

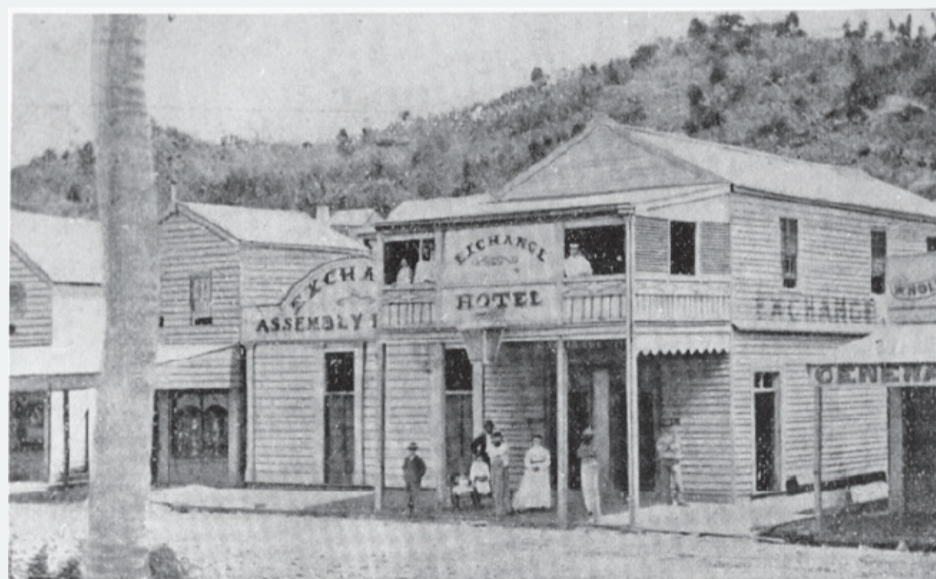
ROSE BALL

C. 1840 - 1925

Pioneer Publican

Rose O'Reilly married Edward (Dan) O'Neill, the licensee of the Racecourse Hotel at German Gardens (Belgian Gardens), in Townsville in 1871. The couple had two children before Edward's untimely death in 1872. Following Edward's passing, Rose took up the license and transferred it to the Exchange Hotel in Flinders Street East in 1873. Under her management, the Exchange Hotel became a favourite with Townsville's citizens, almost doubling in size. In 1877, Rose (pictured at left with her family, seated front row left) married Andrew Ball (front row right), one of the first European men to explore the site of Townsville. Andrew Ball took over the licence and together they increased the popularity of the hotel, undertaking a number of renovations and extensions. In 1881 the Exchange Hotel and many of the surrounding buildings were destroyed by fire. The Balls rebuilt the hotel, reopening it in 1882.

From 1882 the Balls leased the Exchange Hotel to others but remained active in Townsville's development. In 1886 they built a house at Mysterton, naming it 'Rosebank'. Rosebank was known for the beauty of its gardens, with Andrew Ball planting an avenue of mango trees leading to the house. The house and two of the original mango trees still survive. During the depression of the 1890s, Rose managed to hold onto Rosebank. Even after her husband's death in 1894, she continued to maintain the property. She sold the property to her son-in-law when her daughter Alice married in 1912 and remained at Rosebank until her death in 1925, aged 85 years.



Exchange Hotel
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Rosebank
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Rosebank today
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