

ALLAN ARTHUR MORRISON

1911-75

Allan Morrison, the chairman of the John Oxley Library Advisory Committee, died on 30 April 1975. As part of his service to Queensland history he had been associated for over a generation (since 1948 in fact) with the Oxley Committee; as a member and deputy chairman to 1968 and then as chairman from 1968 on, after the retirement of the late Professor F. W. Robinson.

After brilliant academic successes in his early youth — State Scholarship Lilley medallist in 1925, Byrnes medallist in the 1927 Junior Public Examination and a University open scholarship winner two years later — he took out a first class honours B.A. in history in 1933. This was followed by an M.A. in 1935 with a thesis on the history of local government in Queensland.

He taught at Charleville State High School. During this period he acquired a fund of local lore and anecdote that was a delight to hear, but based firmly on a core of historical fact.

In 1945 he was appointed assistant lecturer in the Department of History and Economics at the University of Queensland. Despite the heavy lecturing commitments forced on him by the wartime and post-war staff shortages Allan Morrison pioneered the collection and preservation of local documents and materials.

As a councillor from 1945 to 1948 and then as president (1948-53) he gave the Royal Historical Society of Queensland the post-war impetus needed to overcome the stultification of the war years. At the same time as he was president of the society and encouraging it to catalogue its collections and improve the standard of its *Journal*, Allan Morrison was quietly working to expand the Oxley's research role and bring about greater co-operation between the library and the society.

He obtained the co-operation of the State Librarian of the day (J. L. Stapleton) to persuade the Library Board to undertake the Mitchell Library copying project — the microfilming of materials pertaining to the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement and Queensland held in the Mitchell and the New South Wales Archives.

Allan Morrison and R. B. Joyce were entrusted by the Library Board with the task of making a survey of government and semi-governmental records held in country areas of Queensland. This survey, with the resulting submissions from Allan Morrison and Roger Joyce, largely helped towards the establishment of the Queensland State Archives in 1958 and the records rescue operations which followed.

Progressing in his University career to lecturer in 1948, senior lecturer in 1957 and reader in 1971 Allan Morrison still found time to act as Queensland Working Party chairman (and National Committee member) from the late 1950s onward for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. He was the author of a large number of entries and supervised the biographical research on Queenslanders.

With the passage of place names legislation in 1958 Allan Morrison, representing the University, became a foundation member of both the Place Names Committee and the Place Names Board constituted under the Act.

His pioneering historical writing on Queensland gave Allan Morrison an authoritative position in this area, probably unsurpassed by any other historian up to the present. Yet, despite his great contribution it is to be regretted that he did not live to complete his *magnum opus* — a general history of Queensland from its Moreton Bay origins until recent times. The manuscript was well advanced and it may yet be possible for its publication to be achieved eventually.

Allan Morrison's integrity as an historian is not open to question. If anything, he was a perfectionist who would not publish if the work he had done did not fulfil the criteria he imposed upon himself.

As a member of the Oxley Committee and later as its chairman, he was an esteemed colleague and friend of his fellow committee members.

Extremely approachable, he was happy to advise his friends on problems arising in the fields of his vocations — history and education.

We will miss him and are the poorer for his passing. Vale, Allan Morrison !

J. C. H. GILL