This brochure covers the third in a series of walking trails, designed to reveal Townsville’s rich heritage.

Walking >> Allow 50 minutes for the shortened trail and a further 35 minutes for the extended trail. Allow longer for a leisurely stroll.

Cycling >> Allow approximately 40 minutes for the complete trail.

Heritage Trail 3 >> South Townsville & Port >> Tells the story of the relationship between the industrial and the residential aspects of this working class suburb. From its earliest days Ross Island, now known as South Townsville, was a hub for industry and many men from the suburb worked at the port and in associated industries. The early architecture of the suburb reflects its social make-up whilst numerous pubs provide a snapshot of the daily social interaction between wharfies, seamen, meatworkers and railway workers.

Townsville’s first European contact occurred in 1819 when Allan Cunningham, aboard the survey vessel Mermaid, landed on Cape Cleveland. A further 45 years elapsed before John Melton Black and his partner Robert Towns founded Townsville in November 1864. Originally, Townsville was a slowly developing seaport with pastoralists settling in the hinterland. Following the discovery of gold in 1867 it developed rapidly and by 1880 was the port for five major goldfields and the main supply centre for northern Australia. Later it became the centre for the rich sugar growing districts to the north and south.

Today, Townsville is a vibrant modern city and the administrative centre of North Queensland, but it still preserves a rich heritage from its golden past.
01. VICTORIA BRIDGE
Victoria Bridge is the only swing bridge in Queensland and one of the few surviving in Australia. It was completed in 1889 and was the first permanent bridge built across Ross Creek. It linked the city and the port and contributed greatly to Townsville’s early economic and urban development. The bridge would open to allow ships to sail up Ross Creek.

02. AUSTRALIAN HOTEL
This two-storey brick hotel was opened in 1888. The Australian was on the route of an infamous pub crawl from port to city. In the 1930s Errol Flynn, who later became a Hollywood film legend, stayed in this hotel whose premier room is now called the Errol Flynn Room.

03. ROW OF TIMBER-FRAMED SHOPS
This building is a replication of a type of timber-framed shops in South Townsville. Photographs taken in 1903 show that Palmer Street was a combination of shops interspersed with two-storey hotels.

04. QUEENSLAND TEACHERS UNION
Constructed c1928 as a four-unit dwelling, this building is unusual for its use of concrete bricks during a time when the production of masonry was uncommon in Townsville. The matching front fence adds to the symmetry of this neo-Georgian style building.

05. SHAMROCK HOTEL
The Shamrock opened for business in 1889. The hotel’s unique combination of brick beneath an upper story of timber is one of the few surviving in Australia. It was completed in 1889 and was the first permanent bridge built across Ross Creek. It linked the city and the port and contributed greatly to Townsville’s early economic and urban development. The bridge would open to allow ships to sail up Ross Creek.

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07. MARITIME MUSEUM OF TOWNSVILLE
The Maritime Museum is home to exhibitions and memorabilia from Townsville’s colourful maritime past. From the tragic tale of the SS Yongala to the development of the Townsville Port, the museum offers visitors an engaging experience. The 1930s Pier-Master’s Office, originally built on the Townsville wharves and the 1886 Bay Rock Lighthouse are composite parts of the museum’s architecture.

08. METROPOLE HOTEL
Built in 1887 the Metropole was nicknamed ‘the first and last’ as it was the first hotel thataries and sailors encountered on the “Port to City Pub Crawl” and the last stop before returning to the port. The hotel underwent major internal changes in 2008.

09. 24 ARCHER STREET
This dwelling is Townsville’s first display home. It was built by Buffa & Company in late 1913 and is the only known example in Townsville, and possibly Queensland, of an entirely prefabricated concrete house.

10. FORMER WOOL STORE
This warehouse was erected in 1899 for the New Zealand Loan & Mercantile Agency Company for the storage of wool. Wool was one of the first exports from the Port of Townsville after its founding in 1864. Note the close proximity of this building to the railway line.

11. SOUTH TOWNSVILLE STATE SCHOOL
Opened as Ross Island State School in 1884, The building with the large skylight is the original classroom. The adjacent wing was relocated from Ravenswood School in 1913. The school has a colourful history, pupils initially struggled with shifting sand hills, a swamp in the playground, feral goats and book eating rats.

12. ST JOHN’S CHURCH, HALL & RECTORY
The first church in South Townsville was built on this site in 1886. The current church built in 1907, replaced two earlier churches destroyed by cyclones.

13. ALLEN STREET CORNER SHOPS
The corner shop played an important role not only as a supply centre but also as a meeting place. Almost all the corner shops in South Townsville were owned at one time by Chinese storekeepers.

14. COMMONWEALTH HOTEL
Built in 1901, this brick structure with timber verandahs catered to the needs of the single male workforce, offering meals and accommodation. The hotel was named in celebration of Federation and the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia.

15. ST PATRICK’S CHURCH & HALL
Opened in 1930 this building is a beautiful example of a ‘Spanish Mission’ style church. It was at the hall that Eddie Mabo, renowned land rights activist, established a community school in the 1970s and 1980s.

16. NELSON STREET HERITAGE PRECINCT
Nelson Street is a fine example of South Townsville’s historic streetscapes. The dwellings are largely cottages in the style of the workers dwellings. Note the railway tracks still in-situ at the intersection with Morey Street.

17. FORMER BUTCHER SHOP
This small shop was built in the early 1950s and purchased by local butcher William (Bill) Scown in 1954. The old butcher shop was sympathetically restored in 2003.

18. FORMER OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS CENTRE
This building was erected c1913 to house the Overseas Telecommunications Centre. The first ship-to-shore radio transmissions in North Queensland were made through this building as was the first commercial radio broadcast (1935).

19. VICTORIA PARK
At the turn of the 20th century Victoria Park was regarded as the best football ground in Townsville. It was named in honour of the jubilee of Queen Victoria and was gazetted a park in 1887.

20. FORMER REPUBLIC HOTEL
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