Inglewood. The Omanama school was at first referred to as "The Brigalow Gully School".

Charles Edward Donovan was invited as a member of the Cheshire Lodge in 1903, becoming Master in 1912. He "kept diaries - nineteen volumes of these for the years 1897 -1920 are held in the storeroom of the Oxley Library. Costin Street, Brisbane - their catalogue number is OM64 - 16. Unfortunately, the 1897 - 1900 volumes are in disrepair and pages are missing. Nevertheless, they are wonderful reading and contain many interesting facts."

His diaries may be the source of some of these stories.

Early crops grown in the area were lucerne, corn, pumpkins and potatoes as well as tobacco. (Samuel had a licence to buy and sell tobacco, but this was later transferred to Sophia.) Teamsters would carry wool, lucerne chaff and other goods to Goondiwindi, on the Warwick-Goondiwindi road. Lucerne continues to be a crop grown in the area.

Schooling

The Bull Paddock School and Other Schooling.

School for the children was most difficult in those far off days. However, Willie and Robert Charles attended a bush school for a short while. It was situated in what was called The Bull Paddock, across the Brook from Sandy Hill and between The Island and The Six Mile, the teacher being Edith (Eda) Fletcher (afterwards Mrs Rutledge). Miss Fletcher the teacher used to walk through the bush from Mayfield to the School, by following firstly the Ponds Creek and then the Brook until she eventually reached the school, which was surrounded by huge gum trees and one only had to look up amongst the leaves of the gum trees to see any quantity of native bears (KOALAS!). The country, too, at that time was a moving mass of kangaroos. (Apparently the walk would be about 5km)

I would like to have a list of the names of the pupils who attended the Bull Paddock School. Willie and Rob Charles were pupils at the Bull Paddock School and I know there were some of the Porters, the Lakes and Fletchers, most likely Arthur and Joe Gray and Donny and jam Donovan. I believe it closed down somewhere about 1886. (The)Charles children's next schooling would not be until 1869. John had a Scotchman named George Learmonth who worked for him at The Island for five years for £1 a week, tucker, and a house to live in for himself and family (Mrs Tommy Lake's old home). Mrs Learmonth became teacher for the Charles children for 6/- per week from 1889 to 1894. The members of the family attending Mrs Learmonth's school were Bill, Bob, Allick and Alwin, the hours being three per day. After 1893 the Learmonth's left and for a long while there was no school. *Daisy may have started her education at this school.*

Half Time School at The Island.

About the years 1893-4 we had for a time a half time school, the teacher Mr Walsh from Goondiwindi. He spent one week at The Glen and the next with us. After about a year The Glen became a full time school, and The Island school closed down for a time again and we had no school.

?inder John Cheshire at Naomi Dell

(There's no context for the next part, but shows that there have always been naughty boys. It sounds like the 'John' referred to was possibly a pupil teacher, not uncommon in the early days.)

I remember my own school form. When John gave me a card of sums to do, would say I would do this lot for two lollies - no pay, no sums. John always had a supply of boiled lollies on hand for at least once a week John used to pay a visit to Mayfield and would buy a pound of lollies from Mrs Stephenson's store for about 9d, as once he started paying me, that was the end, as I would not work without pay. Brother Tom was the youngest of John's seven pupils and Tom, when upset, had a habit of sliding off the stool down under the table and there he would stay until school came out. Each one put on a turn of some sort whilst John was our teacher. Many a laugh John and I had in after years about our school days. John reckoned that I was the World's worst speller. No doubt he was right for according to my family I still maintain that Championship. In spite of our troublesome school experience with John, it did not prevent us from remaining warm friends all through life. (Clarrie and Daisy may not have attended this class)

Brigalow Gully School and Pupils

In 1897 the Brigalow Gully School was opened. It was just beyond the Omanama Railway Station of today, although the Railway did not operate until 1907. When the Brigalow Gully School opened, eight of us went forward and I, the leader of the gang and over 15 years of age. (I remained at Brigalow Gully for 18 months and thus completing my education). Our school team was as follows, in order of age - Alick, Alwin, James, Mary, Tom, Sam, Les and Lilly.

Other children who attended the opening of the Brigalow Gully school were as follows-

The family of Johnstones of Sandy Hill - distance 3 miles,

Burt (older than me), Clara, Percy, Arthur.

Stephensons of Mayfield, Clary (older than me), and Daisy

Clarke of Bath Farm, Sarah, Colin and Allan.

Ossie Johnstons of Errwood, distance 1½ miles,

Willie, Blanch (both older than me), Mary, Olly, Walter, Eddie and Edgar.

The Willie Grays, Lucy, Bella and Mary

The number of pupils was 27. The first teacher at Brigalow Gully was a Miss Katie O'Connor, a wonderful and good teacher. (Annie Crawford, who later married grandma's brother Clarence took over from Miss O'Connor on 4th September 1899.)

The Cheese Factory

Cheese Factories.

About the year 1904/5 something new came to the district in the form of cheese Factories. Great excitement amongst the selectors when a Mr Alexander came into the Mayfield district to see if he could get enough milk suppliers to start a Cheese Factory, on behalf of a Company calling themselves the Lowood Creamery Company. The meeting was held at Mrs Stephenson's home which was called Mayfield. (Everything in those days was held at Mrs Stephenson's home, all Meetings, Concerts, Sunday School, Church Services of various creeds) The selectors who met Mr Alexander at this Cheese Factory meeting where those within a radius of about 5 miles, as it was stated that beyond that distance it would be too far to bring milk in time for cheese making. I was at this meeting and the representative spoke firstly and explained what they would do if there (was) enough cows owned by the prospective suppliers and stated that each cow could be put down as a gallon per cow. Each selector was asked to give in the number of cows that he would be able to

milk, about 500 was suggested as sufficient for a Factory. As near as I can remember, the names and numbers would be somewhat as follows:-

John Charles (The then Big Shot) from Naomi Dall	100
Bi11 Johnstone from Sandy Hill	40
Charlie Fletcher from Mayfield	30
Ossie Johnstone from Errwood	50
Wallace and George Gray of Arlington	50
Charlie Donovan of The Glen	50
Dick? Donovan of Glen View	50
Rob Charles of Don Kell	50
Alick Charles of Bath Farm	50
Jim Reibelt from Warroo Creek	50

Total number, roughly 500 cows

Therefore, the meeting was satisfactory, the number of cows promised was sufficient. Then a site for the Factory was discussed and it was agreed that two acres of land on the western portion of Mayfield selection with a frontage to the Warwick road and on the Chain of Ponds Creek would be an excellent (site) Ends.

The Church on Mayfields

ST. DAVID'S

As mentioned earlier, during the early years of settlement around "The Glen" there was no church building - the settlers gathering at homesteads within the district whenever the Minister made his visits.

As the district grew, the settlers discussed the possibility of building their own church and so it was, that on Saturday February 25th 1905a meeting was held at the home of Mrs Stevenson ([Stephenson](#)) to discuss the submitted tenders to build a church at Mayfield. In the opinion of those present the submitted tenders were far too high - Mr Bruer's was 199 Pounds and Mr Riebelts was 120 Pounds. Eventually, it was decided to ask Mr Tom Jeffries (price unknown) to build the church.(He built St John's Church Inglewood).

The families of the district namely Gray, Dowling, Johnstone, Stevenson ([Stephenson](#)) Charles, Donovan and Fletcher, donated some 200Pounds, enabling the church to be built and opened free of debt on Sunday July 30th 1905 in the presence of about one hundred people. Archdeacon Rivers opened the little church and named it "St. Davids".Five Pounds and Eight Pence was collected from the offering.

Over the years the following memorials were donated Donovan family of "Glenview" panelled the sanctuary in SilkyOakin memory of their parents, Richard and Florence.

"The Glen" family gave a silver vase, the velvet fontal and the hangings used for the different seasons of the Church in memory of their parents, Charles and Mary.

The altar cloths were given by Les Bracker of "Lesbrook" (in memory of his mother) and by Clarrie Stevenson ([Stephenson](#)) of "Mayfield".

The organ was given by Mrs Rob Charles.

The Font by Mr.W.Bracker and son Les, in memory of his wife and his mother.

The Communion Cup was given by the Fletcher family in memory of Clarrie who was killed in action during World War I.

The Book Rest for the alter was given in memory of Mr Rundle of "Luna" - also killed in action during World War I.

The Silver Candlesticks were given by Charles, Walter, and Ethel(Naumann) in memory of their parents, Charles and Mary(nee Donovan) Gray.

The first Wedding in the little church was that of Charles Ezzy and Lilly Donovan (24th January 1906).

July 1955-the fiftieth Anniversary Service was taken by Archdeacon Knight, the Rev J. Taylor and the Rev Adrian Charles, Great Grandson of Denis and Phoebe Donovan - Grandson of Charles& Mary Donovan and John & Phoebe Charles - and son of Robert and Alli (nee Donovan) Charles].It was at this service that Percy Donovan gave the Bible and all the Alter Books.

During 1976, the services at St. David's were discontinued - the little church became neglected and almost forgotten during this period in its history the organ was stolen and some of the furniture was vandalised. The memorials were taken to Inglewood.

For more information: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Oman_Ama,_Queensland