

LAVER FAMILY HISTORY

The Mudgeeraba branch of the Laver family began on 22 June 1856 when the sailing ship "Persia" arrived at Moreton Bay, Brisbane after setting out from Plymouth, England more than 3 months before.

Aboard "Persia" was William Laver, who was 22 years of age, together with his wife Annie Elizabeth Robb (23) and their baby, William Henry, who had been born only 9 months before.

William was from Ridgewell, a small village in the north of Essex in England, and Annie Elizabeth Robb was from Aberdeen in Scotland.

After arrival in Brisbane, William found employment as a bullock driver, transporting supplies and produce from where he worked at Caboolture Station in the Caboolture area and Cressbrook Station to Ipswich and back, through the Brisbane Valley.

In 1872 William and his family drove cattle to a selection of 1200 acres at Tallebudgera and Currumbin which had been taken up by Mr Henry Jordan. William managed the property and it was during this time that he recognised the beauty and the potential of the Mudgeeraba area.

In those days, land could be taken up by what the Government called selection and in 1877, William selected an area of about 600 hectares at Mudgeeraba. Today, Somerset College is built on a portion of that property initially selected by William.

William then purchased land on the Springbrook Road and built a hotel there. The "Mudgeeraba Hotel" opened for business in 1883. William donated land for the Presbyterian Church, now the Uniting Church, which served as the State School for 20 years.

William died in 1892 aged 58 years.

His son William Henry, the baby from the ship, was now 23 and had selected some land at Neranwood where he cut timber and eventually established a large dairy farm. In December 1885, William Henry married Margaret Davies at Nerang.

On his father's death, William Henry had relocated and built another hotel, the "Hampshire Terrace" at Mudgeeraba. Opposite the Hampshire Terrace, he built offices for the Nerang Divisional Board, which became the meeting place for the Nerang Shire Council for many years.

Several businesses sprang up in close proximity to the hotel including a sawmill, a general store, the Post Office, blacksmith and a Community Hall. This was the beginning of Mudgeeraba Township.

In 1914 William Henry built a new hotel, the "Exchange" opposite the new railway station, and on the site of the present Wallaby Hotel.

William Henry went on to become a substantial landowner in the district. He was a member of the Nerang Divisional Board, and also served for many years as a Director of NORCO. He served on many community committees, making a significant contribution to the development of the Mudgeeraba area. He was a well-respected community member. He donated land for a cemetery in Mudgeeraba, and was the first person buried there in 1936.

William Henry's grandson, William Maurice Laver, was a councillor of the Albert Shire for 14 years and Chairman (Mayor) of the Council for 12 years prior to the amalgamation with the Gold Coast City Council in 1995. He currently lives in retirement at Tallai.