

BROWNS PLAINS

Browns Plains was used as a place name as early as 1840 by surveyor Robert Dixon. The area was initially used for grazing cattle which provided meat to the convict settlement of Moreton Bay. From 1863 onwards, the coach route to Casino (NSW) passed through Browns Plains. Land began to be taken up from the mid 1870s.

George Stretton established a post office and accommodation house in 1872. The 1876 Bailliere's Gazetteer listed Browns Plains as "a postal centre of an extensive agricultural and pastoral district" with a population of 30. George Stretton's hotel was licensed in 1876. The area was described as elevated and broken into hilly ridges of sandstone and carboniferous materials. The climate was described as healthy and heavily timbered and the soil light and sandy.

A provisional school was established in 1878 with Mrs Catherine Haynes as the first teacher. This school was financed through subscriptions from local residents. A new building was erected by Mans Stjernquist in 1900 at a cost of £110/10. This school was closed in 1902 due to low attendance, because of the major drought at the time.

Prominent early settlers included John Orr who owned the triangular pocket of land between the junction of Middle Road, and the Mt Lindesay Highway. George Stretton married Emma Webber and her brother Thomas Webber was later in charge of the Browns Plains Post Office. Other prominent settlers included the Ansell, Sideys, Goostreys, Mayes, Cronks and Johnsons. Most were timber getters or shingle splitters.

By the turn of the century, the population of the area had grown a little and residents were beginning to show diversification in their occupations. As well as farmers the area also boasted a blacksmith, basket maker, carpenter and storekeeper. In 1913 the school building was relocated to Park Ridge to replace the old school there, which had succumbed to white ants.

Throughout the early twentieth century, the Browns Plains area maintained its largely agricultural character. Timber getting, continued in the district until the 1950's and 1960's, and sand mining created a string of artificial water holes along Scrubby Creek. A post office and store opened in 1956, with the post office named Brownsleigh.

By the early 1970's reticulated water was installed land developers had realised the area's potential and were starting to move in. The first housing estate in the area was called Ranchwood Hill located just behind the Browns Plains Hotel. The developer was Alfred Grant. The Browns Plains Tavern opened in 1976; a century after the first hotel had opened. New shops were constructed on the corner of Browns Plains Road in 1980, including a new post office. The place name reverted to Browns Plains. The Grand Plaza Shopping Centre opened in 1994.

St Bernadine's Catholic School opened in 1982 followed by the Browns Plains State School in 1983, Browns Plains High in 1985, Boronia Heights School in 1990, Regents Park State School in 1994, and Yugumbir State School in 1986. A new college opened just north of Browns Plains in 2006 named Stretton State College.