

Saunter through SPRING HILL



View down
Berry Street,
Spring Hill,
ca. 1958



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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Access for people with limited mobility:

-  Gradient between 1:20-1:14
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MAP



INTRODUCTION

The *Saunter through Spring Hill Heritage Trail* winds through the inner-city suburb's narrow streets with its rows of modest 19th Century cottages, and is a snapshot of the area's rich history. The trail does not focus on grand places and important people. Instead, it explores Spring Hill's everyday people—how they lived, worked, struggled and played.

Spring Hill is one of Brisbane's oldest suburbs. The penal settlement at Moreton Bay was established at Redcliffe in 1824, but moved to the present Central Business District (CBD) site in 1825 where there was a better water supply, fewer mosquitoes and safer anchorage. In an effort to achieve self-sufficiency, it was decided that a mill to grind wheat and corn was needed, the chosen site for the mill at the top of a large hill overlooking the small settlement. The land was cleared and by 1828 the new mill had been constructed. As one of only two convict-built buildings remaining in Queensland (the other being the Commissariat Store in William Street), the windmill is a reminder of the early European beginnings of our city and Spring Hill.



Berry Street, ca. 1958, Brisbane City Council, Negative No. BCC-B54-5650

The convict settlement was closed in 1839 and in 1842 Moreton Bay was officially opened for free settlement as part of the colony of New South Wales. At this time, the area now known as Spring Hill was crown land, and by 1856 the government had begun to subdivide the land and sell it to private investors. Initially the land on top of the hills was bought by wealthy Brisbane residents who established large houses overlooking the town. Smaller and less expensive lots were bought by those of lesser means who built

modest workers' cottages. Spring Hill quickly became one of Brisbane's earliest dormitory suburbs, where most of its inhabitants went to jobs every day in other areas.

Following further subdivision of Spring Hill land in the 1870s, the lower slopes of the hills became increasingly overcrowded. By the time the Great Depression hit in 1929, the slopes and valleys of Spring Hill had become renowned for their seedy side: cheap rents, crowded boarding houses, high levels of unemployment, brothels and criminals all helped to give Spring Hill an increasingly bad reputation that was to continue right through the first half of the 20th Century.



Windmill and Craigston Apartments, in Wickham Terrace, ca 1934, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 193060



Seymore family on verandah of 'Coira' in Berry Street, Spring Hill, ca. 1913, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 160339

It was not until the late 1960s that some parts of Spring Hill began to attract young professionals and artists who were drawn to the character of the area. This heralded an era of gentrification in some parts of Spring Hill, with many of the small cottages beautifully restored. Despite this, there were still parts of the area that remained dilapidated. Today, Spring Hill is one of Brisbane's most sought-after places to live, with its narrow streets of 'timber and tin' cottages and grand historic buildings down Wickham Terrace.

1

THE LADY BOWEN

Hospital

Named after the wife of Queensland's first governor, the Lady Bowen Hospital was built in 1889 as a lying-in hospital for women. This was the second Lady Bowen Hospital in Brisbane; the first was located in Ann Street, but after 25 years it moved to a larger building on a more favourable site.

Throughout the 19th Century and well into the 20th, childbirth was extremely dangerous for both the mother and baby. Mortality rates, particularly in Brisbane, were exceptionally high. For example, in 1878 the infant mortality rate in Brisbane's inner-city areas was as high as 47%.

In 1864, a committee of concerned citizens founded the Queensland Lying-In Hospital (renamed the Lady Bowen Hospital in 1867) after lobbying the colonial government for partial funding. As was the practice at the time in Brisbane, expectant mothers paid a private midwife to deliver their baby either at their home or in a private hospital. Of course if one was very poor these services were not available and many



Lady Bowen Lying-In Hospital on Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, 1912, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 629

women or their babies died either at the time of giving birth or over the following days. With the establishment of the hospital, poor, destitute and single women were provided with midwifery services, medical treatment and nursing at no cost.

To assist with the costs, fee-paying patients were also gladly accepted. When opened, the Wickham Terrace hospital had "eight wards—four for married women and four for others—each ward containing four beds. Two wards are designed to receive paying patients" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 27 December 1889).

The hospital continued to help women until 1938 when the Brisbane Women's Hospital was opened at Herston. All staff and patients were transferred to the new facility.



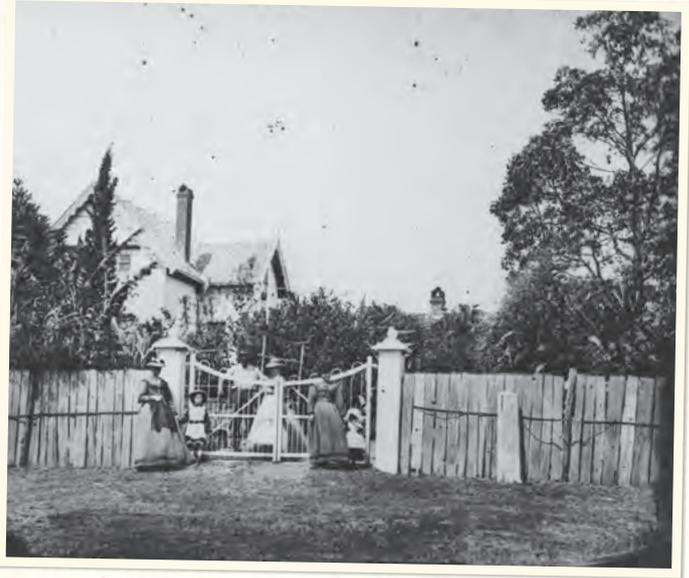
BOUNDARY

Street

In 1846, Brisbane's town limits were proclaimed. This town limit is still apparent when comparing the 1840s map of the town limits to today's street layout. The eastern boundary line aligns to Wellington Road in East Brisbane, the southern with Vulture Street in South Brisbane, the western with Boundary Street in West End, and the northern with Spring Hill's Boundary Street.

In the early 1850s, the town boundaries were marked out by a series of iron-bark posts. In this 1872 photograph taken in South Brisbane, one of the posts can be clearly seen to the right of the gate.

The town boundary was established to assist policing. Aboriginal people were forbidden from within the town limits after 4pm every day and all day on Sundays. Each day at 4pm, the mounted troops rode through the town cracking stockwhips to signify the beginning of the curfew when all Aboriginal people had to leave. This disgraceful practice continued into the 1870s.



Entrance to old Cumboquepa, the residence of Thomas Blacket Stephens, South Brisbane, ca.1872, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 20289

By the 1880s, Boundary Street was a bustling mix of modest houses and shops. Among those living on the southern side of the road between Gregory Terrace and North Street were two carpenters, two mariners, two labourers, a ginger beer maker, a baker, a grocer and a dressmaker.

SPRING HILL

Baths

"In the council's regulations, it is set forth that all persons bathing must wear trunks" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 10 December 1886).

When the Spring Hill Baths were opened in December 1886, most houses in Spring Hill had no bathrooms, let alone running water, and bathing in the river outside swimming enclosures was hazardous and illegal. The narrow, crowded and undrained streets of Spring Hill were regarded by local authorities as dangerously unhygienic following an outbreak of typhoid in the 1880s.

The construction of the Spring Hill Baths helped to alleviate both the residents' personal hygiene issues and some of the suburb's drainage problems. At the end of each day the baths' water was emptied into a newly constructed drain along the original water course, first called Spring Hollow, which ran along today's Water Street. This enabled the drain to be regularly flushed out. During the night the baths were freshly filled with water pumped from the river near Victoria Bridge.



Municipal Baths, Spring Hill, 1910, Brisbane City Council, Negative No. BCC-B54-A1082

At the opening ceremony, Mayor James Hipwood "appeared in regulation bathing costume at 8pm, and was loudly cheered as he stepped briskly along the springboard and took a 'header' into the baths. This was the opening ceremony as far as the formal business of the evening was concerned" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 10 December 1886). For the first year women were not allowed in the baths. In 1887, separate bathing times for men and women were allotted.

The Spring Hill Baths are Australia's last remaining covered baths and still retain many of their original features, such as the dressing sheds.

THE LADY

in Blue

"Her navy blue deaconess uniform became a familiar sight in Spring Hill, and many old residents still remember the 'Lady in Blue' who distributed clothing and food to the needy" (*The Courier-Mail*, 4 December 1952).

Deaconess May Walker gave forty years of her life looking after the poor and needy in Spring Hill, becoming known as the 'Blue Angel'. In 1912, she began working as a deaconess for St Andrew's Presbyterian Church (site No. 19) after an illness dashed her wish to work overseas as a missionary. Deaconess Walker sought to alleviate the poverty and hardship she saw many in Spring Hill experience, particularly women and children.

For many years she walked the streets of Spring Hill, carrying out her mission work by assisting people in their homes. In the 1920s, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church constructed a mission hall on the corner of Fortescue and Wedd streets to assist with her endeavours. The hall became a community centre where those in need could go and be kindly given "food and clothing, and nursing also" (*Sunday Mail*, 6 August 1933).



1946 aerial photograph showing the mission hall on the corner of Wedd and Fortescue streets, Brisbane City Council

Under Deaconess Walker's guidance, the mission not only helped adults in need but also welcomed children, and by 1929 she had more than 170 children attending Sunday School in the hall. Benefits and fetes were held to raise money for the mission. When Christmas grew close, events were held to raise money to buy toys for Spring Hill children who otherwise would have gone without.

PARK

Terrace

This row of five cottages called 'Park Terrace' was built between 1889 and 1890 as investment properties for local resident, James Anderson.

At the time, Fortescue Street was a well-established suburban street with houses on both sides. The residents were generally from the artisan and working classes.

Between 1884 and 1889, Anderson purchased several properties and constructed his cottages. At the time, the five cottages were numbered from one to five. No. 1 was Anderson's house at the top of the row (now No. 146), No. 2 and No. 3 were built on one lot (now No. 138), then No. 4 next (now No. 134) and No. 5 at the end (now No. 130).

The new cottages were immediately available for rent. Because they were targeted at a professional clientele, the rents for each cottage may have been higher than other houses in Fortescue Street. This can be seen in the range of tenants who resided in the cottages from when they were first built.



Fortescue Street, 1968, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 91580

In 1890, the cottages were home to an engineer (Anderson), an architect, the secretary of the Queensland Club and a Madame Boucherville (profession unknown). By 1910, the type of tenants renting the cottages had changed, with artisan and working class people including a shop assistant, tailoress, prison guard and missionary residing in the cottages.

Park Terrace had fallen into disrepair by the 1970s. It was at this time that Spring Hill's character and proximity to the city was increasingly valued. By 1988, all five cottages had been lovingly restored, and today make a striking contribution to the streetscape.

These houses are private property. Please **do not** enter.



VICTORIA

Park

Before Victoria Park was named after the reigning British monarch in the mid-1860s, the area was known as 'York's Hollow' and was an important Aboriginal gathering and camping site. By the 1870s, following decades of cruel attacks by white troopers and vigilante groups, as well as encroaching suburban development, the Aboriginal people had been forced from the inner-city areas.

As early as the 1860s, the colonial government recognised the importance of open space and intentionally reserved land for the benefit of Brisbane's residents. These 'lungs of the city', as they were often termed, provided healthy air and recreational space away from the crowded inner-city streets. When first gazetted in 1875, the park covered an area of about 130 hectares, but this was gradually reduced as developments encroached upon the park. For example, the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School was established in 1884. Today, Victoria Park remains an important green space located in the inner city.



Cricket match in Victoria Park, 1930, Brisbane City Council, Negative No. BCC-B54-685



View of Victoria Park in Brisbane, ca. 1920, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 69378

7

GREGORY TERRACE

Officers' Camp

Directly across the road from Victoria Park was the site of the Gregory Terrace Officers' Camp, one of many US military camps established in Brisbane during World War II.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, the US forces were redirected to Australia. On 22 December 1941, the USS *Pensacola*, heading a convoy of US naval ships carrying troops and equipment, arrived at Brett's Wharf, Hamilton. The General Headquarters South West Pacific Area, under the command of US General Douglas MacArthur, was also moved to Brisbane in July 1942. By December 1943, Brisbane was host to more than 75,000 US troops awaiting deployment to the conflict in the Pacific.

All of Victoria Park, including land on the Herston side, became the headquarters of the United States Army Service of Supply (USASOS). These headquarters were responsible for administering all supplies used in the South West Pacific Campaign, from the smallest items such as toothbrushes to artillery and tanks.



USA Military Officers Club, 1945, Brisbane City Council, Negative No. BCC-B120-19087

A series of prefabricated buildings was erected throughout the park to accommodate the military personnel. The section of park used for the Gregory Terrace Officers' Camp stretched from this point over to the current site of the Centenary Pool, with the rail line as its northern boundary. The only reminder of the camp is the flagpole situated on the Gregory Terrace traffic island between Rogers and Kinross streets.



MRS LONG'S

cottage

This tiny cottage was built in 1884 for Mrs Elizabeth Long. Her son Thomas had the cottage built after she had been deserted by her husband, leaving her with nothing. At a time before social security there was no government support if the husband and sole earner left.

It is the cottage itself, though, and the tiny portion of land it occupies – four perches (101m²)—which make it historically important, and illustrates Spring Hill's crowded conditions in the late 1800s.

There were serious concerns about over-population in inner-city areas from as early as the 1870s. The construction of small tenements and tiny cottages on very small parcels of land increased the risk of disease and fire. In an attempt to prevent slum developments, the colonial government introduced the *Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act* in 1885. It then became illegal to subdivide land into lots smaller than sixteen perches (405m²). The Act also regulated the width of new roads and lanes, and the distance between new houses and the road.



116 Isaac Street,
State Library of
Queensland,
Negative No. 91579

In 1886, the *Queensland Figaro and Punch* commented on Spring Hill's overcrowded conditions:

"Some steps should be taken in order to put a stop to the manner in which buildings are huddled together in the suburbs of Brisbane. One has only to visit, say, Spring Hill, and he will see three or four dwellings on a small allotment of ground barely sufficient for one decent dwelling house... fever and other diseases will be breaking out which will spread like a plague, and the cry then will be 'I always said it would end badly'" (*Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 13 February 1886, p15).

Mrs Long lived in the cottage until her death in 1920.

This is private property. Please **do not** enter.

SPRING HOLLOW

“What can be done to make us well.
To stamp out fevers, gnats and flies,
And all such torments to our eyes,
We should endeavour to indite
What views we hold to set things right”
(*The Brisbane Courier*, 25 April 1879).

This poem was written by a Brisbane resident urging the authorities to address the awful sanitary conditions in Spring Hill.

In the 1860s before Water Street had been established and named, a stream of fresh water flowed through this valley. It was known as Spring Hollow and followed the same alignment as today's Water Street. The stream helped to provide the early settlement with a supply of fresh water before the Enoggera Dam was completed in 1866.

As the slopes surrounding the water course became heavily populated through the 1870s and 1880s, the water channel became an open drain with run-off from the houses flowing into it. At this time there was no distinction between stormwater and sewerage drains, so open water courses such as this one



Hill Street running down to Water Street, ca 1915, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 90327

quickly became putrid cesspits. Inspectors' reports from the time reveal that although most houses had earth closets (toilets) in their backyards, many of these were very dirty. There were some cases where there were none at all.

Some residents refused or were unable to pay the nightsoil man who took away the waste from the earth closets. This led to the burial of excrement in backyards, and rain caused the waste to run into the drain at the bottom of the hill. Animal waste from horses, cows, pigs, chickens and other domestic animals—as well as industrial waste—also flowed into the drain. Before knowledge of bacterial-borne diseases, it was a common belief that serious illnesses such as typhoid, diphtheria and cholera were caused by the smells and bad air called 'miasma' coming from these cesspits.

Following a typhoid outbreak in the early 1880s, the Municipal Council undertook the Spring Hollow Drainage Scheme in 1884. By lining the Spring Hollow water course with stone, they hoped the stagnant water would flush away each time it rained. With the construction of the Spring Hill Baths in 1886 and the daily flushing of the pool water into this drain, the sanitary conditions of this part of Spring Hill improved, albeit only slightly.

SPRING HILL

Quarry

Walk into the park and take note of the steep stone cliffs. These are what remains of the 19th Century quarry that supplied the local area with stone.

The stone quarried from here is known as 'Brisbane Tuff' and is a type of hardy porphyry commonly found in the Brisbane area. It is characterised by its colourful appearance with purple, green and pink tones.

The stone from the Spring Hill Quarry was used for many buildings in early Brisbane. Perhaps most prominent was its use in Brisbane's stone kerbing, stormwater gullies, edging for gutters and manhole surrounds.

Although the quarry had been worked since the early 1860s, in 1887 the Brisbane Municipal Council gained control of the quarry and used the stone for civic improvements in the inner city. By 1918, most of the high-quality stone had been extracted and the land was subdivided and sold.



Leichhardt Street quarry, Spring Hill, 1905, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 191819

As you walk through the streets of Spring Hill, look down and you will discover these features. The quarry's stone lines most of the kerbs, and occasionally you will find the stone used in some stormwater gullies and manhole surrounds.

A KINGDOM OF HAPPINESS

"The seamy side of life, the sad overtones of sorrow, poverty and despair which darken many a home in... Spring Hill, are all too familiar to the officers of the association... In their visits to the homes of some of the children they are appalled by the unhappy environment in which the children are forced to live" (*The Sunday Mail*, 9 May 1937).

This playground, known today as the Bedford Playground, was established in 1927 by the Playground Association of Queensland, which was committed to providing poor children with recreational and educational facilities in disadvantaged areas. This park was the third established in Queensland, after Paddington (1918) and Fortitude Valley (1922).

A playground where children could play in a safe environment away from the crowded and dirty streets of Spring Hill had long been requested by the community. In 1923, several accidents were reported to the Council involving small children who had been playing on the streets and had fallen into newly built sewers. One year later, the disused land surrounding the old quarry was granted to the Council by the Queensland Government for a playground. The Playground Association was appointed to undertake the management of the park.

It was believed that instilling values in children such as honesty, consideration of others and courage would stand them in good



Children in a playground at Spring Hill, Brisbane, 1939, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 106347

stead for the rest of their lives. Supervised outdoor play areas were divided into girls', boys' and infants' areas. There was also a clubroom with "a library of 1000 books... ping-pong and other indoor games, and a dressmaking and fancywork class" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 8 October 1932). A wood-working workshop taught the craft to the boys:

"... it is chiefly the little children who come from cheerless homes, children who have never known the joy of playing with dolls or winding up a clockwork train... who find the four walls of these little libraries a kingdom of happiness that they know not in their homes" (*The Sunday Mail*, 9 May 1937).

Mary Josephine Bedford, who worked tirelessly with the urban poor in the early 20th Century, was fundamental in the founding of the Playground Association and the establishment of this playground. A tree was planted in the park in her memory following her death in 1955. The park was named after her four years later.



ROGERS AND VICTORIA

streets

"[Spring Hill] was a working man's suburb, and the working man and his wife had shown themselves to be the best of citizens by bringing up large families" (*Alderman Teedy's Speech, The Brisbane Courier, 27 November 1923*).

This small pocket of intact 19th Century cottages is one of Spring Hill's most picturesque precincts. Today it is a sought-after residential address, but in the late 19th and well into the 20th Century it was a working-class area. Many of the cottages along both Rogers and Victoria streets were built in the 1870s, and provide a glimpse of how parts of Spring Hill looked in the past.

In 1890, this part of Rogers Street was home to a music teacher, two accountants, a stonemason, a vanman, two labourers, a mariner, a cook, a painter, a tailor and a fruiterer.

Brisbane Central School first opened as Leichhardt Street State School in 1875. It consisted of three separate schools—the boys', the girls' and infants'. This was the same year that the



Rogers Street, 1968, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 91630

Queensland Government introduced the *Education Act 1875*, making primary education compulsory, free and secular. At the school's opening ceremony, Premier Macalister addressed the parents, teachers and children on the benefits of education:

"... if they paid attention to their studies in childhood they would, when older, have a power which would be entirely beyond the control of those who had had no education whatever"

(*The Brisbane Courier, 26 January 1875*).

Brisbane Central School is the last remaining state school in Brisbane's inner city. Its 1870s school building continues to serve as an educational facility for the children of Spring Hill.

THE PLAGUE

This tall, concrete chimney was installed in 1904 by Brisbane City Council to help redirect the foul smells emanating from Spring Hill's drains. These smells were caused by the dumping of household and industrial refuse into stormwater drains and were thought to not only emit disease-causing odours but also attract rats.

In April 1900, the bubonic plague arrived in Queensland after first appearing in Sydney in January. Faced with this crisis, Council implemented extensive improvements to the sanitary conditions in Spring Hill, including the instalment of several of these chimneys. The other surviving chimney is located on Wickham Terrace.

Before the discovery of antibiotics, bubonic plague was a deadly and rapidly spreading disease carried by rats' fleas. Rats were attracted by the unsanitary conditions and the first case of plague struck Spring Hill in May 1900:

"The authorities have decided that a brick house in Bowen Street, Spring Hill, in which the patient lived, is to be pulled down. Five wooden cottages adjoining are to be burnt, having been condemned as unfit for human habitation"

(The Northern Miner, 9 May 1900).



Destroyed rats during the bubonic plague in Brisbane, Queensland, 1900-1902, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 103588

By September there had been 46 cases in Brisbane, including 12 from Spring Hill. Those who contracted the plague were swiftly taken to an isolation hospital in Colmslie. Anyone who had been in contact with the patient would be either isolated in their houses or also taken out to Colmslie. For burials, the bodies of plague victims were wrapped in a sheet that had been soaked in carbolic acid and placed in a lime-lined coffin. In Brisbane, they were buried on an isolated section of Gibson Island, an area that was thought to be undevelopable. Extensive rat eradication programs were also implemented throughout Brisbane.

This outbreak of plague continued to haunt Queensland until 1909. The total number of deaths in the state reached 219. The highest mortality rate was in 1900, with 57 deaths from 136 cases.

VILLA MARIA

Hostel

"Probably not one in every thousand of our citizens knows aught of these good women and their life. Yet all through the day and night for the last half century, in silent prayer... [they have been] keeping vigil over our city, and praying for those who either have not the time or the inclination to pray for themselves" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 7 December 1925).

The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament were first established in 1874 by Father Julian Tenison Woods, who had previously helped Mother Mary MacKillop (Australia's first saint) found the order of the Sisters of St Joseph. The Brisbane order was the first in Australia, and the six sisters initially lived in South Brisbane, headed by Mother Stanislaus. In 1881, they moved to Spring Hill and by 1900 had purchased two cottages on Leichhardt Street (now St Pauls Terrace) between Warren and Gotha streets.

The sisters followed a practice called 'perpetual adoration', which meant there was always at least one sister in prayer throughout the day and night. From the moment the order was



St Pauls Terrace, 1929, State Library of Queensland, Image No. 60500

founded, the sisters helped the poor and sick. They became renowned for their beautiful needlework, which provided them with a modest income. By 1902, the sisters were also taking care of a number of elderly ladies.

After a series of fundraising appeals and encouragement from Catholic Archbishop James Duhig, the sisters were able to replace the cottages with this striking, brick convent and hostel. It was officially opened in August 1927 by the Archbishop and was heralded as one of the best convents in the Commonwealth.

In 1933, the sisters were looking after at least 80 elderly ladies, and the hostel was further extended in the 1940s and 1960s. Today the sisters continue to care for the elderly.

"The efforts and sacrifices of these sisters, who, without thought of creed or nationality, minister to the aged in life's evening, deserves the support of all"
(*The Brisbane Courier*, 27 August 1926).

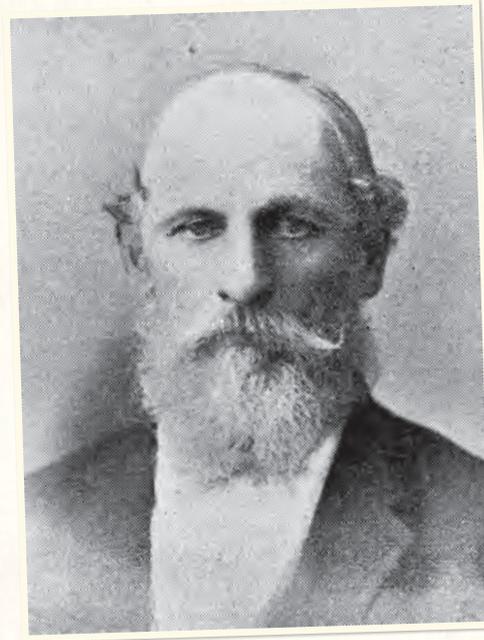
THORNBURY

Street cottages

When these four cottages were built in the mid-1870s, Thornbury Street was a bustling residential street with small houses along both sides. Its residents were mainly working class men and their families. In 1878, there were two master mariners, two draymen, three dray proprietors, two labourers, a debt collector, a book keeper, a draper, a piano tuner and a pensioner.

These timber cottages were built by John Jackson, one of Brisbane's most successful produce merchants. In 1878, he established his business, J. Jackson & Co., in Eagle Street. The business imported seed and other farming-related produce and sold it to Queensland farmers. It also exported farming produce such as dairy products and eggs, and soon became one of Queensland's leading businesses:

"Mr. Jackson's motto has always been 'Steady work on a sure foundation', and in his case it has increased a business which had its origin in a small deal in merchandise until it now ranks as one of the leading commercial concerns in the Queensland capital" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 4 March 1905, p13).



Portrait of John Jackson, ca. 1905, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 67501

No. 15 Thornbury Street became the Jackson family home until 1912-13.

These houses are private property. Please **do not** enter.

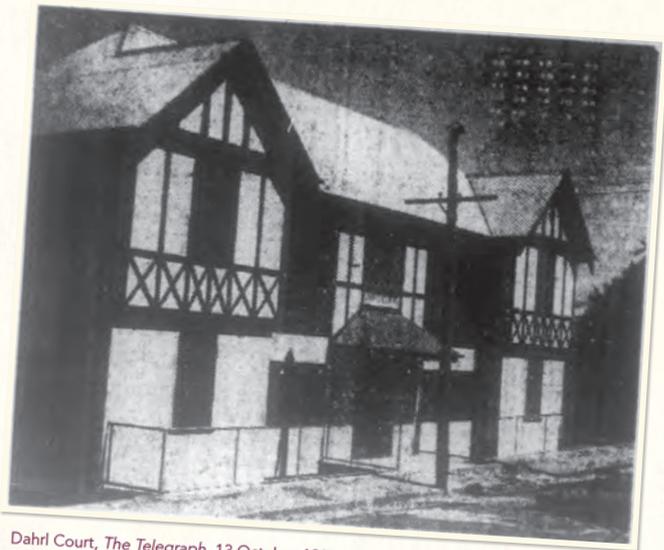
DAHRL

Court

Dahl Court was constructed in 1936 for Elizabeth Sparkes and designed by respected Brisbane architect, AE Brooks.

As the Great Depression progressed in the late 1920s and into the 1930s, there was a marked lack of housing in Brisbane. This was the period in which the multi-unit dwelling began to emerge as an alternative to the traditional Brisbane house and yard. Before this, in larger Australian cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, this style of 'modern' living, in blocks of flats, had become a stylish alternative to living in the traditional house.

In the early 1930s, to cater for the housing shortage as well as to generate income, many home owners in inner-city suburbs converted houses into tenements, where tenants would share bathrooms, toilets and kitchens. This led to community concerns of overcrowding and increased hygiene problems. A fashionable and more sophisticated alternative to this form of accommodation was the purpose-built block of self-contained flats.



Dahl Court, *The Telegraph*, 13 October 1936

Naturally, the introduction of the flat to Brisbane was not without its critics. Flats were generally marketed to single people and childless couples, and some believed that 'flat' living would degrade the family unit and encourage lax morals. In spite of this, apartment living soon became fashionable and new architect-designed apartment blocks began to appear in inner-city suburbs such as Spring Hill, New Farm, Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane.

GLOUCESTER

Street

As you walk up Gloucester Street, take note of the historic streetscape. Most buildings along the street are duplexes built between the 1860s and 1910s. This form of housing was quite unusual in Brisbane at the time.

A very rare example of an 1860s stone duplex can be seen at 19 Gloucester Street. It was built for two early Queensland families, the Grigor and Low families. Between 1883 and 1887, Andrea Stombuco, one of Brisbane's most acclaimed architects, resided here. He designed some of Brisbane's most beautiful buildings during the late 19th Century, such as St Joseph's Christian Brothers College on Gregory Terrace, All Hallows Convent School in Fortitude Valley, 'Rhyndarra' in Yeronga, and 'Palma Rosa' in Hamilton (originally named Sans Souci).

While living in Gloucester Street, Stombuco carried out experiments for a new type of toilet he was inventing. His prototype relied on water and was intended to be an improvement on the earth closets (toilets) used at the time.



Brisbane City Council Detail Plan, 1914, Brisbane City Council, Detail Plan 152

Although the theory behind the invention was sound, the experiments he undertook were received unfavourably by neighbours, who sent a petition to the Board of Health "complaining of offensive smells caused by Mr Stombuco's running the contents of his water-closet into [the] watercourse" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 31 July 1883). His invention was never approved by the Board of Health.

Next door at No. 21 Gloucester Street is a later double-storey duplex, built around 1909.

These houses are private property. Please **do not** enter.



SPRING HILL'S

larrikins

"Exuberant vitality, characteristic of young Australians must either find a useful outlet or safety valve, or it will work mischief by its repression" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 24 August 1901).

The 'larrikin' emerged in Brisbane in the late 19th Century. The term was used to describe a teenage male delinquent, who, with his group of like-minded friends, wielded mischief, harassment and often violence in the crowded streets of Brisbane's older suburbs. These gangs, known as the 'larrikin push', first appeared on the streets of Sydney and Melbourne where poverty and unemployment levels were high.

In Brisbane, the emergence of the larrikin was attributed mainly to a lack of parental control, coupled with a wide gap of almost two years between the time a boy could leave school and when he could begin an apprenticeship. The *Education Act* of 1875 only compelled children to stay at school until the age of 12, while the minimum age for boys to work in factories was 14. Boys who were not encouraged to stay at school



The Larrikin Outbreak,
Melbourne Punch,
27 February 1896

quickly became idle and joined others in these mischievous 'pushes'. Fighting, stealing, gambling, harassing young women, destroying property and drinking were among the daily activities of a larrikin push.

A Spring Hill resident complained about the "larrikinism prevailing in Spring Hill. Last Sunday morning I saw three fights within half-an-hour in Leichhardt Street. In one case the combatants were boys of about 14 years of age, incited on by a villainous-looking crowd, or 'push'. Spring Hill is now getting the unenviable notoriety for this sort of thing" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 20 January 1899).

Although the problem of larrikinism in Brisbane was far less than in Sydney and Melbourne, it was a reflection of the harsh economic times, when jobs for unskilled young men were in decline.

Former site of the

HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN

This beautiful stone Presbyterian Church was built between 1887 and 1889 beside the equally lovely 1886 church hall. Both were designed by renowned Queensland architect, FDG Stanley, who, as Colonial Architect from 1873-1881, was responsible for designing some of Brisbane's best-known buildings, for example the Queensland Club and the General Post Office in Queen Street.

Before the Presbyterian Church acquired the land, this was the site of Brisbane's first children's hospital, the Hospital for Sick Children. It was founded in 1877 by Mary McConnel, wife of important Queensland grazier, David McConnel. She had witnessed the great suffering caused by poor health care given to sick and injured children in Brisbane.

At the time, these children were cared for at home with treatment provided by a doctor only if the family could afford it. The Brisbane Hospital refused to admit children; the only exceptions were children suffering severe injuries caused by accidents. In the superintendent's opinion, children were "troublesome and expensive, and from their being also noisy and undesirable for an institution not intended for them."



St Pauls Presbyterian Church in Spring Hill still under construction, ca. 1889, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 33769

By 1878, fundraising campaigns allowed the children's hospital to open on Leichhardt Street. The hospital's staff consisted of several experienced paediatric nurses, brought out especially from England. There were also a number of visiting doctors and a dentist. If the families of the young patients couldn't afford to pay, they were asked to contribute a day's work washing or cleaning.

Unfortunately, financial difficulties forced the Leichhardt Street hospital to close in 1879, and it was moved to a small cottage in Warren Street. Nevertheless, the founding of this children's hospital heralded a new way of caring for children in Queensland. As the population grew in the early 1880s, a new children's hospital was built at Herston and began admitting patients in 1883. In 1943, this was renamed the Brisbane Children's Hospital.

LEICHHARDT

Street

In the late 19th Century, Spring Hill's commercial centre was along Leichhardt Street between Upper Edward and Boundary streets, where trams travelled on their way to the city or the Valley. Along the street there were a number of houses, as well as a concentration of shops and businesses that included six grocers, five fruiterers, several boot-makers, two drapers, three tobacconists, a baker, four butchers and a bank. There were also four hotels—the Federal Hotel, the Sir John Young Hotel, the Avoca Hotel and the Alliance Hotel.

In 1911, the Spring Hill Picture Palace was opened on the corner of Leichhardt and Wharf streets. It was an open-air theatre, as was common at the time. Moving-picture technology had become increasingly used in Australia, and many other theatres were being established throughout the country. The flourishing film industry in both America and Australia assured the Spring Hill audience a variety of silent films.

Not only were moving pictures offered as entertainment. Vaudeville theatre was a popular form of entertainment in



St Pauls Terrace, 1929,
State Library
of Queensland,
Negative No. 15183

Brisbane in the early 1900s, and Vaudevillian acts were often included in the night's program. The genre was characterised by the performance of a variety of acts that often included comedy performances, singers, dancers, excerpts from plays, acrobatics, ventriloquists and animal acts. On the Palace's opening night, it was reported that the Spring Hill Picture Palace:

"... contains a most up-to-date cinematograph plant, a large screen fronted by a commodious platform, for the purpose of giving vaudeville turns, an orchestra, and, in fact, everything that can make for the pleasure and comfort of the 2000 persons it is capable of accommodating" (*The Brisbane Courier*, 10 April 1911).

By 1927 the theatre had closed.

ALLIANCE

Hotel

There has been a hotel on this site from as early as 1864. The current hotel was built in 1888 to replace the older one and was designed by respected architect, John Beauchamp Nicholson, who also designed the Norman Hotel and the Princess Theatre at Woolloongabba.

There has always been a demand for hotels in Brisbane. When Moreton Bay was opened for free settlement in 1842, some of the first businesses were hotels, with seven licences granted that year. Hotels not only provided an array of services such as drink, food and accommodation, they often played an important role in people's social lives.

To assist in the regulation of the hotel industry, the colonial government introduced *The Publican's Act* in 1863. Under the Act, hotels were to provide at least two rooms for guest accommodation, have two sitting rooms, and enough stabling for six horses. All hotels were to be clean and display the hotel's name out the front on a lamp-lit sign.



Alliance Hotel, Spring Hill, 1971, Brisbane City Council, Negative No. BCC-854-35172

In the 1880s, Brisbane experienced a boom due to high wool prices, gold mining and the discovery of other valuable minerals. Plenty of wealth was on show when many of the older timber commercial buildings in the city were replaced with grand masonry ones. The Alliance Hotel was also rebuilt to reflect this growth in prosperity.

Today, the Alliance Hotel continues to provide hospitality to its guests.



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