

## MANILLA & DISTRICT PLACES AND SPACES 1

### Sites to the north of Namoi River between Manilla River and Manilla Cemetery

*We pay tribute to the Gamilaraay people, traditional custodians of the land on which these sites exist.*

#### “The JUNCTION”

A strip of ground between the Namoi and Manilla rivers, seen from the river bank below the western end of Market Street; and from Bowman street West Manilla. Accessible on foot from North Manilla, east of the Mandowa Bridge approach, at the ‘John Wheeler Reserve’. A significant site for local Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi/Gomeroi people over countless generations, prior to the early to mid 1900s.

The JUNCTION marks the route of teamsters transporting goods by wagon to cattle stations and settlements to the north and the goldfields of Bingara and Bundarra during the decades before the 1880s Namoi bridge construction. When Europeans passed through here, they simply called the place ‘the Junction’. Upon European settlement during the 1850s, when a horseback mail service was being established to serve towns in the North-west, first storekeeper and Acting Postmaster at the time, George Veness, named the place Manilla, after the river on the western side, flowing into the Namoi.

1853 - John RIDEOUT’S BOARDING HOUSE site - North Manilla between Manilla & Rowan Streets. Sold to Davis, then to Thomas Connor c.1862-63.

1863 - MANILLA HOTEL/AUSTRALIAN ARMS INN site - North Manilla midway between Manilla and Namoi Streets above the riverbank at North Manilla. Built for Thomas Connor, following his purchase of Rideout’s boarding House. A Maitland Mercury advertisement of 1865 shows the place for sale, following inundation by the 1864 flood; sold in 1867 to William Hill, then to J. Flynn in 1875, a popular place where meetings were held and cricket matches played. Demolished 1890s.

c. 1870s - LONG FLAT SCHOOL site - [to come]

Pre-1875 - FIRST EUROPEAN BURIAL PLACE - North Manilla - seen from western side of River Street before the Rangari road bend approaching Mandowa Bridge. The area surveyed in 2004, fenced and maintained.

1875 - UNION CHURCH site - North Manilla at Coronation Park, top of Manilla Street. A timber structure built by brothers P. & J. McGauley, members of Manilla’s 1st cricket team. Public education classes were accommodated in this building for 2 years to 1879.

1875 - MANILLA CEMETERY North Manilla - Government provides an area 2km along Namoi River road for the town cemetery. [see1882]

1878 - BENNETT’S LOW LEVEL CROSSING site - unsuccessful bridged causeway over the Namoi River below Rowan Street. Site of the drowning of 2 men and horses. Subsequently dubbed “Bennett’s Folly”. Named for local Member of Parliament at the time.

1879 - FIRST MANILLA PUBLIC SCHOOL site - North Manilla at Coronation Park, top of Manilla Street. A brick school with residence was opened in September 1879 to accommodate fifty children. Five years later another classroom was added. The school closed in 1898 after 19 years, with classes held in the Mechanics Institute until moving to a new school in Court Street in 1900. The first school building continued as Headmaster’s residence until 1938, when it was sold. During demolition in 1939, 4 original documents dated February 26 1879, were found in a bottle set in the foundations.

pre 1880s - TOWN COMMON site - Manilla Road North Manilla, east side vicinity bordering Namoi river road, then eastward, originally taking in area at Ukolan and/or Ceurindi holdings. to 1891. [Research continues]...

1882 - MANILLA CEMETERY - North Manilla 2km along Namoi River Road. Minister for Lands advises cemetery Trustees of provision of £65 for clearing and fencing.

1886 - NAMOI RIVER BRIDGE - northern approach at Manilla Street. G.H. Royce (Royce & Company) commenced work in March 1884. By August 1885 all cylinders and spans had been hoisted into place and a bullock was roasted for the 40 workers in celebration of the effort. Work was carried on around the clock, lighting and hydraulics provided by an electricity generating plant. The bridge opened on March 17 1886; pedestrian walkway added 1917.

c.1880s - MANILLA ABATTOIR / “HIGHLANDALE” SLAUGHTER YARDS site - North Manilla 3km east of the bridge on the northern side of Namoi River, viewable from southern side of the river from road above the large weir. Until 2005, site contents consisted of small holding yard, a shed with concrete floor and sides with overhead bars for chains; 2 water tanks and meat room with large overhanging roof and screened windows. All local butchers had their stock processed there until 1965, after which all meat was brought from Tamworth.

19— - Butcher shop site - western side Manilla Street, north of Namoi river bridge.

1900s - MARKET GARDEN Site 1 - Sam Sing MARKET GARDEN North Manilla adjacent and to west of Namoi River Bridge - Lloyd Street to Namoi Riverbank between Manilla Street & Namoi Streets, near/at site of Manilla Hotel 1863-1890s.

1936 - SHEEP SALEYARDS site - Arthur Street eastern side at Charles & Lloyd streets/Corralynne lane. Built by V.J.Byrnes on 3½ acres (1.416 hrs) of his own property. Opened January 1937 with 340 separate yards, 450 gates and a carrying capacity of 40,000 sheep. Ceased operation 1970s.

1937 - CATTLE SALEYARDS site - Arthur Street western side opposite Sheep yards. Built by V.J.Byrnes. Ceases operation 1970s.

1944 - MANILLA RACE COURSE site - Namoi river flat (north), east of Sheep Sale yards. Built by V. J. Byrnes. Remains of Stalls visible from southern bank of Namoi at small weir.

MARKET GARDEN SHOP - Sam Sing/Mrs Sing North Manilla - timber building, eastern side of Namoi River Bridge approach.

## WEST of the MANILLA and NAMOI Rivers

CHINESE MARKET GARDENS in MANILLA - Dates undetermined. 3 early Sing family members grew tobacco as share farmers throughout the district, the remainder grew vegetables, which were sold locally in family run fruit & veggie shops.

Samuel Herald (Sam) SING - Market Gardener.  
Bill SING (Son of Samuel H) Market gardener.)

Site 2 - Sam Sing MARKET GARDEN - North Manilla major portion of western half of block bordered by Wimborne Road & Richardson Street West Manilla.

Site 3 - Bill Sing - MARKET GARDEN North Manilla west of Namoi River Bridge - Lloyd Street to Namoi River bank between Namoi & River Streets.

Site 4 - Ed Lamont - MARKET GARDEN - West Manilla eastern half of block bordered by Wimborne Road & Richardson Street West Manilla. Block shared with Sam SING. This block recently "The Old Mill" until 2002.

Site 5 - Thomas Gilbert Sing - MARKET GARDEN - West Manilla minor portion (western corner) of block shared with Sam SING and Ed Lamont and bordered by Wimborne Road & Richardson Street West Manilla.

Site 6 - [probable] Sing property to 1970s - West Manilla half block bordered by Boggabri Rd & Richardson St at Shield Ave. Sold to Clarkson 1970s.

Site 7 - [probable] West Manilla - land to West bank of Namoi River north of Rail-line.

### NOTE:

Oral sources have supplied Chinese farming history and locations. Property ownership is undetermined, though probable for sites at North & West Manilla. Share-farming of tobacco and watermelon was likely on several properties along the rivers.

Many Chinese contributed to the early development of Manilla, supplied the town with fresh produce and also found work on tobacco farms scattered throughout the Manilla District. This history is yet to be thoroughly researched. Little information however, has ever been recorded.