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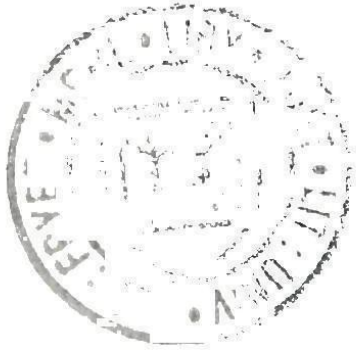
THE MAYNE INHERITANCE

Rosamond Siemon



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Postscript
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The Mayne
Inheritance

ROSAMOND SIEMON

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Dear Reader

SINCE *THE MAYNE INHERITANCE* was published some hundreds of people have contacted me and a few new important facts have emerged about the family. I want to share them with you so that you, too, know the full story.

After the book was first published a group of medical practitioners contacted me wanting to discuss Patrick. When researching the book I had been advised by psychiatrists that he probably had hereditary syphilis. Some in this medical group weren't so sure. Many of them argued that it may have been porphyria — a genetic abnormality which, since the 1960s, has been retrospectively attributed to the “madness” of King George III of England. Syphilis or porphyria — the end result was the same: madness, violence and murder.

Some elderly folk have come forward with heart-warming snippets about James, the responsible younger son who directed the giving of the family's entire fortune to benefit Brisbane and Queensland — a generosity still not adequately recognised by its recipients. In her memoirs, Jane Bell, Matron of the Brisbane General Hospital 1904–06, notes that “James was the kindest, most caring and generous man I've ever met ... He never said an unkind word about anyone.” She added that when the Lady Lamington Nurses Home was built in 1896 James outfitted their sitting room with beautiful, comfortable furniture and

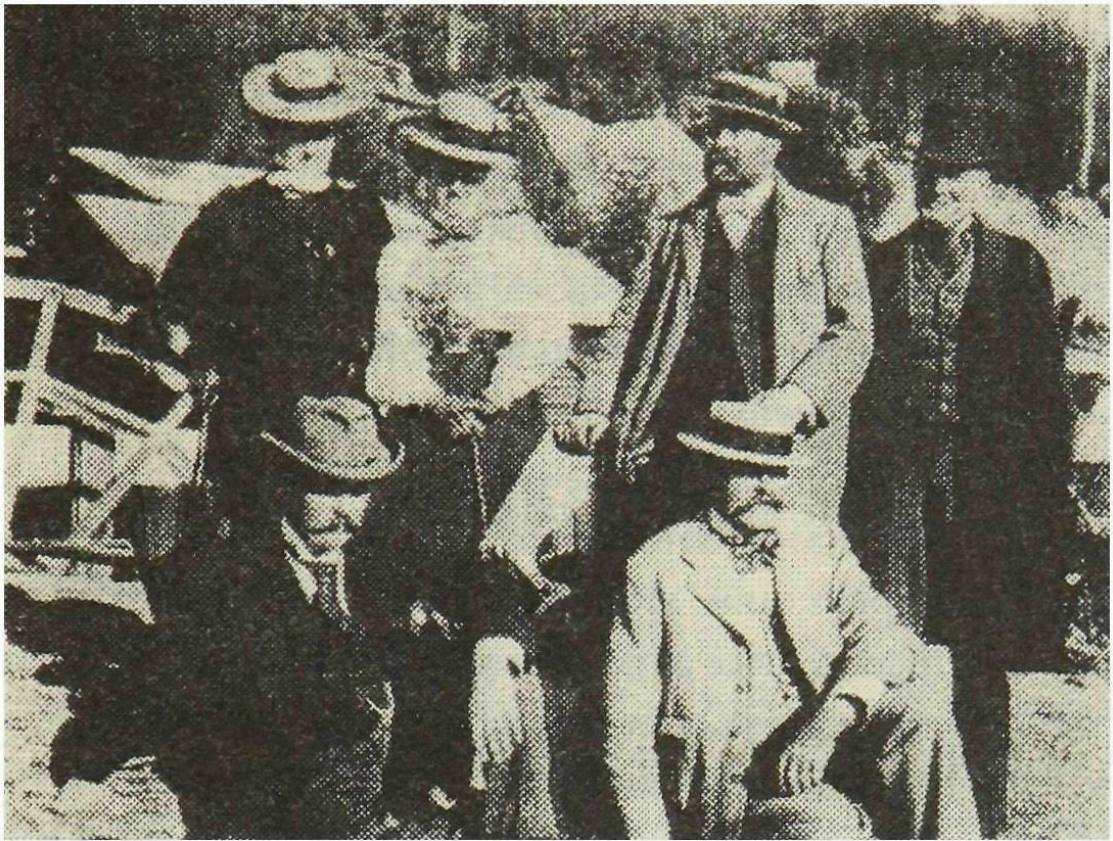
had the surrounding gardens laid out with great artistry and shrubs from all around the world.

THE MOST EXCITING NEW MATERIAL in the form of photographs and a diary has added a very human dimension to William. From the day he left Grammar School to the day he died, there was almost a total blank in his record. I knew that Isaac and James were homosexuals but I noted my uncertainty about William (p. 144). A telephone call from a generous Mrs Bruxner changed that. She sent me her grandmother Florence Davidson's record of a special friendship Florence once enjoyed with William. As you will read, there were no happy endings for the Maynes.

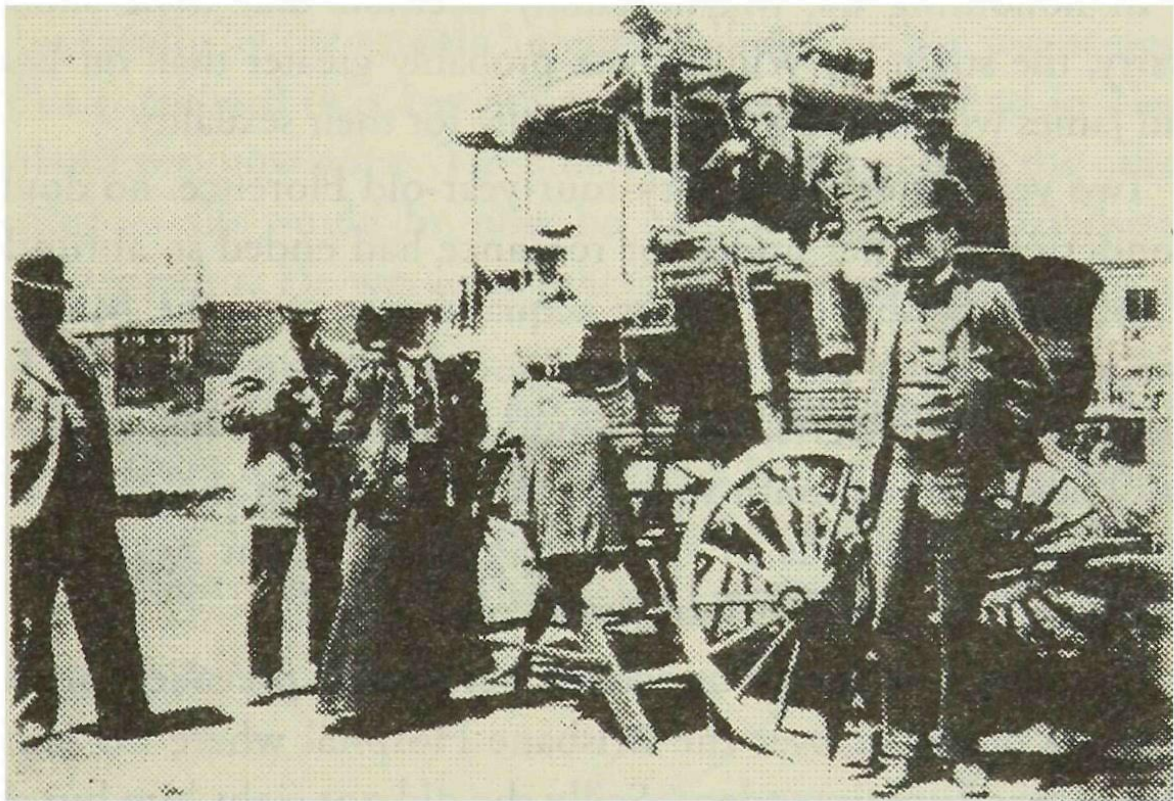
In January 1897 the Mayne family went on yet another of their holidays to New Zealand — a country where their story was not known, not gossiped about, where they could relax and enjoy a carefree holiday.

William and James both had the classicist's eye for beauty and as the family embarked on a scenic coach tour of both islands, two Australian women joined the group. The younger, Florence Davidson, the travelling companion of a Miss Crompton Roberts, was not only stylish and attractive but an intelligent young woman with a keen sense of fun. She came from Parramatta.

By train, steamer, coach and canoe the travelling party was thrown together. They found extra time for long walks in the evening, singing at the hotel piano, and quiet conversation over supper. Group photographs show clearly that they were a congenial company. By the end of the second week William alone was escorting his sister and Florence Davidson on the evening walks. He bought her sweets, a Christmas book and perfume. He stayed late with her in hotel sitting rooms to play cards or to



The Mayne family on holiday in New Zealand, pictured with Florence Davidson, taken in 1897. (Back row, from left) Mary Emelia Mayne, Florence Davidson, William Mayne, Mr Stewart, (front row, from left) James Mayne, Isaac Mayne (courtesy Jill Bruxner)



Various members of the travelling party seen here with the "bone-shaking" coach. Mary Emelia (in dark suit), Florence Davidson, William (seated in coach on right), Mr Stewart (in top hat) (courtesy Jill Bruxner)

chat, and as Florence's diary records: "Mr William Mayne and I sat in the back of the coach and we had fun".

On a bone-shaking sixty-five-mile coach trip to Longford, Florence was distressed with travel sickness and William did all he could to make her comfortable. James, the doctor, either saw no need to offer his professional aid or had advised William on how to treat her needs.

At Christchurch, during the last few days of the group's tour Florence's diary notes that William was very kind and generous, and that he spent time alone with her. At Dunedin his four weeks of being attentive to a beautiful young woman came to an abrupt end. The Maynes returned to Australia. Florence, who may have hoped to win the heart of the handsome bachelor, suddenly found her days empty. She complained sadly to her diary: "I feel as if I had lost a shilling and picked up threepence for the next three days. We miss the Maynes. At least I do very much."

In honouring the Mayne family decision that none should marry, the strain on William was probably greater than on Isaac and James who found a different outlet for their sexuality.

Two years later the twenty-four-year-old Florence, no doubt wondering why her hopes for romance had ended so abruptly, set out for Brisbane to renew acquaintance with the Maynes. She was a young lady with good social contacts and with her friend, Kathleen Betts, sailed from Sydney on the steamer *Cintra*. They spent a month with the Boyd family in their home in the spacious grounds of the Immigration Depot next to the imposing "Yungaba" at Kangaroo Point.

Florence had barely unpacked before she prevailed on Mr Boyd to show her over the Brisbane Hospital where Dr James Mayne was Superintendent. Sadly she did not sight him but she was impressed with the new Lady Lamington Nurses Home for which James Mayne had donated the most comfortable furniture and financed the landscaping of the grounds.

In the busy whirl of Brisbane's winter social season the girls were squired by several eligible young men including Fitz and Cecil Brenan, sons of the Immigration Officer. Mat Cokeley took them sailing on his yacht, while Mr Pring Roberts and others variously escorted them to receptions at Government House and Bishopbourne, polo matches at Ascot, the Masonic Ball and dances. They also attended musical "at homes".

The non-stop entertainment did not deter Florence from her main aim. When she spied William and Mary Emelia in their carriage in town and was not seen by them, she, an Anglican, decided to attend Sunday service at the Roman Catholic cathedral. It was a pleasantly surprised Mary Emelia, not the accompanying William, who invited her to afternoon tea at "Moorlands". Pleased to have a congenial friend visit her, Mary Emelia invited Florence back a week later for luncheon and tennis. William did not appear.

Knowing of the Brisbane family Florence stayed with, virtually on the site of his father's brutal crime, and of the rejection of his family by the establishment families Florence was seeing, William realised that any anonymity the Maynes had in New Zealand was now gone. The sins of the father and all the other hurtful gossip would by now be part of Florence Davidson's enlightenment. He was long practised in withdrawing from an unkind world.

Three days before Florence and her friend returned to Sydney she spent a final afternoon playing tennis at "Moorlands". In the twilight William escorted her across the lawn to Auchentflower station. The diary is eloquently silent on their parting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rosamund Aemona". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background. The first letter 'R' is large and loops back. The name is written in a fluid, connected style.



A Historical Walk with the Maynes

THERE'S A CERTAIN FASCINATION in taking a trip through history and a visit to sites familiar to the tragic Mayne family will bring alive some of the characters and episodes from *The Mayne Inheritance*.

A good starting place is Kangaroo Point, the site of Patrick Mayne's ghoulish crime on 27 March 1848. The Bush Inn was at the corner of Holman and Main Streets — just up from the Riverside ferry, and Rankin's garden, where the murder took place, was behind it. Both were on the downstream side of Main Street. The victim's legs and loins were tossed into the grey-black mud on the bank below the high water level. Higher up, in the long grass was the torso and arms. The head was propped at eye level between the joists of a distant unfinished building ... all on the downstream side of the point.

If you carefully read the case and the actions of the two other slaughtermen — William Lynch and George Platt — the plot thickens. It does seem that on the night of the murder their intent was not entirely innocent (pp. 11–13). Everyone knew that the victim, Cox, had a lot of money. They were all short of it. I have a theory and believe that it's a fair bet that all three slaughtermen, Mayne, Lynch and Platt, had planned to rob Cox

on that night. When they returned to the hotel after midnight and found that Cox had gone, the plan was abandoned. Lynch and Platt worked with Mayne and probably knew him very well, enough to get suspicious that he may, on his own, have carried out the robbery. If so, they wanted their share. Why else at 6am the following morning, after being up till about one or two o'clock, did they go to the hotel looking for the stranger, Cox? Was it to see if he was complaining of being robbed?

When, an hour later, they learned that Cox had been murdered they had second thoughts. Big Patrick Mayne was not a man to mess with. Caution told them to back off or they would implicate themselves. Both their depositions point to my theory, but as Mayne was never arrested and the innocent cook, Fyfe, was the prime suspect, those questions were never asked. If my theory is correct, Lynch and Platt also let the wrong man be hanged.

While you're here, comb the long grass for the host of rusted history that once was Campbell's Boiling Down Works. And take a look at the imposing and elegant "Yungaba", the Immigration Depot. It was the Boyd family's bungalow in "Yungaba" grounds where the young Florence Davidson came as a guest in 1904 — decades before the towering steel Story Bridge was built overhead. Florence was on a quest to renew her friendship with Patrick's son William Mayne, whom she'd met in New Zealand a few years earlier.

Before you take the ferry back to the city, stroll a short distance up the river bank on the city side of Kangaroo Point. There in the mangroves at the water's edge are the rotting old timber pylons of the wharf built by the high-flying investor Evan Mackenzie. It was here he dreamed of exports and imports carried in the holds of sturdy ships of the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company to create

wealth and make Kangaroo Point the trading heart of Brisbane and the colony.

FERRY ACROSS TO THE CITY and walk up to Elizabeth Street to St Stephen's Cathedral. There, among a veritable treasure trove of stained glass art, are three memorial windows to the Maynes. Near the street entrance on the left is Patrick's window, depicting the penitent soldier at the feet of a merciful Christ. To the right of the entrance is Mary's window — a tribute from her children. Its theme is Marian, showing devotion to the Virgin.

The most priceless window in the cathedral is the one that soars high in the sanctuary wall behind the altar. Commissioned by James Mayne in 1922, it is a memorial to his two older brothers, Isaac and William. The artist was Dublin's Harry Clarke, one of this century's major exponents of stained glass. It's a triptych in the splendour of Byzantine colours. The central panel depicts Christ on a sea of jewelled clouds ascending into heaven while below is a thoughtful Virgin Mary. Looking on are the eleven apostles — no Judas. These windows should not be missed.

Queen Street is the next site to visit. Stand in front of the Regent Theatre in the mall. For this site in 1849 Patrick Mayne used his ill-gotten gains — to buy his first butcher shop and dwelling. Small, dark and pokey, the shop stood in front of a basic wooden dwelling which stretched along the allotment behind it. The kitchen would have been a detached lean-to. Queen Street was a dusty, rutted lane that turned to bog in wet weather. It was in this house that the Mayne's first three children were born. The two eldest inherited Patrick's mental instability and in 1904 Isaac, like his father, murdered a young man. The third child died in infancy.

Now cross to the Brisbane Arcade where in 1853 a wealthier Patrick commissioned a two-storied brick building with a dwelling upstairs and a glass-fronted shop below. He also had a coach house on the site. If you stop off at Mary Ryans Arcade Bookshop you can read the plaque commemorating the Mayne's residence on this site. It was here that the last three children, William, Mary Emelia, and James were born. It was also here in 1865 that Patrick made his dramatic deathbed confession to a murder for which the wrong man had been hanged. Try to imagine the milling crowd of 4,000 people outside the shop, and lining the dusty street, waiting to see if the horses would pull the hearse of the murderer.

Patrick's children inherited the shops and dwellings on this site which stood back to back through to Adelaide Street. In 1921, the youngest son, James, converted the site to a three-storied traditional European shopping arcade. It cost him £70,000 which then was the equivalent of 269 years' salary for a white-collared employee. Its more recent upgrading you see today.

YOUR NEXT STOP SHOULD BE Chippendall Street, Milton, at the little churchyard between Suncorp Stadium and Milton Road. This area was once Brisbane's cemetery. Most of the graves were moved when the stadium was built but close to the church are a handful of pioneer graves, including a ground-level moss-covered slab marking the resting place of Patrick Mayne and his baby daughter, Evelina Selina.

On the site of the stadium, Patrick had owned a cattle yard through which flowed Western Creek. Its remnant still joins the Brisbane River by the Oxley Wharf restaurant. The creek was often a chain of water holes and in 1858 in one six foot deep hole Patrick's herdsman, Jacob Schelling, met an untimely death. Re-read this section of the book (pp. 57, 58) for clues

and you might suspect — as I do — that a frustrated Patrick, with his penchant for planning to gain his own ends, just might have had a hasty hand in the death of the man he wanted to get rid of but couldn't. Schelling was a nuisance but was a bound employee who had to be fed and paid and who could have sued Patrick had he tried to dismiss him. We'll never know.

ABOUT TWO KILOMETRES DISTANT on Coronation Drive, Auchenflower, between Chaseley and Land Streets, in the front of Wesley Hospital stands the imposing colonial mansion "Moorlands". In 1892 the four youngest Mayne children commissioned Brisbane's leading architect, Richard Gailey, to design their new home. Another example of his architecture is the Regatta Hotel (1886), one block further along Coronation Drive. The Maynes' previous home, "Moorlands Villa" purchased by their mother, was further up the slope where one of the hospital buildings now stands.

The new home, "Moorlands", is a delightful combination of brick, timber and cast iron with an interior rich in cedar, marble fireplaces and stained glass, reflecting the wealth of the owners and the opulence of the times. The carving on the angled staircase leading from the entrance hall is a strong statement of Catholic commitment. It expresses an act of propitiation by the family for the redemption of Patrick's soul. (See pp. 136–37 for details.)

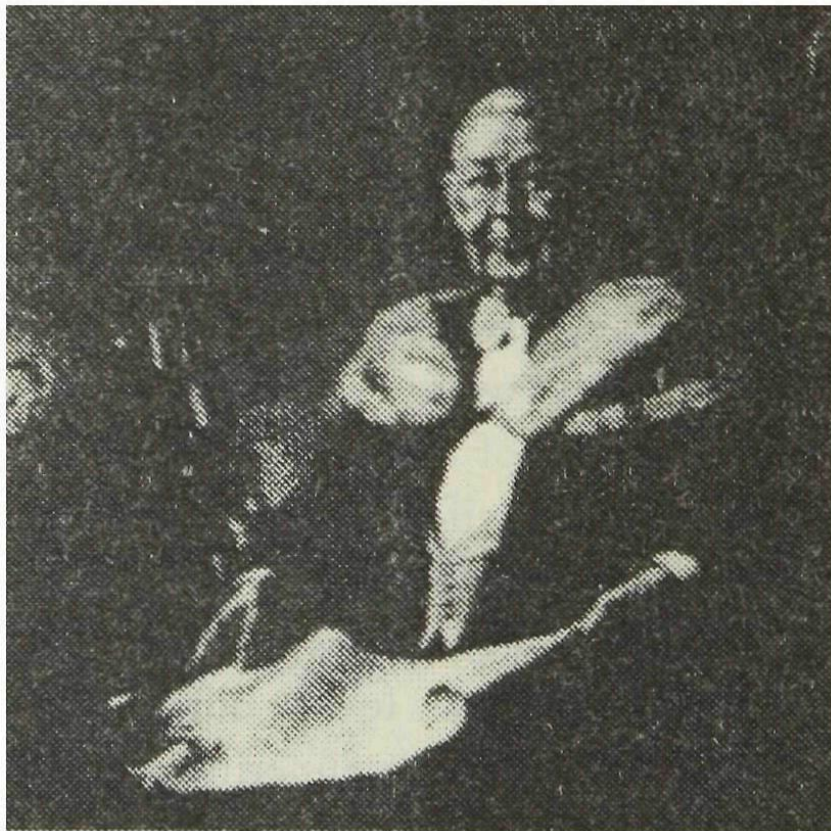
One of the smaller rooms upstairs on the western side of the building is where William and James confined Isaac in 1904 after his complete breakdown and the murder of a Japanese merchant. He remained confined until they could arrange protective custody for him in a Sydney asylum.

"Moorlands" is still a magnificent building and has been kept in excellent condition but is currently used as an admini-

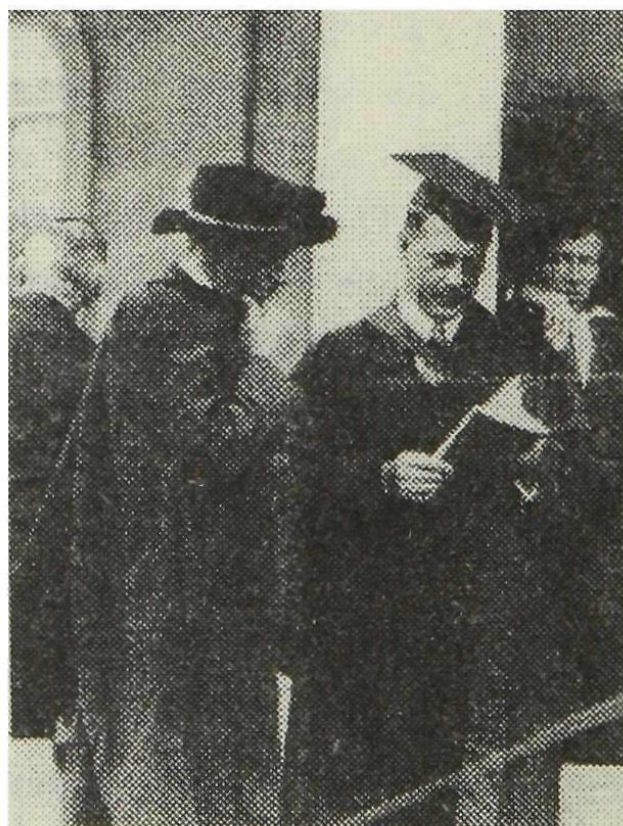
stration block for Wesley Hospital which covers most of the once spacious gardens. Sad to say, in recent months a large part of the front garden, once the family's pride and joy, has been cut away to make room for a council bus lane on Coronation Drive.

There are many grizzly stories about "Moorlands" — all fictitious. Patrick's body was not walled up in the building. He died in Queen Street twenty-seven years before the house was designed. No ghost of a former wife haunts the home. Mary was Patrick's only wife and she, too, died before the house was built. Neither was there a pond full of adult or foetal bones — said by vicious gossips to be James' medical mistakes and aborted babies. He was not a private practitioner or abortionist. He was the Superintendent of the Brisbane Hospital. Those stories are only part of the gossip the family had to endure. They were invented and told by people who wanted to "dine out" on what they said they "knew for a fact".

NOW IT IS TIME TO GO OUT to the University of Queensland at St Lucia to see the magnificent site where James Mayne and his close friend Fred Whitehouse took long riverside walks, and which James and Mary Emelia purchased so the fledgling University of Queensland could create a permanent home. He provided two-thirds of the money, she one-third. They paid £80,000 for the land. It does not seem much in today's terms but that 1926 gift was the equivalent of 307 years' salary at the rate of £5 per week. Today such a purchase would be worth countless millions. The only public and visible acknowledgment of the generosity of the Maynes is in the name Mayne Hall — which to many is the "main" hall. Coming from "Moorlands" your best approach is via Sir Fred Schonell Drive. The University foundation stone, set in the main (central) entrance to the Forgan Smith



Melville Haysom's 1936 portrait of Dr James Mayne in ermine robe with map of proposed university site



A young Dr Fred Whitehouse with Prof. H. C. Richards, head of the Geology department at a graduation long before Fred's dismissal in 1955 (courtesy Peg Martin née Richards)

Building (opposite Mayne Hall) does not include the names of the generous donors.

IT IS NOW TIME TO HEAD BACK towards the city. Go via the Toowong Cemetery and take the secondary Frederick Street entrance on the left, towards Birdwood Terrace. High on a hill, at the cemetery intersection of Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues is the well-tended family grave. A tall, benign angel guards the tomb of the much maligned family. Most probably this is the only place where the blameless mother and those three youngest children who were sane and good citizens found escape from being hounded by malicious and undeserved rumour.

To extend your tour you could move on to Ann Street in the city just where it crosses Boundary Street on the way to Fortitude Valley. On the right is the nineteenth-century All Hallows' Convent where Rosanna Mayne the eldest child, began as a teacher and spent much of her life mentally unstable and cared for by the Sisters of Mercy. Opposite, where now rises the large residential complex of Cathedral Place, once stood "Dara" the primitive wattle and daub cottage sold to Patrick Mayne in 1859 by the Collector of Customs, Mr Duncan (pp. 46, 47). Patrick sold it to the Catholic Church in 1861 and on the site rose a splendid three-storied Italianate Archbishop's residence. That was blown up in the 1920s by Archbishop Duhig to make way for the never-to-be-built Holy Name Cathedral. The commercial venture of today's multi-storied residential units on Dara's site would no doubt have met with businessman Patrick's wholehearted approval.

Patrick owned a great deal of land throughout Brisbane and nearby areas. One has only to look at sprawling Mayne Junction bordering Abbotsford Road, Bowen Hills, and bisected by Breakfast Creek to appreciate the size of his cattle

yard. It was one of his four Brisbane cattle yards. The others were his first at the corner of Elizabeth and Albert Streets in the town, a short walk from his shop; the Lang Park yard at Milton, and the 693 acres at Moggill (now known as the University Farm, Pinjarra Hills). Together they give some indication of the growth of his butchery and allied trade in colonial Brisbane.

ONE MORE LANDMARK IS STILL VERY VISIBLE. That is part of his holdings at Tarragindi. In 1998 the Brisbane City Council purchased 12.5 hectares of this pristine bushland from the Mayne Estate to add to Toohey Forest Reserve. Take Andrew Avenue into the Park. There a large boulder supports a plaque commemorating the purchase and the name of Mayne. Patrick's youngest son, James, would have totally approved of his inheritance being open for public use.

I hope that you enjoy your historic tour of the colourful legacy of this once prominent — but long vilified — Brisbane family.

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The story that has captivated its many readers now has an intriguing postscript...

For the first time, Rosamond Siemon reveals a Mayne family hidden love affair and presents readers with a useful guide to walking the Mayne family sites, charting the colourful legacy of this once prominent — but long vilified — Brisbane family.

