

Frederick REID b.2 Dec 1888 d.24 Dec 1946

Fred Reid holds a unique place in the history of Chillagoe, Queensland and indeed, Australia.

A mining pioneer at the turn of the twentieth century, Fred Reid was born in Murtang, NSW in 1888. As a teenager he travelled to north Queensland with his mother Jessie Murphy, brothers Roy and Lance Reid, step brothers Jimmy Murphy and Rudolph (Jack) Lahz. For the record, Jack Lahz later became a famous Wickham Terrace orthopaedic medical specialist after commencing school in Chillagoe: www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/kasting-a-shadow-over-brisbanes-doctor-street-20091130-k0h6.html

In the early years of last century, education in remote places was limited and although he had no academic qualifications, Fred Reid possessed an uncanny knowledge of minerals and machinery. Fred's peers and colleagues acknowledged this fact, often seeking his advice and expertise in said areas.

In 1917, Fred married Belle Brady (nee Bethel), the mother of four daughters – Glad, Irene, Kat and Beatrice (deceased). Fred and Belle started a new family and had two daughters together – Billie (b. 1918) and Gloria (b. 1921). Billie and Gloria became very accomplished musicians, singers, music teachers and entertainers in the far north of Queensland.

Fred explored many of the old and new mineral shows in Garumba, Sunnymount, Irvinebank, Cardross, Mt Wandoo, Mareeba and Herberton. The Girofla and Lady Jane mine leases were taken up by Fred amidst a buoyant market, with operations working three shifts around the clock. These mines were very large suppliers of ore to the Chillagoe smelters. Mungana Mines Ltd was later established, covering the Lady Jane and Girofla mines.

In 1921, whilst underground with his men, Fred felt a shift from the shockwaves of the Mt Mulligan disaster (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Mulligan_mine_disaster) and immediately organised a mine rescue party. Fred was always considered one of the boys and along with his men, was the first to arrive on the scene of this tragic mining disaster.

Fred Reid and his partners developed interests in the Tarzali sawmill and in the construction of the Pacific Hotel on The Esplanade in Cairns. He often related the following fact: the very wide, richly carpeted grand interior staircase, a large natural timber feature of the foyer, was designed by him to let the inebriated patrons down lightly should they falter or miss their step!

The story of the infamous Mungana Affair (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mungana_affair) is outlined with the newly opened Chillagoe Court House Heritage Centre.

The Queensland Labor government acquired the Lady Jane and Girofla leases from Mungana Mines Ltd on 25 March 1922. Later, this purchase was the catalyst of a politically based inquiry, instigated in 1929, when the Labor Party lost power and the government established a Royal Commission to report upon matters relating to the Mungana and Chillagoe mines and smelters. However, the Royal Commission findings found the prosecution unable to proceed with criminal charges, as evidence was only circumstantial, innuendo or plain false. The government then introduced new legislation that would allow civil proceedings against mine Manager Goddard, Qld Premier McCormack, Federal Treasurer Theodore and Reid, to recover monies expended in the purchase of Mungana Mines Ltd.

It was revealed that this action was indeed spiteful, as on 24 August 1931, a jury of found the defendants "Not Guilty" of fraud and conspiracy.

Fred experienced times of good fortune, as well as deep despair during The Great Depression. Those who knew him well were heard to say, "When Fred Reid had money, everyone had money." In good times and in bad, he had the ability to inspire people with his excellent conceptual ideas. History should show Fred was generous, enthusiastic, energetic, charismatic and very skilful in his work. His business philosophy was "Make an enemy of no man, as some day you may need him."

Early entrepreneurs, like Fred Reid, helped shape today's Australia. This innovative spirit continues through many of his descendants, ie: <http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/cancer-charity-has-win/story-fnjfzsax-1226757847295>