

Paul Turnbull

Looking Up, Looking Back on the Writing of North Queensland History at James Cook University

Abstract: Drawn from first-hand experience, this essay recalls the radical spirit of James Cook University's history department in the 1970s – an institution unafraid to challenge both imperial and Australian nationalist historiography, expose the violence of colonisation, and anchor scholarship in the realities of North Queensland's history. I recall how students were drawn into the fight for Indigenous rights and land, inspired by figures such as Joe McGinness, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, and Koiki (Eddie) Mabo. The department thrived, producing original regional histories with implications for national perceptions and debates on Australia's past, which via its publication program had a wide readership. But political indifference, financial mismanagement, and the rise of market ideology steadily undermined its work. The decline was not abstract; it was something I saw unfold – misguided leadership, squandered resources, and the slow suffocation of the humanities. Yet it's a story that ends with cautious hope: a new generation of scholars are committed to reviving the study of the north's past, working to share their findings with the wider public as well as their academic peers.

I rarely go to conferences these days, but the Australian Historical Association's 2025 annual meeting, 'Looking Up', held at James Cook University and focused on the history of North Queensland, offered more than academic interest. It took me back to the place where, fifty years ago, my path as a historian began.

When I arrived at James Cook in 1974, I had no intention of pursuing honours or postgraduate study in history. My ambition then was to become a clinical psychologist. I had left school with poor results, but after two years of night school and a modest improvement in my university entrance score, I gained entry under the new Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS), introduced by the Whitlam government. James Cook, with its lower entry threshold compared to the University of Queensland and other metropolitan institutions, became my path into higher education.

Before university, I worked as a junior administrative officer in Queensland's prison department. Part of my role involved secondments to the department's secure hospital, which held both those deemed criminally insane and repeat offenders with mental illness. Many of them were sentenced to indefinite detention – held "at Her Majesty's Pleasure" – and some were assigned menial tasks in the hospital office and grounds. I came to know several through daily interactions. Conversations with them, and the psychiatric reports I handled, convinced me that more could be done therapeutically to prepare some of them for independent life.

This belief led me to join the Queensland Mental Health Federation – an organisation of doctors, former patients, and relatives, committed to reforming care in the state's institutions. My involvement came to the notice of Stewart Kerr, Comptroller-General of Prisons, and his deputy, Mike Lewis. Neither objected. Kerr saw it as youthful enthusiasm that would eventually give way to realism. As I recall himself telling me, "There are no votes in prisons or mental hospitals

and never will be". Resources went to vocational training for the general prison population. The inmates of the secure hospital received little.

I began my studies intending to help reform mental health care in the prison system. But by the end of my first year – after courses in psychology, history, and literature – I had started to doubt the behaviourist psychology being taught as orthodoxy in the University's School of Behavioural Sciences. Studying history along with literature left me questioning whether any one theory could account for the richness and complexity of the human condition. And it was the history department that changed my thinking most. I came to see that many of the problems which I knew to have brought men and women into conflict with the law were not simply psychological but had their origins in the accidents and inequalities of history.

History-Making in North Queensland

To write of one's formative years without a trace of nostalgia is almost impossible. Still, others will confirm that the history department at James Cook University in the mid-1970s was distinctive. Students were required to take a year-long foundational course that confronted conventional imperial and more recent nationalist accounts of Australia's past. Manning Clark's 'Short History of Australia' (1969 edition) was a prescribed text – largely because it economically sketched with literary flair the more significant social, political, and cultural developments from the beginnings of colonisation to the 1960s. Alongside it we were required to read and discuss Humphrey McQueen's 'New Britannia' (1970), which, as Jon Piccini observes, was in many ways the flagship of an earlier period of "decolonising Australia's past".¹ With hindsight, it is clear that Henry Reynolds, who convened the course, deliberately paired these books, adding Russel Ward's 'Australian Legend' (1958) as recommended reading, to dispel the idea that history of itinerant pastoral workers was the story of the development of radical egalitarianism, nobly resisting the greed of pastoral and mining interests – a story that, if accepted, would breathe new life into contemporary politics. McQueen would have none of it. As he argued, the bush was no cradle of socialism but a frontier of white capitalism, where so-called mateship cloaked petty bourgeois ambition, imperialism, and racism. The imagined socialism of the bush worker amounted, in truth, to little more than the demand for "ten bob a week" and "no Chinese". And Henry's lectures, always well researched and uncompromising, left no doubt that among Ward's agrarian proletarians were many who had played their part in the dispossession – and killing – of Indigenous people.

The history department's first-year course was also distinctive in its focus on the history of North Queensland, with Geoffrey Bolton's 'A Thousand Miles Away' – the first detailed history of the region by a professionally trained historian – assigned as a third set text.² The inclusion of regional history in the course

1 Jon Piccini: Reading Humphrey McQueen's 'A New Britannia' in Decolonial Times.

2 Geoffrey Bolton's book and its influence on the Dalton era of North Queensland scholars is also discussed by Lyndon Megarrity: Geoffrey Bolton's 'A Thousand Miles Away'.

reflected the intention of Brian Dalton, the university's foundation professor of history, to offer students – most of whom, at the time, were born and raised in the north – the opportunity to study the histories of their own and other communities across the vast northern part of the state, regardless of their subsequent academic or vocational paths. Brian also recognised that the geographic distance from southern metropolitan centres shaped a local focus in both undergraduate and postgraduate research. However, he saw this not as a limitation, but as an opportunity to generate new and valuable insights into how national issues unfolded in specific local contexts. He actively sought to attract, and generously supported, those of us who were inspired to pursue honours and postgraduate work in history, encouraging exploration of new avenues of inquiry into North Queensland's rich – and in many respects, remarkable – past.

History as Witness: Encounters with the Fight for Indigenous Rights

What was also distinctive and memorable about the department's first-year history course was that, during the second half of the program, lectures included talks by men and women actively involved in the struggle for Indigenous self-determination and land rights. One of these speakers was Joe McGinness (1914-2003), a Kungarakman man and long-time trade unionist. In 1974, he was serving as the regional manager for Aboriginal Hostels – a vitally important service that supported Aboriginal and Islander people travelling to Cairns and Townsville for work, medical treatment, or education. Joe had become politically active in Darwin during the Great Depression of the 1930s. He joined others – most of them, like himself, of mixed ancestry – in protesting against slave-like working conditions. Under the prevailing racial attitudes, they suffered the indignity of being classified as “half-castes”. Among the many actions Joe and his comrades took to improve their circumstances was to camp on the veranda of the Northern Territory Administrator's office in Darwin, where they publicly agitated for citizenship. Remarkably, in 1936, Joe and others were instrumental in securing changes to the Territory's Aboriginals Ordinance, allowing Indigenous people with white or Asian ancestry to apply for exemption from its provisions.

Joe later worked on the wharves in Cairns, where he became active in local labour politics through his involvement with the Waterside Workers' Federation. With the support of the Cairns Trades and Labour Council, he and others founded the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League. Their chief concern was to end the near-slave-labour conditions under which Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in Northern Australia's pastoral and pearling industries were still employed – conditions in which they were paid only a fraction of the wages earned by non-Indigenous workers.

Other guests invited by Henry Reynolds included the poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Koiki (Eddie) Mabo. Oodgeroo (Aunty Kath Walker as we then knew her) spoke about her educational work on North Stradbroke Island, or Minjerriba, as it is called by the Noonuccal people. With the support of the Queensland Teachers Union and progressive staff within the state's Department

of Education, who contributed their time voluntarily, she had established a centre dedicated to teaching both Indigenous and non-Indigenous schoolchildren about Noonuccal culture.

Koiki knew Auntie Kath well. During the 1960s, they worked together for the advancement of Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland. In doing so, they came under the scrutiny of ASIO, with informants falsely claiming they were members of the Communist Party.³ Both believed deeply in the liberating power of education. At a time when most white residents of Northern Queensland knew little or nothing about Torres Strait Islander history, Koiki was eager to share his extensive knowledge of the peoples of the Torres Strait. What stood out in his contributions to both first- and second-year history courses was not only his reliance on knowledge passed down through his extended family, but also his critical engagement with European historical and anthropological studies of Mer and other Strait communities.

Noel Loos, who lectured in history at Townsville's College of Advanced Education during the mid-1970s, was a close friend of Koiki and would later collaborate with him on his biography. Loos recalled that after Koiki began working at the university, he often spent time in the library "to discover what had been written about his people [...] and in the process [he] not only realised that white academics had a lot to learn and often made mistakes, but expanded his own knowledge as he grafted on new insights to his old understanding".⁴ Koiki especially enjoyed introducing students to Islander culture, using both artefacts from his personal collection and items he arranged to borrow from the university's small holdings of Indigenous material culture.

I have written elsewhere about how, in the wake of the 1967 referendum's success, Koiki and Bonita turned their attention to improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Islander children.⁵ They became actively involved in Queensland's first preschool for Aboriginal and Islander children, established in Townsville in early 1967 by social worker – and future federal senator – Margaret Reynolds, the activist Roberta Sykes, and members of the One People of Australia League (OPAL). After fifty years, the school, now known as Kindergarten Headstart, continues to enrich the lives of Aboriginal and Islander children.⁶

The Whitlam government's support for Indigenous education inspired Koiki, Bonita, and other community elders to establish a community-run primary school for Aboriginal and Islander students in Townsville. The school opened in 1973, supported initially by modest funding from the Townsville Diocese of the Catholic Church, the Townsville Trades and Labour Council, and the James Cook

3 On ASIO's surveillance of Koiki and Auntie Kath, see Australian Communist Party Policy and its attitude towards Australian aborigines, 1961-1967, A452/1961/3211, Australian National Archives, online via <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>. While there have been various claims that over the years that both were members of the CPA, they were not. I can confirm this having been a member of the North Queensland branch of the party during 1974/75.

4 Noel Loos, Koiki Mabo: Edward Koiki Mabo, p. 11.

5 See Paul Turnbull: Remembering Koiki and Bonita Mabo, *Pioneers of Indigenous Education*.

6 See Headstart Kindergarten Lady Gowrie online, <https://gowrieqld.com.au/location/headstart-kindergarten-pre-school-inc>.

University branch of the Australian Union of Students – whose executive members, at that time, were almost entirely students from the history department.

In asking us to join them in the struggle for a better future, Joe, Koiki, and Aunty Kath showed us – more powerfully than any academic text could – the extent and brutality of the discrimination faced by Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland, and the fundamental importance of reclaiming their sovereign ancestral lands. In the mid-1970s, many still lived on government or mission reserves, most of which had been established in the early decades of the 20th century, following the enactment of so-called ‘protective’ legislation in 1897. That Act laid the foundation for an apartheid-like system under which people were forcibly removed – either from their ancestral country or from fringe camps on the outskirts of rural and remote townships.

By the mid-1970s, many of the harshest provisions of the 1897 Act had been repealed or modified by later legislation. Yet residents of reserves and missions had gained only limited freedom and political agency. The Queensland government still held intrusive and unjust powers over their lives. People were required to seek official permission to have family members stay with them. If relatives visited without such approval, they could be fined up to two hundred dollars. Young people over the age of seventeen could be barred from living with their parents, in order to push them into low-paid manual labour – typically in the cattle industry or on local farms. If the Director of Aboriginal Affairs judged that a person was incapable of managing their property, the Department could assume control over it – without any obligation to consult the individual or offer a right of appeal. The Director even had the authority to decide who would inherit a deceased person’s estate.⁷

In addition to supporting the Black Community School and becoming involved in Abschol – an initiative of the National Union of Australian University Students aimed at assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in secondary education – history students at James Cook University played an active role in campaigning for Indigenous land rights in the Townsville community (Fig. 1). Indeed, while Koiki Mabo’s long struggle to reclaim his family’s land on the island of Mer began in conversations with Henry Reynolds, it gained real momentum – and crucial financial backing – from the James Cook student union, whose executive was, at the time, made up largely of history students.

Researching the North’s Past: Student Histories and a Publishing Vision

The focus on the history of North Queensland in the department’s first-year introductory course included giving students the opportunity to submit an essay based on original research on an aspect of the region’s history. Although I wasn’t from the area, I followed the suggestion of one of my tutors, Mike Doumben, and looked into a series of murders involving Italian Australian farmers and cane

7 See Kathy Franklin: *A Brief History of Government Administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland*; also Rosalind Kidd: *The Way We Civilise Aboriginal Affairs – the Untold Story*.



Fig. 1: Calling for land rights in 1970s Queensland. Oodgeroo Noonuccal (centre), Paul Sekfy, Welfare Officer, James Cook University Student Union Executive and Australian Union of Students Delegate (left), the author (with megaphone, right).

cutters that took place in the Ingham and Innisfail regions in the late 1920s and early 1930s. According to local folklore, the killings were the work of the Black Hand, or 'La Mano Nera' – a secret society with roots in 18th-century Naples.⁸ I spent the mid-year break in Brisbane, visiting the Queensland State Library and Archives almost daily, reviewing newspaper reports and examining any relevant files I could locate. The essay I submitted argued that the murders were, in all likelihood, carried out by two violent individuals posing as members of the society. But what stood out more clearly was the wealth of evidence – within popular media and official records – revealing the racial abuse and discrimination endured by Italian Australian settlers in North Queensland during these years.⁹

I went on to specialise in 18th-century European intellectual history, but most of my contemporaries within the history honours stream between 1975 and 1977 were to write theses which were the first in-depth studies of various aspects of North Queensland history. Among them was Christine Doran, who explored separatism in Townsville during the late 19th-century. After graduating, Christine went on to gain a doctorate in 1981 on the North Queensland separatism, which as Frank Bongiorno observes, "unsettled the spatial and temporal orthodoxies in Australian history".¹⁰ Another was Peter Bell who produced a vivid, meticulously researched account of the 1921 Mount Mulligan coal mine disaster, and afterwards pursued doctoral studies resulting in the first in-depth study of

8 Among subsequent dubious, sensationalist accounts of the killings, see Queensland State Archives: *Stories from the Archives*.

9 See Vanda Moraes-Gorecki: 'Black Italians' in the Sugar Fields of North Queensland, pp. 306-319.

10 Frank Bongiorno: *A View from the North*.

North Queensland vernacular architecture.¹¹ And there was Noreen Kirkman, whose honours thesis explored the Palmer River Goldfield between 1873-1883. Noreen's subsequent publications include the first social history of the north-western city of Mount Isa.¹²

The late 1970s and 1980s saw the completion of an astonishing number of honours and postgraduate theses, covering a wide range of topics: pastoral settlement and Aboriginal-settler relations in North Queensland, European migrant communities, the presence of republicanism, civic and working-class politics, the religious life of northern towns, legal history, the impact of the Boer War and both world wars, the South Sea Islander labour trade, and the history of health and disease in the region. Brian Dalton was immensely proud of the quality of this original research. He often remarked, with evident pleasure, that a James Cook honours thesis would qualify as a master's degree at any other Australian university.

Brian was equally determined that this body of research should not sit, seldom read, on library shelves. He wanted it made publicly available as modestly priced books. This was not easy. No commercial publisher could be persuaded that North Queensland history would sell well enough to make a profit. Nor were they willing to act as distributors. Brian responded by launching a departmental publishing program under his own editorship. With help from local newspapers, schoolteachers, and various heritage and historical societies, the initiative became a success. By the time Brian retired in 1989, the department had published fifteen honours theses and eleven other books written by postgraduate students and staff. Among them was the first edition of Henry Reynolds's *The Other Side of the Frontier*, published in 1981. It now seems remarkable that it was rejected by both trade and scholarly presses as commercially unviable. As Brian later observed, the program had made North Queensland "the most richly documented of any non-metropolitan region in Australia".¹³

Brian continued as general editor of the department's publication program during his retirement, working from an office in the department where he spent much of his time preparing what he hoped would become a comprehensive, multi-volume guide to sources for North Queensland history. It was an ambitious project, made possible by funding from the Australian Research Council, which allowed him to employ two honours graduates from the department, Anne Allingham and Carolyn Edmonson, to search for manuscripts and rare publications in archives, libraries, and private collections across North Queensland and in southern metropolitan centres. They located just under fifteen thousand sources.

Brian did not complete the project. At the time of his sudden death in 1996, he had prepared around one hundred pages in camera-ready copy. However, there is now a possibility that this ambitious undertaking may yet be completed as a web-based resource (more on this will be said later).

11 See Peter Bell: *Timber and Iron*.

12 See Noreen Kirkman: *Mount Isa*.

13 Brian Dalton in his introduction to Todd Barr: *No Swank Here*, p. vi.

Years of Waste and Withering

The publication program came to an end soon after Brian's death. One of its final titles was the memoirs of Joseph Arratta, who had worked for many years as a doctor in central-western Queensland.¹⁴ Its closure was, as Edward Gibbon might have put it, the result of "an unhappy concatenation of circumstances". Chief among these was the steady decline in public funding to universities, which had contracted relative to the size of the economy since the Dawkins Reforms of 1987-1992. Although total student numbers at James Cook University had nearly doubled by the early 1990s, its Commonwealth operating grant failed to keep pace with enrolment growth.

At the same time, the history department's student load fell. The reintroduction of university fees, along with an income-contingent loan scheme, meant that students who might once have chosen to major in history or politics were now opting for more vocational courses. By 1996, enrolments across the university were well below projections, leading to the first of several rounds of voluntary redundancies.

If that were not enough, the situation worsened in 1996 with the election of a federal Coalition government under John Howard, which imposed further cuts to university funding. Senior members of government gave tacit support to conservative media commentators who claimed that history departments had become safe havens for Marxist ideologues, intent on portraying Australia's national past as nothing more than a shameful story of capitalist greed, Indigenous dispossession, and environmental ruin.

By the mid-1990s, what was now the Department of History and Politics had little discretionary funding. The cost of producing books had become increasingly difficult to meet.

Even so, the publication program might have survived had it not been for a serious intra-university and departmental problems that ultimately proved fatal. I witnessed these developments first-hand during my time as lecturer in European intellectual history from 1984 to 1998. Over those years, I served on the executive of the university's branch of the National Tertiary Education Union, participated in numerous university committees, and held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1997-98.

Ray Golding was appointed as the university's second Vice-Chancellor in 1986. The university's Council were especially impressed by his reforms to patterns of expenditure as a pro-vice-chancellor at the University of New South Wales. However, that Golding had ambitions for James Cook University that required funding well in excess of its income from commonwealth and state government sources.

As Peter Bell observed in his fortieth anniversary history of James Cook, the establishment of a second campus in Cairns had been periodically considered by the university's council and executive since the mid-1970s.¹⁵ By the mid-1980s, the accelerating pace of economic development and population growth in North

14 See Brian Dalton, Anne Smith (eds.): *Doctor on the Landsborough*.

15 See Peter Bell: *Our Place in the Sun*, p. 54.

Queensland second city led prominent local businessmen to agitate for the creation of a Cairns tertiary institution. In hindsight, the Cairns campus was a sensible initiative, but it was costly and disruptive, especially for history and politics, which along with other departments was required to fund teaching in Cairns from its existing budget allocation.¹⁶ By the early 1990s there was the additional financial strain on humanities disciplines of Golding's creating a music academy and a department of creative arts, both requiring the funding of new staff and specialist resources to teach small numbers of students.

In my opinion, what hopes there were for restoring history at James Cook to its standing under the visionary leadership of Brian Dalton were dashed during Ray Golding's second term as Vice-Chancellor. Some of his actions were beyond belief. As Peter Bell writes in his brief history of James Cook:

One of the most controversial exercises in supporting the arts came when Ray Golding invited the renowned National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine to Australia in 1995 to celebrate the University's 25th anniversary. They gave a number of performances in the major cities, including three concerts in Townsville. Kuchar, director of the Townsville Chamber Festival, was also conductor of the orchestra. Some 80 strong, with all the instruments of a classical orchestra, the party were transported around the country in a chartered Boeing 737. Their visit was a tremendous success, and wonderful publicity for James Cook University, but at what cost? Officially the University's contribution was put at \$60 000, but it has been whispered that the real bill was more than four times that.¹⁷

My belief then and now is that the full cost to the university was never revealed and could have been as much as half a million dollars, at a time when the university "reported a deficit of \$6 million, and funding for expanding the Cairns Campus was in doubt".¹⁸ Indeed, as Bell concedes in his anniversary history of James Cook, "There were rumours that [the deficit] was really \$8 million".¹⁹

The decline of history at James Cook accelerated after the appointment of Kett Kennedy as Brian Dalton's successor. A protégé of Brian's, Kett was a gifted historian of North Queensland's mining industry, admired for the depth of his research and flair for narrative. Yet by the later 1990s, Kett's loyalty to Golding was unfathomably unwavering and, in my opinion, severely damaged the fortunes of the department, as discontent across the university grew with Golding's increasingly centralised control and opaque financial practices. There were also other aspects of Kett's time as head of department several years prior to his resignation, in early 1997, which brought the department adverse publicity and which, in my opinion, further damaged its reputation in the eyes of the university's executive.²⁰

Kett's departure came in the wake of Ray Golding's resignation, which was ostensibly on the grounds of ill-health. Officially, the university was said to be in

16 See *ibid.*, p. 54.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

19 *Ibid.*

20 The validity or otherwise of my opinion may be judged by consulting editions of the Townsville Bulletin through 1997-9. Files relating to court proceedings are closed until 2098-9: Queensland State Archives, items ITM2473148; ITM2493161; ITM2494299. There is also relevant documentation from the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts during my deanship in the James Cook University archives.

debt to the sum of twenty million dollars on Golding's departure.²¹ Near a year of chaos followed, during which time I was Dean of the Faculty of Arts. In my discussions with the university executive, the actual size of the university's debt was said to be double the official figure. The university's faculties were restructured, in several instances without, in my view, any sound intellectual or administrative rationale, while the federal Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to reduce the university's financial distress if, among other belt-tightening measures, it drastically over-enrolled students, especially in humanities undergraduate subjects, despite this necessitating an extreme reduction in entry standards the level of students' prior educational attainments. In late 1997, a new Vice-Chancellor, Bernard Moulden, was appointed. Moulden, a psychologist who had been Executive Dean of the University of Western Australia's Faculty of Science, was firmly of the view that the teaching of history at James Cook would survive to the degree it could secure government funding through student enrolments. As Peter Bell observes,

Some disciplines continued to wither from lack of resources, especially the traditional humanities like History and English. Moulden was unrepentant, saying that the disciplines which suffered were the ones which failed to justify their existence in a changing world, believing they should exist by right and tradition.²²

The Promise of Renewal

History teaching and research have endured, despite the prevailing climate of neoliberalism, which continues to push the narrow belief that higher education is merely a private investment with little value to the wider society. At James Cook University, senior management has for the most part shown little interest in supporting knowledge of the north's rich and remarkable history. And by the early 2000s the Department of History and Politics had been absorbed within a School of Humanities. Yet a small group of younger historians within what is now a College of Arts, Society and Education headed by Koen Stapelbroek, an internationally respected scholar in the history of political thought, trade, and political economy. Koen and his colleagues are committed to reviving the study of North Queensland and sharing their findings with people beyond the university. But their commitment is evident in successfully bringing the Australian Historical Association to James Cook University for a program notable for papers based on new research on topics including northern Indigenous-settler relations, migration and cross-cultural interactions, South Sea Islander History, the impact of the white Australia policy, North Queensland's environmental and economic history, healthcare challenges, and the history of the arts and literature in the region. It is also reflected in Koen's collaboration with colleagues and Bronwyn McBurnie, manager of the university's special collections, to gradually create free digital editions of the books originally published under Brian Dalton's

21 See Peter Bell: *Our Place in the Sun*, p. 61.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

editorship, along with selected undergraduate and postgraduate theses on North Queensland history.²³ And there is also a real chance that Brian's ambition to produce an exhaustive guide to sources on the region's history may yet be realised in digital form.²⁴ All this signals a hopeful future in which the rich history of North Queensland is not only made more accessible but inspires renewed interest and exploration of the region's history in both scholarly and public spheres.

References

- Barr, Todd: No Swank Here? The Development of the Whitsundays as a Tourist Destination in the Early 1970s. Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University 1990.
- Bell, Peter: The Mount Mulligan Disaster. Townsville: History Department, James Cook University of North Queensland 1978.
- : Timber and Iron. Houses in North Queensland Mining Settlements, 1861-1920 Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1984.
- : Our Place in the Sun. A Brief History of James Cook University, Townsville: James Cook University, 2010.
- Bongiorno, Frank: A View from the North. JCU Library News, <https://jcu-librarynews.blogspot.com/2025/06/a-view-from-north.html> (accessed 4 August 2024).
- Dalton, Brian, Smith Anne (eds.): Doctor on the Landsborough: The Memoirs of Joseph Arratta. Townsville: Department of History and Politics. 1997.
- Franklin, Kathy: A Brief History of Government Administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland, https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/429937/brief-history-aboriginal-islanders-qld.pdf (accessed 8 August 2025).
- Headstart Kindergarten Lady Gowrie: Website, <https://gowrieqld.com.au/location/headstart-kindergarten-pre-school-inc> (accessed 8 August 2025).
- JCU Library News: Studies in North Queensland History. Showcase Released by JCU Library, <https://jculibrarynews.blogspot.com/2025/05/studies-in-north-queensland-history.html> (accessed 8 August 2025).
- Kidd Rosalind: The Way We Civilise Aboriginal Affairs – the Untold Story. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.
- Kirkman, Noreen: Mount Isa. Oasis of the Outback, Townsville. Department of History and Politics, James Cook University 1998.
- Loos, Noel and Mabo, Koiki: Edward Koiki Mabo. His Life and Struggle for Land Rights. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press 2013.

23 See JCU Library News: Studies in North Queensland History.

24 Over a number of years, I have transcribed the 15000 thousand index cards detailing sources for North Queensland History forming the basis of the guide Brian Dalton envisaged. A prototype freely accessible version of the guide can be consulted at <https://www.paulturnbull.org/project/nqhhistory>. The hope is that this digital edition of the guide will be completed and further supplemented by a range of additional visual and audio sources held within special collections at James Cook University. The challenge, however, will be securing the resources to realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance understanding and appreciation of the history North Queensland.

- Megarrity, Lyndon: Geoffrey Bolton's *A Thousand Miles Away: Origins, Influence and Impact*, *History Australia*, 12, 2015, 3, pp. 7-29.
- Moraes-Gorecki, Vanda: 'Black Italians' in the Sugar Fields of North Queensland. A Reflection on Labour Inclusion and Cultural Exclusion in Tropical Australia. In: *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 3, 1994, 5, pp. 306-319.
- Piccini, Jon: Reading Humphrey McQueen's *A New Britannia* in Decolonial Times. In: *Overland*, 244, 2021, online version: <https://overland.org.au/previous-issues/issue-244/feature-reading-humphreymcqueens-a-new-britannia-in-decolonial-times/> (accessed 8 August 2025).
- Queensland State Archives: Stories from the Archives: The Black Hand Mafia, <https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2023/07/04/the-blackhand-mafia/> (accessed 5 August 2025).
- Turnbull, Paul: Remembering Koiki and Bonita Mabo, Pioneers of Indigenous Education. In: Geoffrey Rodoreda, Eva Bischoff (eds.): *Mabo's Cultural Legacy: History, Literature, Film and Cultural Practice in Contemporary Australia*, pp. 33-44.