

PAPER V

THE WANDERING CHURCH & SCHOOL of LOGAN RESERVE

Any story of the Logan Reserve church and school could have many alternate titles. As a church perhaps "From Logan Reserve to Daisy Hill", or "The Church that's Been Around" but that was Fr. Bill O'Shea's story of Saint Patrick's, Beenleigh. As a school, it would be accurate as "Here and There and Down the Road a Bit". Probably "The Wandering Church" is most descriptive.

The broad early history of the Colony of Queensland is fairly well documented as is the history of its major churches and schools. This is not true of the many small churches and schools established in those early colonial days, especially in rural areas. This is part of the story of one of them.

Logan Reserve Church and School have no claim to fame as a grand building or a famous educational institution. Simply they illustrate the efforts of the early settlers to provide for the practice of their religion and education of their children, make a living, their adaptability under adverse conditions and the versatility, durability and portability of the little wooden buildings typical of the period. Such efforts were not restricted to the Catholic population but the story is typical of the problems and efforts of all the early settlers to overcome them.

As background it should be noted that Queensland was designated a separate colony by Queen Victoria on June 6th. 1859 and formally established on December 10th. when the proclamation was read in Brisbane after the arrival of Governor Bowen. Folk history records that there was a mere seven pence halfpenny in the Treasury and that was subsequently stolen. Whether the story is true or false does not matter. It is fact that the Colony's resources were almost non-existent except for the potential represented by the undeveloped land and the as yet undiscovered mineral resources. They were restricted by lack of people to work the land and realise that potential.

Logan Agricultural Reserve, in the general vicinity of Waterford, was one of the earliest areas to be surveyed and made available for closer settlement. Establishment of the Reserve was proclaimed in the *Government Gazette* on January 5th. 1861. Following survey during March a proclamation in the *Gazette* on December 13th. 1861 made the first section of this area available for sale by selection. This covered 44 lots representing portions 1 to 46 but excluding portions 26 and 27. This was portion of a run previously occupied by James Fitzgerald who had first taken up land in the area in 1849 and within ten years occupied most of the land on the northwest bank of the Logan River between Loganlea and Greenbank.

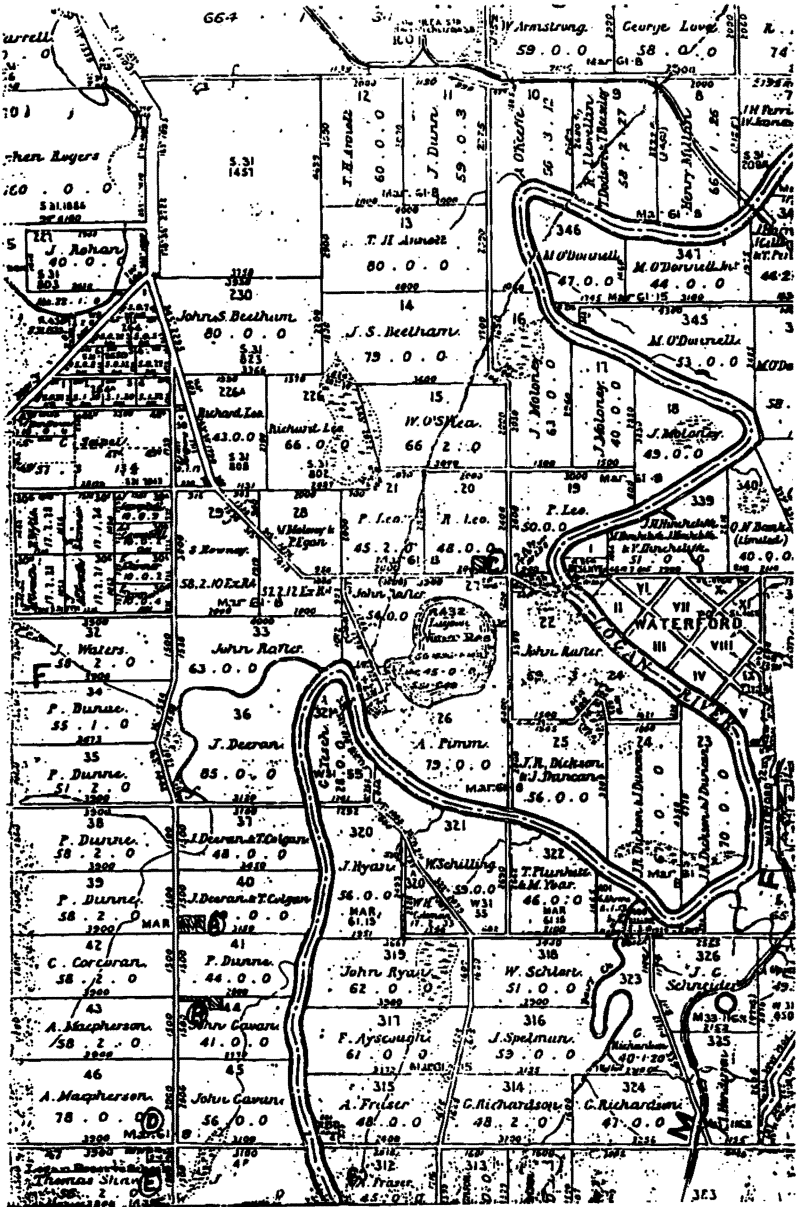
(The significant section is shown on the attached extract from an 1885 map of the area.) The second section, including portions 26 & 27 and a further 70 portions, was gazetted on April 2nd. 1862. A further extension of 75 lots (portions 273 - 350 exc 321, 337 & 338) was gazetted on November 3rd. 1863. Portions 337/8 were reserved for the proposed township of Waterford.

The first two freehold selections to be taken up were Portion 26 by Arthur PIMM, who also leased portions 23, 24 & 25, on July 28th. and Portion 17 by James MOLONEY, who leased portions 16 & 18 on August 1st.

A parliamentary report of land selected up to March 1863 showed 27 freehold and 41 leased. Only the first two listed improvements, presumably some building or clearing.

These sales coincided with a surge of migration specifically encouraged by the Land Order provisions of the Queensland legislation. Included in the surge were numerous ships with predominantly Irish immigrants commencing with the "Erin go Bragh" and the subsequent vessels including those sponsored by the Queensland Immigration Society . Many of the Irish passengers took up land in the Logan Agricultural area as inspection of the names of landholders in the area clearly shows.

(There are numerous stories about the "Erin Go Bragh " written down, many of them pure fantasy. As examples it is frequently stated that the voyage occupied 8 months when it was actually 6 months Published local history also states that "the town of Waterford was probably named after the city of Waterford in County Cork, from which the ship sailed, but this has neither been proved or disproved." As Waterford is not in County Cork and the ship sailed from Cobh - or Queenstown - which is in County Cork the statement is easily disproved.



School/Church:- 1st. Site Portion 44 A School :- 4th. Site Portion 46 D
 2nd. Site Portion 40 B Final Site Portion 47 E
 3rd. Site Portion 20 C

Logan Agricultural Reserve (ca. 1885)

There is also the story of the Female child born on St. Patrick's Day who was first christened Patrick but renamed Mary Patricia when the correct sex was noted. Although frequently quoted, including in Patrick Moran's "History of the Catholic Church in Australia", its veracity is extremely doubtful. The original source is James Fances Hogan, some of whose writings were imaginative rather than factual. Press reports of the voyage make no reference and there is no record of a relevant marine birth in Brisbane.)

The subsequent story covers two distinct periods viz. the early pioneering period from 1865 to about 1890 and the ensuing 105 years.

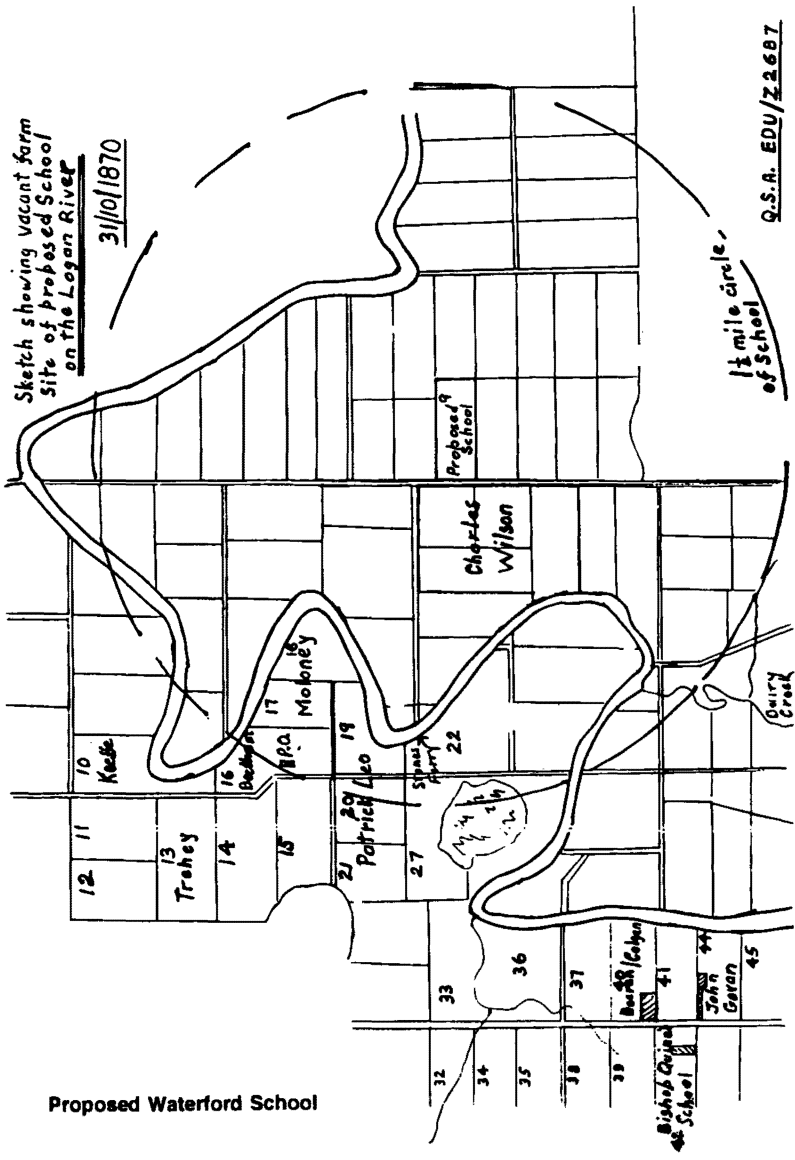
The Pioneering Period - 1865 to 1890.

During this period the church was called in succession; Church of the Assumption, St. Bridget's and perhaps St. James, although the latter name has not been found in any Catholic Directory.

Site No.1.

John GAVAN applied for Portion 44, on Sept. 4th. 1862 and it was granted to him on August 1st. 1863. Ownership of part (area undetermined) of this property was transferred to Elizabeth KILLIAN on December 14th. 1864. She remains somewhat of a mystery as her name has not been found on any immigration list of the period although John RYAN, a passenger on the Erin Go Bragh married Elizabeth KILLIAN in 1864. (Lawrence KILLIAN was a passenger on the Erin but his wife and child both died during the voyage and there is no record of a subsequent marriage.) A one acre site was transferred to James QUINN by her on January 25th. 1865. This site is still property of the Archdiocese and there are at least two graves thereon.

The presence of these graves would tend to confirm that this was indeed a Church site but there are no formal records. One grave is clearly identified by a headstone as that of James MOLONEY, who died in 1882, together with a names of other deceased family members. The other is unmarked, except for an iron surround typical of the period, reputedly one or more young children are buried there. It is possible that Lucy Gavin, who drowned in the Logan River on January 9th. 1865, was one but no confirmation of her actual burial site has emerged. It is also possible that James' seven year -old daughter, Mary , reputed to have died of snakebite about 1863 /4 is another.



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The first building used as a school was definitely a slab hut. The original location of the building used as Church and School has not been absolutely confirmed nor has the date of erection but this is the most likely site. At the time there was no resident priest, the mission being served from Brisbane by priests, including Fathers Connolly and Healy.

The 1865 Board of General Education report refers to the school as “a mixed school, only one month under the Board’s control. The average attendance for 6 months previous to recognition by the Board was within a fraction of 30. During the month of December it amounted to 32.” The 1866 report confirms that the building was a slab hut. Their records show they approved appointment of the first Teacher, Richard DORAN, on December 1st. 1865. It would therefore appear that a building was erected no later than June 1865.

(There is a query about the precise location of the “Slab Building”. An unidentified source, quoted in conjunction with the centenary celebrations of the Waterford State School, stated that it was on Corcoran property, apparently on the other side of Logan Reserve Road. This has not been substantiated except that a sketch dated 31/10/1870 attached to the proposal to establish a school at Waterford, on the opposite side of the Logan River, shows “Bishop Quinn’s School” in this approximate location on portion 42. Parts of portion 37, had also been transferred to Charles and Catherine CORCORAN in two separate parcels in 1864)

Doran continued as the teacher until he moved to the Redbank Catholic school in January 1868. He had some teacher training in Dublin and about 11 years teaching experience in Ireland (Armagh and Fermanagh). He appeared to maintain a connection with the Logan area . The *Courier* in 1869 reported a successful experimental arrowroot crop on a Doran farm on the Logan River and he was a witness to James Moloney’s will in 1874.

When Englishman John Shepherd BEETHAM was appointed the first Logan Reserve Postmaster on April 1st. 1864 his address was shown as Portion 16. (This part of the original Moloney selection was transferred to Lydia BEETHAM on December 31st. 1864.) At various times he occupied 200 acres in the vicinity. He held that post until 1871. When there was an apparent proposal to shift the Post Office to Waterford in 1867 a letter published in the “*Weekly Herald*” signed “Veritas”, denigrated both the location and the occupants while lauding the current Postmaster. A cynic would note that Beetham was also the local representative of the Herald.

Beetham had arrived in the Colony before separation with no specific teaching qualification but had practical experience at private schools in N.S.W. and at Ipswich in 1859/60. He was appointed teacher on Jan. 1st. 1868.

Some local histories have stated that the majority of the Irish Catholics had left the Waterford area for Beaudesert by the early 1870's. While many of the Irish had certainly taken up land further up-river the general statement does not appear to be supported by continued presence of many in the Logan Reserve. Thomas Fraser, teacher at Waterford, responding on January 14th. 1872, to a Board query about low attendances made the following statement :-

"Clerical Interference:Mr. Moloney had two children at my school, Mr. Leo 3, Mr. Richard Leo 2, Mr. O'Keif 1, and Mr. Threy (Trehey ?) 2, when about Aug. 15 last Fr. Fuohy from Brisbane, with Mrs. Beetham visited the children's homes and insisted upon the parents sending their children to Mr. Beetham's school. They held out for a time but ultimately gave way."

Of those named by Fraser the Leo and Moloney families certainly continued in the area as did other familiar names such as McHugh, Colgan and Gavin. The 1873 Board report lists the aggregate enrolment at Logan Reserve as 64 of whom 48 were Catholic.

Following an unfavourable Inspector's report Beetham's services were terminated in mid-1874 and the October Inspector's report shows it as closed. Children from Whelan, Horan, Kaveney, Gavin and Moloney families, all Logan Reserve Catholic, appeared on Waterford School rolls in June and July. This may have coincided with removal to a new site and a change in the clerical arrangements. Fr. Benedict Scortechini was appointed the first resident priest in November 1874 after the departure of Fr. Healy. (see Fr. Tynan's "Pioneer Priest and Botanist") Appointment of a priest to reside in the area also indicates a more permanent establishment.

In the interim a request had been submitted on September 29th. for approval " to reopen the school located between Waterford and Drynan's Ferry, formerly non-vested under Mr. Beetlam ." The request was signed by P.J.McHugh of "Erin's View", the occupant of portions 49 & 52.

Site No. 2.

There is no doubt whatever about the next site. This was located on portion 40 which had been acquired by James DEERAN and Thomas COLGAN on November 10th. 1864, 42 of the total 49 acres were transferred to Thomas Colgan on September 26th. 1865 and a 4 acre sub division on the road frontage was the site of the Church. A survey plan dated 2/7/1874 defines the subdivision but the building may already have been on the site. The 1870 Inspection Report states "The school was removed to a new, roomy, well ventilated building during the year."

An Education Inspector's special report dated September 28th. 1876 giving a detailed description of site and building reveals that it was a single skin building with " hardwood studs placed outside; skin and floor beech with gothic door and windows " . It was also described as " amply commodious , comfortable enough and very fairly furnished for school work." A slab humpy residence for the teacher was also provided on the site.

Various reports have noted that the timber for the new building was carried up the river and unloaded at Pettigrew's wharf. Attempts to find the precise wharf location have been unsuccessful and it seems it may have been merely a loading point for logs destined for Pettigrew's Sawmills, in Brisbane.

A history of the Lutheran Church in the area " Bethania in the Early Days" states that Johann Gottlieb SCHNEIDER, one of the Susan Goddefroy immigrants " donated the timber and frequently entertained the travelling priest with afternoon tea on the verandah of his home at Waterford." It is also of interest that Henry JORDAN , whose reputed inactivity as Queensland Immigration Commissioner in seeking Irish emigrants is frequently noted as major motivation for establishment of the Queensland Immigration Society, had previously established a sawmill on the Tygum Estate, which was subsequently operated by LAHEY and later SCHNEIDER.

Fr. Scortechini advised the Board on January 26th. 1875 that the school had reopened on January 1st. with James SPELLMAN " a teacher with Irish Teaching credentials " in charge. A native of Sligo he had taught in Ireland for 20 years and in Victoria for a further 13 years. His services were apparently unsatisfactory and he was dismissed by the Committee on Aug. 31st.

In the meantime the Board of Education had upgraded the status to Provisional school on February 12th. and allocated £70 p.a. for the teacher's salary. (This also implies that a better standard building was now available)

Scortechini requested approval of Patrick LAMB as the replacement teacher. He had no formal qualifications but had taught in Armagh for two and a half years and at the Boundary St. school for 4 months prior to this appointment. He continued in the position until the school was apparently closed by order of the Board on March 31st. 1877. This evidently did not reflect adversely on him personally as he was immediately employed in the state system. The annual Board report does not even mention the closure.

The closure appears to have coincided with relocation of the building and reopening was approved on July 18th. "subject to a minimum of 12 students excluding those living within 2 miles of Waterford" (presumably the school). The proviso reflected the ongoing rivalry of the two areas and was probably influenced by the erection in 1876 of the new timber bridge at Waterford, a bridge which was to withstand many floods in the area including a particularly devastating one in 1887 and remain in service for 40 years. The allegedly more substantial steel railway bridge at Loganlea, erected only in 1885 did not survive the 1887 flood.

Site No. 3.

There is again no doubt of the third location. This was a subdivision of portion 20, which had been donated to the church by Richard LEO. The only uncertainty concerns just when the church was moved to the site. Relevant evidence includes :-

- a) The school inspectors report dated 28/9/1876 clearly shows it still on the second site.
- b) Bailliere's Queensland Gazetteer and Road Guide for 1876 which states "The Roman Catholics have a neat hardwood chapel near the post office, the Rev. Mr. Scutchini (sic) being priest of the district." (The Editor's note is dated May 1876.)

They can't both be correct. Either the Inspector's report was written considerably after the inspection or the material for the Gazetteer was assembled after the introduction was written. Nevertheless it appears that late 1876 or early 1877 is the probable time. The building remained on this site for about 70 years becoming progressively derelict in later years until relocated in 1949.

The school reopened on September 10th. with Patrick Louis BRODKIN as teacher and a school committee of William BYRNES, P.J.McHUGH and John GAVEN. Brodgin resigned in July 1878 and the school again closed for a short period.

It reopened once more when Joanna DEVEREAUX was appointed on August 1st. but her appointment was cancelled in September 1879. There was a further short break with a one month trial opening approved on September 16th. Margaret CAVANAGH was appointed on September 15th. Apparently a satisfactory teacher had now been obtained as she continued until Feb. 2nd. 1883 when she resigned following her marriage to Timothy MOLONEY. She was the first locally born teacher.

She was immediately succeeded by Michael SULLIVAN, who had taught at Newcastle, Co. Limerick. When he resigned in March 1884 he was succeeded by his wife Teresa, London born, but also with experience in Newcastle, Ireland, and locally at Tambourine. She continued until early 1886 at which time there was some upheaval, although she was not directly involved.

Fr. Scortechini departed for Malaya late in 1883 and Fr. James ENRIGHT was appointed to administer the "Parish" during his absence and formally took charge some time after Scortechini's death was confirmed. Fr. Enright is variously reported as having moved his headquarters to the "newly established railway centre of Beaudesert" in 1885 but the exact date and perhaps the location must be regarded with some reserve.

The contract for extension of the railway from Logan Village to Beaudesert was not let until June 1886 and the line opened in May 1888. A note in Bishop Dunne's letterbook dated Nov. 2nd. 1886 includes only Kerry, Veresdale and Tamborine churches in the Upper Logan area. However, Fr. O'Leary's "*Catholic Miscellany*", published about 1921, stated that Beaudesert presbytery was completed in July 1885 and used as a mass centre as there was no church.

On February 16th. 1886 Fr. Enright, responding to a request to allow continued use of the church building for school purposes, wrote from Tamborine to Education Under Secretary, Anderson. He advised an intention to move the church across the river to Waterford township and declined the request. He also mentioned that a German School, located less than half a mile away was only used 2 days a week. Within a week the School Committee [John Thorn (Chairman), John Gaven, (Secretary)] advised the availability of a suitable building, erected by German residents about 4 years ago. Whether this was the same building is not clear.

Early in May Thorn advised the Dept. that Fr. Enright had "reluctantly agreed to use of the church after intervention of Bishop Dunne who said the building could be used for school whether the children were English, Irish or German." Evidently there had been ongoing negotiations. A handwritten file note states "This is like Dr. Dunne, a Noble Bishop."

Mary Cecilia MARKEY, a young (18) girl from County Meath with some teaching experience at provisional schools at Cambooya and Canungra, was appointed on May 17th. 1886 and continued until September 1888. She was described by one inspector in 1876 as "young, thoughtless and frivolous;. little

sense of responsibility, not likely to succeed," A different inspector within a year described her as "hardworking, honest and industrious."

On September 1st. 1888 Fr. Enright advised the Board the building would not be available for School use after the 16th. and John Gaven, the School Committee Secretary, advised the Education Board on the 18th. that " the school had reopened in a house about 21 ft. by 15 ft." A handwritten Education file note states "I do not believe Dr. Dunne knows anything about Fr. Enright, the Parish Priest, stopping the use of the Chapel for a School. Fr. Enright did the same thing some time ago and his action was not approved by his superior." Markey resigned her position on December 31st.

There was no further suggestion of moving the building across the river, it did not happen and it can reasonably be assumed that there was never a serious intention. It certainly did not make sense when the demographics indicate the majority of settlers on the other side were German / Lutheran and the majority of Irish / Catholics were near the existing location. The new school site was apparently on portion 46 immediately opposite the Gaven property, adjacent to the still existing German cemetery. (Some years later Gaven, as committee secretary, sought approval for the school to be used for a German School on Saturday and a Chapel on Sunday.)

The Subsequent Years

A. School.

This apparently was the last use of the catholic church for school purposes. However the school continued in the new location supported by a school committee, with no explicit catholic involvement, but an enrolment between 21 and 40 over the next 15 years. It should however be noted that it was never a specifically Catholic School although it used the church building, and the majority of the students to that time were Catholic as were the teachers. The school continued in the new location until a request to establish a State School was approved in 1913. A new building was constructed and occupied on the present school site in October 1913.

The Primary Schools in the area now comprise three State Schools. WATERFORD in an expanded site on the general area of the original school. WATERFORD WEST, established in 1976, almost exactly 100 years after relocation of Logan Reserve to its third site and only about 100 metres away. LOGAN RESERVE, on the site it has occupied since 1913 and about 500 metres away from the first site. Although the suburban sprawl has not yet overtaken the

immediate area. The current Logan Reserve school is thriving with over 300 pupils who are celebrating their 130th. anniversary in three weeks time.

B. The Church

St. Bridgets continued to be listed in the Catholic Directory under Logan and Albert until 1921 but the site name changed from Logan Reserve to Waterford in 1894. As parish boundaries changed it is listed under Beaudesert from 1921-4 and Beenleigh in 1925 when it disappears. Yeronga parish, including Beenleigh and an unnamed church at Waterford, was established on April 19th. 1925. At this time it may have been renamed St. James, although the name does not appear in any directory. It was used for mass at least until 1937 but appears to have fallen into disuse during the war.

Site No.4.

The precise fourth location of the church is also quite clear. It was removed to Eight Mile Plains where it was re-erected on a one acre site within the parish of Holland Park. It was opened on November 20th. 1949 under the new name of St. Declan's. The building had been dismantled at Waterford by builder Jack TIERNEY and re-erected and refurbished at a cost of £500. Jack's son Dennis, who assisted with the work, confirmed that weatherboards had previously been fitted to the original single skin building and this was presumably done well before 1920. The new name commemorated an Irish Bishop based near Waterford, Ireland, in the time of St. Patrick.

Once more it became inadequate for the size of the congregation and a note in parish planning documents for 1959 indicated a requirement for it to be doubled in size. This was resolved when it was replaced by the new church which was named St. Martin's. The new church was erected on an expanded site but it was necessary to remove St. Declan's before it could be completed as the new construction overlapped the existing building. St. Martin's was opened on December 16th. 1962.

Site No. 5.

With continued property development further down the highway the building was once more moved to a site on the Pacific Highway at Springwood / Slack's Creek, and became part of the new Rochedale parish in 1974. The Parish Priest Fr. Rollo Enright's finances were limited after construction of the Rochedale church but he initiated plans in 1974 to build a new Church on nearby property at Daisy

Hill using timber on the site. These plans were well advanced when Daisy Hill parish was inaugurated in January 1978 with tiny St. Declans as it's only church.

Building of the Log Cabin church commenced in the same month and when it was completed St. Declans again became redundant on April 30th. The old building was once more moved to the new site. Following the trauma of the destruction of the Log Church by fire on January 11th. 1988, the building of the new church of St. Edward the Confessor and other rearrangements on the site, Saint Declan's finally came to rest in the precincts of the Daisy Hill Parish School where it is used as a youth activity / after school centre.

Tracing this history has been a wide ranging exercise which could not have been done without the assistance of many people. These included Parish Priests and Parish staff at Mt. Gravatt, Upper Mt. Gravatt, Daisy Hill and Yeronga, Library staff at the State Library and John Oxley, Teachers at Logan Reserve and Waterford Schools and last, but by no means least, staff at the Archdiocesan and State Archives.

So the building still called St. Declan's, after 120 years, is still providing for the needs of the children in a parish as it did originally. It has been re-located, re-roofed, re-stumped, re-wired, re-painted, dismantled and re-constructed and re-lined but it is still the same little old "Wandering Church of the Logan Reserve."

L W Moloney

Leo Moloney is a Communications Engineer by profession, with an abiding interest in local history by choice. A direct descendant of the original Irish settlers on the Logan Reserve whose father commenced school at Logan Reserve in 1904.