

Some Old Stations.

By A. J. MCCOY.

No. V.

Durundur.

THE Durundur run had been discovered and applied for by David Archer in September, 1841, and was, I believe, the fourth run occupied on the Brisbane River watershed, the lessees being David Archer and Company.

Mr. David Archer was the son of William Archer, a member of a family which had for many years lived in Perthshire, and in 1825, attracted by an opening in the fishing industry and the cheapness of living in Norway, went to live in that country, in which some of his descendants still reside. Mr. Archer had a large family, of which at least eight were well known in Queensland. These were David, Charles, William, John, Thomas, Colin, Archibald, and Alexander. The first four at various times worked at Durundur. William afterwards went back to Norway and took up shipbuilding, and amongst other vessels he built Nansen's famous ship, the *Fram*. Archibald, who first was a sugar planter in Fiji, came to Queensland, and became a noted politician. Alexander was the first manager in Brisbane of the Bank of New South Wales. He married Miss Minnie Mackenzie, daughter of Sir Robert Ramsay Mackenzie, of Kinellan (New Farm), and was one of the victims when the *Quetta* foundered in Albany Pass. Minnie Downs, a sheep station near Tambo, was taken up by Charles, and named after his sister. Mr. Thomas Archer's son, William, was a noted art critic and dramatist in London, and was the translator of Ibsen. They were indeed a notable family. After living for some years in Queensland, Mr. David Archer returned to Europe, making his home in Norway. His three sons, R. S., E. W., and John Archer, came back to Queensland after their schooldays and worthily carried on the fine family traditions.

David Archer.

THE story of the Archers and their trip to Sydney, from Sydney to Wallerawang, and from there to Durundur, is fully told by Thomas Archer (afterwards Agent-General for Queensland) in his book, "Recollections of a Rambling Life." He mentions that David Archer came to Sydney about the middle of the 'thirties, and got employment from his uncle, Mr. William Walker, a merchant there, who also had station property in New South Wales. After a little time Mr. David Archer got the management of his uncle's sheep station, Wallerawang, near the Castlereagh. There he remained till 1839, when, hearing of the fine country discovered by Cunningham at the back of the Moreton Bay settlement, he decided to go there and take up a run. His cousin, Mr.

David settlement, he decided to go there and take up a run. His cousin, Mr. Edward Walker, who had been managing another station for Mr. William Walker, joined him. Mr. Walker had about 1500 sheep, and David Archer had about the same number. He borrowed money from his uncle to buy some more, and made the flock up to about 5000 head. In the old days employees were often paid in stock instead of cash, and country being plentiful and lightly stocked they were allowed by their employers to keep stock on the run. Mr. David Archer's younger brothers, John and Thomas, joined the party. These had come to Sydney about eighteen months earlier, and had been jackaroos on Wallerawang. David Archer was in charge of the party bound for Moreton Bay, and Thomas was "second in charge." Not long after their start scab broke out in the flock; they had then to lease a block of country named Birallan, on the Castlereagh River, build yards, and dress the sheep. This took a long time, and it was not till nearly August, 1841, that they reached Wyndham station, on the MacIntyre, and got on to Leslie's marked tree line, which they followed, and reached the Condamine about the end of the month. Passing through Toolburra and Clifton they met another party, also looking for new country, headed by Messrs. Frederick and Francis Bigge, who were travelling with cattle.

They also were going to the Brisbane River. On reaching the Downs David Archer and a blackboy went ahead, crossed the range near Helidon, and pushed on till they came to the Stanley passing by Mount Brisbane. The country in that neighbourhood pleased Mr. Archer, but, as he thought it was within the 50-mile radius of the Brisbane penal settlement he pushed on, and after travelling about 20 miles further up the Stanley pitched his site for the future station of Durundur. He then returned to his party, which had crossed the range, passing Wingate's Lagoon near Tarampa. On Mr. David Archer reaching the main party he sent Thomas Archer back to Helidon station, then in charge of "Locky" Rogers as manager for Mr. George Moccatta, for 100 rams, which were obtained and safely driven to Durundur. In the meantime Mr. David Archer had changed the site of his camp, and at the end of September, 1841, chose a spot on the west side of the Stanley, on a low ridge, the river being distant about 400 yards on one side and a small creek was on the other side. During the years the Archers were at Durundur there were many floods. This site was never flooded, but in the flood of February 1893, the waters of the river flowed across this ridge and joined the waters of the creek. At this time (September, 1841) the only

joined the waters of the creek. At this time (September, 1841) the only settlement on the upper waters of the Brisbane were Cressbrook (D. C. M'Connel), Kilcoy (Evan and Colin John Mackenzie), Colinton (John Charles and Robert Balfour and Irving, and Mt. Brisbane (F. and F. Bigge).

Durundur Country.

THE Durundur lease, which was bounded on the north, east, and south by mountains—the Conondale Range, and part of the Blackall Range and D'Aguliar Range, was not good sheep country, the grass being rank and the flats swampy. It was also thickly timbered. Near the Mt. Brisbane boundary boundary was a fine lagoon, named Paul Pry's waterhole. It was so deep that Mr. Francis Bigge, who had been in the Navy, said it would float a "three-decker." I do not know the origin of its name. Durundur was well watered by the Stanley and a number of creeks. One fine waterhole on "Commissioner's" Flat, towards the head of the river was said by the blacks to harbour a "debbil debbil," and they refused to go into it. During the second year of their residence at Durundur the Archers decided to open up a road to Brisbane by a shorter route than via Mt. Brisbane and Ipswich. So with the aid of a black boy they marked a track to the east of D'Aguliar Range, over the head of the Caboolture River and Burpengary Creek, crossing the North Pine some distance about Tom Petrie's accommodation house, and the South Pine at Cash's Crossing. That route was a little over fifty miles. After the South Pine bridge was built (about 1864) the route was by Petrie's and the new bridge. My mother was the first person to ride over that bridge. A party of us were travelling from Durundur to Sandgate, and heard the bridge was complete. We found that about three or four feet of the decking on the south side was not laid, leaving a gap. As we rode on to the bridge, the workmen put a rope across it and requested that we should pay our footing, which was done, and, my mother leading, we jumped the gap. Both the Pine and the Stanley were dangerous rivers to cross, and an anabranch of the Stanley was particularly bad. In February, 1870, a mailman was drowned when trying to cross it, and, later, my father induced the Works Department to build a bridge across it.

In addition to the bridge over the Stanley, Thomas Archer and his brother built a large stockyard, which was a splendid bit of work, very massive and well fitted. Some of the posts were nearly two feet in diameter, with rails and caps in proportion. It remained in use till about twenty years ago, when it was pulled down. Many of the posts were as sound underground as the day they were split.