

JAMES VENTURE MULLIGAN**Prospector and Explorer of the North**

[By GLENVILLE PIKE]

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James Venture Mulligan is a man whose deeds are not known to many. Yet he was probably North Queensland's greatest explorer and prospector—a man who did more than anyone else to open up the vast mineral areas of Cape York Peninsula and the hinterland of Cairns.

In this paper I propose to tell you, as briefly as I can, about Mulligan's work—briefly because the full story would fill a book if sufficient time was spent in sorting out the many records and old newspaper reports that survive—relics of the days when Mulligan's discoveries were big news.

Mulligan made six expeditions between 1873 and 1876 and on only one of them did he receive financial help from the Government. His arduous journeys were made at his own expense, spurred on only by his urge of discovering something of value to the community, and to open up the then wild Northern lands of which this brave man was so much a part. He was a born leader of men. In a wider field he could have become Australia's greatest explorer.

This year is the seventy-fifth anniversary of Mulligan's discovery of payable gold on the Hodgkinson; the founding of Cairns followed within six months. This October, the anniversary is being celebrated in Cairns in conjunction with the Jubilee of Federation, but few will pause to remember Mulligan as the man who blazed the way for the pioneers of Cairns to follow. But for his explorations, neither Cairns or Port Douglas may have arisen.

Mulligan was born at Rathfriland, County Down, Northern Ireland, on 13th February 1837. He landed in Melbourne in the year 1859, when twenty-two years of age. That he was keen early in life to become an explorer is evidenced by the fact that he tried to join the Burke and Wills Expedition of 1860, but he was

unsuccessful. He then went to New South Wales where on the goldfields he was in turn storekeeper and butcher. There, also, he had his first lessons in mining—an occupation that was to have a great influence on his future. It was the Gympie gold rush of 1867 that brought him to Queensland.

Finally, in 1873, he was mining on the Etheridge field in North Queensland, had many friends, and had gained a reputation as a fearless bushman and expert prospector.

William Hann, who had led a Government sponsored expedition into Cape York Peninsula between June and November 1872, had reported the existence of gold on the Palmer River, 200 miles north of the Etheridge, but he doubted if it was payable. Hann's report received great publicity on the Etheridge where fortunes were beginning to decline. Speculation was rife as to what may be found on the Palmer. Some of the miners therefore commissioned J. V. Mulligan to lead a prospecting party to the Palmer. With Mulligan went Albert Brandt, James Dowdell, David Robinson, Peter Abelsen (also known as Peter Brown) and Alexander Watson. With a team of packhorses, they set out from Georgetown on 5th June 1873, in search of Eldorado.

Gold on the Palmer

Mulligan and his mates first rode to Firth's Mt. Surprise Station, then practically followed Hann's route down the Lynd. On 21st June, they camped on the Rocky Tate; they were now, for a time, in country previously untrodden by white men. They rode over the site of the Tate River tin mines. On the 23rd they reached the Walsh River and again came on to Hann's track. Mulligan reported seeing the tracks of thousands of wild blacks up and down the river's sandy bed.

The Mitchell River was crossed near Mt. Mulgrave on 26th June. From the top of the divide north of the river the party beheld the wild grandeur of the Palmer Valley spread out before them. They descended into the valley and camped, on 29th June, about a mile above what soon was to be the busy town of Palmerville.

At this time, several large and powerful aboriginal

tribes occupied the Palmer Valley, and they met this invasion of white men with hostility. They unsuccessfully tried to burn out Mulligan's camp and to roll down rocks on them. They shouted, screamed, and danced, waving spears and boomerangs. They had evidently previously had experience from firearms and were therefore afraid to attack.

Mulligan's party immediately began prospecting up and down the river and in the first week found six ounces of alluvial gold. They camped in six places, then on 16th July they split up into three parties, scattering in different directions up and down the Palmer and its tributaries, obtaining gold wherever they panned. The North Palmer was found to be exceptionally rich in alluvial.

On 7th August, the party reassembled at their camp on the site of Palmerville which they had decided to make their headquarters. Mulligan was vastly impressed by the wild grandeur of the scenery, the sandstone-capped ranges irregularly broken into creeks and gorges hemming him in to the north, while to the east the valley stretched away into more broken ranges and bold peaks. The only sign of life was the smoke from the campfires of unfriendly aborigines.

On 24th August, Mulligan decided he had stayed long enough and had proved the Palmer to be payable. They therefore buried their tools and surplus ammunition, and started out for Georgetown with 102 ounces of high grade gold in their saddlebags. The prospectors returned by practically the same route as their outward journey.

It was 3rd September 1873 when Mulligan and his mates arrived back in Georgetown. It is not hard to imagine the excitement their return caused, or the even greater excitement of the expectant crowd that gathered around the Warden's Office to read the notice the Warden tacked to the wall: "J. V. Mulligan reports the discovery of payable gold on the Palmer River. Those interested may inspect at this office the 102 ounces he has brought back."

The telegraph line to Cardwell buzzed with the news as telegrams were hastily despatched. Townsville, Bowen, and Brisbane newspapers headlined the news. Cardwell telegraphed that upon receipt of the news, most people were packing up to leave. People in

Townsville, Bowen, and Rockhampton were throwing up their jobs and joining the miners from other fields who were heading northward to the Palmer.

The great rush was on. Mulligan led the first party of 100 diggers with 300 horses and bullocks to the new field, blazing a track all the way across 200 miles of wilderness.

There are few people living to-day who took part in this momentous migration of nearly eighty years ago. One of the few is Mrs. H. Finn, of Mareeba, who, as a child with her parents, travelled by waggon to the Palmer in the cavalcade of pioneers led by Mulligan.

This was probably Mulligan's greatest triumph. This was a discovery that had far-reaching effects on the whole of Queensland; it led to the founding of Cooktown in October 1873 and the opening up of the whole of the Colony north of Cardwell and Georgetown which were then the most northerly outposts.

In those days, before the feeling of a national Australian spirit had become noticeable, Queenslanders were not concerned with the idea of federation of the Colonies. Each colony was an independent unit and fiercely patriotic about it, customs and other barriers not encouraging unity between each other. Instead, away back in the days of the Palmer Rush, settlers in the northern district, realising the value of the new lands that were being opened up and resentful of control from Brisbane in an era of slow communications, were trending more towards the idea of separation from the rest of Queensland and the constituting of yet another colony—an idea that occupied the minds and energies of many public men for the next two decades, and still persists in the background to-day.

Mulligan and his mates stayed on the Palmer until 16th February 1874, when supplies having given out because of the heavy wet season, his party proceeded to Cooktown, 150 miles distant. Cooktown was growing as only gold rush towns can, and soon it was to become the third seaport of importance in Queensland. It was a roaring, cosmopolitan mining depot of hundreds of wood and iron buildings crowded along both sides of its two mile long main street from the wharves to the Palmer Road. In 1874, ninety-four hotel licences were issued.

Second and Third Expeditions

On 1st May 1874, as soon as the wet season was over, Mulligan and his five old mates left Cooktown to prospect the vicinity of the Palmer. Prospecting the North Branch, the white men were suddenly attacked by a large number of blacks. Three times they rushed Mulligan's camp, their spears wounding Peter Abelsen severely, before they were repulsed with volleys of rifle fire. Seldom had Mulligan seen aborigines so determined. It was eight days before Abelsen was well enough to travel; two of the others had been slightly wounded.

The party then rode down the river to Edwardstown, Gold Commissioner St. George's "Top Camp." This place does not exist to-day. Mulligan left for the Mitchell River on 4th June.

The expedition crossed Oaky Creek, a tributary of Sandy Creek, a Palmer stream, and at Pine Creek at the head of the Sandy on 13th June, Mulligan discovered payable gold. There were already crowds of diggers working Oaky Creek and Sandy Creek, getting good gold. Others were throwing up their claims on the Upper Palmer because they were getting only four ounces of gold in a week which they considered unpayable. Mulligan, on this trip, missed the valuable tin deposits on Cannibal Creek by six miles. This locality still remains probably the richest mineral area among several in the Peninsula.

Riding on towards the Mitchell, Mulligan and his mates struck a large river—a Mitchell tributary—which they named the St. George after the popular Gold Commissioner. Small quantities of gold were panned in this river, but Mulligan turned back downstream and unexpectedly met a party of eager prospectors who, unknown to him, had followed him from Sandy Creek believing he had discovered gold. On 20th July, Mulligan camped on the Mitchell, prospected unsuccessfully, and returned to Palmerville on the 27th. By a few miles he missed finding the Anglo-Saxon Reef which, in 1887, produced up to 70oz. per ton at a single crushing.

With replenished supplies and more horses, Mulligan again set out on 6th August in quest of gold on a Third Expedition. On the 10th he camped near his

camp of a month earlier on Pine Creek. What had then been an unpeopled wilderness was now a thriving mining settlement unofficially named Toughtville. All the surrounding gullies and even those falling into the St. George were thronged by feverishly working prospectors.

On 31st August 1874, Mulligan reached a point on the Mitchell further east than any white men had been before. Away to the south, Mulligan saw "the notable landmark" sighted by Hann in 1873, shimmering in dry season heat. Hann had turned back, but Mulligan went on. The spirit of the true explorer is echoed in Mulligan's statement in one of his journals: "To me it is a great pleasure to traverse new country where no white man has trod before. Every step discloses new scenes and fresh discoveries. The fascination is broken once I return to ground travelled over before either by myself or someone else."

James Venture Mulligan now named the river that met the Mitchell from the south, the Hodgkinson, after W. O. Hodgkinson, Minister for Mines, and former companion of the explorers, Burke and Wills.

Riding up this new river, Hann's "notable landmark" came nearer and Mulligan's mates insisted on calling it "Mt. Mulligan" much to the chagrin of Mulligan himself who shunned publicity of that sort.

In this great rugged mountain, its red rock walls seared by the tidemarks of prehistoric seas that lapped its sides perhaps ten million years ago, Mulligan has a more fitting and lasting monument than any edifice carved from stone.

On 4th September, after traversing very rough country, Mulligan's party passed the site of Thornborough and camped at the junction of a creek from the south-west near the present Mt. Mulligan Railway. A small quantity of gold was found here—the first to be found on the Hodgkinson. But Mulligan was looking for another alluvial field like the Palmer; the Hodgkinson was later famous only for its reefs. Disappointed, Mulligan passed on, but he was to return eighteen months later.

The explorers toiled over the rugged spurs of the Wolfram Range between the Hodgkinson and the Walsh, for several days, reaching the Walsh River six miles below the junction of Emu Creek on the 7th

September. For six days they followed the Walsh through an almost impassable gorge to better country below the present site of Chillagoe. Unknown to Mulligan, or to Dr. R. Logan Jack who chronicled his exploits in "Northmost Australia," Vol. 2, he was traversing the same route at the same time of the year as did the ill-fated Kennedy in 1848. By 13th September, Mulligan had reached Hann's "furthest east" point, and from there on it was familiar country back to Palmerville.

Fourth Expedition

J. V. Mulligan returned to Palmerville on 21st September 1874. Between 1st and 14th October, he made an unsuccessful quest for gold north and west of the Palmer. Finally, on 22nd October, he left Palmerville with his five old mates on a Fourth Expedition. Mulligan thought payable gold may exist on the St. George, so he traced that river up, but little gold was obtained. The party then crossed over the divide to the south and struck a west-flowing river—a Mitchell tributary—which they named the McLeod after a prospecting mate. It was magnificent pastoral country and now comprises Roberts Bros.' Curraghmore Station. The explorers camped for a week on a tributary creek called the Spencer—prospecting, fishing, and shooting. It rained every day and Mulligan felt ill.

On 9th November, the party crossed over the divide northward on to the head of the Palmer, on the edge of Mt. Windsor Tableland. Some "shotty gold" was obtained. In another six miles, the party left the Palmer and went north nine miles, camping beside a spring at the head of the Laura River. From the summit of the Main Range where the Cooktown-Byerstown road later crossed it, a magnificent view was obtained; a wild panorama of bush and valley with a tumbled maze of ranges and peaks stretching to the northward; forty miles to the east the coastal peaks were lost in low clouds. Nearer at hand the smudge of aborigines' campfires misted the tree-tops here and there. Along Mulligan's route, later followed by one of the old Palmer roads, the new Mulligan Highway is now being built from Mareeba to Cooktown—fittingly named in honour of a great man.

From the Laura, some of his men wanted to prospect the Daintree country to the south-east, but re-

membering Hann's narrow escape from disaster in the death-trap of mountains and jungle, Mulligan was loath to tackle it with his limited food supplies. The expedition therefore crossed over on to a tributary of the Little Palmer for a few days' prospecting. On 23rd November, Mulligan and four mates, rode back eastwards from his camp on a tour of the headwaters of the Normanby, travelling thirty miles that day before they found water. Gold was found but not sufficient water to wash it. On the 26th they returned to the Little Palmer. The two men that had stayed at this camp then rode into Cooktown for wet season stores. Next day the main party started back to Palmerville, prospecting on the way, obtaining some fine alluvial.

More gold was found on the South Palmer, and soon diggers flocked to this new era and the township of Uhrstown sprang up, followed by Byerstown early in 1875. Mulligan reached Palmerville on 5th December 1874. The onset of the wet season prevented further exploration.

Fifth (and Longest) Expedition

In undertaking these four expeditions around the Palmer area, Mulligan received no help from the Government. Often the gold won did not cover the cost of food supplies; in those days on the Palmer flour and sugar was each £20 (in gold) per bag. Mulligan mentions paying £30 for a bullock.

Mulligan's fifth expedition was not only his longest but it was his first official exploit. He was belatedly assisted by a Government grant of £500, together with promise of a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of a payable goldfield. With Mulligan was Frederick Warner—a Government surveyor and the first man to pan gold on the Palmer when he was with William Hann in 1872—also James Dowdell, William Harvey, Peter Abelsen, Jack Moran, and a blackboy, Charlie. Abelsen and Dowdell had accompanied Mulligan on the four previous expeditions. This party left Cooktown on 29th April 1875 with twenty-two horses, following the new Byerstown Road to the head of the Palmer. They then struck south across the mountains to the junction of the Hodgkinson and the Mitchell.

On 16th May they followed up the Hodgkinson, turning up the Eastern Branch through very rough country. Ahead, lay the rugged mass that overlooks

Mareeba. Mulligan, approaching it from the west, named it Hann's Range and the pastoral country on its crest he called Hann's Tableland. It is now better known as the Granite Range. He now made easterly for a gap in the range, which in most places drops sheer to the flat forest country north-west of Mareeba, and came down on to the fine grazing country later occupied by Southedge Station. Unknown to Mulligan, he was now at the source of the great Mitchell River, but he knew by his previous expedition on which he discovered the McLeod River that the Mitchell came from the south before turning west. When he struck the Barron River on 24th May near the present township of Biboohra, he therefore believed he had again come upon the Mitchell. He was agreeably surprised at the amount of water it carried, and emphatically declared the Mitchell to be "Queensland's greatest river."

On 26th May, Mulligan's party rode up the Barron, crossed Emerald Creek and the junction of Granite Creek and the site of Mareeba on the opposite bank, camping near Rocky Creek. He rode over the site of the present tobacco lands on the Kuranda Road. Thus J. V. Mulligan was the first white man to see the site of Mareeba—fully eighteen months before the arrival of John Atherton who established Emerald End Station. It was not until that same year (1876) that John Doyle, searching for a road from the Hodgkinson to Trinity Bay, discovered the Barron to be a different river to the Mitchell; it was Doyle who discovered the famous Barron Falls.

Mulligan and his men rode on southward over "rich basaltic country" and suddenly, near the present site of Tolga, they came upon the dark impenetrable jungle. In vain they attempted to penetrate it, then turned westward, skirting it. They marvelled at the giant cedar trees they saw and at the tropical density of this scrub, no doubt wondering what secrets it hid from the prying eyes of white men, gazing upon it for the first time.

On 3rd June, the explorers found a native track and followed it from pocket to pocket in the jungle-choked hills. On 4th June they passed over, or very close to, the site of Atherton. Next day, Mulligan got clear of the scrub and in a few miles began to ascend

a rough granite range—country in Mulligan's eyes more interesting, for it may contain minerals. The party were the first white men to cross the Herberton Range. On a winding, south-flowing stream he named the Wild River, Mulligan discovered tin.

Mulligan commented thus on his discovery: "There may be any quantity of it here, but of what use is it at present, considering the price of carriage? The nearest settlements on the Palmer are all over 250 miles from here. Yet it is well for the future of the Colony to know that there is tin in this locality. . ." Five years later, with the advance of settlement, John Atherton acted on Mulligan's report and guided John Newell, William Jack and Party to this locality where tin was found and the Great Northern Mine was opened a couple of miles distant. This led to the founding of Herberton in 1880. But it was Mulligan who made the initial discovery of tin—a discovery which had even more influence on the development of North Queensland than the opening of the Palmer. It is but one of many debts we owe James Venture Mulligan.

Mulligan followed the Wild River right down to its junction with the Millstream. On the way, he crossed "a marked tree-line, running fifteen degrees west of north, which is thought to be the road from Cardwell to the Palmer." On 9th June, he steered south-west for Mt. Surprise. He passed close to the Innot Hot Springs without seeing them and camped on Return Creek. Stream tin was afterwards discovered on this creek and is still extensively worked, but Mulligan does not appear to have prospected it. Mulligan wrote in his journal: "I am now all but sure that we must have crossed the Main Range about seven miles south-west of the Scrub, and that we are even now on eastern waters, probably on Herbert's River . . ." He was right.

Mulligan's horses ate some poison bush on the night of 10th June, but there were no deaths. On the 13th the well-known landmarks of Mt. Firth and Mt. Surprise were sighted, and next day the party arrived at Firth's Fossilbrook Station. Next day, they reached Mt. Surprise homestead and were warmly welcomed by the pioneers. The blacks were bad in the vicinity, spearing cattle and horses. On 16th June 1875, Mulligan rode on to Junction Creek telegraph station and telegraphed a report to Brisbane of progress made.

The waggon road from the Etheridge to the Palmer passed close to Mt. Surprise, and traffic was heavy. While Mulligan was at Mt. Surprise he met William Hann of Maryvale; the ex-explorer was taking a mob of cattle to the Palmer for sale. Mulligan's party left Mt. Surprise on 3rd July and followed the waggon road as far as the Tate River; by this stream they reached the Lynd and followed it down. Mulligan exultantly declared: "We are now outside all previous travellers, old Leichhardt excepted." When he arrived at the Mitchell on 18th July, however, he camped within a mile of the camp-sites of Leichhardt in 1848 and William Hann in 1872. A thorough search of this area by the writer in October 1949 failed to find any trees marked by these explorers, but there are rumours of the existence of a tree marked by Leichhardt.

From the Mitchell, Mulligan struck north through poor tea-tree country to the Palmer which was reached on 23rd July. Mulligan then decided to travel on northward to the Coleman River, 120 miles away, his conversation with Hann having given him the idea that gold may be found there. But as stores were low and the sextant needed repairing all hands decided to go to Palmerville and refit there before starting out for the Coleman. On 2nd August, over three months after setting out from Cooktown, Mulligan reached Palmerville.

As the purpose of this paper is to focus attention on the significance of Mulligan's discoveries in the hinterland of Cairns, due to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary this year, we need not go into details of the remainder of Mulligan's journey north of the Palmer. Suffice it to say that although he crossed much auriferous country, no gold was discovered, and in other respects the country was already fairly well known; much of Mulligan's route was identical with that of Hann in 1872. Mulligan's expedition arrived back in Cooktown on 23rd September 1875; the explorers had ridden approximately 1,200 miles in a practically fruitless search for gold. Nevertheless, in other respects the expedition had been a success for a huge scope of new country had been traversed and explored.

Payable Gold on the Hodgkinson

Characteristic of the energy displayed by Multi-

gan in his search for another payable goldfield, is the fact that he was only in Cooktown four weeks before setting out on a Sixth Expedition—on 23rd October 1875, accompanied by two mates only, Messrs. Warner and Abelsen. Mulligan's journal of this expedition, and also Warner's diary, have been lost, and it was Mr. J. W. Collinson, a well-known member of the Historical Society of Queensland, Inc., who recently unearthed copies of the "Brisbane Courier" of 27th March 1876 and 14th April 1876 in which were published portions of this journal and diary; I am deeply indebted to Mr. Collinson for the use of this information—information unobtained (or ignored) by Dr. R. L. Jack who wrote up Mulligan's exploits in his work, "Northmost Australia." Thus are we able to piece together a hitherto unknown, but most interesting, chapter in the history of North Queensland. However, in the limited scope of this paper, only a broad outline can be given.

On this Sixth Expedition, Mulligan returned to the Hodgkinson which he had twice before visited. This time, however, he found a payable creek the first day he prospected—19th January. He and his mates continued to work on gold up and down the river and tributary gullies until 2nd March, although hampered by heavy wet season rain and bouts of fever.

In the "Brisbane Courier" of 27th March 1876, J. V. Mulligan writes as follows: "I have kept a diary of our travels from Cooktown, starting on 23rd October and ending on 31st December at Byerstown. During that period (sic. 9th March) Messrs. Warner, Abelsen, and myself, and a few others, have seen the whole of the Hodgkinson River and all its branches, from Mt. Mulligan easterly and southerly . . . On 11th January we crossed the Mitchell . . . Stopped several times to prospect between the Hodgkinson and Mitchell Rivers; got a tolerable show of gold in this vicinity . . . 17th: Crossed the eastern branch of the Hodgkinson, immediately above its junction with the western branch; ran the western branch up to a place due east of a bluff on Mulligan's Range where a large creek comes in from the east having Mt. Megan on our north side . . . 19th: Went out prospecting from this camp which is two miles due east of where I first saw and named the Hodgkinson about two years ago . . . 26th: Hugh

Kennedy and W. Williams, who are out with McLeod's party, being camped one mile distant from us, and, hearing horse-bells, Abelsen went out to see if he knew them; in the twilight, Kennedy discharged his rifle at Abelsen, at about eighty yards, taking him to be a blackfellow about to spear the horses; in another instant Williams would have drawn his trigger also had Abelsen not sung out. I replied to their shot from our camp; then Warner and I went out to see whom we had so near us in that great wilderness, when we found Kennedy, Williams, and Abelsen, in mutual congratulations in meeting in such circumstances without accident. Kennedy is a dead shot, and Abelsen can only thank Providence and the darkness of the evening for his life. Neither of the party expected to meet each other in this quarter at this season.

"27th: Prospecting and getting gold. Kennedy and Williams called at camp on their way back to join their party (McLeod's) about twelve miles distant north of Mt. Megan." (This may be the present day Mt. M'Gann, a prominent landmark below Thornborough). "February 7th: Heavy rain continues . . . Have now found several quartz reefs showing gold in the stone freely. The alluvial is payable in places but very patchy . . . February 19th: The weather has now settled and we shift to a new camp and now prepare to move Palmer-ward, having got a little gold and seen several reefs which present a payable appearance . . . Had a visit from McLeod and Kennedy, they having left their old camp on a tour some thirty miles south and are returning. On 20th we shifted some fifteen miles and camped north of Mt. Megan. 21st: Came up to McLeod and Party's camp in the evening; we stopped, the creeks being up. Getting payable gold in the ravines.

"March 5th: The weather being fine, there having been no rain for ten days, we think the Mitchell is low enough to cross; we propose going to Cooktown. The grass, being trodden down and dry about the camp, caught fire, and being carried by a strong breeze our tent with all our clothes, blankets, rations, in fact everything save a few useful papers and cartridges, was destroyed. McLeod's party supplied us with all necessaries and we arranged to go to Cooktown with them and report the field. Travelled five miles and on

crossing the Hodgkinson were surprised to find such high water marks. After a long day's ride we struck the Mitchell, ran it up and camped . . . 10th: After reporting a new goldfield on the Hodgkinson to Mr. Warden Coward at Byerstown, we left and camped at Byers and Little's near the Police Camp on the Laura . . . 13th: Arrived at Cooktown, after being out from Byerstown over ten weeks in the wet season."

Mulligan reported the new goldfield on the Hodgkinson on behalf of himself and McLeod's party, and he shared the £1,000 reward which he subsequently received, with them.

Another great rush was on. As at the Palmer rush three years before, Mulligan again led the first party of diggers to the new field and marked a dray road from the Palmer up to the Hodgkinson through country that was wild and rough in the extreme, to the site of Thornborough. Scores of the thousands of miners who flocked to this new field were bitterly disappointed when they found the alluvial was poor and patchy, and Mulligan came in for a lot of harsh criticism. It was not long, however, before rich reefs were discovered—the Caledonia, Tyrconnell, General Grant, and others. Over £1,000,000 worth of gold was won on the Hodgkinson, and in 1877 there were reputed to be 20,000 people on the field. Thornborough, now utterly vanished as a town, was then the largest town between Townsville and Cooktown; it supported a fair population until thirty years ago and several buildings were of brick.

The first need of the new goldfield was a port nearer than Cooktown. Bill Smith, John Doyle, and Christy Palmerston all played their part in finding tracks down the Coastal Range to Cairns and Port Douglas. Thus did Mulligan's discovery of gold on the Hodgkinson just seventy-five years ago bring about the establishment of Cairns and Port Douglas—but that is another story. As the Hodgkinson waned in importance, other areas were settled and the great timber, dairying, agricultural, and pastoral industries established by other pioneers who came on the heels of the first gold-seekers. Thus did James Venture Mulligan open the door to development of one of Australia's wealthiest districts.

Mulligan was storekeeping at Thornborough for a

few years, but the old prospecting urge sent him out into the wilds again, prospecting as far afield as Cloncurry. He discovered silver lead at Silver Valley west of Herberton in 1880. He is thus distinguished as being the first discoverer of silver in Queensland. His last prospecting trip was with Hugh McDonald (still alive) in 1903. J. V. Mulligan was married at Brisbane on 5th March 1903 to Fanny Maria Buls nee Rolls. Old-timers in the North still remember him as a humorous, kindly man with altogether a charming personality and a quiet persistence capable of overcoming any obstacle.

On 24th August 1907, at the age of seventy years, James Venture Mulligan passed away at Mt. Molloy, sadly missed by all who knew him. There this great and good man sleeps in the little bush cemetery beneath a simple stone erected to his memory by a few of his loyal friends. May his memory live long in the province he was the first white man to tread and which he helped create!