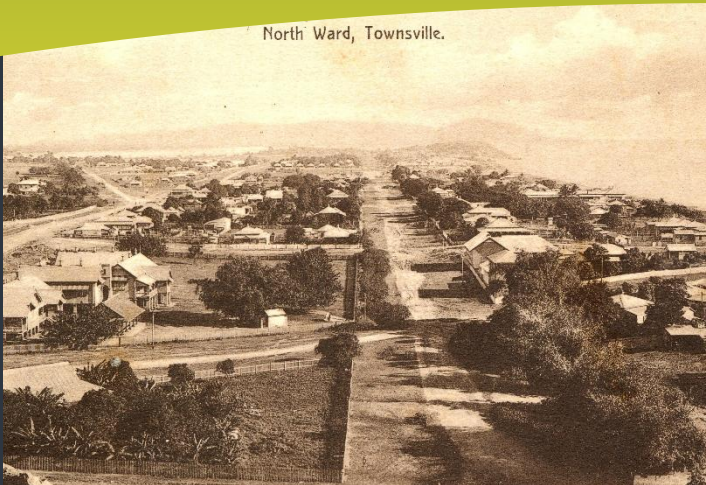




North Ward, Townsville.



this issue

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Business Hours

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

9.00AM TO 2:30PM

ENTRY ADULT \$5

CHILD \$2

Membership Fees

SINGLE \$15.00

FAMILY \$30.00

CORPORATE \$32.50

Contact details

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A Message from the President

Since the start of 2025, the Museum has faced a few challenges.

The heavy rains came in thick and fast and unfortunately the Museum building flooded. A small amount of damage was done to display cabinets in Hall 2, which were quickly repaired by our talented volunteer, Terry. Retired builders and tradies come in very handy and on behalf of the committee – "Thank you Terry".

To avoid further damage occurring, a member of Townsville City Council contacted the SES and arranged for sandbags to be delivered to the Museum. The acting Mayor and CEO were advised of this wonderful assistance given by an employee to the Museum.

In the next month, the Museum will have a new Chemist display with a feature panel of an early Chemist shop. The old cabinet was donated to the 1 RAR Museum.

In September this year the Museum will be celebrating 40 years of showcasing the history of Townsville.

The continued future depends on membership and volunteer support and of course, a relocation where visitors to our city can easily access the Museum. We have also been granted a Charity Permit for financial donations which, with a substantial amount, the Museum could find bigger and better premises and continue preserving and showcasing the city's rich and diverse history for future generations to enjoy.

Until next time,

Regards,

Trish Cronin



Community News

Urgent appeal for Volunteers

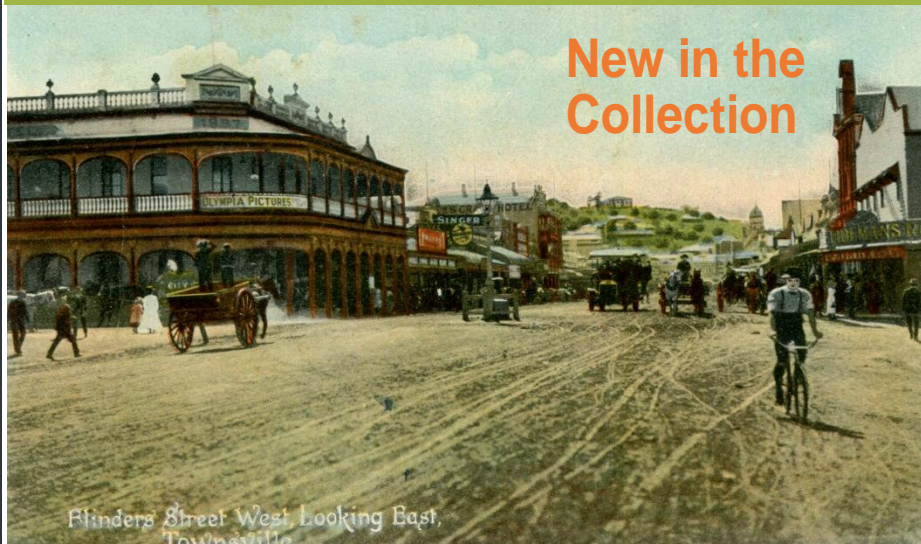


Townsville Museum and Historical Society is urgently seeking volunteers to assist with the daily operation of the museum.

Tasks and roles can vary from guiding guests through the museum to photography, data entry or maintenance and cleaning of museum displays and exhibits. If you are interested, please send us an email at admin@townsvillemuseum.com.au or call us on **4775 7838**.

Save the dates!

VP 80 commemorations will be held over three days from Friday 15 August to Sunday 17 August. Visit Council's website for details of events as they develop.



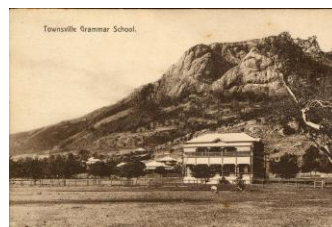
The Museum has recently received a collection of 14 postcards of Townsville views dating from around 1900 -1920.

The postcards came to the Museum from a donor in Sydney. They were owned by Arthur Brook, a government meat inspector who was sent to Townsville in 1917 as inspector at the Alligator Creek Meatworks. The postcard above shows **Lowth's Hotel**, in the top right-hand corner, where Art was living in June 1919.

Lowth's was built in 1897 from plans drawn by Tunbridge and Tunbridge. It was a classical style building with classical pilasters and balustrading. It was built by A Reid for £4465. The Hotel maintained wonderful reputation throughout Queensland as a popular well-run hotel for visitors. It was demolished to make way for the modern Lowth's Hotel in the 1960s.

Other postcards in the collection are North Ward showing the Central school, in the middle left of the postcard and the Drill Hall on middle right with its two-storey brick building on the corner. (page 1 photo)

The **Drill Hall** was constructed in 1887 and in 1890 a two-storeyed brick office and a stores building were built on the corner of Oxley and Mitchell Streets.

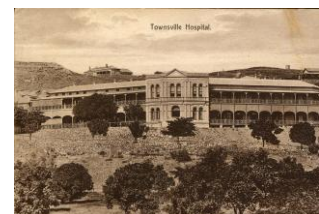


"the experiment of accepting girls has been, so far, eminently successful"

Townsville Grammar School (above) was the only grammar school in North Queensland in 1888. It provided subsidised secondary education, prior to the establishment of state secondary schools in 1924.

It is also the longest surviving co-educational grammar school in Queensland.

The school opened initially as a boy's school but when Mary Foley was awarded a scholarship to attend high school in 1893, her father applied for her admission. Her enrolment was accepted. She went on to Sydney University where she excelled in her 1895 exams.



There have been three general hospitals in Townsville over the history of the city. The first General Townsville Hospital was established in 1882 on elevated land adjacent to Stanton Hill. The two-storey brick building accommodated 70 patients. When Cyclone Leonta struck Townsville in May 1903, it caused extensive local damage and the hospital partially collapsed. The hospital in the postcard above is dated 1906.

Nick's history bits

SUPPOSED FRENCH ESCAPEES.

The supposed New Caledonian escapees who arrived at Townsville on the 18th instant came down to Brisbane yesterday in the steamer Wodonga, which arrived about midday. There are nine in all—seven Italians, one Frenchman, and one German. They arrived at the Townsville Breakwater in a small cutter, and stated that they had been twenty days out from New Caledonia. They left Noumea for Onyon Island to fish for beche-de-mer, but got on to a reef, where they remained for ten days, but after some trouble managed to reach Cleveland Bay. Their provisions ran short, and they had to live on one biscuit a day. They also lost their compass and rudder. After the steamer had cleared Townsville the men were allowed to walk about unfettered, but under constant surveillance. When the vessel arrived at the Pile Light this morning they were handcuffed and chained into two gangs of four and five respectively. The men present a most woe-begone spectacle. Only one of them can speak English, and that very badly. One man has in his possession a battered-looking brass euphonium, which he brought all the way from New Caledonia in the cutter, and which he cherishes as a very dear relic. The men were at once taken off the boat and conveyed to the gaol in a police van.

The three Algerine visitors from New Caledonia, Mearoud Ben Sheriff, Mahomet Ben Amol, and Cadder Ben Hallol, after several remands, were yesterday, at the request of Sub-inspector Urquhart, discharged from custody. When the Interpreter informed them, by direction of Mr. Pincock, that the Salvation Army would provide for them until they got something to do or found some means of returning to their own country, they exclaimed, in good Moorish or mixed French, that they "would like to go into the service of any man at all belonging to the Queen." The bronzed and brawny trio then left the court with lighter steps and brighter bearing than they had shown during their several previous interviews with Mr. Pincock.

French Escapees

While it is well known that Australia was a penal settlement for England, it is not as well known that New Calendonia was used a penal colony by France from 1864 to 1924 with some 21,000 convicts transported.

Those who escaped did so by boat, the prevailing winds sending them in the direction of Australia. Some were picked up by passing ships and tried to pass themselves off as shipwrecked sailors while others made landfall along the coast. Some in very poor condition as it had taken up to 20 days to travel the distance.

From the 1890s to the early 1900s several escapees made it to the Townsville area. One group arrived in a small cutter which tied up in the breakwater, while another lot came ashore at the Bohle. A more adventurous group were chased around Hinchinbrook Island by the police, subsequently they stole the police boat and sailed to the Bowen area where they were detained.

Those found were detained by the local police until they could be returned to New Calendonia where they received further sentences. In one report three were given a further nine years hard labour, with two to nine years in chains and one was condemned to death for trying to kill a warder.

EYE ON FACEBOOK

Read and share our regular weekly posts.

Join the Townsville Museum and Historical Society Group and share our regular weekly posts on your facebook page so that we can increase our reach. The more people we reach the greater the potential for visitors and new members.



WATCH OUT FOR THE

Refurbished Chemist shop

Refurbished display of chemist shop will soon be in place later in the month.



Sue's Spot



Mirimar, the largest motor launch to be built in Queensland, was launched on the Brisbane River from the boatsheds of Norman Wright at Newstead on June 13 1934.

The boat had been built for Mr E.R. Hayles, of Townsville and was an excursion boat 90 feet (approx 27.5 meters) in length and designed to carry 300 passengers. The woods used in construction were spotted gum, Queensland hardwood, and New Zealand kauri pine.

Mirimar was in service as a ferry between Townsville and Magnetic Island, Green Island cruises and cruised Moreton Bay islands until 29 September 2009 when she made her last trip up the Brisbane River to Lone Pine Sanctuary. She was known for her quirks; she didn't like to turn to starboard and popped out of gear whenever she could.

A Captain Watts was fined 20 pounds in 1935 for overloading on a trip to Amity. He had 400 passengers well over the allowable number. He pleaded guilty,

saying he thought many of the people on the boat were just saying goodbye to passengers!

By 2012, *Mirimar* was rotting and vandalized in a boatyard at Hemmant in Brisbane. In 2018 Clint of Marine Access Queensland bought *Mirimar* and believed it was too good to be scrapped. In 2020 Clint announced the vessel was waiting for someone interested in restoring her to her former glory. The challenge was taken up by the Save MV *Mirimar* group who are currently undertaking the painstaking and challenging project.



Townsville Museum & Historical Society Issue May 2025

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