

PAPER IV

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CABOOLTURE DISTRICT 1894 - 1994

PRESENT CHURCHES:

St Peter's Caboolture
Church of the Little flower, Bribie Island
St Joseph's Retreat House Chapel, Beachmere

BACKGROUND:

In the 1840s there was a predominant population of Aboriginals in the Caboolture district - 600 to 1000 on Bribie Island - 400 to 600 on the mainland around Caboolture/Beachmere. Other tribes from as far as the Bunya Mountains visited at various seasonal times, thus producing this variation in the numbers estimated.

CABOOLTURE:

The name was derived from two Aboriginal words KABUL meaning carpet snake and TUR meaning place (i.e. place of the carpet snake).

BRIBIE ISLAND:

In this case the name is thought to have come from two different Aboriginal dialects (CATEEBIL) - "BOORABEE" and (YUGMBIR) "BOROBI", both meaning native bear. Two other names that we know the Aboriginals used to refer to this island - "YARRON" meaning "hunting ground" and a similar word "YIRIN" meaning "mud crab".

The Aboriginals were passive cannibals and quite often ate their dead after skinning them.

The boundaries of the original Caboolture parish extended from Kedron Brook (near the present Kedron Park Hotel) in the south, to Cooroy in the north, west to Dayboro, Kilcoy and Connondale, and to the east along the coast line. This was identical to the civic boundaries controlled by the Caboolture Divisional Board (responsible mainly for roads). In 1903 the present Shire Council system was introduced as areas developed.

The spreading of God's word in the Caboolture district commenced in the 1870s with a zealous attempt from Father Duncan McNab to establish a good relationship with the Aborigines in and around Nambour. Father Julian E Tenison Woods also gave Missions in the area in the early 1880s. In 1866 as parish priest of Penola SA, he established the order of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart with co-founder, now Blessed Mother Mary of the Cross MacKillop (who was a cousin of Father McNab). This order has had a strong influence on the parish in modern times.

Father McNab established an Aboriginal Mission at "Durundur" Station, Woodford, owned by the Archer Brothers. This was one of the main stopping places on the journey north. He obtained government subsidy to provide food and clothes. In 1890 when this subsidy was withdrawn there were no Aborigines on Bribie Island and the mainland tribes were transferred to Barambah (Cherburg). Some individual families remained and worked on the various stations in the area.

In the late 1880s the building of the Queensland Railway exploded on to the scene and Caboolture was the main base for stocks and camps in this push northward and west. Our priests came more regularly to the area to encourage the railway fettlers to marry and settle down.

As far back as 1888 Father J Canali came to Caboolture once every two or three months to say Mass either in the Shire Hall or at the home of Mr Henry Hall. Father M Gallagher was the next priest who called for certain periods of time. From the *Brisbane Age* we quote: "Our readers of the Northern Road are invited to inspect the Mission and Station list of the Rev. clergy of Brisbane, on another page, in which some changes appear which concern our Gympie Road constituents. The Rev. M Gallagher will, we understand, visit them on a pastoral tour tomorrow, holding a station at North Pine, where there is at present a considerable population of natives and their families. Thence the reverend gentleman will go to Caboolture, hear confessions and celebrate mass at Mr Hall's in that township. Father Gallagher's next station will be at the hospitable mansion of Mr P Cash Esq. Wararba on Tuesday 26th. On Wednesday 27th he will be guest of M McCarthy Esq. J.P., the catholic pioneer of the district, closing his tour by a mission at the

house of that stirring man and good christian James Ahearn Esq. of Woodford on Thursday 28th”.

Father McKeirnan was the first administrator and at that time (to 1893) the main church was at St Peter's at Woodford, that church having been opened in 1890. A presbytery and stable did exist at Caboolture on the south bank of the river, and we have record of a marriage taking place in 1892 there.

From this short outline of the evolvement of the Caboolture district one can see the important role that our priests played in providing support and hope to the struggling population of this area, travelling long distances on horseback and always willing to give material help and spiritual guidance.

THE 100 YEARS 1894-1994

In 1894 Father Andrew Monaghan became pro-administrator in difficult times. “This mission in the district was only provisional and experimental and was cancelled as a separate mission recently for several months”. (*Australian Catholic Directory* 1894).

It was in this year 1894 that the parish was declared on a permanent basis by the Archbishop of the time, His Grace Robert Dunne (1882-1917) and although the main church was St Peter's Woodford, he called the parish Caboolture. In 1896 Father John Ryan replaced Father Monaghan and St Mary's Nambour was built and opened as part of the parish.

The first church in Caboolture township was built in 1899 in Church Street Waytown, one mile out of town, in front of the presbytery and stable mentioned above. It was called St Patrick's.

During the years that followed with the development of farming and industries (timber), population centres moved and it was quite common for a church to have a name change or the point of administration moved with new break-away parishes formed.

By 1901 Father Ryan had built churches at Sacred Heart Redcliffe and St John the Evangelist North Pine (Petrie). Father Baldwin became parish priest in 1911 and built a church at Kilcoy, St Michael's. A new parish priest, Father A E Wright took over that year and in 1921 the main church and administration moved to Nambour and Father E J Keating became curate.

The year 1922 saw name changes to two of the churches - St Peter's Caboolture and St Mary's Woodford. Father J T Concannon took over from Father Keating as curate. A new parish at Redcliffe was established and incorporated North Pine and St Francis Xavier's Dayboro.

In 1923 Nambour became a separate parish. Father Leo Hayes became parish priest of Caboolture, but the main church was at St Michael's Kilcoy with St Mary's Woodford and St Peter's Caboolture attached. Mass stations were at Maleny, Landsborough, Mt Mee, Elimbah and Beerburrum.

Father J O'Connor was appointed parish priest in 1928 and in 1933 St. Peter's Caboolture became the main church of the parish for the first time. The year 1934 saw Father J McMonagle become parish priest and Father Moynihan the curate.

During wet seasons quite often people could not get across the river to go to Mass and the bridge had been washed away several times. So in 1938 a new church was built on the present site. The old presbytery had been burnt down many years before and priests had been living in rented premises in Hastings Street. This new two acre site also had a substantial residence. It was planned to move the old church to Caloundra; however we now know that it was demolished and the timber used to construct a new house in the Margate area.

Woodford parish was established in 1946 with Kilcoy attached, Father V Landener being parish priest. At this stage Caboolture parish consisted of St Peter's, Sacred Heart Maleny and stations at Landsborough, Mt Mee, Caloundra, Jimma, Elimbah and Beerburrum.

Father G T Fitzgerald was parish priest from 1950-1957, Father T Guy curate in 1951 and Father J G Conneely curate in 1953. Father Fitzgerald was an organiser and opened a new school (54 pupils) under the direction of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Also that order purchased a holiday home at Beachmere. Since then it has been also used as a Retreat House for the Sisters, Seminarians and other groups and individuals seeking spiritual guidance in a peaceful supportive setting.

Father Conneely became the longest serving parish priest (1957-1971), The curates were Father W B Daley (1957), Father J F Flannery (1962), Father E Colwell (1963-1966), Father J Browne (1967-1969) and Father L Skelly (1970-1973).

In 1965 the second church was moved to allow for the present church to be constructed. The old church is still used as a classroom and music room while the new church is adequately serving the needs of the parish today.

The original church on Bribie Island, St Therese of the Infant Jesus, was situated in Nulu Street, the land being donated by Mr Charles Coward. Monsignor Frawley from Scarborough parish celebrated the first Mass in 1947. In 1954 another church was built on the ocean beach side. The present church of the Little Flower was erected on the newly acquired acre of land (opposite the old site) and was opened by Monsignor English in 1964.

The year 1972 brought further major changes with the northern centres being handed over to the new parish of Caloundra, and Bribie Island became part of Caboolture. Father F W Arthurs was parish priest 1972-1977 - "the happy Irishman whom everybody loved."

In this same year three Sisters moved into the Beachmere house permanently and major extensions were made to that complex. From 1973 to 1977 the Sisters ran a Motor Mission which catered for our parish area and included Woodford and Caloundra. During this time Beachmere residents were invited to attend Sunday Mass in the convent chapel. From these origins the Beachmere community has grown to what it is today.

In the early 1980s Father Coley McKenzie retired, due to ill health, from the parish of Bendigo, Victoria, to become Chaplain to the Sisters at Beachmere. He still assists in the running of the parish.

Father Patrick Dowd became parish priest in 1978 and Father B Grayson the curate (1979).

Father Brian Taylor commenced his ministry here in 1983. His associate pastors - Father Patrick Oliver 1983, Father Edward Loh 1987, Father David O'Connor 1990, Father Mark Percival 1992 and Father Gerard Monaghan 1992.

In 1987 the southern end of the parish, together with Deception Bay and Narangba formed the new parish of Burpengary.

Father Graham Gatehouse took over from Father Taylor in 1992 and is the current parish priest of Caboolture. Father Ian Wren came as associate pastor in 1993. Father Coley Mackenzie who is over eighty years of age and celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a priest on 21st July, 1994, is still the resident Chaplain to the Sisters of St Joseph at Beachmere and plays a very active role in parish life.

PARISHIONERS OF NOTE:

Richard Baker (1866-1953) - Butcher, Land owner, grew sugar and established the first rum distillery in Queensland at Caboolture. Owned most of Beachmere and gave land back to the people to build the main road and main park area there. Played poker with the parish priest on Wednesday nights.

The Petrie Family

The Baker Family

The Delaney Family - Landholders

The Sharman Family

The Carmody Family - of Hotel fame

The Zillmans of Rocksberg

The Hammonds (Lyla West) of Elimbah

The McElanes - the McDuffs

Ian & Flo Mackay (Ambulance) - a big influence in the 1940/50s

Tom Cole, Glasshouse Mountains Station Manager, famous for his parrot

The Wust Family - Mary Bishop & Family

Pat & Mary Caffery, brother & sister from Landsborough

The Noonan Family

Jim Sullivan, Police Commissioner

Gar Moon - tennis player

Ted & Millie Dance. Millie in her 80s made jams and pickles for our Centenary celebrations

The Galvin Family

The Schneider Family

Families mentioned throughout this paper are just some of the many dedicated Christians who contributed to this segment of history of the Catholic Church. To those whom we may have omitted we apologise.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS: The parish celebrated for a week -

Sunday 18th July 1994:

Procession through Caboolture from the old site to the new one - 71 entries approx. 1,000 marched, 2,000 viewed.

Civic welcome by Lord Mayor John White to Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby D.D.

Open air Mass - 2500 attended.

Carnival - 3500 attended - free rides.

Loaves and Fishes Luncheon - fed 3,000 free.

Monday 19th July 1994: Ladies night - Mass and wedding dress parade - 400 attended

Tuesday 20 th July 1994: Men's night - Mass and horse racing night - 120 attended.

Wednesday 21st July 1994: Family night - Golden Jubilee Mass for Father Coley Mackenzie followed by a free meal and concert - 400 attended.

Thursday 22nd July 1994: Youth disco night - Mass with special youth liturgy - 200 attended.

Friday 23d July 1994 - Sunday 25th July 1994: St Peter's Arts & Crafts Festival Annual event in Caboolture, but this year devoted to the Centenary.

The Centenary Committee greatly acknowledges the assistance of all who supported us in staging these celebrations. Especially the Caboolture Shire Council who sponsored the production of our Centenary Booklet. Many organisations and people enabled us as a committee to start with no funds and hold all these functions with no admission charge and free food and still make a profit of approximately \$8,000 - a true loaves and fishes story.

Caboolture has a fine heritage as this paper shows. It has been the focal point in the church's development of the outer northern suburbs of Brisbane through to Cooroy. Behind the scenes there has been a great wealth of committed people, with the main backbone coming from our priests and religious. Society tends to take their supreme effort for granted, without it this story would be short and have no meaning. People should not forget this and we should not allow this to happen.

John Barber,
Chairman Centenary Committee
St Peter's Catholic Parish Caboolture

References:

Australian Catholic Directories.
Speak and Musket
Catholic Progress Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919
The Apostle of Brisbane
Lengthening Shadows in Durundur Country
From Durundur to Woodford
Woodford State School 1892-1992
The Catholic Leader
The North Coast and Stanley District News
The Caboolture News 1923-1994

1994 STATISTICS

POPULATION

QUEENSLAND	CATHOLIC QLD	ABORIGINAL QLD
2,977,813	756,293	70,066
CABOOLTURE	CATHOLIC QLD	ABORIGINAL QLD
70,093	14,714	622

The Theme of our centenary celebrations in 1994 - the Year of the Family - was "WE ARE FAMILY WE ARE ONE". Our supporting artwork in our Booklet depicted an aboriginal with his foot on a carpet snake standing on a rock which overlooked a rail line with a steam train on one end and the fettlers laying the track on the other. This is an apt picture of the origins of the Caboolture parish.

John Barber - Born 21 October 1938. Married with three children and three grandchildren.

Attended SS Peter & Paul's Convent School Bulimba (3 years), then St. Laurence's Christian Brothers' College, South Brisbane (10 years). Studied Accountancy and was employed by the Commonwealth Bank for 34 years until he retired at age 55.

Over 40 years involvement as a player, referee, coach and administrator with the Qld Rugby Union.

Public and Church voluntary work included Parish Planned Giving Programs and Parish Pastoral Councils. He was inaugural President of the Wavell Heights Parents & Friends' Association and the Aspley Opportunity School Parents & Citizens' Association.

Now a Primary Producer and Secretary of Rosalie North Landcare Group, he is a member of Rosalie Shire Historical Society and has always shown a keen interest in recording and preserving our historic happenings.