



Wilma in December 1905 aged four.

MALENY MEMORIES 1905

Wilma (Mary Williamina), daughter of Alexander and Ethel Thynne of Nambour, (and eldest grandchild of Mary Williamina Cairncross) wrote this in 1981 when she was 80. She was four years old when she lived at Maleny for a year.

After we left Cairns, North Queensland, we went to live on my Uncle Ted Thynne's farm at Maleny on the Blackall Range. It is one of the loveliest districts imaginable – mountain views with the Glasshouse Mountains rising in isolated shapes from the plains below, and the coastline of the Pacific Ocean clearly visible for miles on a good day. The farm was very isolated at that time. The roads were frightful, not made at all. Going on a visit was a dangerous undertaking, usually in an open buggy with my uncle's spirited horses, and almost sure to rain.

Knowing my mother had some nursing experience, my uncle Ted Thynne on his next visit to the city bought her a medical box with quite good equipment including dental forceps and suture materials. So every now and then some schoolchild came to beg her to give the last pull of a shaky tooth; or sometimes a suture or two was needed. Once a boy played truant from school. He thought his father would not take such a dim view of him if he cleared some lantana patches in one paddock. He took a brush hook with him but by some means he fell on the razor-sharp blade. Afraid to go home, he lost a good deal of blood before he knew he must go for help. His father brought him to my mother but she at first refused. To begin with it wasn't a fresh wound and goodness knows what infection he had achieved during the afternoon in the bush where he had been. The father said "He won't make a fuss, and if you don't stitch it I will, because there is no way at present that I could get him over the roads to the doctor, or get the doctor here." So, standing there with the little boy, and with the father watching her, she did the best she could with the wound, inserting nearly 30 stitches, and insisted the boy must be taken to the doctor quickly. Well the rain continued and the wound healed. Later on she saw the boy when he was growing up and there was just a tiny hair-like line from near his ear right around to near the side of his mouth. It was a wonderful success. There was a sad end to the story. When the First World happened, he

was one of the very early ones to go to it, and was killed, and all that wonderful surgery went for nothing.

My uncle had some very good horses, some cows, and lots of fowls that had been brought from Gatton College I think it was, or some college that had good fowls, and we had chickens. I remember my mother shooting a kookaburra. She kept losing chickens and one day she caught the kookaburra with one dangling out of its mouth. She pulled up the rifle which she had learned to use, and shot him. Dead. Another day a foreign puss came into the kitchen, climbed onto the table and began to drink out of the big jug of milk. That was not right so my mother shot at it, trying to save the jug. I don't remember what happened to the jug but she certainly killed the cat. She learned a lot of things at Maleny.

The dingoes were very bad in the area and I remember so well their howling when they came around at night. We had all read about wolves doing that sort of thing. My uncles [Ted and Andrew Thynne] built poultry houses that were too high for the dingoes to get at the birds (about five or six feet off the ground?), and the fowls soon learned to climb up to them.

My father at that time was negotiating for a position he thought he would like to fill in Nambour, and for a while he used to travel quite often between Maleny and Nambour. Well, when he would go away we were never quite sure when he would come back, although I had several times heard my mother say she felt she was a little bit psychic. She seemed always to know when my father would be returning from these excursions and we would go walking along the road to meet him. One day my sister Lucy and I decided we'd go to meet him and we wouldn't tell our mother. We walked away through the paddocks, I don't know how far, and we came across a very queer thing. There were suddenly birds all around. They may have been plain turkeys or curlews – they made a noise like curlews but I don't know if curlews live in a crowd like that, in a family affair. They screeched around us and they were about half as tall as we were, and we were simply terrified. We took to our heels and went home as quickly as we could.

Another day I decided I would go alone. I wouldn't take Lucy who was young and not considered very strong at that time. I walked along the road and walked and walked as children will do, until I was tired. It was getting dark and I hadn't met my father, so I crawled up onto a log lying on the ground. One part of it was high off the ground so I climbed up there so the dingoes wouldn't get me. I remember them coming and howling around me but I made myself as comfortable as I could and went to sleep. There was great turmoil at the house of course, because they didn't know where I had gone. As my father wasn't coming home that day my uncles had the worry of trying to find me, which Uncle Ted did about half past eight at night when it was pitch dark. What brought him to the log I don't know but he found me there fast asleep, and took me home on his horse in great triumph.

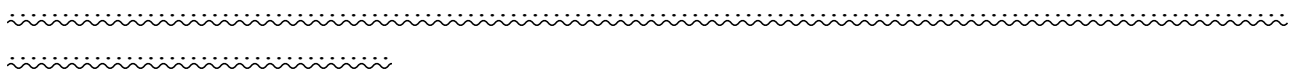
It was lovely country there where we lived: beautiful trees, and anything seemed to grow. We didn't go visiting much but one day around Christmas my mother and father and sister and I all went to visit Mrs Burgess and her husband – elderly people they were – and we thought they were lovely because of course they made a great fuss of us, and we enjoyed the day very much. Unfortunately that very night something went wrong. They were both burned to death. The Burgess family were very well-known people in that district. It wasn't long ago that I met a Mrs Burgess, a daughter-in-law I think of that couple, and she remembered about the tragedy and

everything. We had had such a lovely day with the Burgesses and were terribly shocked to learn next day what had happened to the dear old people.

We used to go to see a Mrs Ward who lived down the road. [The Wards were share farmers with Mabel Thynne and her sister Katie at that time.] I have identified her home in later years, and I remember very well how we used to walk from where we lived down to her place of an afternoon, and she'd give us some cakes and things before we went home. I don't remember whether it was Mrs Ward's house or where we lived, but the bullock teams used to come up the mountain there and when they approached that part of the road the bullocks had to put an extra spurt on. The way the drivers got them to do it in those days was of course to swear like mad at the bullocks. I was terrified at this swearing and I remember getting behind the French-light doors and pulling them close back onto me. I thought nobody could see me, but I could see the bullocks pulling the timber by peeping through the crack near the door hinges. I think my uncle had a little sawmill where they used to bring logs. [Thynne & Pattemore] There's trouble in that district today about cutting down the trees because they can't be easily replaced, and take years and years to grow. But the people were very kind to their bullocks as far as I've ever heard because they were very useful to them at earning their living. However they used to come up the grade at this place and yell and the conversation wouldn't bear repeating as they pulled the huge logs up to the sawmill.

The state of the roads in those days was simply shocking and this part of the road had plenty of rain and bog to follow, and was terribly dangerous to drive upon. My aunt [Mrs Ted Thynne] who later lived there was thrown out of the buggy with her little son in her arms, and I don't wonder. I remember clearly the ruts in the road.

I think my father would have loved the farm life, but it wasn't very good at bringing in the money, and to bring up a family you needed to have money. In Nambour the man who was Editor of the paper there was prepared to sell his half of the partnership, so my father bought into the firm. Mr Mc Fadden was the other partner, and was a very well-trained printer. At the end of the year we moved to Nambour where my father was building us a house, with an office for himself on one corner. He became Editor of the Nambour Chronicle for many years, and also practised as a solicitor.



The context for the family's move from Cairns to Nambour via Maleny is given in this article:

Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser, Friday 8 September 1905

We are pleased to record the arrival in Nambour of a legal gentleman who has decided to settle in our midst. We refer to Mr A. W. Thynne, B.A. (Melb.), who was admitted as a solicitor in March 1897, and soon afterwards set up on his own account in Cairns, N. Q., where he remained until about a year ago, when the failing health of his family compelled him to seek a more congenial climate. Some months of residence on the Maleny end of the Blackall Range, where his two brothers are following up the dairying industry, have removed all fears on this score, and so he has decided to go properly into professional harness again. Mr. Thynne's career in the north was signalised by several good wins, and he earned a reputation for soundness and straight-going, both as a lawyer and a citizen, that we feel sure will stand him in good stead in this district. The fact that

he is the eldest son of the Hon. A. J. Thynne should be sufficient recommendation in itself, even if our local (?) contemporary had not in a recent issue referred to him as “a chip off the old block.” Mr Thynne was educated at Riverview College, Sydney, and at the Melbourne University, and served his articles in the office of Messrs. Thynne and Macartney. In sporting circles rowing was his strong point, as he had an unbeaten record as an eight-oar stroke during four years in Victoria, and was stroke of the 1894 Queensland crew until indisposition put him in a subordinate place a few days before the race. Sailing, however, has always been his favourite sport, though rifle shooting has claimed a large share of his leisure. In Cairns he was an active member of the Hospital, Agricultural Society, Chamber of Commerce, and Penny Savings Bank committees, and lieutenant and for a time officer commanding the F. Company (since disbanded), Kennedy regiment. We hope Mr Thynne’s venture in setting up here will meet with the support that local industry deserves, and judging from our own experience this hope will be realised.

