



# THE PIONEER

THE BUDERIM HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

## OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Historical accounts  
from the Buderim – Mooloolaba area

Number 32 November 2024

### Price Jones – Engineer and Buderim Pioneer

by Bill Lavarack

**Price Jones (1845 – 1931)** was born Price Evans, in Corwen, Merionethshire, Wales. He changed his name to Jones when his mother, who was originally Eliza Evans, changed her name to Jones when she married Edward Jones in 1857. Edward and Eliza had two children, Eleanor Jones and Price Jones.<sup>1</sup> Price married Isabella Hogarth (1847 – 1938) on 8 August 1864 at Warrington, Lancaster, England. In late 1875 Price and Isabella Jones immigrated to Australia aboard the sailing ship *Strathearn* with their daughters Mary three years old and Elena one year old.<sup>2</sup>

Price and Isabella Jones in later life. *Photo BHS*

Over the years Price and Isabella Jones gave birth to ten children, four of whom died in infancy. The surviving children were: Mary (1872) and Elena (1874) born in England; Price (1877), Fred (1880), William (1885) and Elizabeth (1888), the last four born in Australia

The family arrived at Rockhampton on 3 May 1876. Son Price was born in 1877 and the family moved to Dingo, about 100 kilometres east of Emerald, where Fred was born in 1880. Price found work on the construction of the railway from Rockhampton to Dingo. One wonders what a family, fresh from England, made of western Queensland and its weather.



<sup>1</sup> Price (Evans) Jones was born to Eliza before she married Edward Evans. See also WikiTree 2016 (below).

<sup>2</sup> WikiTree, April 2016, Price (Evans) Jones, (1845 – 1931).



In 1880, with his wife and family, he moved to Buderim Mountain.<sup>1</sup> There he selected 140 acres of land straddling what is now Jones Road on the northern side of Buderim Mountain. This was added to by the purchase of a further 69 acres from J.K. Burnett on lower Martins Creek.<sup>2</sup>

Price Jones' second house on Horseshoe Bend Buderim, family in front. *Photo BHS.*

He planted sugar cane which was the major crop then cultivated on Buderim. In the early 1880s he built a house on what is now Horseshoe Bend, using timber from his Martins Creek block. This house was burned down in about 1886. He then built a batter house, typical of the time, with four rooms and a surrounding verandah. (see above).

Although he had no formal engineering education, Price Jones was a clever and innovative builder of machinery and had considerable experience in the engineering trade before leaving England.<sup>3</sup> Price was a born inventor and put his self-taught engineering skills to good effect. Around the turn of the century the coffee industry was growing rapidly on Buderim and there was a need for machines to husk and pulp the beans. Price designed and patented such a machine.<sup>4</sup> One husking machine built for Gustav Riebe, doubled the output. Another cost F.H. Wise £12.10/-.

The machine pulped 15 tins of coffee in four minutes.



George Burrows' water wheel designed by Price Jones. *Photo BHS.*

In 1898 George Burrows, who had a farm on the northern slopes of Buderim, built a large water wheel powered by two small dams on two small creeks which normally stored enough water to run the wheel for an hour a day. The wheel was used to cut chaff. It was not working well and Burrows hired Price Jones who successfully re-designed it. The wheel was 21 feet 8 inches in diameter and

had 60 buckets.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nambour Chronicle*, Obituary, Mr Fred Jones, 26 November, 1954, page 3. Also see *WikiTree*, Fred Jones 1880-1954, the date of moving to Buderim given elsewhere as 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Weir, S.P. Sept. 1983, *Price Jones*, Buderim Historical Society, Pioneer Series, held by BHS.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Mail*, 1922, *ibid.* 30 May 1922, Page 10.

<sup>4</sup> Weir, S.P. Sept. 1989, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Weir, S.P., 1983, Site of George Burrows' Water Wheel, Buderim, Historical/Industrial Site, record card, held by BHS.

Price was hired as an engine driver in the sugar mill run by James Campbell and Sons, which was on the site of the present Post Office. He was also a share holder in Campbell's mill. In 1888 this mill ceased operations. At about the same time Price was involved in brick-making in a kiln situated on the original site of Earnest Middleton's house (more or less behind the current Middy's Complex). He was assisted in those operations by Mr. J. Atkinson who had arrived in company with Mr. Jones also in 1881.



Buderim's two sugar mills. Left: the James Cameron and Sons Mill (1880 – 1890), located where the current Post Office stands. Right: The Dixon – Fielding Mill (1876 – 1896), located on Mill Road. Price Jones worked as an engine driver at both mills, in succession. *Photos: BHS*

He then returned to farming, but due to his reputation as an engineer, Joseph Dixon hired him as engine driver at the Dixon sugar mill on Mill Road. In 1896 this mill also closed and Price again turned to farming, this time bananas. Not long after this, the Moreton Sugar Mill in Nambour started operation and Messers Malcolm and Lunn employed Price Jones as an engine driver. However Price found the distance he had to travel daily was too great and he resigned, again returning to farming on Buderim.<sup>1</sup>

His land was not of the best quality for farming and his various jobs as an engineer proved most important to Price and his growing family. He continued farming up to 1916 when he built a house on Maroochydore Road (now Gloucester Road) in which he lived in retirement with his family until his death in 1931. Proud of his Welch heritage he named the new house 'Brynhyfryd' meaning 'House on the Hill' (see opposite). This house still stands and is still owned by one



of Price Jones' descendants. Price Jones' name is remembered by the naming of Buderim's main northern access road as 'Jones Road'.

Price died in 1931 aged 86. Isabella died on 23 January, 1938 aged 91. Both were buried in the Woombye Cemetery.

<sup>1</sup> WikiTree, April 2016, Price (Evans) Jones, (1845 – 1931).

**Fred Jones (1880 – 1954)** was a son of Price and Isabella Jones. He was born in Dingo but moved to Buderim with his family in 1880, aged three months. He worked in the timber industry and in his earlier days was regarded as one of the strongest man on the North Coast. His work took him to Kingaroy, Taromeo, Blackbutt, Toogoolawah, and Benarkin. He had a team of horses hauling timber.

Fred Jones at Morton Sugar Mill, ca. 1910.  
*Photo BHS.*



In 1912 he married Agnes Jane Wordie (1886 – 1978). They had three children: Olive Isabella (Jones) Ashby (1913 – 2015), Ida Minnie (Jones) Sorensen (1914 – 2006) and Price William Jones (1916 – 1977).



Fred Jones with his horse team hauling timber. Agnes Jones to the right.  
Photo: *Lorelle Flanagan.*

Fred died on 13 November 1954 at age 74. Agnes died on 16 March 1978 at age 91.  
Both were buried at Buderim Cemetery.

### **Acknowledgements**

Lorelle Flanagan and Barry Ashby, both grandchildren of Fred and Agnes Jones, assisted with advice and photographs.

### **Further Reading**

*Daily Mail*, Tuesday 30 May 1922, page 10, *Some of the Pioneers Early sugar growers.*