



**Pine Mountain & Districts  
Historical Society Inc.**

# *History Happenings*

## *Pine Mountain*

**Quarterly Newsletter**

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Edition 2.1**

2023 is well underway. The first meeting of the Historical Society was held on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February in the Rural Fire Shed. Plans are well underway for ANZAC Day with a ceremony being held at the Cricket Pitch Park at Pine Mountain at 9 a.m.

Several historical books being written by Society members are nearing completion; and they will be published this year.

This edition of the Newsletter recalls segments of the lives of some of the district's pioneers. They have left a legacy of tenacity underpinned by a strong work ethic which does Pine Mountain proud.

Mary Mahon

### **Memories**

**Reminiscences by local residents about life in Pine Mountain in previous times.**

**Len Mahon**

### **Old Bill Bell**

*The Bill Bell family had the property next to ours, between our property and the Brisbane River, which is now at the end of Russell's Road. In those days, it wasn't a road, just a horse and cart track.*

*I was about 12 years old at the time. Old Bill Bell's wife had died. He had retired and given up dairy farming; and he was living alone in the house.*

*One day, we found out that Bill had had a stroke. It seems that he had the stroke during the previous night and the stroke paralysed one side of his body. He crawled out of bed in the middle of the night and propped himself up with a stick and hobbled all the way down the access to his property until he got to what is now Russell's Road. It was about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a kilometre.*

*He got to the main gate of his property and he leaned on the gate post so that he could stay standing up. He had brought a stock whip with him. He leaned on the gate post standing on one leg and swung the stock whip with his good hand. He cracked the whip and he called out "Help!"*

*It was about 2 o'clock in the morning. Bill had been cracking his whip and calling out "Help!" for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour, but we didn't hear him in our house. We were about 3 kilometres away. One of our other neighbours, a little bit further up the Valley from us on Russell's Road, happened to be out of bed at that time and he heard the crack of a whip and a faint call coming up the Valley in the silence of the night.*

*He got his wife up, but the call was so faint, they could hardly make it out. They listened, and they both decided it was someone calling for help. That neighbour was Les Hughes, who was a share farmer and he lived in the old Murtagh house. Les Hughes got into his car with his wife, leaving their 5 kids behind, drove down the track. Every now and then, they would stop and listen and they could hear a whip crack and a call for help.*

*They proceeded down the track in his car. They listened and got the direction from the call and eventually got down to Bill Bell's gate, and found old Bill propped up on the gate post with his whip. They picked him up and took him straight into the Ipswich Hospital. He had had a bad stroke and was in hospital for a couple of months and eventually he died.*

*The old house that he lived in is still standing. No one has lived in it since, and the property hasn't been used since those days. The house is now derelict. It was a very old house, one of the original settler's houses. It is falling down now, which is a bit sad.*

*The next day, I heard my parents talking about it. The bush telegraph sent the word around Pine Mountain that Bill Bell had had a stroke, and that he had called for help by cracking his whip. The sound of the whip crack was loud enough to be heard right up the Valley.*

*Old Bill Bell was the same age as my grandfather and he died a little bit after my grandfather in 1957.*

## History Snippets

### Origin of Place Names in Pine Mountain

#### Muirlea



Photo taken by Mary Mahon



Photo from BVRT Inc.

When driving along Pine Mountain Road at the entrance to the Pine Mountain District from the Warrego Highway, Muirlea is the first district on the left. It was named after a Scotsman, John Muir, who arrived in Australia in 1863 with his wife Mary and their five children. They took up a selection of 1000 broad acres (405 hectares) which they called 'Fairfield'. It was later named Muirlea.

By 1861, John Muir had established a farm, which in 1866 was described as having 'an extensive grove of fruit trees including oranges and mandarins and gardens as well as fields of corn, oats and hay'. In 1871 the local newspaper *The Queensland Times* reported that Muir was growing 7½ acres of cotton.

When the railway line from Ipswich to Fernvale was surveyed in 1884, John Muir donated a part of his land and in his honour, the Railway Station and the surrounding area was named Muirlea. It was originally called Brassall Railway Station. The name Muirlea was coined from the surname of the family and 'lea' meaning pasture.

John died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1904. His wife Mary died on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1911. They are buried together in the Ipswich Cemetery.

## Past Times in Pine Mountain

*Queensland Times* (Ipswich, Qld.: 1909-1954 Wed 5 May 1943, Page 2

### SCOUT NOTES

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Ipswich Troop

*In the afternoon 10 members of the troop went out to Mr. Harold Bell's farm at Pine Mountain and assisted in pineapple picking.*

## Pioneers and Early Settlers

Information about a resident of Pine Mountain who has made a mark on the district.



**Friedrich Geirg Bauer**  
1824 – 1890



**Anne Bauer (Pearson)**  
1830 – 1924

**Friedrich Geirg (Frederick George) Bauer Esq.** was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1824 in Hessen, Germany. He emigrated to Australia about 1850. He lived in the Ballarat District for a time. Friedrich married Anne Pearson in Geelong, Victoria in 1854. They had 5 children in Victoria; and then moved to Queensland, where another 4 children were born.

In 1863, Friedrich secured a land grant in the Upper Brisbane River area to establish a cotton plantation at Noogoora. He secured 720 acres, (6 sq. miles) of land on the Brisbane River, previously held by the North family. Noogoora Plantation also grew

40 acres of maize, 40 acres of lucerne, 1½ acres of creole sugar cane, and 1 acre of yams. The crops were cultivated by South Sea Islanders, who were also engaged in the picking of cotton with some indigenous families.

The cotton shed at Noogoora was described as being situated “200 to 300 yards from the main house. The top floor was for cotton storage, the eagle gin, a fire proof room; and a small mill for grinding maize. The lower floor was used for chaff cutting and housed the bale press, both driven by horse power. Behind the shed were the Islander’s barracks.”

Following the disastrous floods along the Brisbane River which covered Bauer’s cotton crops to a depth of almost 20 feet, the crops were ruined. Unable to recover from his losses, Friedrich ventured north, where he turned his efforts into establishing sugar growing. He was later recognised as the “Father of the Sugar Industry in Queensland”.

Friedrich Bauer died in 1890 in Cooktown, aged 66. He is buried in the Cooktown Cemetery. His wife Anne died in 1924 in England, aged 94.

The ongoing development of the cotton industry in Pine Mountain area including cotton grown on small plots of land was taken up by the early settlers of the area who had cleared their plots. This endeavour which ultimately failed, changed the landscape of the scrub country along the Brisbane River forever.

**Research by Colleen Engel**

## Pine Mountain Veterans

### The Murtagh brothers – John and Michael Murtagh

They were the sons of Irish immigrants and they grew up in Pine Mountain.



**John Murtagh 1887 – 1917**



**Michael Murtagh 1888 – 1917**

**John Murtagh** was born at Pine Mountain on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1887. He enlisted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1915 at Cairns in North Queensland and he served with the AIF Unit 25th Battalion, D Company, Regimental Number 941. The Unit embarked from Brisbane, Queensland, on board the *HMAT A60*.

John undertook War Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and France. Between 1915 and 1916, he was admitted to several hospitals in Gibraltar, and London with chronic dysentery. John was invalided to Sydney on the *H.T. Ulysses* early in 1917. He was admitted to the No. 4 Australian General Military Hospital at Randwick in Sydney, where he passed away with his parents present on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1917. His cause of death was Exhaustion and Amoebic Dysentery.

John Murtagh is buried in St. Michael's Church Cemetery, Pine Mountain. His name is recorded on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial Panel number 105.

**Michael Murtagh** was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1888 at Pine Mountain. He enlisted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1915 in Brisbane; and he served with the AIF unit 15th

Battalion, 17th Reinforcement, Regimental Number 5456. The Unit embarked from Sydney on board the *HMAT SS Hawkes Bay* on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1916.

His War Service was in Egypt and on the Western Front. Michael sustained several injuries in battles in France:

Wounded in Action with a gunshot wound to the left hand and fingers on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1916.

Wounded in Action on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1917 with a gunshot wound to the left elbow.

Michael Murtagh was reported 'Missing in Action' on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1917 in France with the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion. At the Court of Enquiry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1917, his Status was changed from 'Missing in Action' to 'Killed in Action 11 April 1917'. Michael's Commemoration details are recorded at the Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France. He is also remembered with a plaque in St. Michael's Church Cemetery at Pine Mountain beside his brother John's grave.

Both John and Michael Murtagh's names are recorded on the Monument erected by the Pine Mountain & Districts Historical Society. Each year at ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Ceremonies, tribute is paid to them and the other young men from Pine Mountain who gave their lives in The Great War.

### **John Murtagh's Grave at St. Michael's Church Cemetery, Pine Mountain**



***Erected By The residents of Pine Mountain District  
In Memory of Private John Murtagh  
Who served his country for Two years in Gallipoli and France  
R.I.P.***

A tombstone was also erected in the cemetery to the memory of Michael Murtagh. The inscription reads:

***In Loving Memory of Michael Murtagh  
Killed in action at Bullecourt France where he was interred.  
April 11 1917  
Aged 28 Years***

**Lest We Forget**

**Source: Information from gravestone inscriptions at St Michael's Cemetery supplied by Michael Mahon. Photo of the Murtagh grave from John Rossiter.**

### **Membership of the Historical Society**

New members are welcomed to join the Society. We host ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Ceremonies at the Cricket Pitch Park at Pine Mountain each year. The rest of the time is taken up with exchange of ideas and historical research.

Meetings are held once a month in the Rural Fire Brigade Shed at Pine Mountain. Afternoon tea is supplied.



# Membership Form

Membership of the association is open to all persons aged 18 years or older, having an interest in Pine Mountain history.

I would like to become a member of the Pine Mountain & Districts Historical Society Inc. I understand that as a member I am bound by the Rules and Constitution of the Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

My connection with district is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive information on upcoming events and

Publications.    Yes    No    *(Please Circle)*

Forward to:            The President  
                             Pine Mountain Historical Society  
                             410 Russells Road  
                             Pine Mountain 4306