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Woolloongabba Exemplars Commune

Introduction

On the western shore of Lake Weyba and amidst the rural residential area of Doonan is the site of Woolloongabba Exemplars commune. In 1894, about 200 people, led by a deeply religious land surveyor, George Chale Watson, established this *utopia* where everything would be owned collectively, and each would work for the good of all.¹

Background to Utopian Communalism in Queensland

During the latter nineteenth century there were worldwide concerns about the social and moral impact of capitalism, urbanisation and industrialisation, with a wide range of radical social reform schemes suggested, Socialism being the best known. Utopian literature from international as well as local writers was widely read and discussed in Queensland.² The plethora of utopian social, economic and moral improvement schemes, widely publicised in newspapers and discussed at large meetings, led many people to believe they could create an era of justice, equality and universal prosperity.³ A significant minority of Queenslanders, through idealism or desperation, sought to realise these ideals.

Background to Queensland Co-operative Communities

In the early 1890s, Queensland faced a severe financial crisis with collapsing banks, mass unemployment and civil unrest.⁴ Communal land settlements, often established by religious sects, were well known in USA, UK and Australia, so perhaps secular communes could work in Queensland? Chief Secretary Samuel Griffith, having read

about American communes, and written about Socialism in William Lane's *Boomerang*, visited Alice River Commune, near Barcaldine, in February 1892 and was impressed.⁵ Accordingly, in April 1892, the Queensland Government appointed a Select Committee, to be chaired by James Drake, MLA for Enoggera, to investigate communal land settlement.⁶

At its hearings, American-born 'Professor' Edward Shelton, the Queensland Government's Instructor in Agriculture, whom Chief Secretary Griffith had sent to also inspect Alice River Commune, described the utopian Greeley Colony, in USA, where he had been a member.⁷ Shelton advised that communal living only works with members 'of like tastes, principles, ... there must be some binding force amongst them'.⁸ Griffith already understood that a commune could only succeed when members had 'mutual confidence and trust'.⁹ Scholars today refer to this 'shared vision', as a necessary precondition for communal success.¹⁰

The most enthusiastic witness was George Chale Watson, a 59-year-old Queensland surveyor who had read extensively about overseas communes, and passionately believed that communal living 'no longer remains an experimental theory, but has been proved in parts of the world an established success'. Watson anticipated that within communes women could engage in a wide range of cultural, economic and social activities, having been released 'from servile drudgery by the establishment of a co-operative kitchen' and a 'public dining room'. Watson believed that rural communes, through creating their own 'system of paper currency ... would morally create a new earth'. People would be

morally improved through providing ‘recreation, instruction and harmony’, and banning alcohol.¹¹

Perhaps surprisingly, the Select Committee accepted Shelton’s and Watson’s assertions and recommended Government legislation be enacted to promote rural communes.

Watson had a role in developing the *Co-operative Land Settlement Act* 1893, through advising his senior colleague, Secretary for Lands, Andrew Barlow, who drafted the Bill.¹² William Allan, MLA, argued this Bill was ‘one of the most important that had ever come before Parliament’, while James Chataway, MLA, supported the Bill because it would draw people ‘gradually from ... individualistic ideas into the fold of true socialism, ... the beauties of communism’.¹³ Not surprisingly, conservative MLAs and MLCs derided it as only ‘a very pretty experiment’ with ‘utopian visions of prosperity’ based on ‘a fad’, but it easily passed through both houses.¹⁴ Significantly, this legislation was passed soon after William Lane had led hundreds of Queenslanders to Paraguay to establish the utopian New Australia. During parliamentary debate, both Charles Powers, MLA, and William Browne, MLA, asserted that had this bill been brought in earlier, New Australia would never have happened because Lane would have been able to create this rural commune in Queensland.¹⁵

The *Co-operative Land Settlement Act* 1893 allowed groups of 30 or more men to apply for 65 hectares of land per member, under a lease, in the name of their commune.

Members must be native-born or naturalised British subjects, resident in Queensland for at least a year, but despite Watson having argued for gender equality in the 1892 Enquiry,

and several MLAs trying to include that in this bill, women were banned from membership. Government support up to £20 per member provided food, tools and stock. On 13 October 1893 an office opened in Brisbane to deal with the rush of would-be communards.¹⁶ Fourteen groups applied but only twelve communes, with a combined population of almost 2000 people, were established.¹⁷ The largest, with 237 people, was Woolloongabba Exemplars, led by George Chale Watson.

George Chale Watson

Watson was born in Tasmania in 1833 and educated at Launceston Grammar School. He was a strict teetotaller and an enthusiastic Congregationalist who, during free time, studied homoeopathy and became interested in theosophy and a range of radical ideas such as utopian socialism and communalism.¹⁸ In 1862, Watson moved to Brisbane where he became a licensed surveyor in 1867. In 1865, he married Sophie Scott, and they had nine children of whom seven survived into adulthood.¹⁹ Watson distinguished himself with what others saw as hare-brained proposals, perhaps his most outlandish being a canal from Spencer's Gulf, near Adelaide, to the Gulf of Carpentaria, a distance of 1500–2000 kms.²⁰

Watson worked as a surveyor in western Queensland, under trying conditions, and was eventually promoted to Commissioner of Crown Lands and Surveying Commissioner. In 1877, he became Queensland representative on an inter-colonial surveying party to establish the Queensland/New South Wales border, working with John Cameron. **The 36 year-old Cameron condescendingly described 46 year-old Watson as 'a good old sort —**

one of the old school, a little behind the times for this kind of work', and 'only fit for praying'.²¹

Transferring to Brisbane in 1890, Watson immersed himself in progressive, humanitarian groups such as the *Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, the *Workers' Political Organisation*, and the *Queensland Vegetarian Society*.²² Watson explored communal living, trying to establish Yeerongpilly Village Settlement, near Brisbane in 1891-2.²³ In September 1893, because of the severe economic depression, Watson was made redundant from his £450 per annum public servant position, and received £410 severance pay.²⁴ He then turned his passion to Christian Socialism and communal living.

Woolloongabba Exemplars: Establishment and Membership

On 28 September 1893, Watson convened a meeting of the Woolloongabba Workers' Political Organisation at Five-Ways Hall, Woolloongabba, and announced his plans for a commune in which all houses would face a central square having a co-operative store, hall, school and other public buildings. Watson's commune would be based on seven utopian principles:

1. 'Benefiting humanity by the promotion of temperance and the mental and moral improvement of the masses the promoters ... will establish an industrial co-operative land commune under conditions wherein any man or woman willing to work will be able to utilise their labour as capital.'

2: 'Believing that ... competition is wrong, and that the worker is honestly entitled to all he produces, the members of this commune covenant and agree to work for, stand by, and do unto each other as they would that others should do to them.'

3. 'All lands, tools, stock, and appliances, as well as improvements, will be held as common property in trust, so that no man by private ownership can deny to another the use of land or the opportunity to earn a living.'

4. 'The association will produce as far as possible all its own requirements, building homes for every member, producing their own vegetables, grain, fruit, as well as all necessary food, tanning their own leather, growing their own wool, cotton, and hemp, and concurrently progressing in manufactures and a comprehensive division of labour.'

5. 'A co-operative store, trade and labour bank, as well as Savings Bank, to ... promote thrift, financial administration, and adequate distribution of produce, uniform remuneration secured to all.'

6. 'The co-operative store to be the sole medium of exchange between members.'

7. 'Mutual assistance between members, and interchange of service to be ratified by contract through the Committee of Industry.'²⁵

As well, members must study 'all questions relating to the structure of human society, ... recognise the full political equality of the sexes, and ... secure the highest standard of social purity and morality'.²⁶

By the end of this crucial meeting, 42 families, possessing skills such as carpentry, farming, journalism, gardening, blacksmithing and shoe-making, committed to join Watson's proposed commune. Nine were well-known to Watson and could be counted

on, while others were unknown but caught up in his utopian fervour.²⁷ As well, severe flooding in 1893, combined with economic depression, meant these desperate people would try anything.

The would-be communards met regularly to discuss where to realise their dreams.

Watson had endured western Queensland droughts and, as an avid sailor, was determined to be on water near the coast. By early December 1893, Watson's group, now calling themselves Woolloongabba Exemplars, inspected land in the Tewantin/Noosa area.²⁸

Land available along the western shore of Lake Weyba was an obvious choice provided they could include more productive areas running southwest to the Maroochy River—and this Watson's connections within Lands Department ensured. Watson and others inspected this land three times and agreed it met their needs, members being re-assured because a government surveyor of Watson's stature approved of the land.²⁹

Taking all things into consideration, the fish in Lake Weyba and the industries which would develop there-from, as well as the 3000 acres in the Maroochy waterfall, were certainties which it was decided were far more preferable to ... the hazard of the West, with the rigour of droughts, eye blight, and other experiences.³⁰

On 31 January 1894, Queensland's Governor, Sir Henry Norman, proclaimed the Woolloongabba Exemplars commune, of 237 souls comprising 59 men, plus 178 women and children, and allocated 9700 acres (about 4000 hectares) in the parishes of Weyba and Maroochy.³¹ The core of this commune was the extended Watson family, including George and his wife, Sophie, their sons Henry, George and Edward, and daughters Mary, Jane, Olive and Elizabeth plus her husband, John Holzberger.³² As well, the group

included Watson's friends, Edwin and Samuel Hodges, plus Samuel's son, William, and their large families, all fervent Congregationalists.

The first contingent left Brisbane on 3 February 1894 by train to Cooroy, then by foot and drays to Tewantin on the Noosa River. There, they rented Regatta Hall as temporary accommodation, and members received 'assistance from each and every resident they have met'.³³ A local reporter described them as a, 'very respectable class of men' supplied with 'every requisite', and believed that 'under the energetic superintendence of ... Mr Watson, things will soon assume a flourishing aspect'. The group included not only professional men such as Watson and Thomas Price, former MLA for Wide Bay, but also 'first-class agriculturalists' and 'practical fishermen ... well supplied with boats and nets'. The reporter believed that given their trades, this commune should prosper. From Tewantin, they travelled by boat to Lake Weyba, arriving 6 February.³⁴

Woolloongabba Exemplars Commune

Upon reaching their land, commune members discussed whether to build houses near Lake Weyba or on better land on Yandina Creek or Doonan. After a long debate, Watson cast the deciding vote, electing to stay at Lake Weyba, at least in the medium term, so Woolloongabba Exemplars commune was established along what is now Lake Weyba Drive.³⁵

They had brought 20 tons of goods, including boats, drays, farming implements and poultry. An observer commented that given the 'undeniable fertility of the area' it should be easy for them to 'extract nature's bounteous wealth, and place themselves on the road to prosperity'.³⁶ The communards, in excellent spirits, began clearing, cultivating and building, and within a week they had created vegetable gardens and began fishing. They erected huts plus an eighteen-metre jetty and a store to house their tools, then drew lots to determine the order in which they would build houses.³⁷ Six 'experienced agriculturists', plus Watson praised their land's 'agricultural potential'.³⁸

In spite of this promising start, only 45 of the 59 men who had joined arrived, with some members seeing this as their permanent home while others saw it only tiding them over hard times.³⁹ Selfishness and dissention soon set in. For example, one member owned a piano and offered it to the community if they would pay for its transport from Brisbane. While most members gratefully accepted this gift, one accused him of only wanting a cheap way to get his piano, so he withdrew his offer.⁴⁰

In March 1894 the first serious criticisms were aired with two reputedly experienced farmer-members claiming that timber was so dense that clearing would cost £45 a hectare. They alleged only about 40 hectares were cultivable, the rest being 'entirely and utterly useless', with coarse grass that cattle refused to eat. Milch cows, 'as soon as milked, immediately clear off to a selection outside the commune's estate, where there is a bit of grass'.⁴¹ Their criticism was augmented by a local resident who doubted one could find 40 hectares of good soil 'in that miserable country', and asserted,

The Exemplars will never add anything to the exports of the colony from an agricultural point of view, but if all the rest are as lazy as those ... I have been unfortunate enough to know, they will never come back to Brisbane ... [because] they will have discovered that by walking barefoot through the waves at a slow pace a man can kick out enough shellfish at half-tide to last him all day. ... What more can even a Communist wish for? ⁴²

The *Brisbane Courier* alleged that those communal groups ‘more fortunate as to soil have to contend with the disadvantage of distance, and that the settlers more fortunate as to distance have to contend with disadvantages of soil’, then concluded that Woolloongabba Exemplars commune was the worst.⁴³ Watson responded, saying they were delighted with their land and that all was going well.⁴⁴ Watson later claimed they had ‘ample room for thousands of inhabitants if they could successfully set to work and live upon the mutual interchange of their own productions and services’.⁴⁵

Another critic alleged that Government Officers were not helping people achieve what Parliament and the Act had sought, and reminded Secretary for Lands, Andrew Barlow, that ‘bad land will cost money, inasmuch as people placed upon it will not be able to produce enough to pay the price which they have promised to pay for it’. He added that because the Woolloongabba Exemplars were on inferior land, some of the best men had left, while those with no alternative remained.⁴⁶ This criticism was well founded because a confidential memo from the Under Secretary of Public Lands had warned staff against advising communards about land. This memo, when leaked to the press, caused great embarrassment to Barlow and angry frustration to the communards.⁴⁷

Archibald Meston, a keen and opinionated observer of communal settlements, colourfully condemned the Government.

When the last woebegone group have departed from their wallum flats ... tea-tree swamps, and ironbark ridges, the Lands Office will partly open one sleepy eye to catch a hazy glimpse of something wrong, and then despatch the usual official mummy, who will return at the end of many days with a chuckle-headed report, expressing a solemn belief that 'after an exhaustive inquiry into all the circumstances, the evidence seems to indicate a lack of agricultural knowledge and a want of essential chemical constituents in the soil'.⁴⁸

Watson reminded readers that 'they had chosen this site because of the fish in Lake Weyba together with the 3000 acres in the Maroochy watershed'. Their first task had been to build huts, then clear and plant. They had spanned one creek with a bridge, and were completing another bridge on the road to Eumundi, thereby facilitating movement between Lake Weyba and their cultivable land, and giving access to the railway at Eumundi. They had a good supply of vegetables planted, so now

One of our earliest considerations will be where to fix our main village or settlement. ... Of necessity our fishing enterprise involves a settlement on the lake ... [but] our nearest agricultural site is four miles distant. ... We have sixteen square miles of country to develop, and it will take time to prove the best point of concentration.⁴⁹

Watson claimed everyone was cheerful and healthy in spite of wet weather and hard toil, and that once they had drained their flats this 'sandy loam was capable of growing millions of pineapples'. Watson announced plans to build a ship, facilitating access to markets along Australia's eastern seaboard cheaper than by rail.⁵⁰ Based on mining engineer John Hardy's exploration for coal in the area in 1888, Watson claimed coal deposits on their land could support industrial development.⁵¹

During April 1894 they began to split into two settlements, one at Lake Weyba for fishing and oyster-raising, while others would settle on agricultural land near Yandina Creek.⁵² At Lake Weyba, they had a quarter hectare garden with another hectare ready to plough, were erecting a substantial store and other buildings, and appeared to prosper.⁵³

Six men worked for three months to improve their road to Eumundi, costing £30.⁵⁴

Fishermen caught fish up to 20 kilos each, with any waste being used as fertiliser.

Woolloongabba Exemplars' orchestra and choir entertained themselves and neighbours at concerts.⁵⁵

Watson later admitted that although members had agreed to act democratically, the minority 'frequently made their influence felt in complaint and innuendo'. To overcome this negativity and to get on with their work they elected a superintendent to lead them but three men in succession abandoned the position feeling they had become 'the scapegoat to bear the brunt of the concentrated shortcomings of every imperfect member'. Another problem was the commonly held feeling 'that the other man was not doing his share of the work'.⁵⁶

In June 1894, a visitor glowingly reported that Woolloongabba Exemplars had a well-built house with chimney and bark roof, and had fenced half a hectare of potatoes with five more hectares of scrub cleared for cultivation near Yandina Creek, while near Lake Weyba fifteen families, totalling 116 people, had substantial cottages, an 18 metre jetty, smoke house and drying shed for curing fish to sell. They held regular church services and Sunday School, had a small lending library, and were erecting a school. The author enthused that Woolloongabba Exemplars were 'a most interesting experiment'.⁵⁷

George Phillips, M.L.A., visited the commune in June and calculated they would need £1000 per year to purchase clothing and necessities. He thought two-thirds of their land

was worthless, then suggested how a tramline from Eumundi to Noosa Heads would facilitate marketing their products.⁵⁸

The Editor of *The Week* lamented the confusing and contradictory reports about Woolloongabba Exemplars, citing one claim that ‘good management prevails, good work is done, and good results are garnered’ while another person damned the management and waste of resources on ‘thousands of acres of utterly useless country’.⁵⁹ Land Commissioner William Watts, after inspecting this commune, was ‘generally favourable’ in his report to Andrew Barlow.⁶⁰

On 2 July one of their members, Thomas Price, former MLA for Wide Bay, wrote to Brisbane condemning Watson as ‘an idiot in group management’. Because Price’s self-assessed wisdom had not been generally accepted, he concluded that the commune was being ruined through ‘faddish ideas’ and ‘extravagant expenditure’. Price’s opinion was supported by another member, William Mason, who described Watson’s management as ‘disgraceful’, and alleged that Watson wanted Woolloongabba Exemplars to be ‘like Lane and Paraguay’.⁶¹ Watson, meanwhile, was exploring the possibility of developing major sugar cane operations using government support under the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act* 1893.⁶²

Members built Lake Weyba Provisional School, its sapling frame clad with galvanised iron, an earthen floor, one window without glass, being hot in summer, cold in winter and admitting rain. George Watson’s 17-year-old daughter, Jane, became teacher when it

opened on 3 September 1894, earning £65 per year.⁶³ This money went into their communal coffers and was probably their main income other than government assistance. At its peak, 21 children were enrolled, with an average of 18 attending.⁶⁴

A serious flaw in the legislation was that people could apply through Lands Department, Brisbane, and be admitted into the commune as new members, then dispatched to the site—to the consternation of members on the ground. Nevertheless, in September 1894, George Watson praised newly arrived members who ‘have worked well here and have returned good value for their supplies’.⁶⁵ On 15 October, however, Watson complained their prospects of becoming self-supporting were hindered by free-riders, but optimistically suggested these problems were being resolved in spite of ‘unscrupulous members who... may have joined us just for the sake of the rations’.⁶⁶ Andrew Barlow, Secretary for Lands, on October 24 opined that Woolloongabba Exemplars ‘will not be self-supporting, and that it will dwindle down to a few, who will keep on fishing in Lake Weyba as long as they are supplied with rations’.⁶⁷

On November 15, Watson wrote that Alfred Edwards, James Gray, Robert Orr, H. Kent, G. Hibberd, William Burton, Frederick Burton, Charles Larsen, Claus Nielsen, William Hodges, Samuel Hodges and he planned to work as a sub-group and share returns only within their ‘division’. Watson intimated that other sub-groups were doing the same.⁶⁸ Later that month, Price complained that Watson ‘shows great apathy in all business matters’, and alleged that ‘Government aid is not divided equally’.⁶⁹ The Secretary for

Lands lamented that 'individualism had shown itself, and dissention had arisen' then ominously warned 'the eye of the department was on them'.⁷⁰

By December, only 16 men, 14 women and 29 children remained at the commune.⁷¹ One member complained that 'the married men have banded themselves against the single men's interests'.⁷² The *Gympie Times* claimed Woolloongabba Exemplars commune was virtually defunct. Watson denied this, optimistically claiming they could grow sugar cane sufficient 'to keep a modern sugar mill of the greatest capacity in full working', while their other agricultural, horticultural and grazing pursuits could 'find employment for thousands'.⁷³

In early 1895 they were increasingly riven by conflict. Thomas Price complained that Watson 'grossly mismanaged' the commune, 'sold store rations to outsiders' and was running the commune 'on individualistic lines'.⁷⁴

In April, tempers erupted into major altercations. After their teacher, Jane Watson, punished a student, his mother, Elizabeth Edwards burst into their school and in front of students confronted Jane, whom she 'grossly insulted ... and called all sorts of filthy & disgusting names', then claimed Jane 'was not fit to keep a school'. The boy's father and chairman of the School Committee, Alfred Edwards, then sent 'a very improper letter' to Jane Watson. Some members defended her while others condemned her.⁷⁵ This ill-will climaxed with a violent melee involving poles and knives. Appearing in Tewantin Police

Court for assault, members were described as being ‘of a perfectly useless character’ because ‘very obscene language was used’.⁷⁶

Following this violence the extended Watson family started abandoning their huts and gardens and returning to Brisbane, although George Watson did not resign until August 15, and Jane Watson stayed until Lake Weyba Provisional School closed on August 30.⁷⁷ Although about forty people remained, most wanted to leave, and critics predicted they would go as soon as Government rations stopped. A reporter at Lake Weyba found ‘there is nothing to be seen save a few huts and two or three kitchen gardens’. Watson’s garden ‘yielded a good supply of vegetables and rosellas’ while the Hodges family next door, had ‘made a promising start in bee farming’, however, ‘the want of harmony ... amongst ... members is apparent’.⁷⁸

A Land Inspector found that in spite of having expended £1,324, their improvements were valued at only £181, with only four hectares under cultivation. The *Brisbane Courier* condemned this ‘communistic settlement’, wittily observing that ‘Woolloongabba Exemplars were no more exemplary than any other group picked haphazard from the general population’.⁷⁹ In August, a visitor found only two men and one woman, who said they were ‘waiting for the Government to let them take some of the land on their own account’.⁸⁰

Given adverse newspaper reports about all twelve communes, the fact that most had collapsed in fact if not in law, and given that their public support of 1892–3 had

evaporated, Parliament sought to salvage the situation. The *Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Act 1893* was amended on 23 December 1895 whereby all communal rights and obligations, including debts, were cancelled, and all leases extinguished. Communards still resident could stay until the land could be re-surveyed, and then negotiate with the surveyor as to which portions of formerly communal land, up to 65 hectares, with buildings, they wanted as leasehold.⁸¹ Woolloongabba Exemplars commune formally ceased to exist on 16 January 1896.⁸²

Reason for Collapse

Watson believed Woolloongabba Exemplars failed because their group was too large and, instead of becoming a 'united phalanx', pandemonium ensued because members 'were utterly bewildered when brought face to face with all the latent capabilities within our area'. They would have succeeded had they been 'of united mind, determinedly set upon one main purpose', but Watson admitted that 'great bitterness was awakened, confidence between man and man was destroyed, and the ill-feeling extended even to the children'.⁸³ One long-term member, William Burton, blamed Watson, saying that while most members were 'good men and true', sincere in their efforts to make the commune succeed, they lacked 'a competent leader'.⁸⁴

Post-communal Fate of Members and Land

By early 1896, only four members of the defunct commune remained on the land, and three of them, Thomas Price, Alfred Edwards and Claus Nielsen, applied for leases.⁸⁵

When Alfred Lymburner surveyed the formerly communal land on 28 March 1896 he recorded six huts, built by the commune, near the lake.⁸⁶

When George Watson and family returned to Brisbane he began to write *Daybreak; or the World's Preparedness for Socialism, Exemplified in the History of the Woolloongabba Exemplars Group*.⁸⁷ He was re-employed by the Lands Department and became Crown Lands Ranger in Barcaldine, and appears never to have finished this book.⁸⁸ Watson transferred to Bundaberg in 1898, as Land Commissioner, and retired there in mid 1902, where he wrote his memoirs, 'Building the Commonwealth'.⁸⁹ He wrote specifically about Woolloongabba Exemplars in 'Half a Century a Humanitarian' but no copy of this work can be located.⁹⁰ Watson died on 30 June 1905, aged 72, and was buried in Bundaberg.

Sections of Woolloongabba Exemplar land are now a housing estate on the banks of Lake Weyba while the rest is either rural residential or forest reserve. No physical evidence can be found of their jetty, store, huts or school.

Summary and Conclusion

Woolloongabba Exemplars' meteoric rise and rapid demise were similar to the fates of the other eleven communes. There are several explanations for their collapse: 'Human-nature' is often mentioned but that belies the fact that some communes in Australia and elsewhere have succeeded. Poor land, plus lack of capital and rail access, are blamed but some communes had good land, adjoining railways, but their fate was the same. One can

argue that conservative politicians and bureaucrats engineered their demise as a means of hindering the Labour Movement—but did they? One problem is irrefutable—all groups included reluctant members who were there to escape poverty and starvation in Brisbane rather than because they wanted to live communally—and that spells death for any commune.

References and Endnotes

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- ¹ We acknowledge the assistance of Louse Howard of Queensland State Archives, Bill Kitson of Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, and Bob Bradbury of Bills and Papers Office, Queensland Parliament.
 - ² Major overseas utopian texts included Edward Bellamy's *Looking backward, 2000–1887*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967 (first published 1888) and Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1916 (first published 1880). Popular Australian texts included Horace Tucker's *The New Arcadia, An Australian Story*, London: Robertson, 1894, Catherine Spence's 'A Week in the Future', *Centennial Magazine*, December 1888 to July 1889, Thomas Lucas's *The Curse and its Cure*, Brisbane: J.H. Reynolds, 1894, and William Lane's *The Workingman's Paradise*, Sydney: Edwards Dunlop, 1892.
 - ³ For example, *Brisbane Courier [BC]*, 21 July 1891, p. 6.
 - ⁴ Raymond Evans, *A History of Queensland*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 123–6; and Tony Gough, 'Tom McIlwraith, Ted Drury, Hugh Nelson and the Queensland National Bank, 1896–1897', *Queensland Heritage*, vol. 3, no. 9, 1978, pp. 3–13.
 - ⁵ *Boomerang*, 17 December 1888, p. 5; *The Worker [TWO]*, 8 August 1891, p. 2; and *BC*, 18 February 1892, p. 5.
 - ⁶ Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, [QLA, *V&P*] 'Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Assisted Land Settlement', vol. 4, 1892, pp. 77–204.
 - ⁷ *BC*, 25 August 1891, p. 4; 16 September 1891, p. 4 and 19 September 1891, p. 6; and *TWO*, 8 August 1891, p. 2.
 - ⁸ QLA, *V&P*, 'Minutes of Evidence ...', 1892, p. 87.
 - ⁹ *BC*, 10 September 1891, p. 7.
 - ¹⁰ William Metcalf, *Shared Visions, Shared Lives*, Forres (UK): Findhorn Press, 1996.
 - ¹¹ QLA, *V&P*, 'Minutes of Evidence ...', 1892, p. 104.
 - ¹² George Watson, 'Building the Commonwealth', *Queenslander*, 19 December 1903, p. 26; and *Queensland Parliamentary Debates [QPD]*, vol. LXXI, 1894, p. 80.
 - ¹³ *QPD*, vol. LXX, 1893, pp. 361 and 459.
 - ¹⁴ *QPD*, vol. LXX, 1893, pp. 361, 406, 10 and 18.
 - ¹⁵ *QPD*, vol. LXX, 1893, pp. 361 and 419.

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- ¹⁶ *QPD*, vol. LXX, 1893, p. 443; *Queensland Government Gazette [QGG]* vol. LX, 1894, pp. 511-22 and 587-90; and Queensland State Archives [QSA] Item ID: 25805 (LAN/AA6) Letter from Charles Green to Undersecretary for Public Lands, 11 April 1894.
- ¹⁷ William Metcalf, 'Utopian Queensland', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol. 15, no. 12, 1995, pp. 553-70.
The other groups were: Bon Accord, Byrnestown and Resolute, near Gayndah; Nil Desperandum, Obertown Model and Excel Pioneers, near Roma; Mizpah, Monmouth and Industrial/Mulga, near Chinchilla; Reliance, near Rolleston; and Protestant Unity, near Pomona.
- ¹⁸ Watson, 'Building the Commonwealth', *Queenslander*, 13 June 1903, p. 9; and Letter from John Moore, 25 October 1986, in George Chale Watson file, Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying.
- ¹⁹ They were Robert Chale (b. 20/2/1866), Henry Yeatman (b. 20/12/1867), Mary Sophia Georgina (b. 2/7/1870), Alfred Lisburne (b. 18/11/1872), Elizabeth Ann Cunningham (b. 15/7/1874), Jane Emily Scott (b. 25/10/1877), George Edward Lucas (b. 21/12/1879), Edward Thornloe (b. 13/11/1882) and Olive Eleanor (b. 28/3/1886).
- ²⁰ *Mercury* (Hobart), 4 June 1868, p. 2.
- ²¹ Letters from John Cameron dated 2 September and 25 November 1879, and 8 January 1880, held as MS 11424, Cameron family papers, La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.
- ²² *BC*, 4 & 11 June 1890, p. 4; 29 May 1891, p. 4; 25 January 1893, p. 5; and 7 September 1893, p. 6.
- ²³ *BC*, 28 January 1891, p. 6; 14 May 1891, p. 4; 29 May 1891, p. 4; and 3 June 1891, p. 4; and *QLA, V&P*, 1892, vol. 4, p. 109.
- ²⁴ *BC*, 1 September 1893, p. 4; and 8 February 1894, p. 6.
- ²⁵ *BC*, 30 September 1893, p. 3.
- ²⁶ *BC*, 15 November 1893, p. 6.
- ²⁷ *BC*, 15 November 1893, p. 6; and 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ²⁸ *BC*, 8 December 1893, p. 4; 24 January 1894, p. 5; and 26 January 1894, p. 5.
- ²⁹ *QLA, V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 432; and *BC*, 12 February 1894, p. 5, and 1 July 1895, p. 2.
- ³⁰ *BC*, 2 April 1894, p. 6.
- ³¹ *QGG*, vol. LXI, page 322, 10 February 1894.
The men, in order of joining, were George Chale Watson, Edwin Thomas Hodges, Samuel Augustus Hodges, William John Hodges, James Benjamin Jones, Edmund Goodwin, John Trotter, Donald McIntyre, Charles John McIntyre, William Edward Jones, William Hurst, Henry Clague, Edward Jones, John Garsden, jun., Owen McCormack, William Watson, Patrick Boyle, John William Beadnell, Edwin Barter, Thomas Birkett, William Thomas Miles, Herbert John Scott, Alfred Edwards, John Julian, Joseph Bowron Thornton, Henry Edward Streeter, Henry Wilkinson, Albert George Jones, John Sumpner, William Mason, James Munt, Herbert Newsome, Harry Price Mason, Charles Larsen, William Spenser Sleath, John McNaught, Alexander Thomson, Charles Franz, William John Burton, George Augustus Ross, Oscar Petersen, Robert Orr, Harry Wheeler Garsden, Francis William Dalton, Henry Yeatman Watson, Henry John Holzberger, William Edward Burton, James Gray, Thomas Byrne, Frederick Francis Burton, Harry Ward, Thomas Meredith Price, Albert Ernest King, Arthur Edward Meyers King, George Seymour, Claus Nielsen, Samuel Woods, James A. Thomas and Lucien Sigismund Buisson.
- ³² There was also William Watson who appears to be unrelated.
- ³³ *BC*, 12 February 1894, p. 5; *Gympie Times [GT]*, 6 February 1894, p. 2; and 8 February 1894, p. 3.
- ³⁴ *BC*, 10 February 1894, p. 4.

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- ³⁵ *The Week [TWe]*, 22 March 1894, p. 10.
- ³⁶ *GT*, 6 February 1894, p. 2.
- ³⁷ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6; and 1 July 1895, p. 2.
- ³⁸ *BC*, 12 February 1894, p. 5; and *TWe*, 16 February 1894, p. 9.
The other men were Donald McIntyre, Edward Jones, Henry Claque, John McNaught, William Hurst and William Hodges.
- ³⁹ *QLA, V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 432.
- ⁴⁰ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁴¹ *BC*, 15 March 1894, p. 5; and *TWe*, 22 March 1894, p. 11.
- ⁴² *BC*, 17 March 1894, p. 6.
- ⁴³ *BC*, 19 March 1894, p. 4.
- ⁴⁴ *BC*, 22 March 1894, p. 7.
- ⁴⁵ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁴⁶ *BC*, 22 March 1894, p. 7.
- ⁴⁷ *QLA, V&P*, vol. 3, 1894, p. 799; and *TWe*, 20 April 1894, p. 12.
- ⁴⁸ *BC*, 20 March 1894, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ *BC*, 2 April 1894, p. 6.
- ⁵⁰ *BC*, 2 April 1894, p. 6.
- ⁵¹ *BC*, 19 May 1888, p. 5; and 2 April 1894, p. 6.
- ⁵² *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁵³ *GT*, 1 May 1894, p. 3; *BC*, 2 May 1894, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁵⁵ *GT*, 1 May 1894, p. 3; and 21 June 1894, p. 3.
- ⁵⁶ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁵⁷ *GT*, 14 June 1894, pp. 2-3.
- ⁵⁸ *BC*, 15 June 1894, p. 5.
- ⁵⁹ *TWe*, 1 June 1894, pp. 14-5.
- ⁶⁰ *TWe*, 29 June 1894, p. 11.
- ⁶¹ *QLA, V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 432.
- ⁶² *QSA*, Item ID 979324 (LAN/B23/B) Register of inwards Correspondence, Lands Department 1894-5, letter 15895, 13 August 1894.
- ⁶³ *QLA, V&P*, 1896, vol. 3, p. 408; and *QSA*, Item ID: 15178, Letter from Jane Watson to Department of Public Instruction, 3 September 1894. Her annual salary was raised to £70 in 1895.
- ⁶⁴ *QSA*, Item ID 10737, (EDU/Z1555) Lake Weyba Provisional School File 546.
- ⁶⁵ *QLA, V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 432; and *QGG*, vol. LX, 1894, pp. 518 and 589.
- ⁶⁶ *QLA, V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 433.
- ⁶⁷ *TWe*, 26 October 1894, p. 9.

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- ⁶⁸ QLA, *V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 433.
- ⁶⁹ QLA, *V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 433.
- ⁷⁰ *BC*, 29 November 1894, p. 7.
- ⁷¹ *TWe*, 14 December 1894, p. 43.
- ⁷² QLA, *V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 433.
- ⁷³ *GT*, 13 December 1894, p. 3; and 20 December 1894, p. 3.
- ⁷⁴ *GT*, 19 February 1895, p. 2; and QLA, *V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, p. 433.
- ⁷⁵ QSA, Item ID 15178, (EDU/Z1555) Correspondence, Lake Weyba Provisional School, No. 546.
- ⁷⁶ QLA, *V&P*, 1895, vol. 3, pp. 432-3; QLA, *V&P*, 1896, vol. 4, p. 453; *GT*, 19 February 1895, p. 2; *BC*, 9 March 1895, p. 4; and 29 May 1895, p. 4.
- ⁷⁷ QSA, Item ID 979324 (LAN/B23) B Register of inwards correspondence, Lands Department 1894-5, letter 15878 and QSA, Item ID 15178, (EDU/Z1555) Correspondence, Lake Weyba Provisional School, No. 546.
- ⁷⁸ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁷⁹ QLA, *V&P* 'Working of Self Government by Co-operative Groups', 1895, vol. 3, p. 427; and *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁸⁰ *BC*, 23 August 1895, p. 4.
- ⁸¹ *QPD*, vol. LXXIV, 1895, pp. 1110-6, 1858-79, 1934-7, and 1945; and *QGG*, 1895, pp. 1337-9.
- ⁸² *QGG*, vol. LXV, 25 January 1896, p. 168.
- ⁸³ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6.
- ⁸⁴ *BC*, 1 July 1895, p. 2.
- ⁸⁵ *BC*, 9 March 1896, p. 4.
- ⁸⁶ Survey Plan M37.1205, 28 March 1896, Department of Environment and Resource Management.
- ⁸⁷ *BC*, 1 July 1895, p. 2.
- ⁸⁸ *BC*, 20 June 1895, p. 6; and *Queenslander*, 19 December 1903, p. 26.
- ⁸⁹ Watson, 'Building the Commonwealth', *Queenslander*, 13 June, p. 10; 20 June, p. 9; 27 June, p. 10; 4 July, p. 10; 1 August, p. 10; 29 August, p. 18; 5 September, p. 22; 19 September, p. 42; 26 September, p. 42; 3 October, p. 42; 17 October, p. 8; 14 November, p. 9; 21 November, p. 8; 5 December, p. 26; 12 December, p. 7; and 19 December 1903, p. 26; and 9 January 1904, p. 26.
- ⁹⁰ Watson, 'Building the Commonwealth', *Queenslander*, 19 December 1903, p. 26.