

## Chapter 10 Growing The Glen

Vegetable Creek, our home since the discovery of Tin in 1872, became a thriving mining town of about seven thousand including some 2000 orientals. Those ever industrious Chinamen supplied fresh vegetables to our community from market gardens they developed along the creek. After ten years as a private town it was renamed Emmaville, in 1882, to honour the wife of the then state Governor Lord Augustus Loftus.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese built a Joss House to worship their deities and ancestors, while the nearest Christian house of God was twenty miles south east in Glen Innes. By 1875 Cobb & Co coaches connected The Creek with The Glen<sup>2</sup> and our Vegetable Creek local school was established with an enrolment of up to 80 pupils in its opening year.<sup>3</sup> In 1876 The Glen, did offer private tuition as indicated by an advertisement on June 21 in its newly established press. The Chapman's offer, just a little expensive, was mainly for boarders from outlying properties.<sup>4</sup> That Vegetable Creek school was up and running even before one in the Glen is an indication of the vitality of Vegetable Creek in those early heady days of its mining boom. Rather substantial buildings were constructed in both centres during the period. But the municipality centring on Glen Innes was not to be out done as indicated in the following article in the 1874 Australian Town and Country Journal of May 16.

**Private School, Glen Innes.**  
**CONDUCTED by Mrs. and Miss Chapman.**  
**Terms per quarter in advance :—**

	£	s.	d.
English.....	1	1	0
Music.....	2	2	0
Singing.....	2	2	0
Dancing.....	1	1	0

☞ **Vacancies for a limited number of boarders.**  
**School duties to Commence on MONDAY, July 3rd.**

'The new (Glen Innes) Public School in course of construction promises to be a capital building, worthy of any town in the colony. It is built of brick with teacher's residence attached. The dimensions of the principal class room is 60 feet in length, and 21 feet in breadth; and the small class-room 15 by 13 feet. The entrance is by a neat porch 7½ foot by 6. Lavatories, &c., are in the rear. Accommodation will be provided for 200 children. The school grounds embrace an area of two acres. The cost of the new school will be about £1500. Mr. M. Simpkin is the contractor.<sup>5</sup> The two towns were engaged in an unofficial struggle for survival, With the passage of time, many small villages in the region bloomed briefly but then withered as they lost some sort of critical civic mass needed to ensure further development.

Another first for the newly named town of Emmaville (1882) was the establishment, down the track of time, of 'the first medical fund in New South Wales with the aim to build a new hospital and keep a doctor in town. In 1891, lectures were given at the local hospital, still called Vegetable Creek Hospital, and a local branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade was formed as a result.<sup>6</sup> Glen Innes Hospital was well and truly up and running by then with a rather substantial building to which regular extensions were added over time. Citizens were starting to feel the need for adequate education, health care and even entertainment, that centred initially around hotels in the towns.

By then my father Patrick Quinn lived in Grey Street working as 'town crier' in The Glen .His bachelor son, another Paddy Quinn, lived with him and he also worked as bell man when Dad was sawing timber in the local mills.<sup>7</sup> What changes had led him to his life as a pioneer in this thriving township at the opposite end of earth to his birth place. What a world of experience was his during forty or so years in the colony. From the antipodes in Ireland he travelled to Sydney Town in 1835, living in Burwood and Parramatta when dog traps were set to catch dingo dominating the scrubby forest around Duck Creek. By coastal packet to Five Islands, inside Lake Macquarie entrance, where he married Selina Louth in 1840. Back they went to Burwood for my birth in 1842. Details are obviously a bit uncertain as I was only a babe, and Dad was not one to expound at length on a life he was so busy living. However these are the facts of his exile as far as I know. Yes I will admit it

openly. A good deal of the preceding chapters have been a tale told to explore and explain what we do not know. Up till now my story of Hugh Quinn includes much invented elaboration fleshing out the skeleton of facts outlined above. But as this story progresses a local newspaper The Glen Innes Examiner holds a record of many of the events that will now fill out the story of my life.

The digression into the coastal cedar forests is such an invention. Maybe Dad saw value in the cedar cutting taking place around Lake Macquarie where he married in the forties. He definitely would have heard of the riches being gathered around the Hunter and its Cedar Arm. Fabulous wealth was in the offing further up the coast beyond the limits of settlement. That the three of us travelled north where he may have joined the 'Men of Death' as a sawyer in search of Red Gold is only hinted at by his recorded occupation as a sawyer. By the fifties our family, now numbering five, had emerged onto the tableland. Skeleton Creek north east of Funaccabad station later to be the site of Glen Innes town was where son Patrick was born in 1852. In the same year Dad and I all of ten years old went gold panning at Rockey Creek on the Uralla goldfield.<sup>8</sup> Dad watched the growth of Glen Innes, his new home with growing pride in its recognition as a town of note so generously depicted in this article written in the Town and Country Journal of 1874.

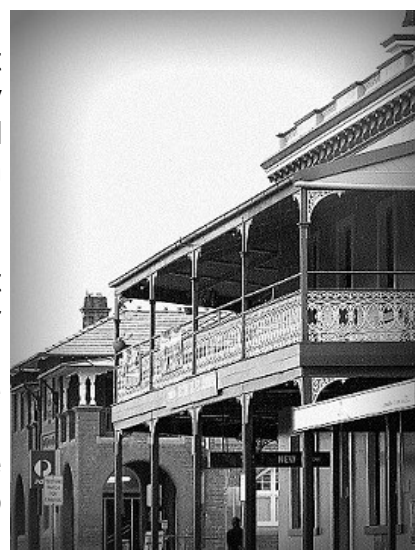


'The new court-house approaching completion is built of bluestone. All the doors, windows, and facings, and quoins are, however, of granite. The building is of a plain, good, substantial design, shingle roofed, and the verandah is iron roofed. The court house will be surrounded by a neat palisading, and the lock-up enclosed with a strong wooden fence 3 feet high, and sheeted with iron. The contractor is Mr. W. Cains, who is well known as a builder in the North; the court house at Singleton and several fine banks in Maitland bearing evidence of his skill. The present Post and Telegraph Office, Glen Innes, is the most disreputable Government building in the North. It has been said that the building resembles an undesirable stamp of horse, that is, one too well developed in the spine, and consequently hollow in the back. The only difference is that a horse's hide keeps out the rain, which is more than can be said of the P & T Office, Glen Innes'.<sup>9</sup>

New PO & Gt Central Hotel

Well it took another twenty years for that leaky old building to go. It was eventually replaced by a magnificent structure designed by NSW Colonial Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon. Completed in 1896<sup>10</sup> our new Post Office still remains in all its glory, a two-storey masonry building with slate roof, terracotta ridges, hips and wide eaves. It stands in the centre of town at the cross road formed by Grey and Meade Streets. The latter running east connects to the coast via the Grafton Road. To the west it becomes the Gwyder Highway running out to Inverell and Moree.

Across Meade Street from the new (in '96) Post Office stands the Great Central Hotel now with balconies added, and on the opposite corner over Grey street stands the Imperial. Built after Federation, the Imperial stands next to the site of the Commercial Hotel.



The Commercial was a mixed bundle that I advertised for sale in June of '76. Seemingly a pot of gold, it never rose to expectations. Location was good, but as the town was in the process of a building spree, the old Commercial just did not keep up with the times. It passed through several hands in the years following the '76 sale and finally died in flames just after Dad passed on in 1889. An inquiry into the fire in September '91 ended with a five year sentence for Dennis Hagan. He provided no hoses for his premises and the Fire brigade arrived at the fire without either of its fire hoses.

Both hoses had mysteriously disappeared and could not be found in the rush to get to the fire. A bucket brigade was just not enough to quell the blaze that already had a head start due to a fruitless search for any hose. There were several red faces over the incident particularly as things unfolded. Would you believe that later on the fire brigade hoses were found under the school house. A general stink generated by such a spate of suspicious circumstantial coincidence precipitated a clarion call for an enquiry. The aforementioned result was almost a foregone conclusion for it was generally known about town that the fire was an insurance job.

### Commercial Hotel, Glen Innes.

**F**OR SALE, the LEASE of those Valuable Premises known as the Commercial Hotel. It is centrally situated in Grey-street, opposite the Court House, and contains all requisites and Out-buildings necessary for carrying on the business of a first-class Hotel. Terms, most reasonable, on application to

**HUGH QUINN,**  
Glen Innes.

Back-stepping in time to 1874, several of the more substantial buildings around town received some free publicity in that A T & C Journal of May 1874. The 'Travelling North' article already quoted included a snap shot of several notables of The Glen. One of the most enterprising townsmen of that time was T E O'Keeffe the very first mayor in The



Glen. 'The fine large building in the accompanying engraving is the wholesale and retail establishment of O'Keeffe & Co, situated at the corner of Grey and Meade streets<sup>11</sup>. The building is a spacious structure of two stories, with balcony in front. The first story is constructed of bluestone, and the second of brick, cemented. The wholesale stores, wines

and spirits, are kept in premises at the rear, where are also the offices. The front is a spacious retail establishment having glass windows, and well fitted up interior. The flour mill owned by O'Keeffe & Co. is built of granite rubble stone, driving 2 pair of 4 feet stones. There is a second flour and saw mill in the town, a wooden building owned by Mr. Grover. Among the other industries of Glen Innes I should mention a good tannery in active employment, carried on by Mr. J. J. Matthews, saddler.<sup>12</sup>

Grey Street at the time was indeed being transformed by a fine pile of business premises. In addition to that of O'Keeffe our first mayor was the store erected by Munro from Araluen. No expense was spared in making them among the best in the north, comparable to any in Sydney. Cedar cutters still worked the local forests of the Newton Boyd so polished cedar fittings throughout were *de rigueur* in the tableland. Indeed it was a just appreciation of the rich resources of our region that influenced the townfolk of Glen

Innes to erect such fine buildings<sup>13</sup> that enhanced and displayed civic pride. The local newspaper, effectively titled Examiner in a miner community, provided the region with a communication core second to none.. When it established itself in Glenn Innes in 1874 the editor Henry Clive St Vincent planned a permanent place in the life of the growing community. For the Glen Innes Examiner he built a magnificent Italianate office premises in Bourke Street near its corner with Grey Street to proclaim his papers commitment to the community. As a newspaper it served Glen Innes well during my lifetime and beyond.



Glen Innes Examiner building

Women in town, mothers, wives and daughters, including those in business, took a particular interest in the drinking habits of us menfolk. In addition to the buildings already described a fine Temperance Hall was erected at a cost of £500. Our flourishing temperance society used it for amusements and entertainments that did little to amuse or entertain some of us males. My Annie was all in favour of improving society and while she supported this venture I tended to lend my support to any of the nearly half dozen hotels in The Glen.

The Commercial and Telegraph hotels at either end of town vied for community patronage while centrally located Tattersalls provided a venue for entertainments such as boxing, more suited to a male clientele. Annie was aghast that day in '86, a decade down the track, when I donned the gloves to take on Larry<sup>14</sup> Foley.<sup>15</sup> But more on that anon. It was Anne herself in '76 who really wanted the Commercial sold and our family out and away from the liquor trade. When Anne set her mind to something, heaven help any who crossed her. She could plainly see the writing on the wall that spelled out a warning to our world. Crystal clear to her and the Temperance team was the damage done to individuals, to families, and to society in general all caused by demon drink. Clearly they expressed disapproval of any increase in consumption or of outlets that further increased the temptation to intemperance.



T E O'Keefe<sup>16</sup> First Mayor 1872-74  
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## Chapter 10 Endnotes

- 1 Wikipedia Vegetable Creek [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,\\_New\\_South\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,_New_South_Wales)
- 2 Emmaville web site <http://www.nsw.com.au/emmaville/history.html>
- 3 Wikipedia School 1875 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,\\_New\\_South\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,_New_South_Wales)
- 4 Glen Innes Examiner, June 21 1876, Private School in Glen Innes
- 5 AT&CJ p 21 Saturday May 16 1874 NLA <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70474593/4767811?zoomLevel=3>
- 6 Wikipedia Emmaville Medical [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,\\_New\\_South\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaville,_New_South_Wales)
- 7 Glen Innes Examiner, Tuesday September 22, 1908, Obituary of Patrick Quinn (Jnr).
- 8 Glen Innes Examiner, Sunday August 8 1915, Obituary of Hugh Quinn.
- 9 Op Cit AT&CJ p 21 Saturday May 16 1874 NLA
- 10 A Heritage CBD in Glen Innes, <https://www.gleninnes tourism.com/glen-innes-brochures/>
- 11 AT&CJ, Saturday May 16 1874, p. 20. Tour to the North: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4767810>
- 12 Op Cit AT&CJ page 21, Saturday May 16 1874 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70474593>
- 13 Ibid AT&CJ page 24, Saturday May 23 1874 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70474771>
- 14 Hunt, C. H. (Charles Henry) (1870). Larry Foley, 1848-1917. NLA photograph <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/9791083>
- 15 Op Cit GIE Obituary of Hugh Quinn Sunday August 8 1915.
- 16 Sommerlad, E C & Glen Innes Council Jubilee 1922 The land of the Beardies. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1652156>
- 17 Story Copyright © T Quinn. All rights reserved.