



## HERITAGE SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET 22

### THE ALICE HOTEL

Another hotel situated along the route inland over Herveys Range was the Alice Hotel. In 1868 Lucy Gray (the wife of pastoralist Charles Gray) stayed at the Alice Hotel on her journey west to Hughenden. Lucy kept journals of her travels from Sydney to Townsville and Hughenden. These journals have provided an insight into what travelers would have endured on their travels over the range.

In last month's issue we focused on the Range Hotel which was once situated at the bottom of Hervey Range. A number of hotels and camping grounds existed along the route inland over Herveys Range. The journey from Townsville to the bottom of the Range could take as long as two days. Many travelers probably stopped along the way at the Alice hotel to feed and rest their horses.



The Alice Hotel was located on the south-western bank of the Alice River on the old road from Townsville to Hervey Range. The first inland road went due west from the port of Townsville, across the Bohle and Alice rivers, climbed the Range at Thorton's Gap and then headed further west.

One of the earliest pioneers of North Queensland, Thomas McCarey built the Alice Hotel in 1867. He claimed to have established the first dairy in Townsville in 1865. The Alice hotel contained two sitting rooms and four bedrooms.

Lucy Gray provides a detailed account of her journey including a description and sketch of the hotel

*"..about 15 miles on our way we stopped at the "Alice Hotel", a rough wooden house with the usual wide verandah where travelers arriving deposit their baggage, saddles and pack bags. We had ridden fast and fifteen miles seemed a long way in the dust and heat.*



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*I was glad enough to have a rest and a bath. After supper the horses were bought up and saddled again as we had to go to the foot of the range 15 miles further where we were to camp for the night.”*

The Alice Hotel ceased business in 1903. This was 9 years after the Range Hotel and 7 years before the Eureka hotel ceased trading. It was during this time that the old road saw less traffic.

It seems when the railway opened, coaches and carriers stopped using the road to Ravenswood and Charters Towers.

All that remains of the Alice hotel today is the two tamarind trees which once surrounded the building. The site is now part of privately owned land.

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Dorothy and Bruce Gibson-Wilde, *A Pattern of Pubs, 1864-1914*, History Department, James Cook University.