

OUR HISTORY - BAGTOWN

Where was it and why was it called Bagtown.

Bagtown was an area of land on the east side of Poulsen Road just north of Newspaper Hill. Small blocks of land in this area were made available for returned soldiers after the First World War.

The blocks were long, narrow and hilly, but were considered suitable for growing bananas.

The soldiers that came to farm bananas had little money, so constructed their huts from what was available. Timber was used to build the frame work, many floors were pounded earth, and no doubt the roofs were of shingles, bark or woven blady grass.

The walls were made from old hessian bags which were then whitewashed with lime to make a reasonably weather proof house for their families. Hence the name, Bagtown.

Dick and Dan Carter came into the district in about 1920, and soon built a sawmill. It was down in the low part of Old Mill Road. This was for their own timber requirements to build their own homes and dairy, but they also saw the need for timber for the packing cases required for the bananas that were being grown on the farms.

In later years Dud Jackson of Bagtown was the local carrier who took the bananas and cream into Cooroy along a narrow and rough dirt road. His father must have been one of the original farmers of Bagtown.

Unfortunately 'Bunchy Top', a devastating disease of bananas, began to cause the complete destruction of the Banana industry in the mid to late 1920's. This no doubt brought these small farmers to their knees.

On the Ridgewood Hall stage there is a wall hanging that depicts the local history, and on it you will see 'Bagtown' along with the 'Cobb and Co Coach'.

Poulsen Road/Newspaper Hill Rd was the original Brisbane to Gympie road until a new road, the Kenilworth Skyring Creek Road was built by the Government, starting in 1938.

The children of the road builders attended the Carters Ridge School. Among those children was Esmay Elsie Thiess. Her father, Leslie Charles Thiess, was the contractor for building the road and his employees' children boosted the school attendance. Bagtown was still listed on the school register as the address for some children in 1942.

Les Thiess and his brothers went on to become Thiess Contractors, the major construction firm that we know today, but the name Bagtown was absorbed into Carters Ridge, named in memory of the efforts of the original Carter family.