



# Brunswick Valley Historical Society MUSEUM

Cnr Of Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 11 AM - 3 PM

MARKET DAY (3RD SAT OF THE MONTH) 9 AM -12 PM

NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2010

## THE BRUNSWICK'S ELUSIVE FIRST SETTLERS



J.A. Back's property, Goonengerry, Jim Mudge on left- Mudge boy on right. The tree is a Black Butt.

Intermittently over the period 1858-65 approximately 210,000ft of cedar left the Brunswick in about 9 ships, but the only bloke identified was a mysterious *Mr Boyd, a cedar cutter on the Brunswick* in 1865. **Robert Marshall** arrived in 1866 (or

so he asserted to a 'Water Conservation Committee' in 1886) to be the first identifiable permanent settler, followed by his wife **Elizabeth**, nee Malone, in 1867 (according to her obituary, but the marriage was registered in Sydney in 1869). At the same time **Henry**

**Wilson** registered himself as a "squatter, near Cape Byron" at the Wollumbin Post Office (Bailliere's 1867 Directory). This letter box near Murwillumbah was the only one between the border and Ballina and inland to Lismore, having 38 subscribers, all identifiable Tweed residents except for Wilson.

Another early selector/squatter/speculator was Mr Anonymous\*, subject of correspondence from James Bray, Crown Land Agent on the Tweed, who wrote to the Under Secretary for Lands ...dealing with the first selection on the Brunswick River, "I have the honor to call your attention", wrote Mr Bray, "to C.P. application No 1, which accompanies my weekly extract for January 4, 1872, for a farm on the Brunswick River. As this is the first selection on that river, I beg to suggest that a proper officer be sent ... to lay out the village and other necessary reserves before the spots best adapted for such purposes are taken up by intending purchasers." A 'Village Reserve' of 640 acres was proclaimed on the 18th October 1872 but not subdivided for sale of allotments until 1884, at which time the Brunswick cedar industry was contracting, although remaining the district's

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and  
for the members of the BVHS

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Patron: Frank Mills OAM.

**All members are invited to  
contribute to this newsletter**

\*Please leave material with Sarah or  
Liz Wed - Fri, 10 am - 3 pm.

Or email to:

[bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au](mailto:bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au)

**NEXT MEETING**

**Saturday 16th October 2010  
1pm. See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Friday 15th November 2010 .

**MUSEUM HOURS**

**Friday 11am - 3pm**

**Market Saturday 9 am - 12pm**

BVHS Newsletter is produced  
by NORTEC Work for The Dole  
participants and BVHS

**PUBLIC FORUM** e-news  
[mullumbimbymuseum@gmail](mailto:mullumbimbymuseum@gmail.com)  
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dominate money spinner into  
the 1890s.

In reminiscing in 1922 the  
historian Archibald Meston  
said "*The only cedar cutter on  
the Brunswick when I passed  
there, as a youth, in 1870, was  
a man named Marshall, who  
practically cut out all the cedar  
behind Cape Byron. He had  
then two million feet cut in the  
Scrub, and waiting haulage*". In  
1870 Robert Marshall was one  
of only 18 legally licensed timber  
getters in the Richmond-Tweed  
region. Two years later he and  
his wife were the likely hosts  
to a couple of blokes who "*left  
Lawrence on 27th May 1972  
and, " travelling by coach to  
Casino on the Richmond River,  
procured horses there for our  
further journey we traversed  
the tableland known as the Big  
Scrub. Keeping an E and N.E.  
course and making the sea  
beach about 4 miles south of  
Cape Byron: we crossed the  
Brunswick River at its mouth,  
and following the beach the  
next day struck across to the  
village of Cudgen*". By this time  
the axemen at the big Bald Hill  
(Bexhill) cedar camp had cut  
their way towards the coast  
and provided a rough path for  
the intrepid, although most  
travellers still used the beach  
route from Ballina.

Identifiable Brunswick  
residents **Henry Stone** (1869),  
**James Smith** (1871), **John  
Johnson** (aka 'Tyagarah Jack'  
1871) and **James Mills** (1872)  
may have been members of  
Marshall's chopping crew,  
while **George Simpson**  
(about 1871), the only other  
confirmed Brunswick resident,  
assisted by guiding the ships.

**Charlie Jarrett**, a Ballina-based  
timber merchant, probably either  
contracted Marshall and his crew  
or acted as Marshall's agent,  
implied by his SMH advert in  
April 1874

*"For SALE, at the Brunswick  
River 300,000 feet, more or less,  
squared cedar, at deep water  
600,000 feet, more cedar,  
in the creek ready for flood  
400,000 feet, of cedar, at stump,  
ready to draw to deep water  
Terms: Part cash, balance by  
approved bills. The Brunswick  
and Cape Byron Cedar needs  
no recommendation"*.

Jarrett in turn had a tie-up  
with Sydney cedar merchant  
and ship owner William Wright,  
whose "*business was to fit  
out cedar cutters with rations,  
goods, and money - general  
supplies - in return for which  
he got cedar, which was left on  
the ground until a convenient  
opportunity occurred for bringing  
it to Sydney*". It seems Jarrett  
was the middleman who found  
the teams for Wright and  
distributed the profits. Jarrett also  
provisioned his own team/s and  
shipped his stuff with Wright's, as  
did a number of others - any one  
shipload containing logs with a  
variety of brands. Wright was  
the first to start taking the stuff  
directly from Cape Byron, as by  
this time his ships had to do a  
150 mile return trip to Bexhill to  
get his Richmond cedar out.

Cedar started coming out of  
Cape Byron in 1867, the same  
year the reinvigorated Brunswick  
started resupplying the market,  
and by the 1870s the timber  
was flooding out of both places  
at a great rate. So who made  
up the tribe of timber-getters  
and support crew? Historians



Horses hauling logs to beach from 'Forest to Farm' by Frank Mills page 7. Timber Jinker.

Hewitt, Brokenshire and Ryan mention approximately 18 men between them, many of whose names are recognisable around the Richmond, Casino and Ballina districts, but the only clearly identifiable Brunswick people remain Marshall, Stone, Mills, Johnson, Smith and Simpson. **Henry Stone**, builder of the second pub at Bruns in 1885/86, told Marshall's 'water committee' that he'd arrived on the scene in 1869, probably with brothers John/James, Richard and William, but he and they remained Ballina-registered 'sawyers' all their lives. Teamster **James Mills** told the same committee that he'd turned up from Wyrallah in 1872, probably with his bullocks to give more legs to the large increase in the rate of extraction of cedar from the Brunswick/Byron region.

The rate of extraction started to go exponential in 1869 when approximately 610,000ft went out (405,000ft through Brunswick and 205,000ft from Byron), but subsequently the Bay outlet gained the ascendancy. Another record was set in 1871, approximately 155,000ft

through the Brunswick, and approximately 665,000ft from Byron, reaching an all time high in 1873 when Byron alone shipped approximately 845,000ft. Presumably those who gave their names to the 'shoots' above Byron - Cooper, Skinner, McLeod and Possum - had taken the mantle from Marshall at some stage. (Disclaimer on figures: some of the big boats turning up in Sydney and Melbourne with 'Cape Byron cedar' are known to have loaded off the Brunswick bar.)

Marshall, Simpson, Smith and Johnson were the only ones to do their civic duty in 1871 and enrol to vote. That year the census also was conducted, census collector James Bray sending his step-brother James Rowland and an aboriginal guide over the Burringbar Range to call the roll around the approximately. Rowland spotted 70 bemused Aboriginies but unfortunately left no breakdown of the axe-wielding whitefellas, they being included in the total of 447 found in the Tweed River Police District. This police district, carved off from Richmond in 1867, basically

covered the present Tweed Shire, except for the southern border being at the Brunswick River. Presumably someone from the Richmond attempted a head count of the whitefellas wandering the wilderness of the Byron scrub.

The next clearly identifiable Brunswick resident was **John O'Neill** who turned up from some where named Big Grass in the Richmond district, to have himself placed on the electoral roll by 1878. That year Samuel Gray MLA, pioneer Tweed squatter and another Bray brother-in-law, whinged to parliament about the lack of polling places in the electorate, *"In regard to the Brunswick, he informed the Government that there were only four votes there, whereas he (the returning-officer) must have known that there were 30 to 40 timber-getters, who were thus excluded from registering their votes unless they travelled 30 to 40 miles"*, not to forget the support crew of teamsters, shipwrights and assorted hangers-on. Tumbulgum and Murwillumbah remained the only polling places

between the border and Ballina until 1882 when Brunswick won a guernsey, 26 of the 30 grateful selectors gave the nod to Protestant Irishman Gray's Irish Catholic opponent thus setting the standard for the district's contrariness with the rest of the region. Booths at Byron, Eureka and Tintenbar (an older village than Brunswick) arrived on the

scene in 1885.

The great land rush of 1881 introduced a new industry, but farming took some time to eclipse timber as the district's main activity. Robert Marshall stayed on and branched out into other entrepreneurial pursuits and, despite the claims of the begetter of 'Simpson's Town', he

is the most likely culprit to be to be accredited as the Brunswick Valley founding father (while his wife Elizabeth, whose funeral in 1899 was reported as the largest ever seen in the district, can also claim birth rights).  
By Peter Tsicalas



Bullock team pulling wagons up hill.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

September 18<sup>th</sup> 2010.

We had another short, sweet and efficient meeting on Saturday.

Estelle is still working on the Housing Project, and making good progress.

We had a pleasant and successful visit from the Lindisfarne School. The children were very interested, and knowledgeable, comparing their grandparents living standards with their own.

The display in the School Room has been changed, and we are still waiting for the plumber to

check our leaky roof.

The Family Tree program is now installed on the front desk computer, for visitors to use when they visit the Museum.

The raffle will be drawn at our November meeting, so don't forget to get your tickets, only \$1.00 ea. First prize a colourful single bed quilt, second prize two interesting history books.

There is now an outdoor power box, for use on Market days, and we have changed our rubbish removal system, so it is cheaper, and more efficient.

Scott Forrester was approved as a new member.

Don't forget we get monthly bulletins and newsletters from other Historical Societies and groups, which you may find informative. Ask someone about where they are kept.

Next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 1.00 pm

**We would love to receive interesting, short, local historical articles for the newsletter.**