

Cranney Family

The 20 year old John Beauchamp Cranney resigned from the Royal Irish Constabulary to emigrate from Queens County, Ireland to Queensland in 1865. He joined the Queensland Police and was sent to the Queensland border post of Barrington.

On the other side of the world in Bath, Somerset, Frances Melinda Beacham, aged 19 years, bade her family farewell and also emigrated. When she disembarked from the "Indus" at Brisbane on 9th July 1870, amongst the single men to greet the ship were John Cranney and two of his associates from Barrington. They were the Customs officials William Augustus Dorsey and Gustave Emil Klaeby. Frances chose John and married him in St Stephens Cathedral, Brisbane on 28th July but the other suitors need not have despaired. Through death and misfortune, their time to marry Frances would come in due course.

John and Frances Cranney raised eight children in Barrington. Their youngest son, Albert James Sarsfield Cranney, was only six months old when his father, aged 40 years, died in May 1884. There was some irony. A policeman who had faced the dangers in frontier country would be claimed by infection from a dog bite, after he had left the Police Force to buy the Royal Exchange Hotel.

Frances Cranney ran the hotel for a time but married William Dorsey, Customs Officer, in January 1887. He was brother in law to Sir Joshua Peter Bell (parliamentarian, president of the Legislative Council, and a foundation settler of the Western Downs). Frances and William had one daughter, Mary, who was only sixteen months old when William died in November 1888. Frances married Gustav Klaeby, by then a grazing property manager, in the following year. The couple had two children but one died in infancy. Reginald Klaeby survived to 1984. The Klaebys moved to Sydney where Gustav died in March 1922. Frances Melinda Beacham/Cranney/Dorsey/Klaeby died in December 1934, aged 83 years and was buried at Fairlight Cemetery, Manly in the same grave as her third husband.

Albert "Bert" Cranney moved to Maleny in 1906 to fell scrub and he first appeared in the Electoral Roll for the area in 1913 as a labourer. He had married Elizabeth Ada Rees in 1912 and the couple dairy-farmed and raised Guernsey cattle on "Fern Hill". Bert was the Foundation Secretary of the Guernsey Society of Queensland and was first Life Member of the Maleny Cricket Association. The couple moved to 30 Palm Street in 1954. Bert and "Lizzie" both died in Soldiers Memorial Hospital, Maleny and were buried at Witta Cemetery - Lizzie in 1966 and Bert in 1968.



Bert & Lizzy (Rees) Cranney

They had had five children:

- Albert Clifford (“Cliff” born in 1912) worked on his parents’ farm until he enlisted in July 1940. He married Marie Jean (“Doric”) Watson in July 1941 in Sydney. They had been married only 13 days when Cliff embarked with 2/26th Battalion for Singapore. When Singapore fell to the Japanese in February 1942, Sergeant Cliff Cranney began an awful period of more than three years as a prisoner of war, including the infamous Thai railway. Doric enlisted in the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force in December 1942. She was not reunited with her husband until his disembarkation from the “Tamaroo” at Sydney in November 1945. After prolonged malnutrition and mistreatment in the hands of the Japanese, his general health took years to return but his eyesight was permanently impaired. He and Doric settled at Appin and then Colo Vale. They were to have five children - Dianne Vivienne, Sandra Margaret, Ian James, Neil Charles and Heather . Cliff Cranney died in March 2001, surviving to an older age than any of his siblings, despite the deprivations he suffered in war. Doric died in 2006 and their ashes were scattered off Mooloolaba.



Clifford Cranney (2/26th Battalion)
before embarkation 1941

- Esther Marion (“Marion” born in 1914) married Leslie John Robert Deans in Brisbane in 1934. Les had been born at Bli Bli in 1907. His parents and family moved to Mapleton in 1918 to take up dairying but concentrated initially on bananas and pineapples because of drought conditions. Les met Marion Cranney when his father bought a dairy farm at Watson’s Road, quite near the Cranney’s farm at Reesville. After their marriage in 1934, Les and Marion took a half share on the Mary River at Conondale. Les served in the Voluntary Defence Corp from 1942 to 1945. In 1944, Les and Marion bought their own farm on Balmoral Road. They raised



Harry & Mavis, Margaret, Edgar & Les Deans with baby Faye at the
Maleny Show, c 1941

their family and eventually retired to Nambour. Marion died in 1980 and Les, after marrying a second time to the widow Dorothy Sutton, died in 2001 aged 91 years. He was buried in the same grave as Marion at Nambour Cemetery. Les and Marion had six children - Leslie Clifford, John Barry, Errol Robert, Faye Margaret, Trevor William and Dianne Marion.

- Harry Percival ("Bill" born in 1915) worked at the Butter Factory on leaving school but applied to join the Queensland Police Force in June 1937. He was eventually called up for training one year later. He married Mavis Dawn Isbister in Mackay in 1941. Harry served in the Police Force and the Criminal Investigation Branch. He was then a public servant living in Brisbane until retirement. After the death of Edgar Cranney, Bill and Mavis lived for some years at 30 Palm Street. Bill Cranney died at Caloundra in May 1996. He and Mavis had four children - Elizabeth Anne, Jenifer Ruth, David Isbister and Stuart Michael.

- Edgar John (born in 1917). Edgar worked on the family dairy farm and he enlisted to serve in 1941. On 14th July, he was one of the advance parties of the 7th Militia Brigade which left Townville for Milne Bay. Lance Corporal Cranney suffered repeated debilitating bouts of malaria. He was granted periods of leave for recuperation at home. In uniform from December 1941 to October 1944, his service in New Guinea totalled only 202 days. Edgar became a successful businessman in auctioneering, real estate, and retailing of sporting goods. After establishing his own cattle selling complex on Maleny-Kenilworth Road, he bought the opposition's business and sold from the yards between Obi Obi Creek and the Maleny Hotel. Today, it is the site of Woolworths. Edgar never married. He was involved with various sporting associations in the district and was a member of Rotary. He died in November 1970 and was buried beside his parents at Witta Cemetery.



Edgar Cranney



Margaret Cranney, 1944

- Margaret Elizabeth (born in 1923). Margaret worked as a Postal Assistant in the Maleny Post office, and then entered nurse's training at St Helen's hospital in Brisbane for two years. Her work was cut short by the need to return home to Maleny to support her mother who had been stricken with debilitating arthritis that would condemn her to a wheel chair for the last fifteen years of her life. Margaret married Jack Burton Raymond Thorne, a local dairy farmer, in Brisbane in 1949. After his father's death in 1944, Jack Thorne took responsibility for his mother's farms at Curramore and on Cedar Creek, Conondale. They remain in the hands of Charlie Thorne's direct descendants today. Jack died in 2002 and Margaret in 2004 (their ashes are interred together on the family land at Curramore). They had two children: Charles Grant and Jean Margaret Elizabeth.



Cranney Children in 1924

Clifford, Marion, Harry, Edgar & Margaret