



HERITAGE SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 18

THE RANGE HOTEL SITE

Possibly the oldest extant headstone in the region lies at the foot of Hervey Range. It is the grave of 24 year old, Francis Earl, a local squatter who died of fever at the *Range Hotel* on 12 March 1866. This grave and two others from the 1870s are surviving remnants of the hotel which once provided a resting place for travellers undertaking the arduous trip up the range and further inland.



The first inland road went due west from the port of Townsville, across the Bohle and Alice rivers, climbed the range at Thornton Gap and then headed further west. The trip from the port to the Eureka Hotel at the top of Hervey Range took three days.

The *Range Hotel* at the bottom of the range was built by James Mead in 1866 and had two sitting rooms and six bedrooms. In 1878, a traveller observed that it was “very pleasantly situated. The proprietor has added to the natural beauty by planting some Leichhardt trees around the house which looks very graceful.”

The other two graves on the site date from the 1870s and remind us of the hardships of living in the bush. The first is Mary Langton. Her story is a sad one. At the age of 28 years she committed suicide by taking poison. At that time she was the mother of three small children, the eldest 4 years old. Her husband John Langton was a carrier who carried goods from the port to Dalrymple township. It is believed that the isolation of living in the bush with a young family and her husband often away on carrying business led her to despair and an untimely death.



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The other grave in the cemetery is that of John Henry Bell, a child of 4 years who died of inflammation of the lungs in May 1879. His father, Charles, was also a carrier and lived at Bellgrove.

The hotel closed in 1884. All that remains of the hotel are the Leichhardt trees and the three headstones. In recent years the site was used by workers constructing the

Yabulu to Greenvale rail line but since then has become overgrown with spear grass, lantana and other native vegetation.

Acknowledgements:

- Dorothy and Bruce Gibson-Wilde, *A Pattern of Pubs, Hotels of Townsville 1864-1914*, History Department, James Cook University, 1988.
- Peter Bell, Graves, Range Hotel Site Thornton Gap, report to City of Thuringowa, 1998.