



Patrick Francis Hanran: Merchant and Politician

Patrick Francis Hanran, (1831-1916), merchant and politician, was born on 16 September, 1831, at Limerick, of Corporal Francis Hanran (Hanrahan) of the 28th Regiment, and his wife, Bridget, nee Hayes. His parents reached Sydney in 1834, presumably in a troop-ship. His father served at Bowen's Hollow (Bowenfels), guarding convicts. They sailed from England in the *Trusty* on 21 March, 1840. Taking his discharge there, he returned to Sydney and began business as a commission agent. Patrick went to the Christian Brothers' School on the corner of Kent and Argyle streets.

Failing to maintain the family business after his father's death in 1851, Hanran went prospecting with some success in New South Wales and Victoria. Working successively at Turon, Louisa Creek, Bendigo and Ballarat, he was an eye-witness of the fight at the Eureka Stockade. In New Zealand, in 1861, he followed the gold rushes at Gabriels Gully, Tuapeka and the west coast, though with less success than in Australia.

After returning to Sydney in 1864, he probably spent a little time in Ipswich, Queensland, before establishing himself as a storekeeper at Townsville in March, 1866, seventeen months after the town's foundation. Despite ups and downs, which included an insolvency on his own petition in December, 1874, he carried on the business for the rest

of his life. First elected to the Townsville Municipal Council in 1868, he was an alderman for twenty-seven years and mayor nine times between 1871 and 1896. His long civic service also included membership of the board of health, the fire brigade board, the harbour board, the Cleveland Bay Immigration Board, the hospital, state school and orphanage committees and the council of the Northern Separation Movement.

Hanran was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as junior member for Townsville in 1899. Overshadowed throughout by his colleague, (Sir) Robert Philip, he retired from parliament in 1909. He had a reputation for taciturnity, and newspapers dubbed him the most silent member of his day. In State politics his career was insignificant, but in a long and productive municipal career he helped to guide Townsville from a struggling settlement of about 100 people on a muddy creek to a thriving city and port with a population of about 10,000 in the 1890s. His well-documented generosity and kindness, while not conducive to commercial success, endeared him

to the local citizens. He boasted proudly that, in his long career as a general storekeeper, he had never sued for a debt. He and his publican brother, John, were among the best-known racehorse owners in the district.

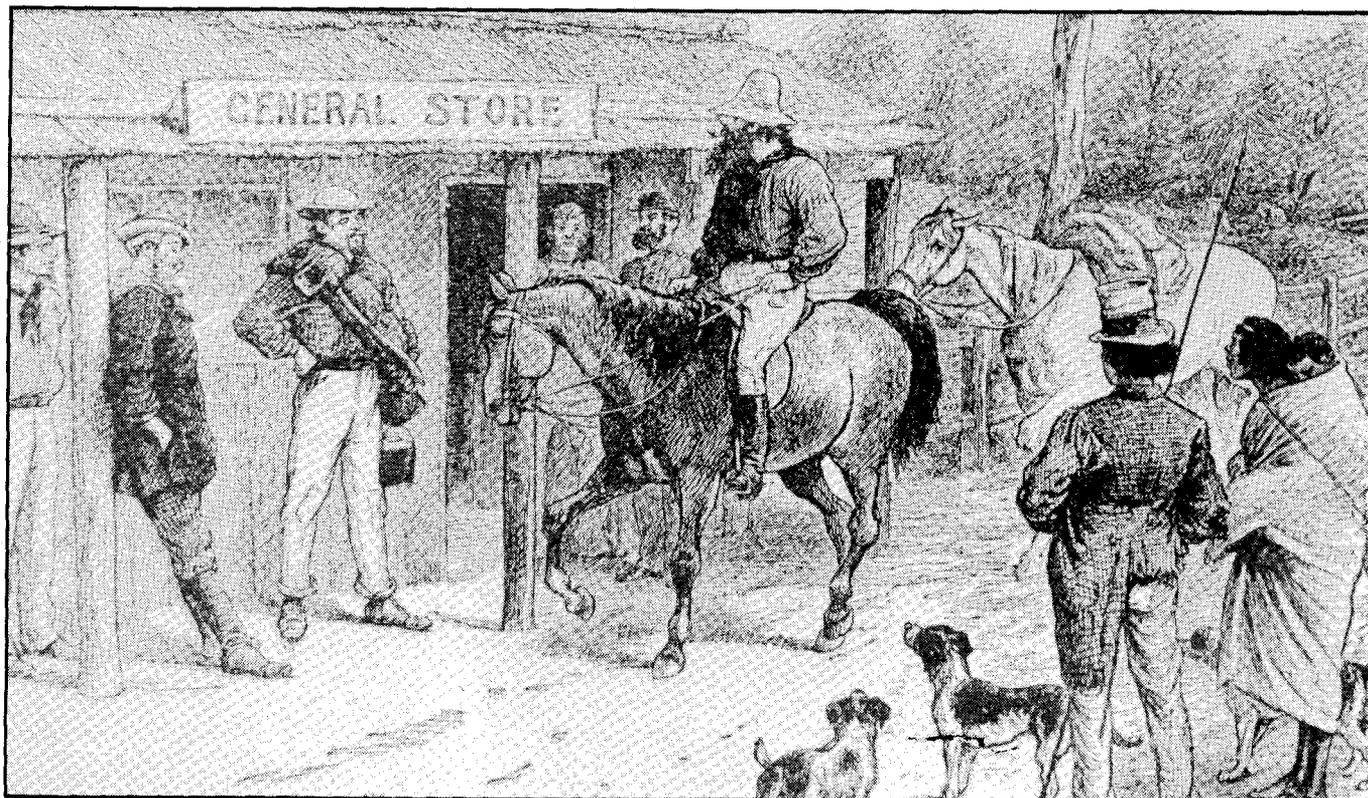
By his marriage in Sydney on 17 September, 1864, to Mary Ann Ogle, born in Drogheda, Ireland, there were five daughters and two sons. His wife and a daughter predeceased him. Hanran died at Townsville on 8 August, 1916, and was buried in the Catholic Section of Townsville cemetery.

Sources

W.F. Morrison, *The Aldine History of Queensland*, 2 (Syd, 1888); W.J. Doherty, *The Townsville Book* (Brisb, 1919); *Government Gazette* (Qld), 1874, p. 2433; *Townsville Herald*, 24 Dec. 1887; *Queenslander* (Brisb), 6 Jan. 1894; *Sun* (Brisb), 26 Jan. 1908; *Nth. Qld. Register*, 14 Aug. 1916; Townsville City Council Minutes, 1876-96 (held by council).

J. C. Proud

(Reprinted from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*)



The hinterland of Queensland—a bush store.