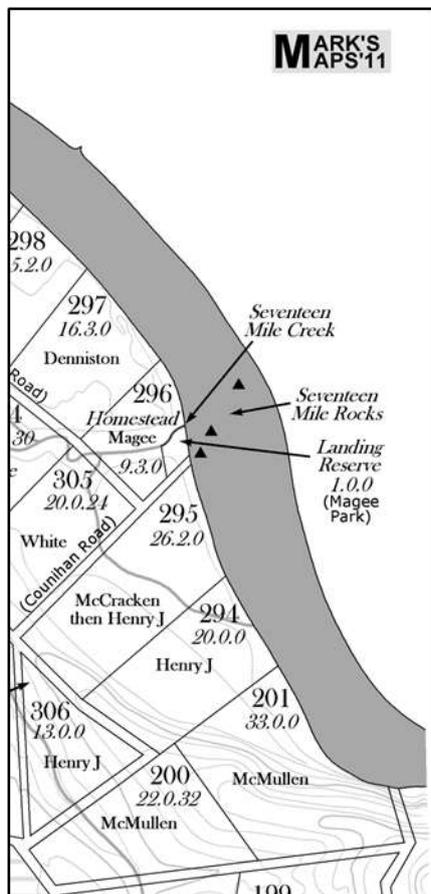


Agriculture and Market Gardens - Rocks Riverside Park & Vicinity

The group of 25 mature fruit-bearing mango trees at the base of the escarpment near the Rocks Community Garden at Rocks Riverside Park are a remnant of the rich agricultural and market gardening history of the area. From the time of first settlement in late 1864, the fertile alluvial soil on the riverside flats, once cleared, was used for agriculture. Pioneers took their produce by river, on rafts or punt-style rowboats, to markets in Brisbane and Ipswich for at least the first 20 years of settlement. Later, horse-drawn transport, followed by motorised transport was used to take produce to the markets by road.

Typical crops in the 19th century were potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and corn. While information specific to the Rocks Riverside Park area is not available, it is known that farmers in the Seventeen Mile Rocks farming district (of which the area was part) experimented with growing sugar cane and cotton, and that some also grew a variety of green vegetables.



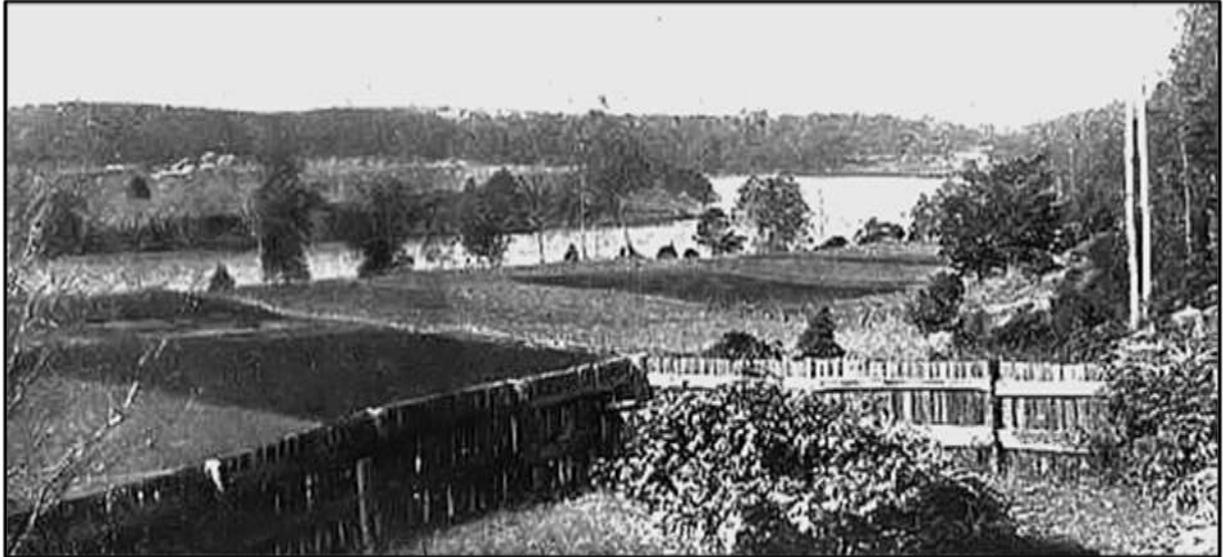
Original Crown Land Portions 201, 294 & 295, Rocks Riverside Park. Section of Map by Mark Roberts for CSHSoc.

The land east of Counihan Road and bounded by the river in the north and east (that is, at the QCL wharf and the area now occupied by Rocks Riverside Park) comprised three original Crown land portions (nos. 201, 294 and 295). These portions each extended to the top of the escarpment. (Rocks Riverside Park now occupies much of this land). Three pioneer couples settled on these blocks and raised families in the area: **James and Mary Ann Henry and family** (portion 294, later also portion 295), **Samuel and Selina McCracken and family** (portion 295) and **James and Eliza McMullen and family** (portion 201).

On the west side of Counihan Road, **John Vincent Magee** worked the riverfront portion 296, continuing to do so after taking up residence on another block on the Fig Tree Pocket side of the river. In the 20th century, his daughter **Cis and her husband Tom Counihan** settled on portion 296 after their marriage. They operated a market garden there for many years, during a period when most of the Seventeen Mile Rocks farming district had switched to dairy farming. During World War 2, the Counihans supplied the Army with vegetables as well as taking their produce to market.

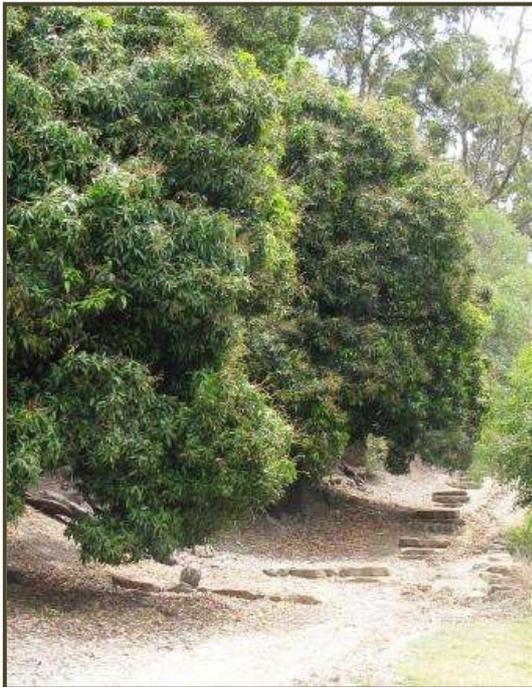
The Henrys and McMullens both continued to work the land east of Counihan Road well into the second decade of the 20th century. The last Henry holding (portion 294 on which their home stood) was not sold until 1920. As the map opposite illustrates, the Henrys and McMullens also held additional land between the

escarpment and Seventeen Mile Rocks Road. Read more about the pioneer Henry and Magee families here - <http://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/19th-century-pioneers.pdf> For more information about them and also about the McMullen family, see our book *When River Was Roadway* <http://cshsoc.org.au/when-river-was-roadway/>



View of the Henry Farm, Seventeen Mile Rocks, from Henry house yard on ridge above escarpment, 1906. Image No. 10041, SLQ; Origin Queensland Newspapers.

Between 1912 and 1920, all three portions changed hands. The first 20th century owners were **James Alfred Boyce** (portion 295), **Daniel Aloysius Hogan** (portion 294) and **John Joseph Manion** (portion 201). Farming of the lands continued though Mr Hogan and Mr Manion each had another occupation and were not full-time farmers.



The mango trees are on portion 201. The images of mango trees opposite and below were taken in November 2012. As a Henry family descendant born in 1925 and a Counihan-Magee family descendant born in 1926 have each advised that the mango trees were already mature fruit-producing trees before he/she was born, it is likely that the trees were planted by the McMullens or John Joseph Manion, most likely the former.

In 1925-6, the Catholic Church bought all three portions. Queensland Cement & Lime acquired portion 201 from the Church in 1932 and had established a wharf and a coral transfer and processing plant there by 1936. An easement provided in 1936 through portions 294 and 295 allowed QCL access to portion 201 from Counihan Road. The current vehicle track (usually

closed to the public) that commences toward the top of the hill and leads down to the QCL site is on the route of this old road. Read more about QCL here - <http://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/queensland-cement-and-lime-company.pdf>

The adjacent portions 294 and 295 were used for farming purposes, primarily grazing for dairy cattle, from 1925 until 1947. Market garden activities were resumed on these portions from 1947. In that year, **Mervyn Ashton** bought portion 294 and cultivated it for food crops. In the same year, **Tom and Cis Counihan** expanded their enterprises with the purchase of over 19 acres of portion 295. When Mervyn Ashton sold in 1951, he subdivided portion 294 and **Frank Pettinata** acquired a sub-division of approximately 14 acres and continued market gardening.

Light industry gradually took over the former market gardens after suburban development commenced in 1960-1. Rocks Riverside Park, opened in December 2003 (approximately four years after Brisbane City Council initiated plans for a large park on the site), now occupies a considerable part of the early agricultural and market gardening properties. Today the only remnant of that era is the stand of 25 mango trees at the base of the escarpment near the Rocks Community Garden and the QCL plant.



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