

WATERFORD

Early History

Captain Patrick Logan explored the Waterford area, during his excursion south of the Moreton Bay Penal Colony (Brisbane). The Logan district was not available for white settlement until after the Penal Colony was closed in 1842. After this time, squatters leased vast areas in the district on a year by year basis, until in the early 1860s the area was surveyed, and the Logan Agricultural Reserve was established. From then on, the land in the area was progressively released to settlers. Waterford was the part of the lease of James Fitzgerald.

Migrant Settlers

Two migrant groups, the Irish and the Germans mainly settled the Waterford area. Irish settlers were brought to Queensland by the Queensland Immigration Society, which was founded by Bishop Quinn. The first group sailed for Queensland on a ship called the “Eringo-Bragh”, which took twenty five weeks to make the long journey. Many of the immigrants chose to leave the ship at some of the ports of call down the coast of Queensland, however a significant number completed the journey to Brisbane, and then travelled overland to the Waterford area.

Irish settlers included the Leos, Maloneys, Rafter, Colgans, Beethams, Ryans, Deerans, Gavans, Farrells and McHughes. The Leos later established the Morning Star Hotel, as well as a butcher shop, grocer’s and blacksmith’s which serviced the Cobb & Co. coaches. Many of the Irish immigrants later left the district and moved to the Beaudesert and Tamborine areas, however the Irish influence in the area had been established.

The German immigrants began arriving in Brisbane from 1864. Land was available in the Logan area, and many of the immigrants selected blocks there, including twelve families who travelled from Brisbane on the steamer *Diamond* to land at what is now known as Bethania. Nevertheless, while the division between Waterford and Bethania was cultural, both communities worked together for the development of the Logan region.

Establishing Waterford

Initial development in Waterford began around Tygum lagoon. Arthur Pimm took up riverfront land here in 1862 with John Rafter taking up the remainder to the north of the lagoon. Pimm then engineered the relocation of the Waterford ferry, which Samuel Waterman had established at the end of Tygum Road in 1862. Pimm closed off the road and then had a new road surveyed to cross the river at the current bridge site. Pimm then subdivided the estate, which he marketed as Pimlico in 1866. A police barracks was established at Waterford at that time also. The township, we now know as Waterford, was surveyed in 1866, but did not have a name at that time. The name of Waterford did not come into common usage until 1868.

The ferry had a string of operators including Waterman and William Stone. The first official licence went to Henry Eden in 1865. Eden had a small hotel and store located between Loganlea Road and the ferry, which was used to accommodate travellers. Eden generally employed others to run his ferries, which also included the Loganholme ferry. Eden's Ferry Hotel was licensed to ferryman William Huston in March 1871. Richard Leo established the Morning Star Hotel at the same time on the western corner of Loganlea Road. He was licensed in May 1871. Another hotel was built on the southern side of the river, run by Robert Skiffens, which was built around 1873. It was known as the Waterford Arms.

Arthur Pimm's attempts to sell Pimlico township were not successful and in 1869, Henry Jordan, the former emigration agent for Queensland, purchased the estate and renamed it Tygum. Jordan was instrumental in much of the Irish immigration to Queensland. He was the state member for East Moreton between 1868 -71. Jordan began construction of a sugar mill almost immediately. Sugar was seen as a better option to cotton. Sugar cultivation on the Logan was encouraged by Louis Hope of the Ormiston plantation near Cleveland, and early sugar crops on the Logan were taken by riverboat to Hope's mill for crushing.

Sugar growing became a key industry on the Logan for the next 20 years. Hope only managed to secure the milling of Logan sugar for a couple of years and many farmers started building their own mills. The first crushing at Tygum mill was in September 1870. At that time Jordan purchased Tygum Road and it was permanently closed to traffic. It is likely that the stand of bunya trees marking the entrance to his estate, were planted at this time. The other significant legacy of Jordan's occupation is the private cemetery in Henry Jordan Park, which holds the remains of four infants of Henry and Sarah Jordan, who died between 1872 and 1876.

Logan River residents continually lobbied for a bridge across the river, but the funding was not forthcoming. By 1875 tenders were called for the supply of timber for a bridge at Waterford. It was completed in August 1876.

A school was also required in the region. While the Logan Reserve School had been established around 1865, it was far removed geographically from Waterford. The first Waterford school was set up in Charles Wilson's barn in 1869 and a new primary school was established in 1871.

In the mid 1870s the Catholic Church from Logan Reserve was relocated to a site adjacent to the Morning Star Hotel. A cemetery evolved next to the church. It may have been in use as early as 1874 when infant Richard Leo junior died. The Leo family formally donated the land to the Church in 1892.

Henry Jordan sold off much of his property in 1878. Tygum House was sold to William Arthy and Jordan left the district. Arthy and his son James are also buried in the private cemetery on the riverbank in Henry Jordan Park.

The Lahey brothers purchased Jordan's sugar mill in 1879. The sugar milling equipment was then sold to Schneiders of Bethania, who set it up on the creek in Old Logan Village Road. Laheys then turned their attention to timber milling. The sawmill burnt down in 1884 and the family later moved to Canungra.

Local government was introduced in the form of the Waterford Divisional Board, (later known as Shire Council) which commenced operation in 1880. Initial meetings were held in the Waterford Arms Hotel, and then in a storeroom opposite the Royal Hotel in Beenleigh. Waterford shared premises and a clerk, with the Beenleigh Division for many years. In 1906 new boundaries were gazetted for the Waterford Shire to include some of the former Yeerongpilly Shire to the west. Chairman Martin Schneider, then lobbied for independent premises for the Council. He donated land in Waterford and a small timber hall was erected. The first meeting in the new hall was held in April 1908.

Railway transport came to the Logan with the construction of the first part of the South Coast line in 1885. A rail bridge was constructed over the river at Loganlea in 1884.

The worst flood ever recorded on the river occurred in January 1887, and the railway bridge was washed away. The Waterford Bridge survived, but six houses were washed away.

Further major flooding occurred in April 1893, with the bridge suffering each time it had to endure a flood. By 1916 a new concrete bridge was built with steep sides, which was locally known as the pig trough.

In the twentieth century, dairying became the key industry, particularly after the opening of the Kingston Butter Factory in 1907. Cattle ticks were a problem and the locals installed a cattle dip in Waterford, between the bunya tress and the river in 1905.

Waterford was again victim to a major flood on Australia Day in 1947. The bridge washed away and the ferry had to be re-introduced while the construction of the new bridge was planned. Fortunately for the council, the Kingston-Beenleigh Road had been declared a main road, which meant the State Government had to pay for a new bridge. Despite local councillors lobbying the Main Roads Commissioner for a high level bridge, this was not forthcoming, and a new low level concrete bridge was constructed during 1953-4, which opened in July 1954.

Coincidentally, the next major flood on the river occurred on Australia Day in 1974. Two houses were washed away, although the bridge survived. A new high level bridge was constructed in 1976.

The old hotels were rebuilt too. The Morning Star, which became the Club Hotel at the turn of the century, was rebuilt in 1969. The Waterford Arms was resurrected as the Riverwilde Hotel in 1972.

A drive-in theatre was built on Logan Reserve Road, near Beutel Road in December 1974. A new school was established in Waterford West in 1976. The old Catholic Church had been sold off in the late 1940s and relocated to Eight Mile Plains and then to Daisy Hill, where it remained in use as St Declans until it burnt down. The cemetery was then sold by the Catholic Church, with only four graves relocated to Gleneagle. It is unknown how many graves remain on the site, which is now occupied by semi-industrial shops.