

John Atherton - - The Founder of Mareeba

(By G.P.)

THIS year is the eightieth anniversary of the arrival of John Atherton on the Barron River, where it receives Emerald Creek, and his decision to take up the surrounding country for cattle raising. Most historians have accepted the idea that it was the middle of the following year, 1877, when he returned with his family, with waggons and stock and occupied the country, which he had taken up in 1876.

The descendants of John Atherton have now decided to commemorate this great pioneering event—great because of its repercussions on the development of the Cairns hinterland—by erecting a granite obelisk with appropriately worded plaque, at Mareeba.

The suggested site is at the north end of Byrnes Street, on the bank of Granite Creek, close to where John Atherton erected the first building in what was to become the town of Mareeba—a coach change and wayside hotel on the road from Port Douglas to Herberton. This was in 1880.

John Atherton was not only the founder of Mareeba; he discovered tin at Tinaroo, cut a track to Redbank on the Cairns inlet, and packed tin ore by this route down the range to make it one of Cairns' first exports. It was he who told John Newell and William Jack of the existence of tin at the Wild River which led to the founding of Herberton. The Atherton Tableland, discovered by J. V. Mulligan in 1875, bears his name, as does the town of Atherton and Atherton Street, Mareeba.

* * *

He was born in Lancashire, England, about 1837, and emigrated with his parents when still a child to New South Wales in the year 1884. That was before the great gold discoveries of the 'fifties, and the south-east of Australia, practically the only part of it that was settled, was entirely devoted to cattle, sheep and agriculture. Much of the inland and north was entirely unknown, for the era of the greatest explorers was only then dawning. In 1844, Ludwig Leichhardt set out from Brisbane on his epic journey to Port Essington. He was the first explorer to penetrate into what is now North Queensland. Kennedy made his tragic journey from Rockingham Bay to Cape York, through the hinterland of Cairns, in 1848.

John Atherton's father, Edmund Atherton, took up grazing pursuits in the Armidale district. His six sons and three daughters had the true pioneering spirit, and like the young Colonials of those far-off days, were soon experts with horses.

In 1860, the family began their slow northward pilgrimage. With drays and stock they journeyed north to Rockhampton, then only a few years old. The Colony of Queensland had just been formed. At Mt. Medlow Station, which they established, the father passed away.

John Atherton was anxious to push further North out into the unknown lands on the tracks of the gold prospectors, and explorers like the Jardine Bros. and William Hann.

In 1873 when the Palmer rush broke out, he started off with a mob of cattle to sell to the diggers and to explore some of the country for himself. His interests were in land and stock, and gold mining had no appeal to him.

His brothers settled in the Bowen district, but John took a fancy to the Upper Burdekin country. He had married and now had a family.

In January, 1875, he again rode north with 1500 cattle and two bullock drays. Mrs. Atherton and the children joined him in Townsville.

The pioneers were a month crossing the jungle-covered range behind Cardwell, and floods delayed them on the Herbert. John Atherton then took up Basalt Downs near Cashmere, on the old telegraph line from Cardwell to the Gulf.

* * *

But the lure of strange—and perhaps better—country still further north was awakened in Atherton when J. V. Mulligan made known his discoveries of mid-1875—the Hodgkinson River, the Barron, the great un-named Tableland at its head, the Wild River, and all the unoccupied country through which these new rivers flowed.

When the Hodgkinson gold rush broke out in March, 1876, Atherton could contain his restlessness no longer. A young pioneer, John Fraser, had already brought a thousand head of cattle over the coastal ranges and ridden north to the Mitchell River headwaters and taken up a vast area of cattle land, deep in the wilderness.

On an exploring journey, Atherton took up all the country between Fraser's run south to the scrub country, east to the coastal scrub, and west to beyond the Barron River. He then sold Basalt Downs to McDowell of Kangaroo Hills, loaded the family possessions on two bullock waggons and a buggy, and with a small mob of cattle set out on the northern track.

Wild blacks barred the way, and spears were thrown, but Atherton and his two young sons aged

(Continued on Page 31.)

JOHN ATHERTON — THE FOUNDER OF MAREEBA—Contd.

thirteen and eleven years of age, defended the wagons and stock, and pressed onward. Mrs. Atherton, riding in the buggy possessed all the qualities of a pioneer wife and mother.

Up the rough and rocky Wild River, past the later site of Herberton, and down the steep, trackless range, following in the footsteps of Mulligan and Fraser, they came to the impenetrable wall of jungle, later called the Atherton Scrub.

They found a way around it at the foot of the Walsh Bluff Range, and turning eastward in rocky forest country they crossed a creek later called Atherton Creek. In rough basalt country, covered in long sweet grass, they came to the swiftly flowing Barron River. When Mulligan had first seen it, he thought it was the Mitchell. Smith, Doyle and the Mounted Police, trying to find a route to the coast from the Hodgkinson, soon found it to be a new river altogether. It was named after a clerk in the office of the Police Commissioner in Brisbane.

The Athertons crossed the river with difficulty and pitched their camp on the eastern bank, just above where a scrub-born creek with banks of Emerald green joined the river.

* * *

This was Emerald Creek, and the pioneers' new home was called Emerald End—of the EE2 brand, so well known to old timers.

Cairns had only just been founded, and probably Port Douglas had not yet appeared on the map—it was established in July, 1877.

The country surrounding the Atherton homestead, with its slab walls and ant-bed chimney, was open box and bloodwood forest heavily grassed in wild oats and speargrass to the edge of the jungles twenty miles to the east and south; it was a little-known domain, and the aborigines were hostile.

Scores of Atherton's cattle were speared, and seeking them far and wide over the Barron and Clohesy valleys, he carried his life in his hands. A tomahawk thrown from ambush once almost put finis to Atherton's career; he carried the terrible scar to the day of his death. A hill northwest of Tolga, called Bones Knob, is a grim reminder of the revenge the early pioneers took on the dusky owners of the land—for those were grim and dangerous days.

The old homestead—still standing and occupied—withstood a terrific cyclone in 1878 which devastated Cairns and Smithfield. That year a telegraph line was erected along the Smithfield track, and at the crossing of the Barron (Biboohra) was situated the Atherton's first neighbours—Waldrons, Rosins and McCords. A few miles to the northwest, on the extreme headwaters of the Mitchell, was Baan Bero, the Native Mounted Police Camp.

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It was then in charge of Sub-Inspector Douglas. From this fortified hilltop, the troopers frequently sallied forth to "disperse" the Stone Age tribes who were fighting a losing battle against the white invasion.

John Atherton, the expert bushman, noted landmarks with an explorer's eye, and his namings have endured—Shanty Creek, Granite Creek, Mt. Twidder, Kate's Sugarloaf; Tichum Creek, Cobra (Cobera) Creek, Tinaroo, etc.

Tinaroo is reputed to have got its name when Atherton excitedly called out to his mate, Jim Robson, "Tin-huroo", when he found the metal in his prospecting dish.

A minor rush set in, and the ways began to change. Atherton found a pack track down the range to Cairns. To this tinfield in the scrub came John Newell and William Jack, carrying their swags from the Hodgkinson. Atherton told them of having seen tin bearing ore on the Wild River, and investigating late in 1879 and again in April, 1880, Newell and Jack found the Great Northern Mine. A great rush began, and the town of Herberton sprang up.

Overnight, civilisation came to Emerald End. It would be lonely no longer. Turning off the Port Douglas to Hodgkinson road which veered away to the west around the Granite Range some miles north of Atherton homestead, excited travellers flocked to Herberton, crossing Granite Creek almost within sight of the Atherton homestead. They followed in the wake of Christy Palmerston, Mullins and McLean, who blazed the way to Herberton.

* * *

From Emerald End, John Atherton saw the dust of their passing. By the eddying pools and lush flats of Granite Creek, the carriers and packers who followed the rush lingered awhile, and the din of their horse and bullock bells and the flickering gleam of a score of campfires cleaving the solitude of the bush. This spot, half way between Port Douglas and Herberton, was a convenient camping place.

Quickly, in the manner of the times, came passenger-laden mail coaches—first run by Murphy and Macdonald, then by Cobb and Co.

Although only a rough bush track, the Herberton road soon became as busy as a highway. For the convenience of the coach travellers and the hundreds who streamed along that dusty boulder-strewn track twisting between the bloodwood trees, in the early months of the year 1880, John Atherton built a little steep-gabled wide-verandahed shanty and rest-house on the high south bank of Granite Creek, right at the crossing.

Eccles and Lloyd conducted this business, and so these families became the first citizens of the town of Mareeba. But so far it was only known

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POTATOES	— 2oz.	GREEN PEAS	— 1½oz.

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as the Granite Creek coach change on the long dusty road to Herberton. All around was a waste of grey-green bush and heaps of basalt boulders among the tall speargrass.

In 1886 and for the next seven years, a railway was climbing the coastal range from Cairns towards Granite Creek. In anticipation of its coming, surveyor Alfred Starcks laid out a few township blocks on the north bank of Granite Creek, in 1887.

With the arrival of the railway from Cairns in 1893, it became the town of Mareeba. John Atherton watched it grow rapidly. He played a prominent part in the early life of the township, as well as contributing to its development.

His son, William, when he formed Chillagoe Station in the 'nineties, had noted the existence of copper there, and so was partly responsible for the founding of that town also. The building of the Chillagoe Railway placed Mareeba on a sound footing, and it has never looked back.

In the early days of Mareeba, old John Atherton, red-shirted and bearded, was a familiar figure, riding up the street on a small jack donkey. During his lifetime he saw the town of Atherton carved from virgin jungle, the railway constructed to it and extended beyond it to Herberton in 1910.

The old pioneer died in 1913, after some 34 years' residence at Emerald End. He was buried there beside his wife, who had died in 1902.

John Atherton, the founder of Mareeba, played a valuable part in the development of North Queensland. He is worthy of a fine monument in the town he helped to establish so long ago.

Only one son is still living. Another son, E. A. Atherton, known as "Paddy" Atherton, died a couple of years ago, and was laid to rest in the family graveyard at historic Emerald End. He did his share of pioneering, and was a keen Northerner and cattleman. For years he represented the Tablelands in the State Parliament, and was Minister for Mines at one time.

ORPHEUS—ENCHANTING ISLE OF REST AND RELAXATION—Contd.

makes music on the shore and the gentle breezes rustle softly as they waft through the tall palm fronds and descend like a caress on the lacy casuarinas. The giant bosom of the ocean glitters with silver sequins.

Soon, all too soon, it will be the morrow—"Boat Day", whence we must say "Au Revoir" to this tropical gem of beauty, peace and tranquility.

"Did you hear that the fire department fired their efficiency expert?"

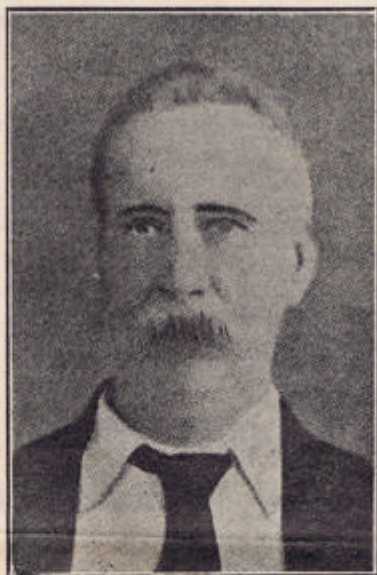
"No. What for?"

"He put unbreakable glass in all the alarm boxes."

The Path of the Pioneers

JOHN ATHERTON.

(By "Tramp")



The Late JOHN ATHERTON,
Squire of Emerald End.

CLOSELY associated with the early history of North Queensland is the name of the late John Atherton, whose memory is perpetuated by the rich Atherton Tableland and the town which bears his name. Herberton also featured in the life of the fine old pioneer as its establishment was due to his first discovery of tin and his report led up to the opening of the famous Great Northern Mine by John Newell and party. The flourishing township of Mareeba also grew round his pioneer settlement at Emerald End on the banks of the Barron River and he took up and stocked Chillagoe Station long before the copper deposits resulted in the formation of Chillagoe township.

EARLY HISTORY.

The Australian history of the Atherton family dates back to 1844 when Edmund Atherton arrived from Lancashire and settled in the Armidale District of New South Wales where he carried on farming and grazing operations for sixteen years. In 1860, after the discovery of gold at Canoona two years previously had attracted attention to the grazing possibilities of the Port Curtis district, Edmund Atherton decided to migrate to the young State which offered such bright prospects. The Armidale property was disposed of, and accompanied by his family the long trek was started, the method of transport being by means of drays which were followed by the stock required for the new venture.

At the time Rockhampton was practically unformed and a vast area of the surrounding country was held by the Archer Bros. Plenty of adjacent country was, however, available and Mt. Medlow was taken up and a station formed. Three years elapsed, then the old pioneer passed away, leaving a family of six sons and three daughters. Of these John Atherton, who had accompanied his father from England and gained considerable cattle experience in the initial settlement, took much interest in the expansion of the new settlement at Rockhampton, while still engaged in pastoral matters.

The pioneering spirit was always existent in the family circle, and the desire to push further afield was specially featured in John Atherton until the sensational accounts of a rich gold discovery on the Palmer inspired him with the desire for further ventures in the little known Northern section of Queensland.

OVERLAND WITH CATTLE.

In 1873 a start overland with a mob of cattle was made, the intention being to supply beef to the hordes of diggers who were rushing to the field. Before, however, the goldfield was reached the demand for cattle was so keen through the country traversed that the whole mob was disposed of. Before the return journey was made the country was fully examined, and its attractions were sufficient to emphasise its great possibilities for new settlement and John Atherton decided to move North.

THE TREK NORTH.

Disposing of his Rockhampton property the trek North was started, and in which he was accompanied by his two eldest sons, William, now of Chillagoe Station, and Edmund (deceased). At the time the lads were aged 13 and 11 years, respectively. The expedition embraced 1500 head of cattle, 90 horses, two bullock drays, and a buggy. During the opening month of 1875 the Sea View Range at the back of Cardwell was crossed and the Burdekin River reached. Basalt Downs near Cashmere Station was then formed and a home made for Mrs. Atherton and the younger children, who came by sea to Townsville. From there an adventurous journey was made over the mountains where big floods compelled the party to remain in camp, and it was a month before the station was reached.

EXPLORATION.

The call of the unknow country was still strong in the mind of the pioneer and his anxiety to explore the country to the east of Cashmere and be-



EMERALD END.

First House erected in Mareeba District by the late John Atherton, 1877.

low the mountains beyond the scrubs resulted in further journeys. The Cashmere property was sold to W. McDowall, then at Kangaroo Hills and gathering together a herd of cattle John Atherton set off to cross the mountains near where Herberton is now situated. This was in 1876 and in relating the journey to the writer some time before his death the old timer spoke of many stirring experiences with the myall tribes of blacks who then frequented the scrubs and upper watershed of the Herbert River. However, these difficulties were overcome and the range was descended and pushing on North along the foothills of the range the way was blocked by an impenetrable wall of dense jungle. This was afterwards named the Atherton Scrub, and the surrounding country, the Atherton Tableland.

EMERALD END.

Skirting the jungle in a northerly direction the hills known as the Walsh Bluff were sighted, looking over the headwaters of the Walsh River. At this point the country became more open, eventually the fine stream known as the Barron River was reached and followed down from a point some distance below where it emerged from the jungle. The journey came to an end when the district afterwards called Mareeba was reached. Here the country was well watered and attractive, as three large tributaries entered the Barron, now known as Emerald, Tinaroo, and Granite Creeks. The junction of Emerald Creek was selected as a homestead site, and the surrounding country was taken up and Emerald End Station formed. The building of the homestead was completed in 1877 and the balance of the stock from Basalt Downs completed the first stocking. Then the late Mrs. Atherton took up residence with her family.

SOLITUDE.

The solitude of life at Emerald End in those early days was such that for the first two years a white woman was not seen by the family outside the residents of the station. The utmost vigilance was necessary to protect the new settlers from the

aggressive tribes of blacks roaming the adjacent country, and owing to then continual depredations the loss of stock from their spears averaged a beast daily for the first five years.

A CLOSE CALL.

The working of stock during the early days of the station was always a source of danger to the pioneers. On one occasion while mustering cattle in the ridges near the Clohesey River a tomahawk thrown by a tribesman wounded John Atherton, and to the day of his death he carried a scar from the terrible wound which opened the side of his head.

A NATIVE MURDER.

During the gold rush to the Hodgkinson many of the diggers passed through Emerald End, remaining overnight at the station. To one of them it proved his last stage. From an examination of the tracks afterwards it was gleaned that the unfortunate digger had camped on the trackside next day and the blacks sneaked upon, and attacked him, the mutilated body being discovered shortly after the murder.

MINERAL WEALTH.

During those early days the history of the old pioneer was full of romantic episodes. The first knowledge of the wealth of minerals was gleaned when tin was discovered at Tinaroo Creek not far from the homestead, and here John Newell and William Jack were working with other diggers when Atherton told them of rich deposits away on the range.

HERBERTON.

This discovery was made during his journeys over the mountains with cattle from his original holding at Cashmere. In 1879 he informed Newell and party of the find and led them to it. The result was the opening of the Great Northern Tin Mines and the formation of the town of Herberton in 1880. Both Tinaroo Creek and the Herberton mines have since yielded immense wealth, but

during one of his interesting yarns with the writer John Atherton stated he was more concerned with bullocks than tin. His information was usually passed on to digger friends who profited considerably.

Gold was also known to exist in the Tinaroo Creek section and in later years, after prospector Alf Hort reported gold, the Mareeba goldfield was extensively worked but the deposits petered out in the deeper workings.

CHILLAGOE

This early history furnishes ample proof that the worthy old pioneer did much towards settling and expanding the district he first explored, but the old desire for fresh fields and adventure still burned bright. His next venture was the taking up and stocking of Chillagoe Station, followed by Nychum, which were handed over to his son, William. Chillagoe homestead is still under the control of William Atherton but is surrounded by the mines, smelters, and township which carry the original station name.

MAREEBA.

As these districts progressed the solitude of Emerald End was broken by numerous parties or men passing inland from Post Douglas and Cairns which became seaports of importance, and from both places the tracks to Herberton and the Hodgkinson passed through Emerald End. "The Squire of Emerald End" as he was known to all and sundry found his hospitality taxed to too great an extent. The trouble was solved by the erection of a small bush hotel which was leased to Eccles and Lloyd, two of the first settlers. Then Cobb and Co. started a line of coaches from Port Douglas and the hostel became a night stage for passengers, and a camping place for the army of teamsters making for the gold and mineral fields. Situated on Granite Creek, close to its junction with the Barron the bush hotel formed the centre for a new township which eventually merged into the Mareeba of to-day.

ATHERTON.

Away to the south still stood the virgin scrubs which barred John Atherton during his first journey over the mountains. As settlement progressed its secrets were revealed and the value of its wonderful timbers resulted in bands of timber-getters exploring its depths. Clearings were made and hordes of Chinese leased the land from the early settlers, and maize growing followed. A wee township started and in honour of its discoverer, was given the name of Atherton.

To-day the scrub no longer exists, a railway passes through the Tablelands which are served by various branch lines and covered by prosperous dairy and maize farms surrounding modern butter factories, and various new townships of importance.

AT REST.

This history of John Atherton covers his achievements in the pioneering of a large section

of the Cairns hinterland. The writer, who was an old friend, has in the past written many stories of his stirring adventures, which have appeared in the columns of this Magazine, and in 1913 paid the last tribute when his remains were placed at rest in the little private cemetery on the banks of the Barron River.

In the same little burial ground at Emerald End, the late Mrs. Atherton, who predeceased him in 1902, sleeps alongside the worthy pioneer within sight of the old home where they took no small part in Nation Building.

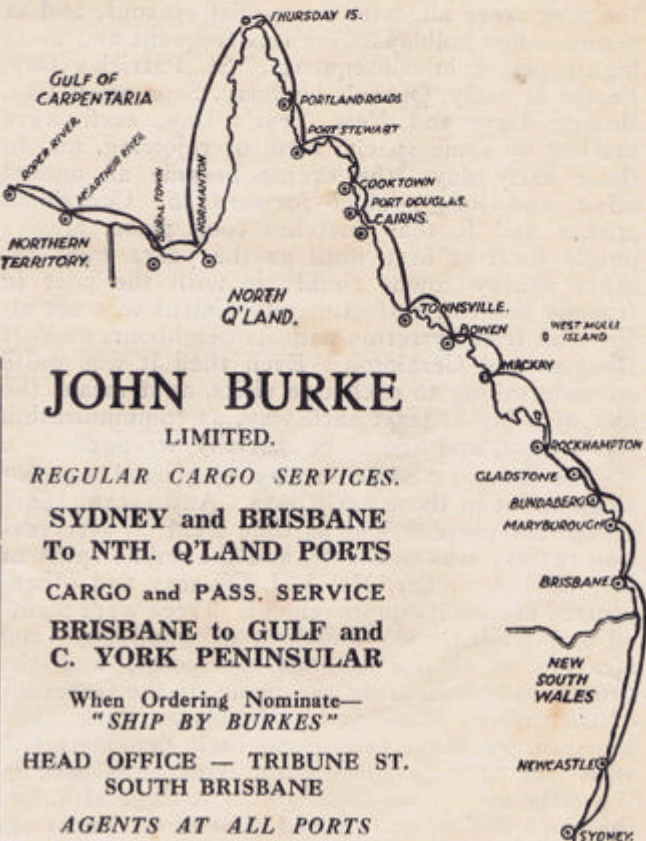
DOG AND DODGE

Policeman: "You must put that dog's muzzle on, sir!"

Wide-awake Party: "Excuse me, Robert, you're mistaken. The order is that no dog shall be allowed in the streets without a muzzle. As you perceive, he has got a muzzle, but prefers carrying it!"

Tommy had to stay in and as a punishment he had to write an essay of at least 50 words on "Cats." He wrote:

"Cats are nice animals. My Aunt Martha has one. She likes him and when she wants to give him some milk, she calls 'Puss, Puss, Puss, Puss, Puss . . . and so on for fifty words."



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AGENTS AT ALL PORTS

PIONEERING DAYS.**JOHN ATHERTON OF EMERALD END**

A link with one of North Queensland's best known pioneering families was severed when E. A. (Paddy) Atherton died a few months ago. He was laid to rest in the family graveyard at historic Emerald End, Mareeba. He had helped pioneer the North, was a keen cattleman, and had represented the Tablelands in the State Parliament, as well as being Minister for Mines at one time.

The late E. A. Atherton was a son of John Atherton, the founder of Mareeba and after whom Atherton town and Atherton Tableland was named. His homestead of Emerald End was one of the first pioneer homes in this then wild region.

John Atherton was born in Lancashire, England, about 1837, and emigrated with his parents when still a child to New South Wales in the year 1844. That was before the great gold discoveries of the 'fifties, and the south-east of Australia, practically the only part of it settled, was entirely devoted to cattle, sheep, and agriculture. Much of the inland and north was entirely unknown, for the era of the greatest explorers was only then dawning. In 1844, Ludwig Leichhardt set out from Brisbane on his epic journey to Port Essington. He was the first explorer to penetrate into what is now North Queensland.

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occupied country through which these new rivers flowed.

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Wild blacks barred the way, and spears were thrown, but Atherton and his two young sons aged thirteen and eleven years of age—defended the waggons and stock, and pressed onward. Mrs. Atherton, riding in the buggy, possessed all the qualities of a pioneer wife and mother.

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This was Emerald Creek, and the pioneers' new home was called Emerald End—of the E.E.2 brand, so well known to old timers. This was the middle of 1877—Port Douglas' natal year, and Cairns was less than a year old. The homestead, with its solid antbed chimney, was the first homestead near the site of Mareeba town.

The country surrounding the Atherton homestead—open box and bloodwood forest heavily grassed in wild oats and speargrass to the edge of the jungles twenty miles to the east and south—was wild and little known, the aborigines savage and treacherous. Scores of Atherton's cattle were speared, and seeking them far and wide over the Barron and Clohesy valleys, he carried his life in his hands. A tomahawk thrown from ambush by a wily tribesman almost put finis to Atherton's career. He carried the terrible scar to the day of his death. A hill north-west of Tolga called Bones Knob is a grim reminder of the revenge the early pioneers took on the dusky owners of this land.

The slab-built homestead—still standing and occupied—withstood a terrific cyclone in 1878. In that year a tele-

(Continued on Page 38.)

JOHN ATHERTON OF EMERALD END—Contd.

graph line followed the Smithfield track, and at the crossing of the Barron (Biboohra) were situated Atherton's first neighbours, Waldrons, Rosins and McCords. On the extreme headwaters of the Mitchell was a Native Mounted Police camp in charge of Sub-Inspector Douglas. From this fortified hilltop, the troopers frequently sallied forth to "disperse" the Stone Age tribes, fighting a losing battle against the all-powerful white man.

John Atherton, the expert bushman, noted landmarks with an explorer's eye, and his namings have endured—Shanty Creek, Granite Creek, Mt. Twiddler, Kate's Sugarloaf and Tinaroo.

Tinaroo is reputed to have got its name when Atherton excitedly called out to his mate, Jim Robson, "Tin-hurroo" when he found the metal in his prospecting dish.

A rush set in, and the ways soon changed. Atherton found a pack-track down through the scrub-covered ranges to Cairns, and tin from Tinaroo was one of Cairns' first exports. To this tinfield came John Newell and William Jack, and it was Atherton who told them of having seen tin-bearing ore on the head of the Wild River. On a second visit to the locality, Newell and Jack found the Great Northern Mine in April, 1880. A rush set in, and the town of Herberton sprang up.

Overnight, civilisation came to lonely Emerald End. Turning off the Port Douglas-Hodkinson road which veered away to the west some miles north of the Atherton homestead, excited travellers flocked to Herberton, crossing Granite Creek almost within sight of the Atherton homestead. They followed in the wake of Christy Palmerston, Mullins, and McLean who blazed the way to Herberton.

From Emerald End, John Atherton saw the dust of their passing. By the eddying pools and lush flats of Granite Creek, the carriers and packers who followed the rush lingered awhile, the din of their horse and bullock bells and the flickering gleam of a score of campfires cleaving the solitude of the bush. This spot, half way between Port Douglas and Herberton was a convenient camping place.

Quickly, in the manner of the times, came passenger-laden mail coaches—first run by Murphy and Macdonald, then by Cobb and Co.

Although only a rough bush track, the Herberton road soon became as busy as a highway. For the convenience of the coach travellers and the hundreds who streamed along that dusty, boulder-strewn track twisting between the blood-wood trees, in the early months of the year 1880, John Atherton built a little steep-gabled wide-verandahed shanty and rest-house on the high south bank of Granite Creek, right at the crossing. Eccles and Lloyd conducted this business, and so these families became the first citizens of the town of Mareeba. But so far it was only known as the Granite Creek coach change on the lonely road to Herberton. All around was a waste of grey-green bush and heaps of basalt boulders among the tall speargrass.

But slowly, from now on, John Atherton was able to watch the township grow. With the arrival of the railway up the Barron Gorge from Cairns in 1893, it became Mareeba. He played a prominent part in the early life of the settlement, as well as contributing to its development. His son, William, when he formed Chillagoe Station in the 'nineties, and noted the existence of copper there, was also partly responsible for the founding of that town. The building of the Chillagoe Railway in 1899-1900 placed

Mareeba on a sound footing, and it has never looked back.

In the early days of Mareeba, old John Atherton, red-shirted and bearded, was a familiar figure. His favourite mount was a small jack donkey. During his lifetime he saw the town of Atherton carved from virgin jungle, the railway constructed to it and extended beyond it to Herberton in 1910.

The old pioneer died in 1913, after 33 years' residence at Emerald End. He was buried there beside his wife who had died in 1902. John Atherton, the founder of Mareeba, played a valuable part in the development of North Queensland.

THE FATE OF MIKE RENMARK—Contd.

Well, it still goes. This is the end. I've had enough. We take the next train to town. We'll rent a house and I'll get a job. The bush has fooled me all my life. It keeps urging you on, urging you on. You work your fingers to the bone, but you never get anything out of it. Well, we're finished with the bush. We're for the city from now on. Let somebody else do the pioneering!"

"All right, Mike. It's three days to the next train, so why don't you and Sam get me some firewood to tide us over till then."

Mike frowned. "Oh, all right." He picked up his axe and stamped out.

Jenny laid a hand on Sam's arm, then turned to the wall shelf. She dropped the wolfram specimen she had rescued into Sam's hand, winked at him. Slowly, Sam smiled back.

"He found this up the mountain," she said. "Lead him up that way. We stay here, Sam. He'd be unbearable in town!"

Sam's smile broadened, till it must have hurt. He dropped the sample into his pocket, then picked up her hand, and wrung it.

"Ready, Sam?" Mike called.

"Yes, Mike. Coming."

Mike strode heavily away. After three or four paces, he stopped, glanced quickly back like a nervous bird, bent down and picked up his prospecting pick. For a moment, he stood looking at it as if he'd never seen it before. Then he went on his way, towards the mountain, the pick held in front of him.

Behind him followed Sam. He was smiling.

In the humpy doorway, Jenny used her apron to wipe the tears off her cheeks. She, too, was smiling.

(All characters fictitious.)

Make your trellis with the lower strand placed to enable the climber beans to reach it when about four inches high or when the first feelers appear. Stout string or old insulated wire is good substitute for plain wire and less likely to "burn" the tender tendrils as wire gets very hot in tropical areas. The long or snake bean grows best around the Darwin district as they don't mind heat and are more hardy than most. Sow from one to two dozen seeds every four weeks and there should be a good supply of beans all the year round. A sprinkling of superphosphate in the dug ground (not too near roots) is a help.