

# Toowong History Group

## Toowong Local History

A brief history by Marilyn England

TOOWONG HAD ITS BEGINNINGS IN THE 1850s. By 1842 the Moreton Bay Convict Settlement had been disbanded and Moreton Bay was thrown open to free settlement.

Margaret Deeth wrote in **Toowong: a community's history** that the first land sales in the 1840s were made up in what is now the city centre, South Brisbane, Fortitude Valley and Kangaroo Point. The earliest links between Brisbane and Ipswich and the Darling Downs were the river and a road on its southern side, but in 1849, a shorter road on the north side of the river was surveyed and named Moggill Road. It ran from Brisbane, along River Road (Coronation Drive today), through what would become Toowong, to near the junction of the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers where the Moggill Ferry crossing still exists.

In 1850 the area now known as Toowong was surveyed and divided into several large estates owned by families such as the Cribbs, Drews, Markwells and Maynes whose names have become familiar to local residents. The first recorded use of the name Toowong was in 1851 when J. C. Burnett marked Toowong Creek on the survey of lots for sale. The name was then used in 1862 as a boundary descriptor in Land Purchase Certificates for these lots.

Richard Langler Drew was described as 'the father of Toowong' by J. B. Fewings when he wrote his Memoirs in the 1890s. Drew had purchased lots on Toowong Creek in 1861 with a man called Bennet Clay and proceeded to subdivide and sell much of it; he posted sign on a tree somewhere near the present-day corner of High Street and Burns Road which announced to everyone that 'This is the village of Toowong'. Our first Governor of Queensland, Sir George Bowen, was quite amused when he saw it while out riding and remarked: "This is the village of Toowong but where are the houses?"

Perhaps the greatest single impetus to increased settlement in the Toowong district was the opening of the railway line from Brisbane to Indooroopilly in 1875. Four trains passed through Toowong each day (except Sundays) and this brought an upsurge in the development of shops and houses to provide for the many new residents.

Toowong was proclaimed a shire in 1880, and it became a 'villa' suburb attracting elite public figures who built gracious residences to catch the cooling breezes on the summits of hills, along the ridges and along the river. Public amenities were planned and built, and in 1903 Toowong, with its newly formed Council, was proclaimed a 'town'.

For more information please contact Marilyn England.

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