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***M. P. HANSEN,
MALLING***

***A Pioneer's True
Story***

***Told by
M. P. Hansen
and Compiled
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M. P. Hansen, Denmark, October, 1900

M. P. Hansen — Malling

IN WRITING MY MEMORIES, I think I should set out my background, and my reason for coming to Australia.

I am one of a family of eight children - six boys and two girls. Our parents had a small, poor farm. It consisted of four acres, in common with all Denmark at that time, when the country was still suffering from the effect of the 1864 war with Germany, and many other causes at that time. This economic position continued up to 1895 and even later, and there was a constant stream of people leaving Denmark for America. The middle States of America were particularly favoured.

As we grew up and left school, we five eldest boys decided that as soon as we could afford it, we, too, would go to America.

The fare from Denmark to New York was about \$9. Another \$7 was required at least to get to the middle States of America. If one had \$17 in Denmark it was possible to get to the mid States of America in about three weeks. When we realised that the best wages a young man could get in Denmark at that time was about \$16 plus keep a year, we knew it would not be easy.

My eldest brother got to America in 1893, and my brother Christian and I were saving and planning to go over in 1900. At that time, I had a job as foreman on a large farm, in comparison with farms in Denmark.

Early in 1900 a letter arrived for the man who held my position two years earlier. His name was Hans Peter Madsen. My name is Mads Peter Hansen. The postman gave me the letter and said, "They have turned your name back to front."

The letter was from the Queensland Agent General in London, giving some information about the Queensland Government which gave free passage to approved Danish farmers. It also gave a good deal of information about Queensland.

At that time, all I knew about Australia was what we had learnt in school. It was a big, sandy island, inhabited by blacks, mostly cannibals, but with some white settlers along the coast. Water was so scarce that it had to be caught in iron tanks and saved from one rainy period to another.

The information from the Agent General's letter made Australia appear much better, and I made further inquiries and collected all the information I needed. I talked it over with Christy, and we decided to try for the free ticket from London to Brisbane. We were both qualified farmers, and the only condition was that we were to stay in Queensland for twelve months, and so our tickets were granted. The main factors for deciding on Australia were, the free ticket, and the fact that Queensland was about the furthest we could get on the globe.

We left London on the 9th November, 1900, and arrived in Brisbane at 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve, after the little steamer had been stuck on a mud bank in the river for a couple of hours. It was a hot, tropical night, and very different to the Christmas we were used to, with frost and snow. It was a week before Federation.

We went straight to the Emigration Depot, where we stayed until the 2nd January. We tried to get work, the wages offered were 80c to \$1.20, plus keep, per week. We would have taken any wages we could possibly get, if only to get started in something. Some Danish speaking people in Brisbane advised us to go to Toowoomba. It was possible for us to get free rail fare to any place in Queensland.

Arriving in Toowoomba, we went to the Emigration Depot, which was situated where the Technical College now stands.

On January 7, my brother got a job with a travelling chaff cutter in the Pittsworth district. Another Dane and myself got a job at Daly Bros., Quinalow.

We left Toowoomba after breakfast, and got to Jondaryan, by train, at 1 p.m. Neither of us, of course, could speak English. We had a letter to Daly Bros., Quinalow, which we showed to people at Jondaryan, and they directed us which way to go.

We now had to walk the rest of our journey, plus carrying our heavy swag; also we had had no mid-day meal. By mid-afternoon we got to Freemount, owned by Daly Bros' father. He directed us to Quinalow, and gave us a piece of strong cheese and a piece of damper. The cheese was old, and I did not like it, but my friend did, so I ate all the damper and he ate all the cheese.

We arrived at the little Quinalow Sawmill at 8 o'clock that night, hungry and tired after carrying our swag for the 20 miles on a blistering hot afternoon.

We were to get \$1.50 plus keep per week, and next morning we started our new job. Before doing other work we had to milk the cows. All orders and conversation had to be done by signs, as no one else spoke Danish. I was ordered to cut Bathurst Burr, but told to only cut the big ones. I cut them all, thinking the name of the burr was Big-ones.

At that time, Daly Bros. had started the small sawmill, and the next day I was put to work there.

We had to do our own cooking, and as I couldn't cook, I had to learn from the other men.

The men's quarters consisted of two small rooms with weather board walls and a bark roof. There was a small detached fireplace. The cooking utensils consisted of a camp oven, two kerosene tins, one frying pan, two billy cans, knives, forks and spoons, plus a few tin plates and tin pannikins. There was no table nor chairs. At night, our light was obtained from a couple of fat lights made from 2lb. jam tins which were filled with fat, with a piece of moleskin stuck into the fat, and hanging over the side. When the moleskin was lit, it would draw the fat and provide a dim light. This was in early 1901, the sawmill grew and conditions for myself improved as gradually. I was able to understand and converse with my work mates.

It soon became clear, however, that I would never get on while working at the sawmill, and in June, 1901, my brother came up from Pittsworth and we took on a contract ringbarking brigalow scrub for Mr. J. Bruhn. We were paid 25c an acre, and hardly made sufficient to buy food. There was no way of cooking, and we only had a frying pan, kerosene tin and a billy-can, plus a small amount of cutlery and pannikins. We had a small tent, but no camp-oven. We baked our damper in ashes. This was done by making a large fire to produce a large amount of ashes, large enough to enable us to make a hole in the middle of the ashes. We then mixed the dough and dropped it into the hole, and covered it up with the hot ashes. We dug it out when we thought sufficient time had passed to bake it. We removed as much of the ashes as possible before eating, but of course much was impossible to remove. There was a saying, however, that brigalow ash was so clean and white that one could nearly bake a damper without the flour.

While doing other contract work with the same financial results, we were on the alert for suitable land to call our own. At that time, most of the land in the Rosalie Shire of the big scrub was mapped out in 160 acre blocks. It was not surveyed, and could be selected as a homestead in any size block up to 640 acres at 25c an acre with certain conditions of clearing and occupation.

On the 4th August, 1901, I selected 320 acres as a homestead at 25c an acre and 10 years to pay for it. This is the land where the Malling Cheese Factory now stands.

The land was waterless, and covered with a dense mixed scrub. The nearest water was at Quinalow, five miles away. (The only water Christy and I had while we were clearing was carried by us from Quinalow). There was no road, nor even a track, nor were there survey lines. The wild life consisted of dingoes, several types of wallabies, kangaroo rats, scrub possums and ring tail possums who built their nests in bushy scrub trees like birds. There were all types of birds, such as blue-white headed pigeons, plus scrub turkeys and a few emus. There were different kinds of snakes, from the large, slow carpet snake to the slender, tree-climbing whip snake.

The prickly-pear was only now coming into this part of the scrub, but during the 1902 drought, when nearly two thirds of the cattle in Queensland died from thirst and starvation, the people living on the forest and plain country joining the scrub-country, turned their cattle into the prickly-pear land. It was found that prickly-pear kept the cattle alive without water. As the cattle moved off into the clean scrub country, they then, of course, helped the spread of the prickly-pear seed. Malling district was the last of this scrub country to be selected and settled, but it soon became quickly infested with the pear menace.

To try to get water on our land Christy and I dug a hole with a pick and shovel on a selected 160 acres joining my selection. When we got a little water in the water hole, all the wild animals from the scrub came to drink. Some wild cattle also took advantage of the water. We finally had to erect a fence around the hole, thereby allowing only the birds to drink.

During 1902, and up to October in 1903, we got work where and when we could. We earned enough money to live and work on the selection for a time. (I might mention that when I arrived at Quinalow from Denmark I had 67 cents left from the money I had brought from the old country).

We built a slab hut 20 feet x 9 ft. Also, we erected a 100 gallon tank. We cleared a little more land, and a track across country to Quinalow.

In October, 1903, Christy and I went to Clifton for the wheat harvest. After the 1902 drought, the 1903 wheat crop was particularly good. We worked for Imhoff Bros. first harvesting and later following their threshing machine. We were paid 5 cents an hour, and our food was given to us, it was cooked for us, and was the best we had had since coming to Queensland.

We stayed with the thresher until the end of the season, at the beginning of April, 1904. We saved our earnings.

In the meantime, the two selections had been surveyed, so we knew the boundaries of our land. We again started to fall scrub.

The Agricultural Bank had opened, and I applied for a loan of \$600, but was granted only \$320 to build a two-room house, ring-bark 150 acres and buy eight cows, and also make an 800-yard dam.

I felled 40 acres of scrub, which by that time was badly infested with pear. Then I planted corn and pumpkin by hand between the stumps and logs. The kangaroo rats and wallabies soon discovered what was going on, and at night they followed along, dug up what corn had been planted, and ate it. We found that if, before planting, we dipped the corn in Stockholm tar, then rolled it in ashes, it lost its flavour.

Christy also cleared land, planted corn and pumpkin as I had done. As we could not afford to buy wire for fencing, we cleared a strip of scrub all around the part we had planted with corn, we then stacked up the fallen trees to keep out the wallabies and wild cattle.

There were two mobs of wild cattle, one from Moola Creek, and the other from Irvingdale; there was about a dozen head in each mob. They quickly discovered the corn, and although we were alert, they managed to get in and destroy the corn.

We decided action was needed. Christy was to be on the west side of the corn, and I on the east. We each had a gun, and our plan was for Christy to fire a shot when they arrived, to stampede them, and I to fire another as they left. The cattle came at night, however, and when we got there they had already arrived. We each tried to get to our original place without the cattle noticing, but in the dark Christy fell over a log and his gun went off. The cattle stampeded through our scrub fence and headed straight for me, but I managed to find refuge behind a large tree trunk. I did not get the chance to fire my gun until the cattle were well past, but they never returned. This all happened where the Malling School now stands.

I got a small dam sunk by contract, and timber from the Quinalow Sawmill for a two-roomed house. It was not lined or ceiled. The contract price for the carpenter was \$8, and I helped him as much as I possibly could.

There were practically no dairy cows in the district, and we milked those available. Before the 1902 drought the price of cows was from \$4 to \$6. It was difficult to obtain cows after the drought. I bought eight cows with five big heifers. None of them would give the milk without bringing the calves up along side of them.

The little butter factory at Bismark had just started, and I had bought an old spring cart, into which I broke my saddle horse. I also bought a small separator on terms. Two roads had been cleared from Malling (then known as Box Gully) to Bismark. The roads were cleared at a contract price of 17 cents and 20 cents a chain. A good man could clear two chain in one day. It was 14ft. wide.

I built a crude yard, and in a small way I started dairying in 1906 January. My largest cheque for a month was \$8, but by winter my supply was so small the manager of Bismark factory told me that after a sample had been taken of the milk there was not much left to make butter.

At that time Christy forfeited his selection and left for America.

Although our position was difficult, Mrs. Hansen and myself stuck to it, and gradually it improved. When the Bell railway was opened, Kaimkillenbun became our rail head. We sent our pigs and a little corn that way to Toowoomba. The pigs bought from \$3 up to \$4.25, while the corn brought 15 cents to 20 cents per bushel.

While the Tara railway was under construction I obtained three horses and a German waggon. I bought the waggon from the resident engineer. I cut and carted railway sleepers to Kaimkillenbun to pay for it.

This was about 1908 and in 1909 one selection (114V) which had been selected and forfeited three times and again the fourth selector was beaten by the prickly pear. He had done a little improvement on the land and he sold the 170 acres to me for \$160. Half of this in cash and the rest to be paid in twelve months.

At that time I had got the deed for my 320 acres and I transferred my account from the Agricultural Bank to the Bank of Australasia in Oakey. This bank lent me the money to buy the 170 acres.

At that time my neighbour had fallen some scrub and planted corn between the stumps as I had once done. He got a good crop, pulled and then shelled it by hand into bags. Corn, however, was cheap and he had no way of carting it to Kaimkillenbun. As I had horses and a German waggon I bought all his corn and carted it to the railhead. I paid him 13 cents a bushel and sold it on rail Kaimkillenbun for 19 cents per bushel.

I continued to clear the scrub and reared most of the calves as a means of increasing the herd but the spread of prickly pear and the want of water made it very difficult. We had a small dam but the thickness of prickly pear and scrub prevented the water from running into it. I remember one day when things were very bad I remarked that we had had our dam over three years and as yet it had not been completely full. One of the children replied, "You made it too deep."

As the children grew older, we sent them to MacLagan School, a distance of five miles. At first they rode on old, quiet horses and later they went by horse and sulky.

In 1911 in an effort to get sufficient water, I sunk a well 90 feet deep but got only 30 gallons of water an hour.

At that time Rhodes grass had begun to come on really well in the burnt scrub soil. If the Rhodes grass did so well the prickly pear did not get as much of a hold as before. Between the Rhodes grass and the prickly pear (if soft) in the scrub, the country could carry more cattle per acre than it will now that it is all cleared and cultivated. The prickly pear supplying the water which was so very scarce.

By rearing most of the calves and selling only the steers by 1912 I had a fair herd of milking cows, in fact I was the biggest cream supplier to Mt. Bismark butter factory and also Chairman of Directors.

The milking became a problem and I had to employ a man and sometimes two men. This was difficult as the accommodation was poor and difficult for us as well as for the men. At that time milking machines of several different makes were coming on the market but they all spoiled the cows after being used on them for some time.

Then Winchcombe Carson became agents for the Ridd Milking Machine Bucket Plant and they sold me a three bucket plant with a 3 h.p. Lister Engine on a deposit of \$30, the balance on P.N.

I put up a crude but sensible milking shed and looked after them myself as I simply could not afford to let them fail. They were quite successful and I believe they were the first machines on the Downs which did not spoil the cows. This was in September, 1913, and between the Rhodes grass, the prickly pear, and the milking machines we did quite well during 1914. In the 1915 drought we lost no cattle and sold a few head of fats at most Quinalow sales.

The war brought the price of cattle forward, also the price of butter and cheese went up and we began to get some control over our position.

In 1914, after living and working in many States of America, my brother Christy returned to Australia. He thought that Queensland was the best place after all. There were plenty of forfeited prickly pear selections available and he selected 160 acres which he made into a really good farm. He lived there until he died at the age of 75 years.

By 1915-16 the prickly pear became so thick in the south portion of the Quinalow-Malling Moola districts that wild animals such as dingoes and wallabies moved out to other parts -- only the birds and snakes were left. The wallabies then became bad on the land we cleared. They grew bigger and were more destructive on the better feed.

I cleared the last of the scrub on my homestead and there was nothing to keep the wallabies off the Rhodes grass.

There was at that time a family camping at the Hemrah Dam making a living by shooting and skinning possums and wallabies. They asked me for permission to erect a wallaby yard in the corner of the netted in paddock. It was erected so that the wallabies followed the fence into the yard but could not get out. The first night they caught 106 wallabies in the yard. It took nearly a day to skim them.

Many settlers in that heavy pear country borrowed money from the Agriculture and other banks. They made a few improvements on their land but the pear bear most of them and they left their land to the banks as it all appeared hopeless.

In 1916 I bought No. 13 Parish of Moola from the Bank of N.S.W. for the amount which was owing on it. I remember the day I went to Oakey to settle the deal. It was on terms. There was no value on the land as it was. I met a man who knew the place and when I told him I was going into the bank to settle up for No. 13 Moola he looked at me and replied, "Don't you think you should see a doctor first."

I brought the land, however, heavily scrubbed and prickly beared. I got most of the scrub felled. Because of the heavy pear I had to pay double price per acre for felling. We wore long leggings and we gave our trousers two coats of paint. This enabled us to walk through the pear without the long prickles intruding. But it was hard and dangerous work and one man received a badly broken leg working in that block of scrub.

The weather was hot and dry but I got most of the scrub down, burnt and planted the land with Rhodes grass. Also managed to erect some sort of fence around the boundary but there was not a bucket of water on the whole place. In the 1919 drought I had about 150 head of my own cattle there as well as a herd of dairy cows from Oakey. This herd was very poor and two cows died on their journey from Oakey. There were about 200 head of cattle on 320 acres. None of the cattle had water at all for nine months but survived with the help of the moisture in the pear.

In the beginning the cows were milked once a day, however, after a time they were milked twice a day. The drought broke in December and the Oakey herd was taken back and in really good condition. I had a lot of dry cattle there and yarded a few head of fats for every Quinalow sale.

The pear began to get the best of the Rhodes grass so I started to clear and plough the land. A bore was put down and we had some water. Also made a dam and built a house, milking shed and yard.

I had a large stock of milking cows at home and from this I put a whole dairy herd on this new place and still had a herd at home. A new Ridd Releaser milking machine plant was put in. This was my second Ridd machine. I later sold No. 13 Moola with cattle and machinery to my eldest son on terms he could pay.

When the first World War started the price of all our produce and stock elevated particularly cheese which began to be exported from Queensland and many small cheese factories sprang up all over the Downs. There became so many that they took the cream supply from the Maclagan Butter Factory and this factory eventually gave up making butter and turned to cheese instead.

There was at that time four or five settlers dairying around Malling and I decided that instead of taking my milk to Maclagan why not erect my own small factory -- taking also the milk from my neighbour's supply. I had a little over 100 gallons per day from my own farm and I got about 80 gallons per day from the other farms.

The factory building was crude and small but I could not afford anything better. Although the cattle in the district ate a lot of prickly pear the cheese was good and it was nearly all graded first class.

The small factory gave us a market for our milk at home.

This was about 1917. Also at this time there were several settlers with school-age children. With the assistance from some families along Moola Creek, who were much further from a school than ourselves, we tried to get a school at Malling. I offered three acres free for a school ground and everyone interested did all they could to reduce the cost. So with the assistance of our Member, Hon. A. E. Moore, we got the Malling School.

This school was opened on the 13th August, 1917, under the name of Box Gully State School; later this was altered to the name of Malling. The attendance on the first day was 11, but by the end of the month it rose to 17. The first teacher was Miss M. E. Mohr.

In 1919 I put down the first bore at Malling and got a splendid supply of water. This helped us a great deal for as the newness was going out of the ground it became more set and the prickly pear on the homestead land then grew harder and more prickly, consequently it was not quite so good as cattle feed.

In 1920 there were more forfeited selections in this district. Some of them were partly improved and now taken over by the banks. The owners simply walked off and left their land to the banks. One of these blocks of land was portion 183V Parish of Rosalie. It contained 640 acres. About 100 acres had been more or less cleared but the remainder was heavily scrubbed and infested with pear. There was also on the land a small hut and a small dam.

I bought this block from the Bank of N.S.W. for \$1200 on terms.

As soon as possible I had the scrub fallen by contract at \$4 per acre. The price paid for falling clean scrub -- that is scrub minus the prickly pear -- was \$2 per acre. I had to get assistance from the bank. This they always gave to me.

After a time this block was divided into two farms consisting of 320 acres each. I then sold one of these to my son in law at a price and terms he could manage. Many years later in 1964 my grandson bought from me the other farm.

QUINALOW, MACLAGAN, MOOLA AND MALLING

The Quinalow, MacLagan and Malling part of the big scrub was different to the Moola section. The scrub consisted of patches of vine scrub, brigalow and belah, and a few stony coolibah ridges with some ironbark in places.

The land was selected mostly as homesteads in areas from 160 acres to 640 acres. The selectors were mostly single men and came from England, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark and Germany.

We were all without money or valuables of any kind. There were also some men from N.S.W., Victoria and South Australia and various parts of Queensland. Some of these settlers had families.

Those of us from the other countries knew nothing of this climate nor how to get water by sinking wells. Bores were not thought of then in this part and besides we had no money to pay for them. We were about twenty-five miles from Jondaryan and none of us had carts or wagons. Many had a good horse and saddle and of course many of the first settlers soon forfeited their selection.

About 1927-28 the Government made an effort to get people on the pear land. Some land in the Malling district which had been selected and forfeited several times was made available free and a bonus of \$1 per acre freehold for any part of it which was cleared and kept clear of prickly pear for a certain time. A few selections were taken on these farms, but were all eventually abandoned.

At that time portion 50V Parish of Moola containing 1109 acres was made available at a small rent and when certain conditions were complied with could be made freehold at 60 cents per acre.

This block of land had been selected years before when there was little pear but it had been forfeited for years.

It was all heavily timbered and had pear. No improvements had been made and there was no water. It was known as the big pear block.

In 1928 I selected it under the conditions stated. At that time I only had my usual way of clearing by tractor and choughing. I had smashed three tractors in the scrub and pear. I also had four teams of plough horses -- six horses to a team. To clear 1100 acres of green scrub and prickly pear was a big job.

It was at this time the Government bought out the cochineal and the cactoblastis and I was one of the first to get hold of them in this district.

The depression was coming on and labour was plentiful. I paid good wages and employed a lot of men. One day I counted all my employees -- there were at that time thirty-one. They consisted of cheese factory hands, share farmers, fencers, ringbarkers and some men clearing land for ploughing. I had a lot of men using axes and they all wanted the best of axe. On calling them all together I found I had sixteen men using axes.

“They cleared a wilderness
and created the stepping stone,
Let us honour, as well as reap,
that which has been sown.”

ORIEL HARPER



Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Hansen, Malling

When the scrub was fallen and partly burnt it killed a lot of pear and this allowed the Rhodes grass to grow. It was this grass and the young pear which then sprung up that made such good feed for the cattle — the pear also providing the moisture. Of course as the ground settled and the pear became older and harder and more prickly the feed value fell again. This took approximately two years and if not cleared and ploughed again one was back in the original position.

The fallen scrub and young pear became full of mice and frogs etc. This of course was ideal for the snakes and they came in great numbers — all sorts and sizes. While bringing the cows out of the paddocks for milking it was common to see a dozen snakes on the cattle tracks. They were so fat and lazy it was an effort for them to crawl out of the way of the cattle. In all the years, we had no more than five or six head of cattle killed by snake bite. As the land was cleared the snakes disappeared and it is seldom we see a snake now.

I provided each of my farms with the necessary machinery, all bought on the best terms I could manage to obtain. I also provided a team of horses.

Bores and a dam were also provided for each place. They were over 300ft. deep. All this and windmills etc. were costly and the number of P.N. were constant and heavy.

In 1924, 62V of the Parish of Moola was for sale. It had been improved with fences, buildings and clearing. But it slipped back badly when I got it. I paid \$8 per acre and had to get the money from the bank. I had sufficient milking cows to stock this place and I put in my fifth Ridd Milking Plant. I also supplied a team of horses and necessary machinery. It was of course the easiest place I had started and when I had it in reasonable working order I sold it to my second son on terms he could manage.

By the time I had most of the scrub fallen or ringbarked on the 1100 acres the cactoblastis had most of the pear killed and the dead pear made a great body of material for carrying a fire and made the clearing of the ground cheaper and easier.

I divided the 1100 acres into three dairy farms. One small farm of 10 acres and one timber reserve of 35 acres.

I built the house, cow yards, milking shed and other sheds and put in Ridd Milking Machines. This being my sixth lot of milking machines. I also had sufficient dairy cows without running short on the other farms. I had a good supply of water in a bore on this farm. This place started in November, 1930.

I kept rearing all heifer calves and by October, 1932, I had the second farm in this block ready with a good bore and all necessary buildings and machinery and I put in my seventh Ridd Milking Machine.

After some years when I had made the farm freehold and in working order I sold it to my son-in-law at a price and terms he could manage.

The milk from these farms came to the Malling Cheese Factory which had been made bigger. A Pasteuriser had been installed and a bore had been sunk and water laid on to the factory. Our cheese was mostly good and we had got a few small suppliers from Moola Creek way. The Malling Factory was no longer the smallest factory in the surrounding district.

My own house contained ten rooms plus out-buildings. There were also quarters for the factory employees and a house for the factory manager.

In 1924 I was elected a member of the Queensland Cheese Manufacturers Association and the Queensland Cheese Board. The Malling Factory then won a prize of \$50 at the Brisbane Exhibition for Cheddar cheese and it was the first time such a prize was given. We did not show any more Cheddar cheese, however, as I did not think it the best cheese for this climate.

I suffered a few accidents and had several turns in hospital for various complaints mostly due to strain. The family also had their troubles and bad health and in 1934 we lost our youngest daughter, a bright girl, with double pneumonia. In 1935 I had a really bad time with several complaints but after a month in hospital I gradually got over it.

Just after this, I remember one morning there were 812 gallons of milk from my own cows on several farms. I kept all the whey from all these farms on the home farm where I kept a lot of pigs including 35 breeding sows.

By this time the prickly pear which had once covered all the new land had practically disappeared and it became necessary to completely alter our way of working.

I still had one farm to start on the 1100 acres but before I could do so I had to get sufficient water. I got some water by boring and I bought a crawler tractor, plow and scoop and made dams. I built a house, sheds, milking shed and yards. I also installed my eighth Ridd Milking Plant. Although we lost some cattle in the 1936 drought I had sufficient cows to put a herd on this new farm. After making it freehold and having it in working order I sold it to my son-in-law at a price and terms he could manage.

The disappearance of the prickly pear made the land valuable, and I remember one block of land which had been selected under the freehold and bonus terms but was left and forfeited, was again open for selection. There were almost 300 applications. There was also about the same number of applications for any land open for selection at that time. There was no more forfeiting and really good progress was made in the Quinalow, Malling and Moola districts. MacLagan had never been as badly affected by pear as other parts of the country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AYRSHIRES

In 1911 I BOUGHT my first Ayrshire bull. I found the Ayrshire best suited to our conditions. In fact I think they were as good as pioneers as ourselves. Since then I have had nothing but Ayrshires. In 1911 I joined the Ayrshire Herd Book Society.

At that time what is now Malling was called Box Gully. It was called this from the gully running down through Wonga Plains although there were no box trees. When I joined the A H B Society I had to give my place a name so I called it Malling. There is a place in England and also Denmark called Malling and the short, plain name appealed to me.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRACTOR

IN 1915 OR 1916 the I.H.C. brought out the first one man tractor working on kerosene -- it was called the Mogil. I bought the first of these tractors to come west of Brisbane -- on a deposit of \$50.

I had a triangle log to pull behind the tractor. This way I attacked the prickly pear and fixed the tractor so it would climb the pear. This way I broke the pear down. Although I broke up three tractors and turned one over so the back wheels pointed right up in the air on the side of a pear 5 to 6 feet high. I cleared the pear by the tractor -- triangle method however.

MALLING CONTINUED

IN 1938 THERE WERE TWO PROPERTIES for sale on the Moola Creek. They were portion 1317A Parish of Moola, consisting of 276 acres and 1318 Parish of Moola about 550 acres.

I bought the 276 acres with house and a good deal of other improvements. My son-in-law bought the 550 acres. There was not much improvement on the land -- no buildings or clearing and it was a big job to make a dairy farm of it.

To assist my son-in-law I put in a complete Ridd Milking Plant — this being my ninth — for which he paid when he was able.

I got the 276 acres in working order with new house, fences and clearing. Also put in a Ridd Milking Plant; this being my tenth and I expect my last.

I brought this land because it had a double front to the Moola Creek which is a dry creek running only after heavy storms. The creek is about 20 feet deep and the 100 chain of creek in the place it was 20 ft. deep. This would hold a lot of water if dammed. There were good lucerne flats all along the creek and irrigation from the creek would help these flats.

I applied to the Irrigation Department for a license. The application was advertised in the usual way and received no objections. In fact all the people along the creek were just as keen as I was to see the creek dammed.

But when the Irrigation Department applied their conditions the lay-out of the creek did not meet with these rules. The conditions were as follows: The creek must be down at least 7 feet from the top of the bank, leaving only the small narrow bottom of the creek to hold water. Also I had to put a valve in the bottom of the dam so the Department could allow the water to run if it were required further down the creek.

After arguing about the terms for a couple of years I gave up and there is no water conserved in the Moola Creek. As I could not use the farm as I intended and had really more than I could look after and my health became affected, I eventually sold this farm. I was disappointed I did not get the chance to carry through my irrigation plans.

I eventually sold also the farm of 365 acres which was the first one I got into order on the 1100 acres in Portion 50v. I sold too, the small farm of 10 acres with house etc., leaving me only the 35 acres of good timber country as a timber reserve for the factory and farm.

Now that the land was cleared it became a most important catchment area. The clean paddocks and sloping ground provided a great body of water during heavy storms. This water not only ran away, thus being of no use, it also took a lot of top soil with it and gouged out gullies in the paddocks.

Although most farms had sufficient water for stock it was clear we would never have irrigation even in a small way unless something was done about it. More dams were needed. Most hollows and gullies in the district had yellow clay sub-soil which held water really well. A small area of lucerne kept alive during drought by irrigation would provide just what the dairy herd needed.

In 1937 I bought my first crawler tractor, suitable plough and scoop. I made dams and conserved water as much as possible. I made the dams in positions where it was not compulsory to obtain a licence from Irrigation Commission for that purpose.

But it was not until after the Second World War that real progress was made. I bought a bulldozer and constructed dams on all the farms I owned, particularly on the home farm. Lucerne was sown close by the largest dams and I irrigated in dry times to provide feed for the dairy herd.

The lack of green vegetables locally and in Dalby suggested that a vegetable garden in the scrub soil with irrigation would be a good idea. I surveyed 30 acres and built a house, packing shed and provided the necessary machinery and irrigation plant. It proved an excellent place to grow vegetables and there was a good market locally and in Dalby. My trouble was to get labour which understood vegetable gardening.

MALLING CHEESE

ALTHOUGH WE COULD make Cheddar cheese as able as any other factory on the Downs, I did not think it the cheese best suited to the Australian climate. Also one type of cheese did not suit everybody.

In 1927-28 I started to study the making of other types of cheese. I was particularly interested in the low acid type of cheese. I procured information and samples from America and Europe. I made small lots of Edam, Norwegian whey cheese, American Brick, Californian yan cheese and others. I found that only what is known as a hard type of cheese was suited to this climate and even then this could not be made in just the way it was made in other countries.

After a few years I began to make a Swiss type of Gruyere cheese. I employed a Swiss man who had made cheese in his own country. In 1930 I put up more buildings and plant and we managed as well as we could. We had no trouble selling this cheese and the next year I decided to extend the plant and I put in a 4 ton refrigerator and erected proper insulated cold rooms.

We had learnt to make a cheese to suit the Queensland climate to some extent and the cheese was good and uniform.

Selling it then, however, became a problem. The public could not understand that there could be more than one type of cheese and when told that this cheese was a good deal more expensive nobody was interested.

The season was good and we made a large amount of cheese. We had on hand about 25 ton of Gruyere cheese and my Brisbane agents told me they could not sell it. I tried other agents but with no better results.

I decided if the agents could not sell it I would have to do it myself. I got assistance from one agent and I went as far north as Cairns. I had samples and advertising pamphlets with me.

I called on everybody who handled cheese from Rockhampton to Cairns and sold cheese for delivery from 10lb upwards. I discovered many people in the north knew of Gruyere cheese and they were pleased to get it. I paid 10% commission and made it worth while for dealers to handle it. The price did not seem to worry the public when they became interested. Six months after I went north and later south, as far as Melbourne, our stock was all cleared and we could not fulfill all orders. But it was a desperate position with all the other work I had in progress and had the bank stopped my credit I would have gone out with nothing.

As our cheese became known and to keep our customers interested in the north I took another trip up that way the following year. One day I was in the office of Samuel Allan and Sons, Cairns. The manager showed me an order for a storekeeper from Mareeba. After ordering many store goods, the storekeeper finished off with: 'and one cheese like a grindstone' - meaning Gruyere cheese!

Gruyere cheese can only be made when the grass is green and in weather which is not too hot. Also it can only be made from morning milk: the evening milk having a too high acid content by the following morning. Of course, the Gruyere cheese took only part of our milk. At that time only Cheddar cheese was subject to Equalisation; this gave us the chance of getting the best results from any cheese other than Cheddar.

I tried to make Roman cheese. This is an Italian type of fairly dry cheese suited for grating and cooking. We soon found that we could not make it like the Italian Roman cheese but we could make a Roman cheese to suit the Australian climate and conditions.

I remember the Department of Commerce at that time had inquiries from New York and they asked me for samples to be sent to New York which I gave them. I then received a letter from the firm in New York stating they could not understand why Australians made Roman cheese from cow's milk when sheep were so plentiful in Australia. Some Roman cheese in Italy is made from sheep's milk.

Although our Gruyere and Roman cheese was reasonable it did not comply with a low acid cheese at a reasonable price for every day table use which was my plan. Many attempts had been made to make this type of cheese particularly in Victoria but with negative results.

I kept persevering and some times thought I was successful. One lot of cheese which I sent to mature in Brisbane cold stores, turned out to be faulty. I found a poultry farmer to take it free of charge. Thinking I had learnt something from the failure I kept on until I felt sure I was right. I made quite a quantity of cheese — it was a cheese without a cheese cloth and rimless, about 7lb. in weight.

Once again I sent this to a Brisbane cold store to mature, however, when I thought it should be ready for marketing I discovered faults I did not expect and it was useless. This position was as follows: I paid for the milk and made the cheese, then I paid for cartage plus railage and cold storage. I then had to pay for a carrier to take it from the cold storage to the railway and have it sent back to Peranga. I then carted it home and fed it to the pigs. It was a total loss.

Thinking I had learnt the reason for the failure I continued to make small lots of cheese and as they matured I thought them right for market and sent them to Brisbane to my agents.

This cheese proved successful and every week my agents asked for more cheese. The agent and myself were sure we had found the cheese we had been aiming for, for many years.

To make the cheese distinct in appearance I waxed it red and it obtained the name of Mulling Red Cheese. I liked this cheese myself and found the more I ate the more I wanted to eat. I heard the same from everyone who tried the Mulling Red Cheese.

This was about 1933-34. At that time only Cheddar cheese was taken into Equalisation and we had only to see that our price for the cheese would pay the extra cost of making and selling our cheese.

I paid 10% commission on all our cheese. It was the only way to prove profitable for the agents finding new markets, which they did. They procured orders not only from all over Australia, but we got regular monthly orders from Manila, Hong Kong, Batavia and Singapore. We found we could not supply all the orders. This was the chance to enlarge and improve the factory which I did. I then visited America to see if I could learn something which would help us to improve our cheese. I did not learn anything new, however, the trip was interesting and educating.

When the Second World War started, suppliers of cheese were cut off from all eastern markets and representatives came to Queensland in an effort to find cheese in place of discontinued supplies. Two representatives called at the factory and wanted to take all the cheese we could produce at our price. One firm from Batavia wanted to place a standing order for 10 tons of Gruyere cheese per month, taking delivery and payment in Brisbane.

These conditions kept on through 1940. The Department of Commerce received many requests for various types of cheese. They passed many of these requests on to me asking us to do our best to supply these orders from the east. We did our best in the small way we could.

At that time, we received word from the Equalisation Committee that we were not exporting our quota of cheese to England and that we were required to make Cheddar cheese to export. I explained this could not be done as the factory was not equipped to make different types of cheese and that if this was done it would destroy all that had been accomplished to make our own type of cheese.

This explanation did not satisfy the Government, nor the Equalisation Committee, and in February, 1941, I received orders from the Federal Government that they required 50% of all my cheese manufactured during February. They stated I was to deliver the cheese at Birts Cold Stores, freight and all expenses paid. I had to pay cold storage and I might be paid something if the Government sold my cheese. If, however, there was any loss, it must be paid by myself.

Our type of cheese was such that it was impossible to send to cold stores until 2 to 4 months old. It takes three months to salt a Cruyere cheese and after that it has to be turned regularly for sometime. The order I received from the Government therefore meant that any cheese I sent to cold stores would go rotten and be a total loss. This, I explained to the Government, but they insisted that I comply with the order.

I visited Canberra and with the assistance of our Member, saw the Minister for Commerce, Sir Earl Page. He told me he did not know anything about it although he had signed the original order at the recommendation of the Dairy Produce Board. Sir Earl Page then advised me to go to Melbourne to visit the D.P.B. which I did but there I was told the Board and the Equalisation Committee were meeting in Sydney. They phoned Sydney and asked the meeting to see me the following day. When I arrived at the meeting, however, the secretary, Dr. Cross was sent to inform me the meeting would not see me.

I had to return home without any satisfaction at all. Each month I received notice to deliver cheese to Birts Cold Stores. This continued for eight months -- each month I received the same notice and I replied each month that I could not comply to the orders. I never sent cheese to the cold stores.

The position for our type of cheese was very difficult during and after the war. Firstly, labour was controlled and as our cheese required extra labour this was not allowed us. Some of the labour which was allowed to us had never seen cheese made.

Then when the Subsidy was commenced it was paid on green cheese instead of butterfat. This was unfair and because I objected, the Subsidy to all my milk suppliers was withheld for two years thus amounting to \$11,000. Later when the Equalisation fixed the price of cheese for processing, at that time 1/3d per lb. in favour of the processor, I objected and the Subsidy was again withheld for two years. The total of withheld Subsidy then being \$22,000. Later this was all paid but I felt the financial strain. I was forced to finance the factory from my farm account to the amount of \$36,000. There was also a loss on cheese spoiled by rail transporting. All this loss was so heavy that had I not had the farm to finance the factory the latter would have been closed years ago.

Up to 1950 the roads in the Malling district were always in bad condition. Then road construction by the Rosalie and Wambo Shires was carried out and we are now served by mostly all-weather roads. We have district road transport from Malling to Brisbane and we also transport our cheese, by road, to Sydney. This means our cheese arrives in the city in the same condition in which it left the factory.

We have the city electricity supplied to the Malling district, proving of great value and the production of the district is very good.

I think it has been a great experience in my lifetime to see the eventual progress from the fat lamp to city electricity.

MACLAGAN

IN 1900 THE ONLY BUILDING where Maclagan now stands was a small bark hut on the bank of the creek. It belonged to Mr. Bruhn and was used by him when he brought his sheep along the creek bank.

There were a few more settlers along the creek and a bush track running down from the mountains to Quinalow. There were also a few roads cleared on the east side of the creek but only one on the west side leading from Quinalow to Lewis on the Moola Creek.

In 1901 Mr. J. Bruhn built the first timber house at Maclagan. He started a small store to serve the new settlers on the scrub land. But it was not until 1905 when Mr. J. Warran a storekeeper from Clifton, arrived at Maclagan -- then called Bismark -- that an attempt was made to create a centre of the place. Mr. Warran started a store and post office and financed a small co-op. butter factory. A small amount of butter was made and transported by spring cart to Jondaryan and then railed to Brisbane. This was continued until 1913 when the railway from Toowoomba to Coovar was opened. The butter was then transported to Rosalie Plains and later to Peranga.

By 1904 a number of families had settled in the Mt. Bismark district and a school was built about 2½ miles from the butter factory.

It is a fact that Mr. Warran is the father of Maclagan. Having established the store and financed the butter factory he also gave store credit to assist the settlers -- including myself.

The scrub portion of the Maclagan district was never as badly infested with prickly pear as the Malling and Quinalow districts, therefore the number of settlers leaving their selections was small.

In 1890 some settlers from the Brymaroo district selected land on the range north of Bismark. One of these was Fred Wockner of Bender. While taking cattle along the Quinalow Creek he passed the large hill north of Bismark and Mr. Wockner called it Mt. Bismark. This name applied to the district until the first world war when the German name of Bismark became very unpopular. Mr. Warran moved to have the name changed to Maclagan. This was the name of a Scot general who was killed. So the district of Bismark or Mt. Bismark became known as Maclagan.

Maclagan has become the main centre for a large populated country district and from the small bark hut on the edge of the creek, when I first saw it, it is now the makings of a small town.

QUINALOW

I CAN GET NO RELIABLE INFORMATION as to how Quinalow acquired its name. Apparently the name was first given to the creek when it was part of Rosalie Station. It has been suggested the name is of Irish origin.

Quinalow is the oldest of the four districts mentioned in these writings. Only a portion of Quinalow was a part of the big scrub country. The creek and creek flats were selected early in 1880 for grassing. Late in the eighties Daly Bros. started dairying and cheese making. With the assistance of the Department of Agriculture they erected, what at that time, was one of the most up-to-date cheese factories in Queensland.

The timber for this factory was cut on the factory site. This site is on the side of the hill about half a mile from where Quinalow now stands.

The square timber was cut by pitsaw and the boards were cut by a small circular saw. The building is still standing on the original site.

Daly Bros. milked a rather large herd and also bought milk from other settlers along the creek.

Daly Bros. were successful with cheese making. In 1891 they received a special prize for the best produced Queensland cheese at the Brisbane Exhibition. This is believed to be the first prize of its kind given in Queensland. The Daly Bros. still have this certificate in their possession.

In 1898-99 Daly Bros. started a saw mill on the bank of Quinalow Creek. In the beginning it was small but soon improved and by 1903-4 it became quite large with hoop pine coming from the mountains north of MacLagan and the hardwood from the scrub land in the district.

The saw mill and other undertakings by Daly Bros. assisted in bringing settlers to the district and in 1901 a small school was opened. A State election was held during 1902 and the school was made a polling booth. There were twenty-one votes, seven for Labour and fourteen for the Conservative Party.

In 1902 Daly Bros. built and opened the Quinalow Hotel with store and post office.

A few years later stock sale yards were erected and sales commenced. This made Quinalow the main business centre in the district.

As the hoop pine disappeared from the mountains and the prickly pear made it impossible to get the hardboard out of the scrub, the saw mill was closed. The cheese factory also was closed. Practically all that remained of Quinalow was the school, hotel and sale yards.

A small cheese factory, however, was started by Mr. Donald McIntyre of Goombungee, which was sold to the Queensland Co-op. Dairy Association and again sold to Mr. T. Dare.

Mr. Dare built a new factory and later sold to Kraft Food Pty. Ltd. It is to Kraft Food Pty. Ltd., that Quinalow owes its present important position in the district. Quinalow now has one of the most important and advanced cheese factories in the State. It also has the largest State School in this part of the countryside, with a school bus collecting children from some distance.

There is also the hotel, a store, large garage and repair shop, with quite a number of dwellings all supplied with city electricity. Also an excellent sports ground.

MOOLA

MOOOLA CONSISTED OF ONE LARGE BLOCK of scrub land with no water and the section joining Ringing Plains and Nungli was thick with prickly pear.

In 1898 the Government had two 12 foot tracks cleared from the Hemrah Road to Ringing Plains. Also the Government sunk three dams to induce settlers to select land.

Blocks of 640 acres could be had, but 160 acres to 320 acres proved most suitable. The price was 25 cents per acre with certain conditions applying. The portion within the Rosalie Shire was mapped out in 160 acre blocks but one could select four blocks as a homestead.

The portion in the Warbo Shire was not mapped and in 1901 the whole block was reserved for a group of Russians from Bessarabia. They intended to grow red roses for perfume as they were doing in Bessarabia and Rumania. Representatives were sent and they were satisfied the land and price would suit. However, when they returned to Russia, the government would not allow them to take money or goods out of Russia.

At that time a group of farmers from the Snowy River in Victoria made inquiries about land in Queensland and the Lands Department sent them to Dalby.

They inspected the Moola scrub land and the portion reserved for the Russians was in turn reserved for the Snowy settlers.

Before this occurred however, a man called Findlay and his family had selected a block containing 320 acres for each member

of his family. Mr. Findlay was the contractor sinking the Government dams in Moola and the Findlay family had made a good start clearing the scrub when the Snowy settlers started on their blocks in 1902.

This was the year of the big drought and the hardships caused by this, plus the prickly pear, was such that the position could hardly be described. Families such as Watts, Allans, Ascrofts and McKenzies and others will always be prominent as the pioneers of the Moola scrub district.

In 1903 or 1904 a school was started in a room at Mr. Findlay's place, then called Myra. The room was built with brigalow saplings for walls and plastered with clay. It served as a school and Miss Findlay was the teacher. She is now Mrs. J. Duncan of Kaimkillenbun.

As the settlers got some control of their land, with clearing, fencing, plus dairy stock, they erected a hall and church.

When the then Mt. Bismark Butter Factory was started a cream run commenced through Moola. Later a small cheese factory was erected by the Laidlow Bros. This factory became a branch of the Bismark factory until it was taken over by the Moola Co-op. Dairy Association.

The Moola part of the big scrub was the easiest and quickest portion to be cleared and eventually farmed due to comparatively easy clearing of brigalow and belah plus the fact that most of the settlers had a little money of their own and were able to borrow from the newly formed Agricultural Bank.

A fact worth mentioning is that Mr. E. W. Watt, a son of Mr. J. A. Watt took a contract to fall 100 acres of brigalow and belah scrub. This he did in 74 days. Also 500 acres was burnt in one piece. It burnt in about three hours and the noise it made was like a great wind storm. It was in this burnt scrub soil that Rhodes grass was first started and for some years was the mainstay of the Moola district.

The Rhodes grass was started by Mr. C. Gooley from seeds out of a small paper packet. These seeds he sowed in a small place about three yards square and he collected the seed as soon as it was ripe selling it at 10 cents an ounce.

M. P. HANSEN — IN CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION I would mention I have often been asked what I know of the aborigines and this district. The fact that there was no water in this large area of scrub made it impossible for the aborigines to camp here. Although the scrub was full of food, I have seen no evidence of their camps. We have found many tomahawks and the toe marks, made by these, on trees showing that hunting was done here but when I arrived there were only five or six aborigines in the whole district.

Referring to the whole of the large scrub area which was once waterless and what then appeared useless for any purpose, it has been settled and developed into what I think is a most valuable portion of the Darling Downs. My reason for thinking this is that the soil is rich, free and easy to work. In bad seasons it responds easily to showers and provides feed whereas similar showers would prove useless in other types of country.

Most of this scrub land has a yellow clay sub-soil which in dry seasons will keep the Rhodes grass and lucerne alive.

I consider this country can still be improved by conserving more water. Dams in every catchment, big or small. The yellow clay will hold water well. The soil can be made to hold and absorb more moisture by using some of the new implements now available, particularly the Ripper which will open the ground to allow water and air into the soil.

I consider some parts of the big scrub country, in particular, Moola, have been cleared too clean and tree planting in suitable places would be an advantage.

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