



Special Points of Interest:

- *A Tourist's Complaint—18 October 1937*
- *Getting to Know Harvey Low*
- *Mick's Memories of growing up in Townsville*

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Here we are with half of 2021 over already and it's time for renewal of memberships. New members are always welcome and volunteers to assist with museum duties. The Museum has been very busy with visitors, some locals and quite a lot of travellers taking advantage of the wonderful weather Townsville has to offer.

A new display board is in place in Hall 1 featuring the Mayors of Townsville from 1865 to the present. The board tells the story of Townsville and when it became a Municipality and then the amalgamation with Thuringowa City in 2008. This display has been sponsored by Brad and Kay Matheson of McGrath Real Estate in North Ward. Brad and Kay are very supportive of the Museum and on behalf of our members I sincerely thank you.

Gary has also been busy upgrading the lighting in the display cabinets with LED lights which is the best option for displays. We have also received a wonderful piece of Townsville's history from Aunty Gail Mabo. It is a small wooden coffee table made from a piece of carved timber balustrade from the stairs of Tattersall's Hotel. This is so important to Townsville's history and we thank Aunty Gail for this gift.

Until next time, keep supporting the Museum and tell friends and family to visit and also support our Facebook page "Townsville Museum Inc" with comments.

Kind regards,

Trish Cronin
President

Monthly committee meetings are held at the Museum on the third Monday of the month at ten o'clock. All committee members are notified a week prior to the meeting.



Harvey Low — our long term volunteer at Townsville Museum
Story on page 6

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TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 2:30 pm

First and Third Sundays of the month

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

ENTRY Adults \$2 Chn 50c

MEMBERSHIP FEES

(12 months from 1st July to 30th June)

Single \$ 11.00

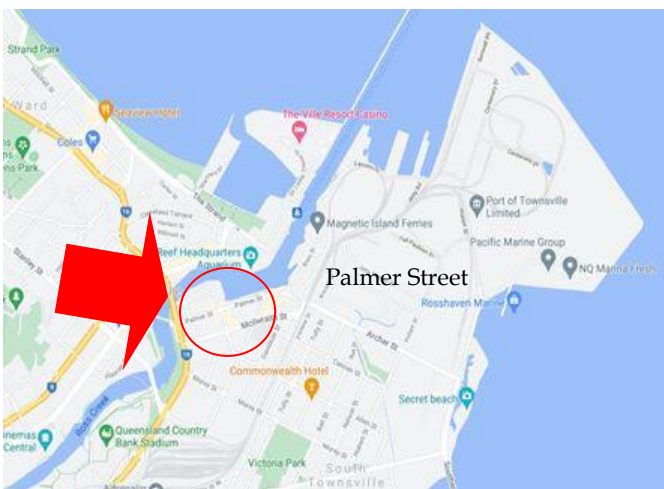
Couples \$ 16.50

Corporate \$ 32.50

PALMER STREET, SOUTH TOWNSVILLE

Palmer Street, South Townsville. Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer (1819-1898), pastoralist and politician, arrived in Australia in 1838. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly for Port Curtis in 1866 and aligned himself with the squatter party. When Charles Linney's ministry fell in 1870, Palmer became Colonial Secretary and Premier, holding office until 1874. As a director of the Queensland National Bank, he was involved in the financial crises of the early 1890s, but was found not guilty of collusion and acquitted of the charges by the Supreme Court. He is best remembered for his staunch advocacy of free education and his opposition to state funding of private schools.

Mathew, J. (1995). *Highways and Byways*. Townsville, Queensland: Townsville City Council.



Some of the pubs of Palmer Street in South Townsville.

Clockwise from top left:

Unknown (1985). The Australian Hotel, Palmer Street, Townsville, 1985. CityLibraries

Unknown (1971). Fire damage to the Crown Hotel, Palmer Street, South Townsville, 17 January, 1971. CityLibraries

Unknown (1985). Metropole Hotel, Palmer Street, South Townsville, 1985. CityLibraries



PALMER STREET, SOUTH TOWNSVILLE



Unknown (1900). Reclamation work, Palmer Street, South Townsville, December 1900.

CityLibraries



Unknown (2016). The Shamrock Hotel and the restored Wharton Reef Lighthouse, Palmer Street, South Townsville, 16 September 2016.

CityLibraries



Unknown (2016). The former Wharton Reef lighthouse, Palmer Street, South Townsville, 16 September 2016.

CityLibraries



Unknown (1937). G.T.W. Hegarty's flats, Palmer Street, South Townsville, 1937.

A TOURIST'S COMPLAINT

Published in the Townsville Daily Bulletin Tuesday 19 October 1937. Accessed Trove 20 April 2021

(To the Editor),

Sir, There is a matter of vital importance to every citizen within the boundaries of Townsville, Ingham, and Cardwell districts, and that is the road between Moongabulla and Cardwell, particularly the section between Ingham and Cardwell. It is in a disgraceful and shocking condition and is considered as Australia's worst road. I am not overlooking the Townsville to Charters Towers, and Townsville to Giru roads, which are almost on a par. Let me confine this letter to the road North of Ingham. My wife and self decided to journey to the scenic beauties of the Tablelands via the Coast Road – and what a shocking surprise was in store for us. In one section of the journey it took two hours to do eight miles, boulders lay on the roads (through the action of heavy rain in washing away the earth and leaving these boulders exposed) in hundreds, some weighing as much as a hundredweight. In negotiating this section the footboard of my car was torn away, the back and front bumper bars damaged, mudguards dented, and two new tyres damaged beyond repair, and with a trying ordeal and severe shaking into the bargain. On the return journey I had to use bags of peat to ease the car over the large boulders. The bridges seen and passed, were built of bush timber in its crude state. I am predicting a serious accident at any one of them. At Tully I met another car owner who came over this road and had his petrol tank pierced. In order to continue, he used a piece of tubing to feed the engine from a container in the car, otherwise he would have been held up there until his tank was repaired. Another dreadful section is on the El Arish Range; this is dangerous and impassable in wet weather. It is a quagmire of red mud and slush for a distance of five miles, and takes hours to negotiate. I met another Townsvilleite at Millaa Millaa who strongly condemned the road from Ingham to El Arish and stated he was shipping his car back to Townsville, as it was too big a risk to negotiate the roads again with a good car. I would strongly recommend owners of cars (this is, if they place any value on them), not in any circumstances to come over that section between Ingham and Cardwell. As a means of demonstration, and for the purpose of bringing it forcibly upon those people in authority and substantiate my remarks. I would suggest that a tour be arranged over the section Ingham to Cardwell, to include the members for the districts, in Hon. J. Dash, Hon. M.P. Hynes, and Mr C. G. Jesson. I would find the time to act as a driver. I would make one condition in this demonstration, that is, that the car to be used should belong to one of those members. Why I suggest the above-named members is because, in my opinion, it is they who have placed Townsville in the unfortunate position of isolation through shocking roads. Contrast Townsville with Brisbane district, and Innisfail, Cairns on the part of the authorities, who, in my opinion, Port Douglas, and Tablelands network of roads. All these roads are first-class in construction and run parallel with the railway. On the Tablelands and connecting with Cairns, Innisfail, and Port Douglas, this network of roads extends for hundreds of miles. Townsville, Ingham and other near towns are deprived of this consideration, yet we are heavily taxed through the medium Main Roads Tax, Petrol Tax, etc.

A TOURIST'S COMPLAINT CONTINUED

In my opinion it is extremely unjust that we should be heavily taxed, and with hundreds of unemployed looking for employment when the urgent work could be put into effect with the double purpose of relieving the unemployed at breaking Townsville's long overdue isolation and her inherent right to enjoy what her city cities already enjoy. I would greatly welcome to see all such bodies as the R.A.C.Q. in every such affected town or city, rise in body as a protest against such intolerable inaction on the part of the authorities who, in my opinion, are the members for the districts. Our tour was simply ruined – instead of being a pleasure it turned into a nightmare, plus a damaged car thanks to the people responsible. As a citizen it is my duty to ventilate such states of affairs. Yours etc.,

G. DUNWOODIE Townsville, October 18 1937

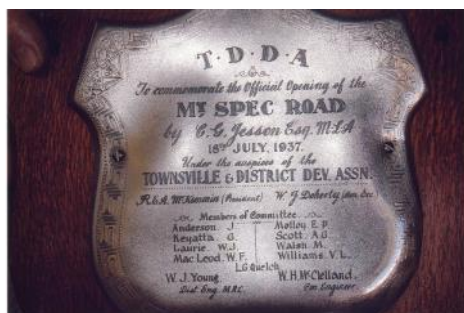


Unknown (1937). Opening of Road, Mt. Spec 18 July 1937. CityLibraries

Here are some photos from north Queensland during the 1930s



Unknown (1937). Opening of Road, Mt. Spec 18 July 1937.



Right: Laurie, W. J (1937). Bert McKimmin addressing a portion of the crowd at the [Mt. Spec] road opening, July 1937. CityLibraries



Unknown (1937). Plaque commemorating the opening of the Mt. Spec Road. CityLibraries



(2008). Cascades at Cardwell, ca. 1930. State Library of Queensland



Unidentified (1920). Car driving over 5 Mile Grid, Muttaborra Road, Hughenden. Flinders Shire Council



Unidentified (1946). Local identity, Arthur Benham, at the opening of Mount Spec Road, Townsville, ca. 1946. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

GETTING TO KNOW YOU—HARVEY LOW

I was born into a family that lived on a sugar cane farm in Strathdickie near Proserpine. There was no electric power, sewerage or even mail services. I was the youngest of five children.

On a shelf in the kitchen near the old wood stove was a large bottle of cough mixture. One of the ingredients was licorice and I drank about half of the contents. I started to have convulsions. Dad harnessed the horse to the sulky and rushed me to the hospital which was 10km away. The doctor was able to pump out my stomach and restore me to health. I think they might have broken the speed record for the distance. I cannot remember this as I was only three years old when it happened.

My mother had a half-brother whose job was to travel the world and collect items for museums. We already had an interesting collection including snakes in bottles, some cotton from the very first cotton bush grown in Australia, a chicken with two heads, a carved wooden snuff box and many more. He brought us an ivory ball with seven rotating balls inside it, an Indian god, a Chinese snuff bottle hand painted on the inside and many other items. He also showed us lantern slides of things he had seen on his trips. He later became head of the Brisbane museum.

Many other people donated to the collection. eg. A brooch collected by a member of the Lascelles family in 1780 in Venice, a Tchuringa stone of the local Aborigines, and tin type photographs from the 1860s.

My uncle admired some tree snail shells which we had collected from trees along a local water course and asked us to send him a dozen. He sent them to a London museum who sent half of them to America. We received letters of thanks from both museums. I believe these snails are extinct today.

I started school aged 4 ½ in order to keep up the necessary number of students. On my second day at school I was called out in front of the whole school and given two cuts with a cane. Why? On my way to school on the previous day I had said "Good morning, Mr XXXX" to one of the parents and he had reported my insolence to the teacher. I hadn't raised my hat so I received my just punishment. This teacher joined the RAF, did three tours of duty as a tail gunner, and died in Brisbane aged 95.

At the end of Grade 3 I transferred to the Proserpine State school. I was considered too young to go into Year 4 so I had to repeat Year 3. This was the best thing that ever happened to me as from then on education was a breeze and I was always in the top three in any exam. We were terrified of an old lady teacher when she was on playground duty. If you misbehaved she pulled your pants down and smacked your bare bottom in the middle of the playground.

In 1946 our farm was devastated by a drought followed by a bush fire that destroyed everything except the house. All animals, the cane crop, the cow bails, the stables were gone. We sold up and moved into town. Dad worked carrying bags of sugar in the mill.

Proserpine State School added a high top section so both Irwin and I were able to matriculate from Junior (Yr 10). Irwin did a year of Fitting and Turning at the mill but didn't like it.

We found out there was a boarding school in Coorangbong in NSW that would allow us to work as well as study. He and I decided to go there and get our Leaving Certificate (Year 12) which would allow us to attend Teachers College. We arrived during the holidays and Irwin got a job in the dairy while I picked fruit and drove a horse and cart through the village selling the produce door to door. I was fascinated by a small collection of artefacts the college held for teaching physiology. There were skeletons, the lungs of a miner who died from coal mining, a baby girl in formalin and many other items.

GETTING TO KNOW HARVEY LOW

We became friends with a chap called Murray Robbie who told us that Kelvin Grove Teachers College in Brisbane was accepting students at Junior level but they had to do a two year course. The good thing was you got paid for doing the course: \$6.30 per week the first year and \$8.40 the second year. The three of us moved to Brisbane.

During my first year at Kelvin Grove I became interested in ballroom dancing at night. Before the end of the year I had even gained qualifications to teach dancing and by the end of my second year I was able to teach Modern, Old time, Latin American and New Vogue.

At this time men had to do compulsory National Service in the armed services. Fortunately this started during the Christmas holidays. Irwin and I got on the special train to Brisbane and on to Wacol. I was sent to get something from the Quarter Masters Store and a chap started shouting at me. "What's biting you, mate?" I asked. He did his block. He was an officer and this boy from the bush hadn't addressed him correctly. I was given three days of mowing the lawn with a double sided razor blade. There were half a dozen others doing the same.

We marched up and down marked lines so the length of our steps would be the same and ate lousy meals with brown mashed potatoes. (It was said the coloured potatoes would stop us wanting to chase girls). After eleven days we were given a physical examination. I had had an accident playing soccer in primary school and my leg had gone out of joint. I was told I was Totally Permanently Incapacitated and I wouldn't be able to march. I didn't tell them I was a dancing instructor. Irwin was kicked out as well. He has a piece of steel embedded in the muscle of his chest—an accident from his Fitting and Turning days. My best mate from Teachers College also failed. He was told he could never fire a rifle. He was the Australian Small Bore rifle champion at the time. We soon found out why they preferred to have us in the classroom. I had 48 in my first class and Irwin had 69 for the whole year. I arrived in Townsville in time to start teaching Grade 3 at Mundingburra State School..

I taught primary school classes till 1971 and then, because of the great interest in schools in research oriented education, I became a Teacher Librarian. To qualify for this I had to return to Kelvin Grove Teachers College for 6 months training. In 1974 I was asked to become a Library Adviser so it was back to Kelvin Grove for 6 weeks. I wonder how many other teachers attended that college three times.

I met many interesting teachers during my career. There was a man who survived scrub typhus in WW2 in New Guinea, a person trained to attack Singapore on the Krait but failed to make the final team, a person who was one of only 200 who survived a Japanese prison camp, and a man who jumped out of his burning fighter plane at 19 thousand feet without a parachute. He hit a fir tree, landed in soft snow, broke his back, but survived.

I joined the Townsville Museum and Historical Society in 2000, when it was housed in the old magistrate building on the corner of Stoke Street and Sturt Streets. There was very little space to house anything not on display and to fill our jug for tea or coffee we had to ask permission of council employees in other offices.

In 2002 we moved to the present location but this is not a good position for a museum. I have even had taxi drivers complain that it is difficult to find. I really think the council should bite the bullet and build us a purpose built building. If Proserpine, Bowen, Collinsville, Cairns etc can have their own purpose built museum why can't we? Forget the Museum of Tropical Queensland. It is part of the Brisbane museum.

GETTING TO KNOW HARVEY LOW

Many memorable moments occur when you are showing people through the museum. Recently a lady looked at the picture of Sr Kenny and said, "That was the midwife that delivered me". Another said Audrey Nicholls, a Townsville product, taught her ballet in Melbourne when viewing the theatre display. Probably the most memorable event happened a few years ago. A lady asked whether I could give her an idea of the value of a painting she held. It was a genuine painting by a world famous artist. Her family were Jewish, had escaped from Hitler's Germany with a few valuable items, settled in Australia and the painting stayed under the bed till just before she appeared. I could only offer advice. Another family had a demijohn. This ancient wine bottle was dredged up in a fishing net many miles east of Eden in NSW. They finally cleaned the growth off the outside. Someone had said it was Portuguese and very old. How did it get there?

I am fascinated by museum objects. To me they all have a life of their own even if they won't tell you what it is. I would have loved to study archaeology or paleontology but there was little chance of doing that in Australia when I was young enough to do so.

This is why I work as a volunteer in the museum. If I can pass on a little of my own fascination I will have achieved my reward.

Harvey Low 2021



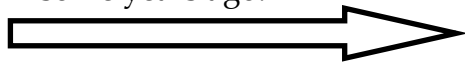
Harvey is in the School Room in Hall 2. Teaching was a major part of his working life.



FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Looking for new dentures? Check these out.

Donated to our museum some years ago.



Our museum volunteers had the pleasure of meeting Mick Keane at Townsville Museum some weeks ago, when he dropped in to donate some items from the Townsville Foundry which was situated on the banks of Ross Creek.

On the right is a meat tenderizer and photo on the left is of the moulds from the Townsville Foundry. The tenderizer moulds are on the left of that photo.



Below is a copy of Mick's "Memories".

I have lived in Townsville 81 years, having been born in Tully. When I was 12 months old, my parents bought a house in Sturt Street West, from my Grandparents when they moved to Bowen to retire.

In those days where the cutting is now—was a Council Quarry, and to get to West End, you turned down Morris Street, then right around the Causeway, where the Thuringowa Council Offices were, and on to West End, or you stayed in Flinders Street and it was straight around the corner.

All the lads my age were Chinese, and we got on well together. At the age of 9, we started to try and put together go-karts to ride down the steep hills.

As soon as my parents let me, we would go across the old Overhead Bridge that crossed over the rail yards, to go crabbing in Ross Creek, which was close handy. I made my own crab-pots with mesh string. My Grandmother taught me how to make nets when I went to Bowen on holidays.

We spent a lot of time in the Creek. We didn't need water as there were taps in the Railway yards. We did not need to take food either, as we cooked some of what we caught on an open fire. Failing that we ate oysters from the rocks.

One of my mates found that in amongst the driftwood on the banks there were dried out mangrove twigs, that were so porous you could light them and smoke them like a cigarette—we all did this, until my Uncle came to live with Mum & Dad. He was a returned soldier who spent the last of the war in Changi Prison Camp.

My uncle smoked and had bought large cartons of the Temple Bar cigarettes with him, so us kids had some real cigarettes to smoke for a while. To us, the only difference was the amount of saltpetre in them made them sparkle like a cracker wick. I still think the mangrove sticks tasted better at the time.

MICK'S MEMORIES CONTINUED

Our museum volunteers had the pleasure of meeting Mick Keane at Townsville Museum some weeks ago, when he dropped in to donate some items from the Townsville Foundry which was situated on the banks of Ross Creek.

This is more of Mick's Memories.

Needless to say, our families all enjoyed a feed of crabs or prawns every Sunday night for tea.

At the age of 16, I started an apprenticeship as a Foundry Jobbing Moulder at the Cleveland Foundry in South Townsville. On attending Technical College as part of the training, I met up with two apprentice Wagon Builders from the Railway. We became great friends, and one eventually became my brother-in-law.

We started taking our pushbikes on the Railmotor to Ayr every Saturday, because in those days the girls outnumbered the boys 8 to 1 in Ayr.

We had fantastic times with the girls we met, they accompanied us on tours of all around Ayr and usually to the movie matinee in the afternoons.

My only problem was, my mother could tell me what we did in Ayr—but would not tell me how she knew.

Finally after many weeks, she told me all her relatives lived in Ayr, and all the girls we associated with, had at least one cousin amongst them, who told their mums, and they contacted my mum. Good thing we were behaving ourselves with the girls. We eventually found things more interesting in Townsville, and gave Ayr a miss.

I took a weekend job Oxy cutting scrap metal—which enables me to buy my first car, a 96A 1931 Whippet Ute for (£)25 pound—equivalent to \$50 these days.

Back when I was an apprentice at the local foundry—I was getting paid 2 shillings and 1 penny per hour, so I found a part time job—oxy cutting scrap steel in a scrap metal yard—working for a boss who would have put Scrooge McDuck to shame. He paid me two shillings per hour—saying he would get into trouble with the apprenticeship board if he paid me more.

I bought my first car with what I earned plus a slight loan.

It was a 1931 Whippet Ute—no hood and no windscreen—but it worked and it was registered—plus it took me and my 2 mates Curly and Jeff anywhere we wanted to go.

The Olympia pictures in Sturt Street was our favourite place. It was an open-air theatre, on the corner of Sturt & Stokes Streets, and if it started to rain—most everyone raced up the back for cover—we would pull the row of canvas seats in front of us—back over us and enjoy the show.

MICK'S MEMORIES CONTINUED

Our museum volunteers had the pleasure of meeting Mick Keane at Townsville Museum some weeks ago, when he dropped in to donate some items from the Townsville Foundry which was situated on the banks of Ross Creek.

This is the last part of Mick's Memories.

As young fellows—we were basically girl shy. To try and overcome this—we decided to go to a jive class at the railway Canteen in Flinders Street. To give us intestinal fortitude before it started—we went to the Mansfield Hotel.

We soon found this was not necessary—as the girls we met in the beginning of the class were very helpful and we enjoyed ourselves. We stayed in the beginner's class—because as the girls moved up to other levels—they appeared to be only interested in themselves—the new ones coming along were more friendly.

One night—3 lovely girls were dropped off by car just prior to starting—they were from out of town and just wanted to learn to jive. My mates and I seemed to have them as partners right through. At the end of the class—we waited and spoke to the girls—it appeared their transport had problems and would not arrive for at least 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

I suggested that rather than stay here in the dark—we all go for a ride in the whippet—the girls agreed rather than wait by themselves—so we all piled into the ute and for the first time—I headed for Castle Hill.

Half way up—the engine was boiling and the sparks coming out of the exhaust were like sky rockets. When we got to the top—we found no water there for the radiator. After looking around we decided to go down slowly and go to Queens Gardens in North Ward for water.

It was a worrying time going down—but we got to the park and found a tap—then we found we had no containers. The best we could do when it cooled down was get two handfuls and a mouthful and spurt it into the radiator—even the girls helped with this and we were soon on our way back to the jive building again.

We were back and having a laugh over everything when the girls transport arrived—so we wished them all the best.

When I got home from work the next day—Mum said to me I hear you took some girls up Castle Hill last night—I asked her how she knew—“Well,” she said, “two of the girls were your cousins—but they didn't know and one of the mother's rang me and asked me to thank you.”



MICK'S MEMORIES CONTINUED

Our museum volunteers had the pleasure of meeting Mick Keane at Townsville Museum some weeks ago, when he dropped in to donate some items from the Townsville Foundry which was situated on the banks of Ross Creek. Below are a few pictures of the Townsville Railway Station which would have looked similar to this when Mick was visiting the Railway Canteen for dance classes.



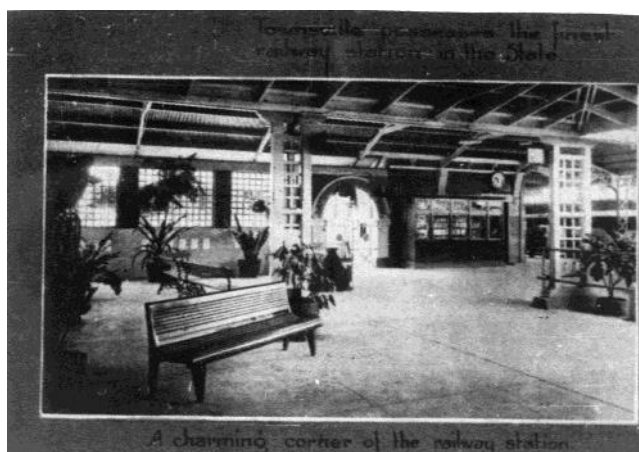
Unknown. (1942). Townsville Station.

Nick Shailer Collection. Copy in Townsville Museum Photograph Collection

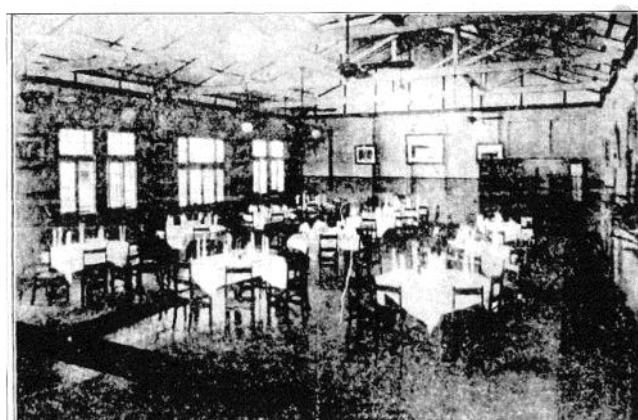
Taken by US newspaper reporter who was reporting on the first air raid on Townsville.



Harrison, John Thomas Townsville, Qld. 1944-05-12. With their luggage piled high on a trolley, four WAAF airwomen make their way along a railway platform. They are anxious to be on their way to their new job at a RAAF.



Unknown. (1929). Interior of Townsville Railway Station. Townsville Museum Photograph Collection



Interior of the Dining Rooms

Townsville Daily Bulletin (Qld. : 1907 - 1954), Saturday 18 February 1928, page 13.

Accessed 25/05/2021





Townsville Museum

&

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