



HERITAGE SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 12

TOWNSVILLE SHOW

Early records related to the founding years of the North Queensland Pastoral and Agricultural Association have been lost or are unavailable. The following account endeavours to address the discrepancies in the interpretation of events in the available secondary sources and present an outline of the early years of the Townsville Show.

In 1876, the year Brisbane held its first *Ekka*, prominent figures in our region's community established the North Queensland Pastoral and Agricultural Association.

William Hann, JC Steiglitz, LF Sachs, AE Bundock, SF Walker, W Robertson, PF Hanran, C McAllister, AF Chubb, and P Hannon called a meeting to be held at the *Exchange Hotel* on the June 21 1876. These men were leaders in commerce and pastoralism in the region. William Hann held Maryvale Station, JC Steiglitz had pastoral property in the Mount Stuart area and AE Bundock and SF Walker and L F Sachs were involved in commerce as

merchants, business managers and bankers. PF Hanran was Mayor of the municipality of Townsville at the time. The Division of Thuringowa had still to be formed.

It seems that the first show was held later that year at the Botanical Gardens Reserve. The industrial and horticultural exhibits were displayed in the old Supreme Court building on Melton Hill which was then the School of Arts. At that time office holders were Patron, the Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy; President, Mr SC Dickens PM; Vice Presidents, Mr (later Sir) Robert Philp and Mr W V Brown; committee members, Messrs W Aplin, PF Hanran, AFB Chubb, Rev W Gray, Messrs AE Bundock, W Hays, W Smith, Dr Frost, Messrs PF Armati, WJ Castling, A Ball and W Hann. The secretary was Mr JN Parkes. In the early years the association served the wider region and attracted delegates such as R Grey, E Cunningham, J Deane and AF Walker from as far a field as Hughenden, Woodhouse, Charters Towers and Ingham.



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The Government Gazette of January 1881 proclaims the acquisition by the North Queensland Pastoral and Agricultural Association of 10 acres of reserve land on Ingham Road. At that time William Aplin (then Chairman of Thuringowa), William Hann and Walter Enoch Price Hays were listed as the trustees of the association. As North Queensland developed and pastoral and agricultural associations were established in other centres, the North Queensland Pastoral and Agricultural Association dropped “North Queensland” from its title and replaced it with “Townsville”.

Over the next 25 years the association acquired more land until in 1916 the showgrounds covered an area of 30 acres 9 perches. In 1929 the grounds were described in a Brisbane newspaper as enclosed by “a substantial eight-foot galvanised iron fence...at intervals along the boundary, magnificent trees give a cool and picturesque appearance to the surrounds. The improvements consist of a grandstand, exhibition hall, secretary’s office, a committee room, fat cattle yards, stud and dairy cattle stalls, dog shed, poultry pavilion and pavilions which have

been erected by various firms. The show ring proper was enclosed with a picket fence, and it was within this area that wonderfully consistent high jumping performances have been witnessed.”



Mr H Abbot (Sole Judge) in centre, Mr Rintoul (Steward) on left. Mr Mawby (Steward on right) in the cattle lane at the Townsville Show.
Photo: Townsville City Council Local History Collection

Over the years, a number of prominent Thuringowans have been involved in the association. Mr Henry Abbot, Chairman of Thuringowa, 1910, 1911, served as President of the Townsville Pastoral and Industrial Society for 11 years. He was a regular judge of cattle in the beef cattle classes.





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Another was Mr WJ Affleck, member of the Thuringowa Divisional Board from 1900 to 1904, who was President of the Association and was well known for his horses. Other members of the

Thuringowa Shire Council who were also members of the Association were J Deane, JC Steiglitz, AG Bundock, C McAllister and J Hodel.

Acknowledgements:

- Cummins and Campbell Monthly Magazine, July 1939.
- Cummins and Campbell Monthly Magazine, July 1941.
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines, registered plans of show reserve
- Doherty, W.J., The Townsville Book, Edwards, Dunlop and Co Ltd. Brisbane, 1919.
- Queensland Government Gazette, 1881, 1888, 1897, 1902, 1916.
- Townsville City Council Local History Collection photograph from their collection
- Townsville Daily Bulletin, 6 July 1971.

