

Chapter 11

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While the German language among the Bethania Germans declined in the twentieth century, the economy of the community also changed. Farmers moved from mixed farming to a dependence on dairying, more specifically to the production of whole milk for the Brisbane market, and the economic fortunes of the Bethania Germans became dependent on milk production. It has proved impossible to find written evidence of how this change occurred, or of the timetable or the stages of the transition to whole milk sales. Copies of Beenleigh newspapers for the early years of the century have not survived and there are only sparse references to the Bethania area in the newspapers of Brisbane and Beaudesert. In writing about the dairying industry in Queensland most attention was given to butter production which absorbed most of the milk produced. In 1922, for instance, five millions gallons of milk were sold for consumption as milk, 105 million gallons were separated for butter-making, and twelve million gallons were required for cheese and condensed milk factories.¹ Butter was exported and problems of the export industry received continual attention. The little written about the market for whole milk in general was mainly concerned with problems of distribution and little with supply.

The first suppliers of milk to Brisbane consumers were suburban dairymen who supplied 'warm milk,' defined as milk produced by dairymen and sold by them directly to consumers in retail quantities, or purchased from the dairymen by retail vendors who sold it to the consumers.² The Bethania farmers became suppliers of 'cold milk,' milk produced by dairy farmers in the country and purchased by wholesale companies and vendors who then sold it to retail vendors for distribution to consumers.³ In one of his histories of dairying in Queensland, Morris Lake described the early supply of country milk to Brisbane:

Early records show that in 1902, milk was first brought to Brisbane by rail from Bald Hills and Strathpine. It was later brought from Rosewood, Lowood and Caboolture. This was brine cooled, stored in cans in cold rooms and distributed by vendors. The retailing method was to place the milk in a can fitted with a tap. The vendor poured out the quantity to be purchased into a measure, placed this milk in another vessel and transferred the milk into a jug or billycan left by the consumer on his doorstep.⁴

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1. Department of Agriculture and Stock Annual Report for 1922-23, p. 76, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1924*, Vol. II, p. 78.
 2. *Brisbane Courier*, 5 July 1923, p. 6.; *Courier Mail*, 4 June 1936, p. 12.
 3. *Courier Mail*, 4 June 1936, p. 12.

It was not until 1912 that bottled, chilled, raw milk was distributed from two small establishments in Brisbane, and pasteurization was first commenced in Brisbane in 1919.⁵

It is not clear when Bethania farmers became regular suppliers of milk to Brisbane. In the *Queenslander* in 1896 it was reported that a few farms at Logan Village were sending milk to Brisbane.⁶ This suggests that some supplies by rail to Brisbane were sent earlier than the 1902 in Lake's account. In the *Brisbane Courier* in 1907 there was a reference to a small quantity of milk sent by train from Beenleigh.⁷ However, in the discussions leading to the setting up of the Kingston butter factory in 1907 there were no references to the supply of whole milk to Brisbane as an alternative for the farmers to sending cream to Kingston, so it is probable that the supply of milk to Brisbane by most farmers commenced after 1907. The records of the butter factory do not show a fall in cream received which might be accounted for by milk sent to Brisbane, so it is assumed that production increased with the morning milk sent to Brisbane and the afternoon milk separated and the cream sent to the butter factory. The next reference to sending milk from the Logan district to Brisbane was in 1925. During the rail strike of that year it was reported that road transport to Brisbane had to be arranged for milk from Bethania Junction and neighbouring areas, Waterford, Loganlea and Logan Village.⁸ According to a 1931 report 350 gallons of fresh milk were sent to Brisbane from Bethania daily, in addition to several hundred gallons of cream to the Kingston butter factory each week.⁹

Dairying in the Bethania area to supply milk was different from and more difficult than dairying to supply cream. The difficulties generally of dairying in the tropics were described by Lake.

Dairying in the subtropics and tropics is unique. ... Rainfall and temperature in the tropics peak in summer, and so does pasture growth. ... Tropical pastures are lower quality and less digestible than temperate species, and have a lower per cow production potential than highly digestible temperate clovers and grasses. Autumn is a difficult production period because tropical pasture species, although high in bulk, are at a very low production and digestibility level.¹⁰

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4. Morris Lake, *One Hundred Years of Dairying, A History of Dairying in the Fassifern District*, M. Lake, Brisbane, 1984, p. 37.
 5. Morris Lake, op. cit. p. 38.
 6. *Queenslander*, 1 August 1896, p. 200.
 7. *Brisbane Courier*, 23 August 1907, p. 4.
 8. *Brisbane Courier*, 29 August 1925, p. 9; 2 September, 1925, p. 15; *Daily Mail*, 29 August 1925, p. 7; 8 September 1925, p. 14.
 9. *Brisbane Courier*, 3 January 1931, p. 10.
 10. Morris Lake, *Queensland's Dairy Industry - Its History and Development*, Department of Primary Industries, Brisbane, 1992.

Seasonal changes were not of great consequence when butter was produced. Butter could be stored, and farmers selling cream to butter factories could work with the seasons, with the highest production when there was the most grass for the cows. During the winter butter factories reduced production and some creameries actually closed. On the other hand, whole milk was expected to be delivered to the consumer within a day or so of milking. The highest demand for milk was in the winter months, and the wholesalers were prepared to pay higher prices. Further, when there was an oversupply in the summer, the quotas wholesalers would accept were based on the farmers' winter production. To maximise their returns, farmers selling milk had to work against the seasons to produce as much milk as possible in the winter. It was necessary to provide fodder during the winter months to keep up production, and also in summer when pasture provided poor nutrition during rapid growth in the rainy months. Fodder crop cultivation was continuous throughout the year, and in my observation of the late 1930s and early 1940s dominated the lives of the Bethania farmers.

Farming at Bethania was technologically backward and methods in the 1920s had little changed since the previous century, but continued with an intense application to dairying. Cows were milked by hand. Milking machines had been introduced early in the century but were not used on small farms, and did not become general in Queensland until the 1950s. Two-horse teams were used for fodder cultivation. In the late 1920s petrol engines replaced the horse gear to power chaffcutters on most but not all farms. Motor cars as personal transport also appeared in the late 1920s, but tractors for farm work were rare before the Second World War. Electricity reached the area in 1938, and was used only for domestic purposes until electric motors replaced petrol engines in the 1950s.

Cattle management had improved. The dairy herds in the Bethania area were said to be of twenty to seventy head, and of a good grade of the Jersey and Illawarra breeds.¹¹ The Holsteins or Friesians of A.C. Noffke were mentioned in newspaper accounts.¹² Ben Fels and Ben Holzheimer maintained pure bred herds of Illawarras for a time in the 1930s. Herd testing advocated by the Agriculture Department was generally not practised. Farmers with small herds were sufficiently well acquainted with the quantity and quality of production of each animal. Paspalum continued to be the introduced pasture where it could be grown, with native grasses on poorer land. Other grasses and clovers grown in different parts of the state had not been successful in the Bethania area. Green feed was grown for immediate use in both summer and winter, and in summer additional crops to be conserved and used as winter feed.

11. *Brisbane Courier*, 3 January 1931, p. 10.

12. *ibid.*, 3 January 1931, p. 10; 10 January 1931, p. 19.

Although ensilage was encouraged the Bethania Germans preferred to conserve fodder by making hay. Lucerne which could be cut several times during the year remained the preferred hay crop. Cows were generally fed in the milking bails. Cutting fodder into chaff avoided wastage, permitted a mix of crops, and facilitated feeding.

Most farmers used their small areas of arable land almost exclusively for fodder production. However, W. Kopp at Loganholme was a vegetable-grower, and the main activity of the Schulz family at Bethania from the 1930s was poultry-farming. Some dairy farmers grew small quantities of potatoes twice a year, and some small patches of water-melons for the Christmas market. When all milk was sent away as milk and none separated to leave skim milk pig-raising diminished. Subsistence farming apart from the growing of garden vegetables practically disappeared, and even butter was purchased from the storekeeper.

Milk was sent to Brisbane by the morning train, usually at about 8.30 a.m., which meant that milking had to commence about daybreak. There are references in the 1920s to an evening despatch of milk, but usually the day's second milking was separated and the cream railed to Kingston butter factory once or twice a week. During the rail strikes of 1925 and 1927 milk was collected from the Bethania area by motor lorries,¹³ and a few years later road transport of milk replaced rail. The lorries took the cans of milk direct from the dairies to the premises of the wholesaler without double handling at both ends of the rail. Later in the 1930s the lorries called twice a day and nearly all milk was sent to Brisbane, and only that not required by the wholesaler was separated.

Dairy farming was described in newspapers as 'slavery' and 'drudgery' and referred to as 'tedious and monotonous.'¹⁴ Cows had to be milked twice a day every day. At Bethania even on Sunday, the church's day of rest, there were two milkings and cutting of chaff for fodder. So too on the occasional days off, the church holidays, Christmas and Good Friday, and such occasions as the Beenleigh Show and the school picnic. Dairying in general and milk production in particular required family labour. Even the small dairy farmer required assistance at milking time. In its dependence on the labour of women and children dairying among the Bethania Germans was similar to the earliest subsistence farming, and the cotton years. The conditions of women on dairy farms were mentioned in the press from time to time and the plight of children was deplored almost continually. It was said that children were exploited from the age of six years, and they had to work on dairy farms before and after school hours with

13. *Brisbane Courier*, 29 August 1925, p. 9; *Daily Mail*, 8 September 1927, p. 8.

14. *Brisbane Courier*, 2 April 1927, p. 16; *Courier Mail*, 27 October 1936, p. 12.

little time for games or recreation.¹⁵ But family labour was accepted as 'normal' in the industry. 'The great dairy industry of Australia is built upon a basis of child labour and unpaid family labour.'¹⁶ The return seldom repaid the hours of work. For instance, it was reported: 'Dairying was an unprofitable business in 1936-37, the earnings of hundreds of dairymen were more than £100 below the basic wage.'¹⁷ In the circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s the Bethania farmers were typical of those who would have had difficulty realising their farms and finding other occupations, who preferred living in the country, looked on farming as a way of life and not only as a source of income, and hoped for better times.

The dairying industry in Queensland was mainly directed to the production of butter for export to Britain, and the market for butter was unstable during the 1920s and 1930s with fluctuation in demand and price. While butter production was of little direct concern to the milk producers of Bethania, changes in the demand and price of cream affected the demand and price of whole milk. In 1922 it was reported at a meeting of the Dairymen's Association that 'the very low price of cream had resulted in many farmers sending their milk to Brisbane instead of to the cream factories, thus flooding the city with cheap milk.'¹⁸ There was over-production during the depression in the 1930s as farmers increased output to maintain their incomes during a period of low prices.¹⁹ The whole milk market in Brisbane was chaotic during and just after the depression years of the 1930s as supplies were brought into the city from additional country areas. An article in 1936 referred to the 'invasion of the dairy farmer' who supplied milk to Brisbane only when the price of cream was low and when the price of cream improved abandoned the milk supply business.²⁰

Various organisations existed in the 1920s to press for better prices and conditions for dairymen, but the histories of these are difficult to trace from the brief mentions in the press. Bethania farmers were represented on some of them. The Dairymen's Association had existed for some years and its annual meetings in 1922 and 1923 were concerned with the low price of milk.²¹ In June 1922 when it was decided at a public meeting in Beenleigh to form the South Coast Milk Producers' Association, C. W. Goll became one of the committee members.²² Nearly all of the members of the

15. *Courier Mail*, 27 October 1936, p. 12; 3 December 1936, p. 21.

16. *ibid.*, 24 October 1936, p. 24.

17. *ibid.*, 8 December 1937, p. 30.

18. *Brisbane Courier*, 21 March 1922, p. 8.

19. Anne Statham, *The Fight for a Fair Go: A History of the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation*, Q. D. O., Brisbane, 1995, p. 17.

20. *Courier Mail*, 8 June 1936, p. 12.

21. *Brisbane Courier*, 21 March 1922, p. 8, 2 March 1923, p. 15.

22. *ibid.*, 17 June 1922, p. 4.

committee of the Waterford branch of the Producers' Association formed in September 1922 had German names, with A. Baumann, chairman, and R. Radke, secretary.²³ A Dairy Farmers' Milk Association formed in 1926 from various previous bodies included representatives from the Logan but none from Bethania.²⁴

As conditions did not improve a strike of milk suppliers was considered at various times. In 1926 a Milk Suppliers' Association supported a suggestion that supplies be stopped as did the East Moreton Council of Agriculture representing milk suppliers at Ipswich.²⁵ At that time it was felt that suppliers were 'not getting anything like adequate returns considering the long hours they are obliged to work, the nature of that work, and the importance of the service they are rendering to the community.'²⁶ It was however difficult to establish sufficient discipline among the small dairy farmers for concerted strike action, and there was the threat that any strike could be broken if milk was brought in to Brisbane from other areas. To determine what should be done to improve conditions in the Brisbane milk supply the Queensland Government in 1932 set up a Milk Inquiry Committee which recommended the appointment of a Milk Board.²⁷ The Government did not improve goodwill in the industry when it did not immediately act on the recommendations. In June 1936 the Country Milk Association threatened to cease supplying wholesale distributors who refused to accede to their demand for increased prices.²⁸ By then there had been 'four years of discussion, inquiry and investigation by the Government and the various interests concerned' on the 'question of an efficient organisation for the supply and distribution of pure milk.'²⁹ In July 1937 the Association again urged the Minister for Agriculture to introduce a milk control bill.³⁰

The milk strike occurred in November 1937. Police patrolled roads leading to dairying districts, and at the request of wholesale vendors escorted some delivery trucks.³¹ In answer to allegations that pickets on roads to the north and south of Brisbane had persuaded truck drivers not to proceed with loads of milk, the Country Milk Association denied its members were picketing the roads and claimed it did not countenance lawlessness.³² However the police patrols were increased.

23. *ibid.*, 12 September 1922, p. 9.

24. *ibid.*, 15 January 1927, p. 16.

25. *ibid.*, 20 November 1926, p. 17., 17 November 1926, p. 15.

26. *ibid.*, 26 May 1927, p. 12.

27. *ibid.*, 17 February 1933, p. 13.

28. *Courier Mail*, 2 June 1936, p. 13.

29. *ibid.*, 4 June 1936, p. 12.

30. *ibid.*, 17 July 1937, p. 17.

31. *Telegraph*, 17 November 1937, p. 1; *Courier Mail*, 18 November 1937, p. 13.

32. *Courier Mail*, 17 November 1937, p. 17; 18 November 1937, p. 13; 19 November 1937, p. 15.

This was largely influenced by an incident near Waterford, where it is alleged a vehicle, stopped on a bridge ostensibly for repairs, caused a truck with milk supplies on board to halt. Several men, it is reported, seized the cans and poured an adulterant into them.³³

This was the only incident of the type reported at the time. The strike was successful in reducing the cold milk coming into Brisbane to about 5,000 of the usual 17,000 gallons daily consumption, and farmers separated their milk and sent the cream to the butter factories.³⁴ When the strike was discontinued the Queensland Government set up a provisional board to make agreements for the purchase of milk from producers.³⁵ In the next year under the *Milk Supply Act* 1938 the Brisbane Milk Board was formed to supervise the collection, treatment and distribution of milk and the allocation of quotas to suppliers to stabilize the industry.³⁶

Apart from milk and cream and small amounts of other farm produce, milled timber continued to be the only product of the Bethania Germans sold outside their area. Schneider's sawmill closed in 1921 after its last two years had been limited to cutting firewood.³⁷ From his wheelwright shop Johan Radke developed a sawmill and was followed by his sons Bill and Paul, who continued the sawmill as one of the last enterprises operated by steam power until 1945. His son Ernst took over the farm when Carl A. Oppermann began a saw mill in 1937, and another son Alfred operated the mill from 1945 until it ceased in about 1968. In the village of Waterford in the 1930s two blacksmiths, W. Oppermann and F. Winter, and a saddler, A. Rick, provided services for local farmers, the two hotels and the state school continued, and the Waterford post office store remained with relatives of the Schneider family until 1932 when it passed out of German hands. Families of the 1920s and 1930s were on average smaller than in the preceding generation, but there were great differences in family size. Ten families in the old Bethania area totalled only nineteen children,³⁸ below the replacement rate, but the Lietzow, Maas, Regeling and Schulz families all had six or more children. As in previous generations, children who could not be placed on the land had to leave the district for their livelihood. From 1925 children likely to remain on farms could attend a rural school in Beenleigh usually for one day a week to be taught useful manual skills. Brisbane was necessary for education above primary level,

33. *ibid.*, 18 November 1937, p. 13

34. *Telegraph*, 18 November 1937, p. 1.

35. *Courier Mail*, 24 November 1937, p. 17; *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 1 November 1938, pp. 1334-5, Secretary for Agriculture and Stock.

36. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, 1 November 1938, pp. 1334-5, *op. cit.*

37. *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1920, Vol II, p. 819; 1921, Vol II, p. 1077; Report of Commissioner for Railways, 1920, p. 85; 1921, p. 78.

38. Families of E. Oppermann, C. Oppermann, G. Fels, B. Radke, A. Noffke, T. Tesch, B. Holzheimer, H. Ludwig, E. Ludwig, and W. Radke.

and either Beenleigh or Brisbane for apprenticeships. The train service was adequate for Bethania residents to travel to Brisbane daily for work, but with a long working day. After George Noffke had worked with the railways at Bethania for a few weeks in 1925 he was transferred to the head office in Brisbane³⁹ and travelled daily from Bethania to work until his retirement in 1975. However, few travelled by train to work, usually younger people, and for only a few years. The fortunes of the German descendants who remained at Bethania depended primarily on milk production.

Bethania Germans generally continued to retain their farms in their families. The practice of passing farms on to youngest sons continued. In the 1930s Ben Fels, Ben Holzheimer, Ed Ludwig, Ern Oppermann, Ben Radke, and Ern Tesch, were all youngest sons who had taken over farms from their fathers. But from the 1930s the early Bethania German families began to lose their hold on the land through disposals to outsiders. Wilhelm Kelk in September 1935 sold out and with his family left Bethania. His property however remained with Germans, as it was held briefly by A. Switzer and was then acquired by Carl F. Oppermann, son of Carl A. Oppermann.⁴⁰ In September 1939 Carl Goll sold his properties earlier held by Thumm, Eppinger and Ludwig, and also left Bethania.⁴¹ Since the 1885 disposal at the eastern end of the settlement, this was the first sale to a person not a German descendant of part of the area originally settled by Germans. Ben Holzheimer in 1940 sold to a non-German some of the properties earlier occupied by Andreas Holzheimer, Ebert and Berndt,⁴² but remained in Bethania as a farmer. These properties were never re-acquired by Germans.

The war years, 1939 to 1945, were a time of modest prosperity for dairy farmers including those at Bethania. There were general shortages of foodstuffs and all produce was saleable. From 1943 butter was rationed to maintain exports to Britain. The price of milk was controlled and from October 1942 a subsidy was paid by the Commonwealth to increase the producers' returns without disturbing the price paid by the consumers.⁴³ A government subsidy in one form or other was to continue until 1975. In spite of wartime shortages of labour and supplies the Queensland dairy industry numbers peaked in the years 1942-3 to 1944-5 with 1,300,00 dairy cattle and 31,500 dairy farmers.⁴⁴

39. *Brisbane Courier*, 4 November 1925, p. 11.

40. Certificates of Title 16967, Vol. 128, fol. 236; 17923, Vol. 133., fol. 172; etc.

41. Certificate of Title 172339, Vol. 1048, fol. 79; etc.

42. Certificate of Title 99619, Vol. 655, fol. 109; 74968, Vol. 510, fol. 208; etc.

43. Anne Statham, op. cit., pp. 23-5; *Dairy Industry Assistance Act 1942*.

44. *Queensland Year Book*, Government Statistician, Brisbane, 1951, pp. 153-4.

The flood of 1947 in the Logan River was about as high as that of 1887. There had been considerable but lesser floods in the Logan in 1893 and 1928, and in those years the main flood damage was in Brisbane and areas to the north. The 1887 flood had indicated the flood line below which no dwellings or substantial buildings were to be constructed. In consequence, while the 1947 flood ruined crops and fences, the damage was not nearly as severe. The Waterford post office store built below the flood line was destroyed, and the railway bridge was covered in debris and its approaches were washed away.⁴⁵ However the destruction of the 1916 road bridge at Waterford caused the greatest inconvenience as a ferry was in use until a new bridge was built in 1954. A flood in the Logan in 1974 was similar in height but caused less damage than the 1947 flood. The 'Australia Day flood' of 1974 was very destructive in a large part of Brisbane, and the flood in the Logan was scarcely reported.

After the war the government encouraged 'more dairy produce to help the balance of payments problem,' but Australian producers had to contend with low world prices, increasing quantities of butter, and the relatively low prices of substitutes, and by the mid 1960s there were only low returns from export markets.⁴⁶ Until the second half of the 1960s Australia's dairy exports consisted mainly of butter the bulk of which was shipped to Britain. World butter production rose faster than demand, stocks accumulated, and in 1961 Britain imposed restraints on butter imports.⁴⁷

British negotiations to enter the European Economic Community began in the late 1950s, and Britain joined the E.E.C. on 1 January 1973. The E.E.C. had self-sufficiency objectives, with support arrangements for its dairy farmers and factories, and the British market for Australian dairy produce was closed completely.⁴⁸ New markets in Japan, South-East Asia and North America for diversified dairy products including milk powders and reconstituted products made up only part of the reduction in exports to Britain.⁴⁹ When it became apparent that the industry would not revive, government subsidies were phased out, and governments gave attention to restructuring a reduced industry. The level of Commonwealth government subsidy to the dairy industry was cut from 1972 and discontinued in 1974-75. As Anne Statham observed, 'Britain's entry into the EEC coincided with government withdrawal of subsidy, devastating returns for all dairy produce other than market milk.'⁵⁰

45. *Courier Mail*, 29 January 1947, pp. 1, 5; 30 January 1947, p. 1

46. Anne Statham, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

47. *The Dairyman*, January 1976, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 5-7.

48. *The Dairyman*, *loc. cit.*; Anne Statham, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 77.

49. *The Dairyman*, *loc. cit.*

50. Anne Statham, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 77, 90.

For some time the downturn in the demand for butter had little effect on whole milk production, which remained a more prosperous 'industry within an industry,' although not without its problems.⁵¹ Price control powers returned to the state government in 1948, but the state authorities were reluctant to grant increases in the price of milk. In 1950-51 there was a shortage of milk, with milkless days and milk rationing in Brisbane. Milk was brought into Brisbane from additional country areas and northern New South Wales. Brisbane wholesale distributors obtained part of their supplies direct from dairy farms and part from co-operative factories in the country. To encourage a consistent level of production through the year the Milk Board introduced a quota system for both direct and factory supply.⁵²

When the main export market to Britain was disappearing and government subsidies were being discontinued, suppliers of cream demanded participation in the domestic milk market.⁵³ From 1970 the state government introduced changes to the system of supplying milk to Brisbane to open up the market to competition among milk wholesalers and create a more equitable distribution of market milk supplies. In 1977 a Milk Entitlements Committee became responsible for allocating market milk quotas, which could be sold. The value for quotas would 'enable people wishing to leave the industry to obtain monetary recognition for their market milk equity,' and release quotas to those who needed them.⁵⁴

Further recognition that some farmers would have to leave the dairy industry was given by Commonwealth and Queensland government promotion of a number of adjustment schemes under different names mainly during the 1970s. While each of these schemes had its own particular features, their general thrust was intended to allow some low income farmers to dispose of their farms, to allow others to increase the sizes of their holdings and make them profitable, and to assist in diversification away from a reliance on butterfat production.⁵⁵ In the Logan district some larger farms put together to the south of Bethania and some farther up the Logan valley continued as dairy farms supplying milk to the factories, but there were none of these in the Bethania area.

The modern dairy industry began in the 1960s, according to Morris Lake.⁵⁶ Mechanisation was completed in the 1950s. Milking machines were universal, and

51. *ibid.*, p. 50.

52. Anne Statham, *loc. cit.*; Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Queensland Dairy Industry, 1976, in typescript, p. 16, Oxley Library.

53. Anne Statham, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

54. *ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

55. *ibid.*, pp. 67-81.

56. Morris Lake, *Queensland's Dairy Industry*, p. 2.

cultivation was by tractors instead of horse teams. Instead of supplying cream to the factories the dairymen made the alterations necessary to their dairy premises and installed refrigerated bulk milk vats on their farms. The milk was transported to the factory in tankers. Farmers such as those in Bethania who had previously supplied milk to wholesalers also sent their milk to the factories in tankers, and milk and cream cans disappeared. The capital expenditure together with the fall in prices from reduced demand required a larger scale of production to be profitable, and forced many of the smaller dairy farmers out of business, including a number in the Bethania area.

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a 'dairy produce marketing revolution' in Queensland.⁵⁷ From the 1960s there was a downward trend in domestic butter consumption. Propaganda about butter and health reduced the demand for butter and the former butter factories could not survive by producing butter alone. There were new demands for snacks and convenience foods, and milk delivered to the factories was processed into a range of food products, yoghurts, dairy desserts, custards, and modified and flavoured milk drinks.⁵⁸ The Kingston Butter Factory went with the move away from single purpose factories. In the 1950s it became a milk depot, and received both milk and cream from farmers. In 1958 the Peters Arctic Delicacy Company took over the company. The factory produced buttermilk powder and skim milk powder in addition to butter, and in 1978 began manufacturing cottage cheese and bakers' cheese. Dairying was declining in the Logan, supplies of milk became inadequate, and in 1983 production ceased at the Kingston Butter factory.⁵⁹

The changed demand for dairy products and the changed technology in the industry were reflected in the reduced numbers of cattle and farmers. The number of dairy cattle in Queensland remained above one million until 1964-5, but the number of dairy farmers had reduced considerably. (Change in counting of dairy farmers distorted comparison of numbers. Until 1962-63 when the number was recorded as 21,600 the statistician counted every 'owner of one head or more of dairy cattle,' but in 1963-64 excluded 'holdings with house cows only' for a total of 14,800.⁶⁰ However the fall in the number of farmers was clearly very great). By the time Britain joined the E.E.C. in 1973 the number of dairy farmers had fallen to 6,700 and the number of dairy cattle to 600,000. Numbers continued to fall and from the late 1980s appear to have stabilised at about 2,200 farmers and 300,000 dairy cattle.⁶¹

57. Anne Statham, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

58. Anne Statham, *loc. cit.*; Report of Committee of Inquiry, p. 41.

59. 'Kingston Butter Factory,' unpublished paper in typescript, compiled by Mary Howells, historian, Logan City Local History Library.

60. *Queensland Year Book*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Queensland Office, 1964, p. 171; 1965, p. 175

As the dairying industry changed the Bethania German families were unable to increase production to levels necessary to remain economically viable and meet the need for more cows and more milk per farmer. From being a low capital industry dairying required increased capital, first for tractors and milking machines as the industry became more mechanised, then to meet the requirements for bulk handling. Even with increased capital greater production was difficult to achieve where land was limited and the small areas of arable land were insufficient for larger scale fodder production.

Bethania Germans left the dairying industry at various times and in various circumstances, and some of them moved out of the Bethania area. The following examples indicate the time span of their withdrawal from the industry. Ed. Ludwig and his sons Clive and Kevin sold their properties in 1956 but did not immediately leave the area. Ern and Bill Lietzow ceased dairying and sold the Lietzow property at Loganlea in 1964. Ben Fels and his sons Eric and Colin sold their Loganholme property in 1973 and lived in Beenleigh. John Oppermann was the last to leave the dairying industry and sell his property in the area of the original German settlement. He had experienced the stages of the industry. On his father's farm, the former Kelk properties, hand-milking and farming with horses had given way to a milking machine and a tractor in 1948. In later years after John had taken over the farm he had to introduce on-farm refrigeration and bulk handling of milk. With the addition of the former Hinze and Oppermann properties he had some 140 acres with twenty-five acres of cultivation and he built up a herd of seventy cows, a dairy farm which was small by the standards of the 'modern dairy industry.' In 1980 he disposed of his milk quota and his property, moved to the nearby suburb of Loganlea, and took up full-time employment. John Radke is the last of the descendants to be a farmer in the area originally settled by Germans. His father Fred Radke ceased dairying in 1975 and operated a piggery until his death in 1992. John is a full-time employee and runs beef cattle on the property which includes the nine acres his great-great-grandfather acquired from Hausmann in 1866 together with the additions made by his forebears.

For some of the small Bethania farmers a 'let-out' from the dairying industry was provided by the changing demographics of south-east Queensland and the associated spread of suburban development to the Bethania area. From the 1950s the population increase of Brisbane city spilled over into adjacent areas and residential and industrial estates were developed beyond the city boundaries. In 1972 it was reported that rising land prices and a growing desire for a more relaxed way of life had led to a boom in

61. *Queensland Year Book*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Queensland Office, 1991, p. 173.

land sales beyond the Brisbane city boundaries, and the start of construction of freeway systems provided a boost for areas south of Brisbane. "Those looking for the cheaper block of land bought in the "new suburbs" while those looking for a bigger block of land in quiet surroundings were paying big money for acreage blocks.⁶² There was also a population increase in the shires to the south of Bethania. In the 1949 reorganisation of local governments the Bethania area was included in the Beaudesert Shire. The beach resorts from Southport to the border were included in the South Coast Shire, the name of which was later changed to 'Gold Coast'. The Albert Shire included the areas to the north and west of the Gold Coast. In 1978 in recognition of the spread of population from Brisbane the Logan Shire was formed to include parts of the Albert and Beaudesert Shires north of the Logan River, and the Bethania area was included in the Albert Shire. The Gold Coast grew rapidly from the 1960s, and the population of the Albert Shire increased quickly from the 1970s. There was also residential and industrial development along the traffic corridor to the east of Bethania between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Suburban development at Waterford began before that at Bethania. In the late 1960s developers began buying and subdividing blocks in areas closer to Brisbane, at Woodridge, Kingston, Slack's Creek and Loganlea, and then around Waterford. There were a number of separate residential and acreage estates. For example, the first release of blocks in the 'Running Waters' estate on the river in the Tygum area of the earlier sugar plantation was made in September 1971, and larger blocks in the 'Logan Meadows' estate were being sold in 1973.⁶³ A suburb developed on the left bank and across the Logan River from the original Waterford township. Waterford West State School commenced in 1976, and when the Waterford Plaza Shopping Centre was opened in September 1988 with a second stage in May 1994 it was claimed that consumers had no need to travel to major centres for supplies and services.⁶⁴ Closer to Brisbane and on the rail line at Loganlea a State High School was opened in 1983 and a College of Technical and Further Education in 1988. There were also estate developments around and to the south of Beenleigh, and Holmview changed from a farming area into a suburb of Beenleigh. The new suburb of Tanah Merah appeared across the river to the north of Bethania, and Loganholme farms were also subdivided. Being handy to industrial estates at Acacia Ridge, Rocklea, Moorooka, Kingston and Woodridge, and easy access to the highway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, were selling points for residential blocks at Waterford and Bethania, and for Bethania there was also 'proximity to the railway station with eighteen trains per day.'⁶⁵

62. *Courier Mail*, 11 August 1972, p. 21.

63. *Courier Mail*, 4 September 1971, p. 7; *Albert News*, 13 January 1973, p. 18.

64. *Albert and Logan News*, 19 October 1988, pp. 35-43; 25 June 1994, pp. 21-31.

The first suburban development in the Bethania area originally settled by Germans was across the road to the south of the Lutheran church, an area of thirty-four acres. This block was originally taken up by Tesch and later acquired by Ludwig. After the sale by Ludwig it passed through various hands until it was acquired by developers and subdivided into housing blocks in 1971.⁶⁶ The small block to the south of the Lutheran school previously owned by J. F. W. Schulz was subdivided in 1982.⁶⁷ Adjacent areas became part of the same development marketed as 'Camelot Heights' estate. This development included the Bethania Village Shopping Centre. There was continuous development to the east along the Beenleigh Road to link with the new suburb of Eden's Landing. The eastern end of the original German settlement, blocks first occupied by Thiedecke and Berndt, also became part of Eden's Landing, separated from the developments in Bethania by a low-lying area reserved as parkland. An industrial estate was developed across the road from the Bethania Village Shopping Centre near the Beaudesert railway line on part of an area of 170 acres set aside for that purpose.⁶⁸

Two subdivisions across the road to the west of the original German settlement together formed the largest suburban development in the immediate area of Bethania. The first subdivision was the property of nearly 100 acres acquired by Schilling from Hinchcliffe in 1969 and later owned by members of the Tesch family. After the death of Ted Tesch in 1961 and some intermediate owners the property was bought by developers in 1969. The 500 residential blocks into which it was subdivided were offered for sale in instalments from November 1972 and marketed as 'Cromwell County' estate, a name which would disappear when marketing was completed. The first allotments were offered with bitumen streets, concrete kerbs and channels, underground drainage, electricity and phone, and the council had supplied reticulated water and a sewerage system before the last were sold.⁶⁹ Adjacent to 'Cromwell County' were the Noffke properties which were acquired by developers in 1970. The part of the property to the south of the railway line and above the flood line, in earlier times owned by O'Donnel and Willert, was subdivided into 750 homesites. The blocks were marketed as 'Bethania Waters' in stages from 1977 to 1986.⁷⁰ Many of the blocks were similar to those on the previous, adjacent development, but there were also more expensive hilltop blocks, and along the river upstream from the railway bridge, larger 'riverfront blocks

65. *Courier Mail*, 11 August 1972, p. 21; 17 November 1972, p. 21.

66. Certificate of Title 376620, Vol. 1985, fol. 210; etc.

67. Certificate of Title 104863, Vol 683, fol. 103.

68. *Albert and Logan News*, 11 May 1979, p.25.

69. *Courier Mail*, 17 November 1972, p. 21; 23 February 1973, p. 17.

70. *Courier Mail*, 22 January 1977, p. 6; *Albert and Logan News*, 29 November 1985, p. 38.

well above flood level.⁷¹ The development included recreation areas on the river bank, a preschool site, a school reserve, and a football park. The name given by the developers was retained in the Bethania Waters Shopping Centre which was opened in 1986 across the road from the railway station and including twelve businesses offering a variety of services.⁷² Other parts of the Noffke property were subdivided into acreage lots or hobby farms, much of them below the floodline but each with a homestead area above the line.

The Bethania area had taken on the characteristics of a Brisbane suburb with residential development surrounded by hobby farms in the low-lying areas. There were no full-time farmers. The immediate area provided few opportunities for employment apart from the shopping centres and service activities, but there was easy road access to employment areas, and the rail service Brisbane to Beenleigh through Bethania was electrified in November 1984, with services half-hourly for off-peak periods and more frequently for peak periods.⁷³ The Bethania area became mainly a dormitory suburb for commuters to Brisbane or Beenleigh or to the industrial estates south of Brisbane.

There is no definite time but somewhere about the 1980s the Bethania area was no longer identifiable with a German community. The population of Bethania and adjacent areas was different from that of earlier times and much more numerous. There were no civic organisations based on Bethania, and those centred in Beenleigh did not have representation from German descendants in Bethania. A Bethania Progress Association held meetings at the Waterford State School from 1983 to 1985 and claimed to have been influential in dealing with local government. None of its committee members had German surnames.⁷⁴ Since the changes of 1949 no German descendant has represented the area in local government. German descendants had mingled with British residents and no longer spoke a language which could separate them from other citizens. The Lutheran congregation had changed too. It no longer used the German language, and its members were not exclusively German. While some descendants of the early German families, and of later migrants with German names, were scattered among the residents of suburban developments in Bethania and adjacent areas, there was no concentration of Germans or German descendants in any definable area of land. The Bethania Germans had ceased to be identifiable as a community.

71. *Courier Mail*, 1 September 1979, p. 62; 10 April 1982, p. 59.

72. *Albert and Logan News*, 2 July 1986, p. 16.

73. *ibid.*, 2 November 1984, p. 1; 7 November 1984, p. 1.

74. *ibid.*, 9 February 1983, p. 36; 4 November 1983, p. 1; 7 December 1983, p. 6; 25 May 1984, p. 7; 12 June 1985, p. 35.

Chapter 12

CONCLUSION

The thesis has sought to explore and find answers for the three questions asked in the Introduction: first, how it was that the original Bethania Germans and those who followed them came to migrate to Queensland and take up land in and near Bethania; second, how those Germans and their descendants were able to sustain themselves so that the area remained identifiable as a German-settled area for about a hundred years, and third, how that German element then declined so that the area and its population ceased to be identifiable as German.

The exploration of the history of the early years of the topic, mainly concerned with the first question, was more difficult than it ought to have been. One may pass over the minor errors in other works, such as the various misspellings of *Susanne Godeffroy*, the mistakes for so many years in the name of the steamer *Diamond*, or the attempt to build up a story of Irish-German friction, but these were not merely annoying but pointed to the need to check all secondary sources. Many of the more serious pieces of history of the community, as written, have been distorted by attempts to show parallels with the German settlements at German Station (Nundah) and in South Australia. Newspaper accounts which compared the Bethania settlement with that at German Station concerned only a few of the earlier years and were relatively easily disposed of. The Church accounts sought to portray a unique migration of a group of German Lutherans under a recognised leader to parallel the 1838 settlement of Lutherans in South Australia. On the history of the Lutheran Church in Queensland one cannot go past Theile but his attempt to portray the Bethania settlement as one of Old Lutherans from its inception does not stand up to serious examination, nor does his attempt to limit the involvement of Hausmann in the early years. The linear forest village imagined by Erdmann simply never existed. Exploration of the topic showed that the settlement of the Germans at Bethania fitted within the general history of the migration and settlement of Germans in Queensland.

An explanation of why German migrants came to Bethania requires consideration of two major factors, the 'push' factor, why they left Germany, and also the 'pull' factor, why they came to Queensland. It also requires an explanation of why in Queensland they came to settle at Bethania. The Germans who settled at Bethania from February 1864 were part of the large emigration from Germany in the nineteenth century, only about one per cent of whom came to the Australian colonies. We do not have direct evidence of the reasons the Bethania Germans decided to leave Germany.

Economic factors were the reason for most of the migrants leaving Germany, and the apparent reason for the departure of those who came to Bethania, although not all of them were desperately poor and some had paid their own fares. The Queensland government included Germans among the migrants it sought to attract as workers and settlers. For Germans part of the attraction of Queensland was the possibility of obtaining their own land and that there were free passages for those who could not pay the fares. To those who had paid their own fares the Queensland government gave land orders on arrival for themselves and members of their families. Those who did not pay their own fares would probably have to work as employees, but after two years in the colony there were additional land orders for all migrants.

The first settlers in February 1864 included some who had recently arrived on the *Susanne Godeffroy*, and also some Germans who had been in the colony for various lengths of time. Later arrivals joined them at Bethania. While some of the settlers later brought out family members, chain migration was never a strong feature of the Bethania settlement. A majority of the early settlers were from the Uckermark in Prussia, but other areas in the German states were also represented. Some of the Uckermarkers were associated with one or more Old Lutheran churches in their area, but religious difficulties of Old Lutherans were over by that time and as far as we can tell there was no religious or denominational reason for their migration. There is no evidence that the core group of Uckermarkers migrated under a leader or as a group. While the migrants formed a Lutheran congregation, this was not a planned settlement of Lutherans or of Germans.

The Germans owed their settlement at Bethania to Pastor Hausmann. He brought the Germans to the area which he knew from previous visits, and where there was available land adjacent to that recently taken up by English and Irish settlers on the Logan Agricultural Reserve. The land had been surveyed and offered for sale by the Queensland government under its land settlement scheme, and as it had not been sold was then available for selection. There was no special provision of land by the government for the Bethania Germans. Five of the Uckermarkers and two later arrivals applied their land orders to obtain surveyed blocks. Apparently Hausmann persuaded Germans with means to assist their fellows to obtain land, and some blocks were divided with some of the subdivisions as small as six acres. Other blocks were acquired and forty families were settled on a little more than one square mile by the end of 1866. The concentration of small holdings gave the area a distinctive character. The Bethania Germans, like other German settlers in Queensland, were dirt farmers, intensive rather than extensive farmers. Coming to the Logan settlement area later than British settlers,

they took up small blocks of heavily timbered land which when cleared were suitable for cultivation.

The Germans were able to maintain themselves on the land they acquired in 1864 with additional areas to which they expanded later. They continued to hold the land until the 1930s. With marriages mainly among Germans and with large families they maintained a German population in the area. Church and language were the main factors in uniting the Bethania Germans and in distinguishing them as an identifiable community in the wider population.

Their farming was able to sustain the Bethania Germans in the area until the collapse of the dairying industry in the second half of the twentieth century. In the early years subsistence farming employing women and children provided most of their own sustenance and some of the men sought work away from the area while awaiting their first crops. But their settlement was never going to be mainly self-sufficient and from its beginnings the Bethania Germans had to obtain supplies and market their produce outside the area. As water transport restricted the crops they could market, at first they relied mainly on the hardy crops, maize and potatoes, and these remained important for a long time. The Bethania Germans followed government encouragement of new farming industries, and were at the beginning of cotton and sugar production in Queensland, and then moved on to the dairying industry. Their activities were properly described as mixed farming until the twentieth century when they became reliant on milk production. Among the Bethania Germans there were tradesmen to provide services for a farming community, but the only activity other than farming with produce for sale outside the area was sawmilling, and it was never more than a small activity employing only a few people.

The small blocks of land on which many of the Bethania Germans initially settled provided only for subsistence farming and proved inadequate when they moved into crops requiring larger acreages. In the area originally settled blocks were consolidated over a long period and the number of families decreased. However, the Bethania Germans were able to expand their settlement into adjacent areas upriver and across the river as English and Irish settlers moved out of the district. These new areas were taken up by Germans from the area originally settled and also by Germans new to Bethania who joined the community.

The continuing German identity of the Bethania population was ensured by marriages within the community and large families. Most of the Bethania Germans had migrated as families. They were part of the larger German population of the Logan

district and preserved the German identity of the population by marrying mainly Germans from within the Logan district. The small number of Bethania Germans who married non-Germans generally lived away from the area. Only from the 1930s did non-Germans who married Germans remain in the community. Their large families ensured that there were succeeding generations of Germans to take over their farms, in fact, far too many for the available farms. With a relatively large population initially settled on a small area, then with large families, and with barely any employment opportunities other than agriculture, it was inevitable that many of the Bethania Germans and their descendants would have to leave the area. But a sufficient number of them remained for the area to be identified as German until at least the 1930s when some sales of land in the former German area were made to non-Germans.

The German language and the Lutheran church were unifying influences, and separated the Germans from the British settlers. The Germans do not appear to have observed any distinctions among the speakers of different German dialects in the community. There may have been some denominational differences among the settlers when they left Germany but at Bethania they established a Lutheran congregation which remained united, and also remained within a Lutheran synod organisation after that was formed. When the German Apostolic Church later established a small community it did not detract from the general unity of the Bethania Germans. It is impossible to gauge the attachment of the community generally but there was always a sufficient number of active members to maintain a Lutheran congregation at Bethania. The Lutheran congregation had problems in obtaining acceptable pastors, but appears to have provided services for all Germans who required them. For fifty years the pastors of the Lutheran Church attempted to maintain church schools and teach the German language, but with diminishing success. It was difficult to maintain an interest in learning German when the essential language for dealing with officials and for business purposes was English, and the quality of the German used declined. The congregation was often unable to obtain teachers, and by the time a regular congregational school was established in the early 1900s it attracted only half the Lutheran children. In its services the Lutheran congregation persisted with the German language until the 1930s. Apart from church and language there was no strong German national or cultural identification. The Bethania German community was generally untroubled by officials or other citizens during the two World Wars, although restrictions during the First World War made the teaching of the German language more difficult.

The processes of integration and assimilation which would eventually destroy the separate identity of the Bethania German community began almost as soon as the settlement was formed. Their trading involvements with the British merchants in

Brisbane were part of their integration into the life of the colony. In addition, the Hinchcliffe sons' instruction in English, involvement in forming a government school when the church school failed, and the requirement of naturalisation to obtain a second land order, lessened their German identity and the separateness of their community. With other landowners they had the right to vote in local and colonial elections, and later in state and federal elections. Some of them became members of the local government council, and one was a candidate, albeit unsuccessful, for election to the state parliament. The evidence is sketchy but it suggests that the Bethania Germans were never deliberately excluded by British residents, and they were able to participate in sport and social activities and in associations of producers.

The decline of an identifiable German community at Bethania may be attributed to two causes. The German descendants became assimilated and lost their identity as Germans. They also disposed of nearly all of the land and the Bethania area ceased for most part to be identifiable as settled by Germans.

In the twentieth century the processes of assimilation were completed. The population declined still further as the scale of agriculture increased and milk production became the main industry, and the area still offered little other employment. With continued consolidation properties supported fewer families, and families had fewer children. Attempts to teach the German language were discontinued in the 1930s and the English language progressively replaced the German in the Lutheran congregation, until by the 1940s all services were in English. By the 1950s, the last of the German migrants at Bethania had passed away, and the community consisted mainly of German descendants, few of whom could speak the German language. Non-Germans married to German descendants were included in the community, and in the Lutheran congregation. The Apostolic community also abandoned German and became smaller. Its church building in Waterford was removed in 1949, and it ceased to be identifiable as a community of the Church. German descendants participated in all activities of the wider community with little except their family names to distinguish them.

The German descendants also lost their identification with the areas originally settled or taken up later by their forebears. From the 1920s nearly all the German farmers in the Bethania area became dependant for their livelihood on the production of whole milk for the Brisbane market. Dairying was regarded as a hard industry where the rewards were seldom adequate for the labour, and particularly so in Bethania where milk had to be produced against the natural seasonal pattern and farmers grew their own fodder. Some sales of Bethania properties were made to non-Germans from the 1930s. With changes in technology and in the scale required for successful dairy farming from

the 1950s, more of the Bethania German farmers left the industry. When the British market for dairy produce closed in the 1970s there was a general decline in dairying in Queensland. The remainder of the Bethania Germans left the dairy industry, and none of them took up any other farming in the area as a full-time occupation.

As dairying was declining the spread of urban development from Brisbane reached Bethania and adjacent areas. Although a few retained their properties, most Bethania Germans were able to dispose of their farms to developers who subdivided them into residential and acreage blocks. The Bethania landscape changed. For the most part the land above the flood line became residential suburbs with shopping centres and other services, and hobby farms extended to areas below the flood line. Those descendants of Bethania Germans who had not left the area were only a small part of a changed and more numerous population. The Lutheran congregation continued to worship in the 1872 church but it drew its members from the wider population and only some of its members identified with the former Bethania Germans.

Economic circumstances led to the beginning and ultimately to the end of the settlement of the Bethania Germans. Their economic circumstances led to the emigration of the Bethania Germans from Germany. The schemes under which they migrated and took up land were the response of the Queensland government to aspects of the Queensland economy. The interest of Pastor Hausmann led them to take up land at Bethania. They initially fulfilled the purpose for which the government brought them to Queensland, as part of the labour force and mainly as small farmers. They and their descendants who remained in the area obtained their livelihoods as small farmers for over 100 years. Their language and their church distinguished them from British settlers and made them identifiable as a German community, but over the years their descendants lost the German language and became less identifiable as Germans or German descendants. In the end, when changed economic circumstances made it impossible for them to continue as small farmers most of them sold their land and lost their connection with the area, and the Bethania Germans ceased to be identifiable as a community.

Reminders of the presence of the Bethania Germans remain. There is the place name Bethania. The 1872 church is still used for Sunday worship. The Lutheran congregation has had a continuous existence since it was formed. The cemetery has German names on the headstones and some of the earliest epitaphs are in the German language and script. German family names have been given to some roads in and around Bethania. The only part of any of the February 1864 selections held continuously by a direct descendant is the 900 square metres I occupied as I wrote this

thesis. The only other original holding in the same family, and a more substantial one, is the farm of John Radke on the block his family bought from Hausmann in 1866, with additions. As an identifiable community the Bethania Germans have passed into history.

IMPERIAL-METRIC CONVERSION

1 foot	0.3048 metres
1 yard = 3 feet	0.9144 metres
1 chain = 22 yards	20.1168 metres
1 mile = 80 chains = 1760 yards	1609.34 metres
1 perch = $30\frac{1}{4}$ square yards	25.29 square metres
1 rood = 40 perches	1011.714 square metres
1 acre = 4 roods = 160 perches = 10 square chains = 4840 square yards	0.405 hectares

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