Kendall's Flat

Richard and Salome Kendall outside their first home at East Bundaberg, with Teddy Arsteu and son Burnett.

For most residents of Bundaberg, Kendall's Flat is the netball and sports grounds over Kennedy Bridge. Few people know why the area is called Kendall's Flat, and that the history of this part of East Bundaberg is that of one of our earliest pioneering families—the Kendall family.

ARRIVAL

On the 8th October 1862, the Black Ball Line ship *Ariadne* arrived in Maryborough. On board were 259 immigrants—the first group to arrive directly in Maryborough from Great Britain. The *Maryborough Chronicle* editor wrote:

The arrival of the 'Ariadne' at Wide Bay - the first of a series of vessels bringing human life - the most needed, the most enriching freight that can be transpanted from the soil of Britain to our own - will never be forgotten.

The present residents will calculate from the year of the 'Ariadne'... as a year of mark, the beginning of an era of unusual vigour and progress. [1]

The voyage of the *Ariadne* had been a good one. There had been little trouble with the crew, a normal event on such long voyages when crew members were subjected to harsh discipline, poor rations and hard work.

On 8 October 1862, the steamer *Telegraph*, of Rockhampton, came alongside the *Ariadne* at the entrance to the Mary River and took aboard all the immigrants for the short passage up river. The *Ariadne* was dressed in bright flags and bunting, and, as the *Telegraph* moved slowly away, the immigrant ship gave a thunderous salute with eleven of its cannons. The immigrants, crowded onto the steamer's decks, waved wildly and gave three loud cheers. For them, it was the beginning of a new life in a strange land. [2]

On board the *Ariadne* was 28 year old Richard Kendall and his 24 year old wife Salome (nee Coney), from Lincolnshire. The couple had two children with them—George Kendall, 3 years

and Sarah (Sadie), 2 years old.

After disembarking in Maryborough, the family spent some time in the district, before travelling to Bundaberg in 1870.

SETTLEMENT

After their arrival in Bundaberg, Richard Kendall and his wife each selected 260 ha (640 acres) in the area known as Spain's Pocket—at what is now East Bundaberg. According to Walker in his *History of Bundaberg,* the area of grassy breaks in the scrub near Millaquin Mill was known as Spain's Pocket, and due to the winding road, was then two miles away from the town. Once Kennedy Bridge was constructed, the distance halved.
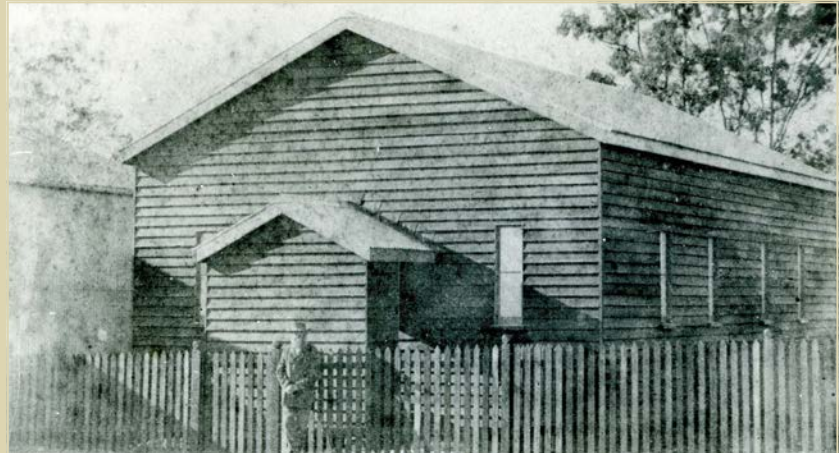
His selection covered land now occupied by the Gasworks, Kendall's Flat sportsground and the Burnett Sawmill. It covered the areas from the east bank of Saltwater Creek, along the Burnett River and down toward the Millaquin Refinery. It became locally known as Kendall's Hill and Kendall's Flat.

Ebenezer's Free Church

Richard Kendall had been a Methodist preacher in England, and one of the first tasks he set himself was the construction of a wooden hall that would become the first Methodist Church in Bundaberg. He named it Ebenezer's Free Church, and allowed all denominations to hold services in the Church.
"This little building was ever at the gratuitous disposal of all who desired it for religious purposes." *Bundaberg & Mt Perry Mail* 9.6.1893

Richard Kendall outside Ebenezer's Free Church.

Additional land was also selected at Rubyanna for sugar cane cultivation.

Richard Kendall had been involved in agriculture in his home country, and lost no time cutting slabs and splitting shingles to erect a home. Although originally working as a farmer and dairyman on the scrub land immediately adjacent to Kennedy Bridge, Richard Kendall sold that business, and

after the flood of 1875, he opened a store on Kendall's Hill, and in 1884 built a church adjoining the store.

Walker records:
It is due to the public spirit and piety of one of the residents of East Bundaberg, who is also one of the earliest pioneers, to mention that the chapel (Ebenezer's Free Church) referred to above is the free-gift to his fellow-citizens of Mr Richard Kendall. It is not connected to any individual sect; but is open to all Protestant denominations; and so scrupulous was the donor to avoid in his gift all appearance of anything bearing the semblance of a public subscription that in purchasing the organ he even declined the offer of a liberal Bundaberg merchant, Mr J. F. Davies, to make a reduction in the price in consideration of the excellence of the object.[3]

Salome and Richard Kendall

EARLY YEARS

In the early days in Bundaberg, it was common after droughts or bad weather for settlers to fall upon hard times. Richard Kendall allowed those who were homeless to put up tents on his property free of charge, until they could put a roof over their heads again.

During these hard periods, he made sure no one went hungry or in need of care. Each week a parcel of groceries came from his General Store to those in need, and if there was no money to pay for the food, he did not ask.
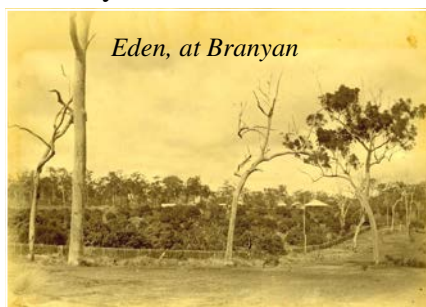
Richard and Salome Kendall had a further five children after George and Sarah. Alice, Elizabeth (Lizzie), Burnett, Charles (Charlie), and Jack (John). Burnett was believed to have been the first white male child born in Bundaberg.

Richard Kendall farmed produce along with establishing orchards and gardens on Kendall's Flat. Much of the harvest was sold at the General Store, which also sold grocery, hardware, crockery, boots and shoes and drapery.

In later years the General Store was passed on to eldest son George Kendall and his brother John, and renamed Kendall Brothers. A new premises was built in Bourbong Street near Kennedy Bridge. After John moved to New Zealand, George Kendall continued in the business, and in 1890 purchased further land at Branyan.

They are generally acknowledged as the pioneering family in a large area of land in the Branyan District, where they began a fruit and vegetable industry.

Eden, at Branyan

Jack Kendall in the Eden orchards

The property was named Eden, and over 600 mango and citrus trees were planted. George Kendall's produce also supplied the Bengall Chutney Company for many years.

With sugar cane gradually becoming established in the area, son Jack Kendall remembers the men grubbing out the fruit trees to clear the land for cane.[4] During these years, the Kendall family owned about 100 bee hives, and in one year collected a ton of honey. Kendalls Honey and beeswax was supplied to George Kendall's store in Bourbong Street.

Kendalls Road near Agrotrend now runs through the former Eden property.

LATER YEARS

Richard Kendall was known as a public minded gentleman and citizen, and took an active interest in his community. He was elected as the first Chairman of the Woongarra Divisional Board and served for several years in that capacity. He was an untiring supporter of the local Bundaberg Hospital, and was appointed an Honorary Member of that Institution.

Richard died on 8 June 1893, and the *Bundaberg and Mt Perry Mail* noted that "By the death of Mr Kendall, Bundaberg and especially the East End, has lost one of the most sterling, upright and consistent colonists, whose loss it will be difficult to replace." [5]

Richard and Salome Kendall are buried together in the Bundaberg Cemetery in the family plot.

Images: Picture Bundaberg, supplied by the community of the Bundaberg Regional area.

George Kendall in his orchards at Eden

Kendall and Rattray families on a picnic 1899

KENDALLS FLAT OR FLATS?

The correct name for Richard Kendall's selection is an issue yet to be definitively resolved.

J. Y. Walker in his book on Bundaberg called the area The Pocket, and Kendall's Hill, while descendant Bruce Muller calls the area Kendall's Flats. The *Bundaberg News-Mail* in 1963 called it Kennedy Flats, then in 1966 Kendall's Flats, while Mayor C.J. Nielsen referred to it in 1964 as Kendall Flat.

Nev Rackemann refers to it as Kendall's Flat in his book, as does Bundaberg Regional Council, while an internet search will turn up predominantly Kendalls Flats.

The Kendall family at home at Eden ca1898

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