

The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

No. 31 July 1995

The Outlook

The promise of a busy 1995 for the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland has been realised. For six months, members have been active in the Society's programmes. Mel Williams released his *Cameos* in March. David Parker has worked on a reference manual, *The National Guide to Australian Baptist Historical Resources and Services*, assisted by Keith Applegate. Eric and Rosemary Kopittke have produced a book on writing Family History, entitled *So, Your Ancestor was a Baptist in Queensland!*

All this led to the highlight of our year, our Annual Presentation held at Albion on 8 July. There, members presented a seminar on the resources available to people wanting to start tracing their family heritage. The seminar, based on the Kopittkes' book, was designed with Baptists in mind, and revealed where to look for information, and how to access these sources. A Family History Workshop in the afternoon gave people a "hands on" experience of searching some resources such as microfiche records, shipping registers, and Births, Deaths and Marriages Indexes. As well, a feature address traced the contribution of some significant families in Queensland Baptist history. Many members of the families were present, some from as far away as Townsville. The families - Jones, Cook, Pfeffer, and Jensen clans - took advantage of the occasion to have their own re-unions during the day, including the extended luncheon break provided for that purpose. The section of the address dealing with the Soren Jensen family is reproduced in two parts in this and the following issues of *Forum* (see inside)

I thank all those who contributed to the day. Special thanks go to the Kopittkes for their excellent research and presentation; the Toowoomba Education Centre for expediting the printing of the book; the many families who co-operated in the research and who provided material for display; Ruth Masters for her extra help in compiling charts etc; the Fire of Hope (Albion) Church for providing the venue; and all those members of BHSQ who provided the teas and all the other assistance needed. A lot of work was done, but the experience of coming closer to our forebears in a fresh appreciation of their efforts for the Lord was its own reward.

The work is gathering momentum. More people are finding the rewards of delving into their history. We invite you to take it up, and so develop a new awareness of the significance of history. Please write to us, and write for us. We would love to see more people join our Society, and share the labour of love and learning that is ours in this work. Our next BHSQ meetings are at the B.G. Wilson Centre, Brunswick Street, at 2.00 pm on the Saturdays of July 22 and November 4. We would love to see you there.

Les Ball, President BHSQ

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (est. 1984)

Membership

Individual \$6 p.a. Family \$10 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.

QB Forum 3 issues p.a. Free to Members
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Pastoral Profiles No 3

Rev. E. R. Makin

by William Higlett

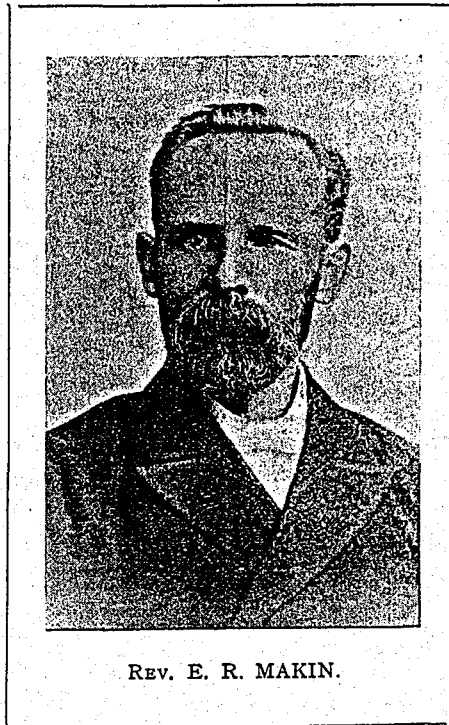
Reproduced from the *Queensland Baptist* March 1, 1898

The Rev. Edwin Robert Makin comes of a line of preachers. His grandfather was for forty years a Congregational minister. His father, Robert Makin, became a Baptist, and, after studying in Mr. Spurgeon's College, settled at Sittingbourne in Kent. From thence he went to Bideford in Devon, where his health failed, and he was obliged to resign the ministry in which he was so esteemed, and the work in which he had been greatly blessed. Removing to Romford, Essex, he died in 1882, after four years of suffering.

His son, Edwin, was born at Hadleigh in Suffolk in 1860, and was educated at Sittingbourne for a mercantile career. At the age of sixteen he was converted through hearing one of Talmage's sermons read aloud in his own home. When engaged in mercantile life in Cheltenham, he developed gifts of public speaking, and for seven years did good service among the Cheltenham associated churches, two persons professing conversion under his first sermon.

Being recommended for the Pastor's College, he was accepted by Mr. Spurgeon as a student, when failure of health compelled him to relinquish all study and preaching for two years, and to abandon the hope of entering college. There being friends of his family resident in Queensland, the year 1890 saw him in this colony with his mother and sisters.

Greatly benefited by the change, he was able after a few months rest to take the oversight of the church at Rosewood, where he laboured with much encouragement till April 1892, when he received and accepted a unanimous invitation to Sandgate. There his stay was brief, and after a visit to Rockhampton as



REV. E. R. MAKIN.

supply, he was cordially invited to the pastorate. At Rockhampton he has now laboured for four years with many signs of blessing.

Throughout his ministry, our brother has devoted much care to his preparation for the pulpit, thus making that the strong point of his work. Testimony borne by one of his officers is

"It cannot be said that he has preached a poor sermon since his arrival in Rockhampton. His ministry is attractive to the younger portion of the congregation, as well as relished by the elders, and gives every promise of progress and permanence."

May his bow long abide in strength.

How language changes!

Denominational Intelligence.

[Title for regular column in *The Queensland Freeman* of the 1880's reporting local church news!]

Pastoral Profiles No 4

Rev. Thomas Vigis

by William Higlett

Reproduced from the *Queensland Baptist* April 1, 1898



REV. THOMAS VIGIS.

The name of Rev. Thos. Vigis will always be associated with the history of Baptist enterprise in North Queensland, although not actually the first Baptist minister (by a few months) in Charters Towers.

Born in 1862, at Plumstead, Kent, England, he was educated at the National School in that place, and under the ministry of the Vicar of East Plumstead, Rev. W. McAllister, M.A., he received his earliest religious impressions. Converted at the age of seventeen, he at once commenced preaching the Gospel. A year later, in 1880, he was baptised by Rev. J. Wilson, of Woolwich, and continuing his work for the Master conducted evangelistic services in Bromley, Bickley, Lewisham, Blackheath, Brighton and other places. In 1882, his business called him to Kingston-on-Thames, where, for nearly a year he had charge of a Baptist Mission at Hampton-Wick, under the auspices of the Kingston Baptist Church.

He next settled at Petworth, in Sussex, and under the combined strain of business, study, and constant preaching, his health broke down and he was compelled to retire from busi-

ness. The autumn and winter of 1884 were spent recuperating at Eastbourne and Ventnor. Next summer he resumed evangelistic work, but autumn witnessed another breakdown, and from Ventnor he was ordered by his medical advisor to go to Queensland for two years.

Leaving London by sailing vessel in November, 1885, he reached Brisbane in February, 1886, thoroughly restored in health by the voyage. He shortly obtained a situation in Ipswich, and had many opportunities of service for the Master. His two years drawing to a close, he seriously considered whether he ought to return, when just as he decided to remain in Queensland he received a call to the pastorate of the Rosewood Church, which he accepted. Eighteen months spent there were months of happiness to himself, and prosperity to the church, but in February, 1889, came a call to the north.

Charters Towers had had the services of Mr. John Brame for but four months, when ill health caused his retirement, and after an interval of temporary arrangements, Mr. Vigis was called to take the oversight of the infant church, so that its present position and influence are almost entirely the result of his nine years of patient, faithful labour.

As will be gathered from the reference to his early career, our brother is well qualified to "do the work of an evangelist," and with a good voice, and love of music, he is able to present the Gospel in song as well as in speech. Pity is that distance has prevented the exercise of these abilities for the more general welfare of the churches of our denomination. In a difficult and trying sphere he has rendered noble service and gained the respect and esteem of all who know him.

Being now in the early prime of life we may anticipate more in future from the only one in our ranks in Queensland who can be termed a "sweet psalmist of Israel."

THE SOREN JENSEN FAMILY

PART 1

by Dr Les J. Ball, President, Baptist Historical Society of Qld.

This is the first instalment of the story of Soren Jensen's family, and the contribution they made to the Baptist denomination in Queensland. Only the first three generations are presented here: the rest will appear in the next issue.

On the 16th April 1878, applications for membership were received at the Wharf Street Baptist Church in Brisbane from "Soren and Dorteia Marie Jensen, living at the Caboolture. Certificates were produced, showing their connection with the Baptist church at Ooppelstrup, Denmark, dated 17 June, 1877." These were the pioneering Jensens who were to begin the Baptist work in Wamuran and surrounding places in the 1880's, and whose story is about to be told here.

Family anecdotal stories abound about old Soren in the Old Country. The story is told of his dramatic conversion. An encounter in a field with a man whose profanity of language caused Soren much discomfort led to his rebuking the man roundly. "You must not insult God by such language, or you will surely incur his wrath." Now, Soren himself was not a fervent Christian by any means at this stage, but no sooner had he uttered his words than the offending party was struck by lightning and died. Soren was immediately and irrevocably converted to the faith! Another story relates his vision to go to Australia with the express purpose of planting a church. Indeed, if ensuing actions are any guide, this story carries a lot of weight.

However, I prefer another, possibly more romantic, tale. The unwed couple, Soren and Dorteia Marie Jensen (her maiden name was also Jensen), were members of the same Baptist church at Ooppelstrup. An historical possibility (though by no means certain) is that, like the Swedes, the Danish may have forbidden marriage of first cousins. Now, this is not certain as regards Denmark, and it is by no means certain that they were first cousins, but it does add an element of romantic intrigue to the possibility that the two lovers arranged to leave Denmark so they could

indeed marry and set up a new life abroad. Historical conjecture is fraught with danger, but it does add a lot of colour to the enterprise! The sequence of events of this period is also interesting. Dismissal certificates from Ooppelstrup were dated 17 June 1877; their boat left Hamburg 26 June 1877 (with both registered as single); their Family Bible records their wedding date as 15 July 1877 (presumably on board, performed by the less strict German captain); and they were accepted as man and wife members at Wharf Street Baptist on 16 April 1878.

Once in Queensland, Soren Jensen lost no time in cementing his faith in the new land. He and his bride settled first at Stony Creek (Upper Caboolture), then a few kilometres from Caboolture, and finally, in 1882, at Wamuran, where they carried on his traditional livelihood as a farmer. An extract from a family manuscript states:

They having been born again of the spirit of God, and been buried with Him in baptism, rising up to walk in newness of life, whilst in the land of their birth, continued in the Faith, walking in the fear of the Lord.

The Jensens raised a family of eight children, yet still found time and determination to be leaders in the service to their Lord. Their lack of English did not hinder them, as they gathered around them other Danish believers, meeting on alternate Sundays in various homes for worship and fellowship. A transient immigrant population left them at times somewhat isolated from Christian fellowship, but their growing mastery of English soon opened other doors. They engaged a teacher for

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their children as they grew, which attracted other, English-speaking children to their classes. This in turn enabled them to invite their English neighbours to their home for services, and soon there were regular services and a flourishing Sunday School of some 25 children meeting weekly at the Jensen house.

Their adventurous spirit and zeal soon led them further afield. By using their contact with brother Anders at Jireh, they arranged for a supply of preachers to visit and conduct services in a number of places in the region, as far away as Mt Mee on the D'Aguiar Range, which necessitated an arduous horseback journey of nearly 30 kilometres each way, on top of the 15 kilometres from the railhead at Caboolture. The fact that some of these city men had never ridden a horse before no doubt added to the discomfort (not to mention the humour for the rural community). Often, the preachers were prevented from coming, but that was to be no impediment to the services. Soren Jensen himself, accompanied by one or more of his four sons, would undertake the journey, insistent that the continuity of the services would be maintained.

Eventually, Soren's health waned, most of his sons married and removed from the district, and the regular services faltered. However, whenever his health permitted, he would use any free Sunday, accompanied by a son or daughter, to make a house to house visitation for miles around the district, reading a portion of Scripture, offering a prayer, and leaving a tract on his departure. While the railway line was under construction from Caboolture to Woodford, Soren and his sons walked along the line, meeting with the camp workers, bringing them the Word, as far as the top of the range.

Many local people have over the years given testimony to the debt they owe to Soren Jensen's persistent itinerancy for their coming to know the Lord. In his later years, Soren's activities were curtailed, and he eventually died in 1919, with Dorthea surviving him until 1935. However, the services continued in the home of his son-in-law, John Alexander Jackson, who had married Soren's second child and first daughter, Lillian.

Soren and Dorthea Jensen had eight children -

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The Opening of Wamuran Baptist Church 6 August 1921

The church was opened by Rev. W. Pope (Chairman, Home Mission Committee; second back row, right end) & Rev. T. U. Symonds (Secretary, Home Mission Committee; second back row, left end). Others in the picture include Mr Jackson (back row, right end), Mrs Behrens, Mrs Jackson (sisters - second back row second and third from left) Everard and Arthur Jackson (front row, left end).

Foundation members were Dorthea Marie Jensen, John A. Jackson, Lillian Jackson (nee Jensen), Arthur Whiteman, Herman A. Behrens, Dora D. Behrens (nee Jensen), Mary Jensen, Florrie A. Whiteman, Otto S. Jensen, Henry Jackson.

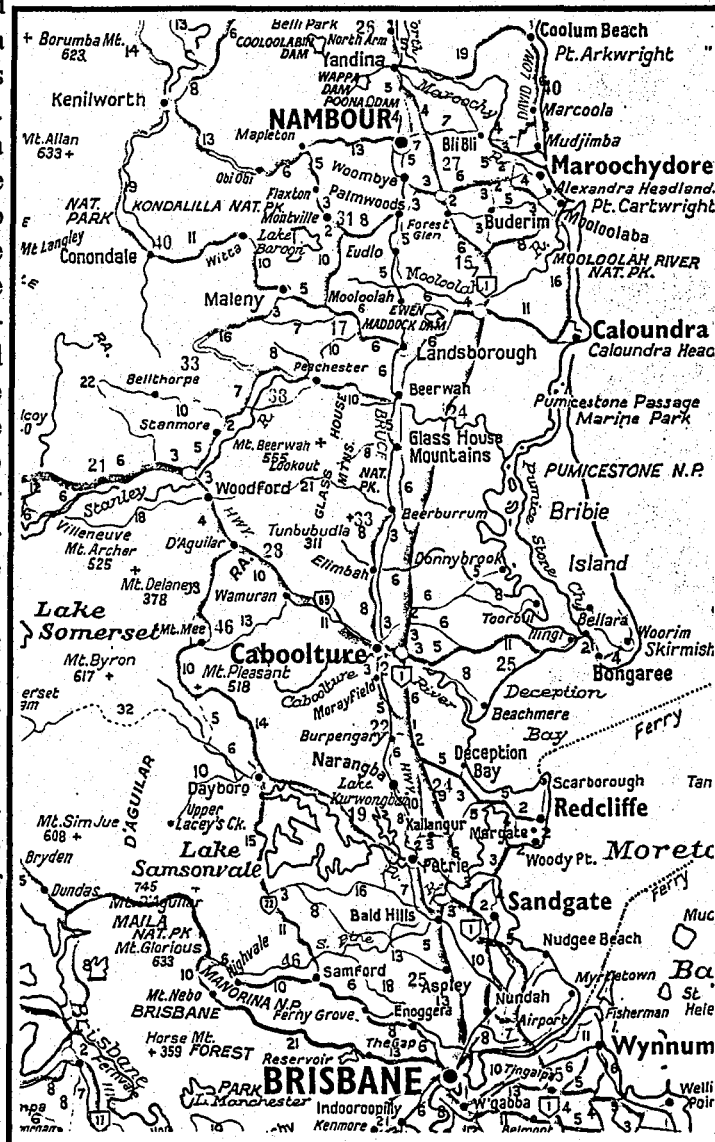
Jens Christian, Lillian, Sarah, Anton Samuel, Dora Deborah, Anna Priscilla, Enoch Emanuel, and Otto Soren - all of whom were to play significant roles in the ongoing development of the Baptist witness in their regions. Many moved to other agricultural areas, and it is the line of Lillian that is to be followed here, since she remained at Wamuran for the rest of her days, as Lillian Jackson. Born 19 April 1881, Lillian married John Alexander Jackson, a Scotsman. Though two years his senior, she outlived him by 11 years, leaving this life on 28 October 1962. Old Grandma Jackson was the undoubted matriarch of the clan, with much of her parents' dogged resolution and firmness of faith being exemplified. Soon after the death of Soren, a number of Wamuran Baptists yearned to have a church building they could call their own, and the years 1919-1921 saw a determined drive to achieve that. Herman Behrens, who had married Dora Jensen, was a prime mover, as was John Jackson. The two men, in a very low-profile way, managed to purchase a prime piece of real estate (in the process beating some annoyed businessmen to the punch), and paid the £18/16/- (\$37.60) price out of their own pockets. Similarly, when the church building was to be built, a subscription was taken up, with the members of the Jensen-Jackson-Behrens families quickly contributing over £100 of the total of £115 subscribed. The typically country wooden church was opened on 6 August 1921, the chairman being J.A.

Jackson, the Secretary H.A. Behrens, and the Treasurer Otto Jensen. When all accounts were settled on 27 August 1921, the Treasurer held a credit balance of 8d. Clearly, the heritage of Soren Jensen had now been rendered into a very tangible form. The names of Dorthea Jensen, John and Lily Jackson, and Herman Behrens were to feature strongly in all the business of the Wamuran church until the deaths of Dorthea in 1935, John in 1951, Lily in 1962, and Herman in 1968.

The next generation of the Jensen-Jackson family were to be, if anything, even more integrally involved in the business of God in the Wamuran and other churches. John and Lillian had five children: John Everard Alexander (Everard) (1910-86); Arthur Donald (1913-); Irene Myrtle (married Jim Dau) (1915-94); Beryl Maud (married Les Beasley) (1916-); Pearl Doreen (married Robert Maxwell) (1918-).

Everard Jackson seemed to be a particularly close companion to his father, John. In 1929, John offered to finance a car for the church's purposes, especially the pastor's needs. In fact, it was Everard's car that was so purchased. As well as this, it was often the case that the Jackson boys, first Everard, and more extensively later Arthur, were called upon to serve as chauffeur for various ministers, in driving conditions that were hardly pleasant. As John and Everard continued to work co-operatively, the 1920's saw numerous developments,

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Map used by permission of Universal Press

with the result that, by 1929, church services, Sunday Schools, and Christian Endeavour Societies had been established at Wamuran, Wamuran Basin, Stony Creek, and Woodford. Everard had a particular involvement in the Christian Endeavour movement. He served in many capacities, and when he transferred to Salisbury Church, where he and wife Joy became foundation members, he again served as Deacon and Treasurer.

By 1932, younger brother Arthur was emerging on the scene, and for the next 40 years, "A.D." was to become the most identifiable personality of the Wamuran work, and arguably of the Wamuran community at large. In 1932, he gave support to the formation of a church choir; in 1935, he became a delegate to the Baptist Assembly; his marriage to Ruth Mollenhagen in 1941 brought a new organist into the church; he preached and taught Sunday School; in the 1940's, both brothers were appointed to the diaconate; in 1950, the extensions of the church were delegated to the two brothers. In 1949, Everard became Secretary and Arthur Treasurer, a situation which lasted until 1955, when Everard removed to Brisbane.

At that point, Arthur was appointed joint Secretary/Treasurer, a position he held continuously until the de-constitution of the church in 1976. In 1975, he was honoured for his service by being appointed as Wamuran's only Life Deacon. In 1976, Arthur joined the Caboolture church. By this time in poor health, his activities were somewhat curtailed, but his consistency, devotion, and experience were again noted, and once again, he was appointed a Life Deacon. An unfortunate episode in church politics saw him suffer some setbacks, but when he finally transferred with his family in 1990, he left as one of the most honoured men in the history of the Wamuran-Caboolture church.

The three sisters also played their parts. Pearl, the youngest, was the last to come officially into

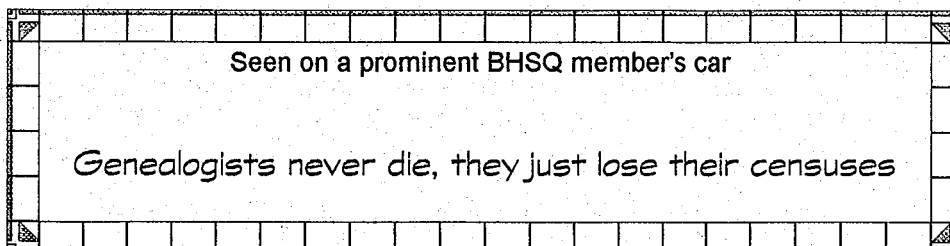
the membership of the church in 1941. The Sunday School had always been a primary concern for the family, and the records show all members - Lillian, John, and all five of their children - to be diligent and consistent in their labours here. It was this Jackson family who largely comprised the teaching staff for decades. Irene moved to Brisbane to take up employment, and some time later married Jim Dau and moved to their property at Rosewood. There she remained, active in many aspects of the life of Rosewood Baptist Church, until her death in 1994.

Beryl taught in the Sunday School, but when she was 21, she married Les Beasley, and moved to Northgate. Since 1947, Beryl and Les have been extremely active in Baptist churches such as The Grange, Nundah, and Banyo. Beryl has worked in the areas of Sunday School, Christian Endeavour, Choir, Boys' Brigade, and more recently as President of the Women's Fellowship. Having raised six children has not prevented her energetic involvement in a host of Christian services, as many campers who have sampled her catering could also testify.

Pearl also married in the early 1940's, and despite the premature loss of her husband Robert Maxwell, she has continued to serve in various churches in Tasmania, including Punchbowl Brethren. Among other things, she has acted as Missionary Convener, Sunday School teacher, and Christian Women's Communicating International (C.W.C.I.) leader.

The list could go on, but it is clear that in this generation of the Jensen/Jackson family, there was demonstrated an intense dedication to serve the Lord. The results of the labour of John and Lillian Jackson certainly bore fruit in their children. In turn, their children's labours were to be equally fruitful.

(to be continued in next issue)



☞ Would anyone vote for a republic after hearing this sermon?

pledge.—On Sabbath evening, March 4, the pastor was induced to change the subject of his address by the fact of the attempted assassination of her Majesty Queen Victoria. The text was taken from 1 Kings i. 39: "And all the people said God save King Solomon,"—appropriated as "God save Queen Victoria,"—and was dealt with as follows: 1st. That as Solomon was divinely appointed to be the ruler over Israel, so was Queen Victoria as ruler of Great Britain, instanced by the fact of her far remove from any claim to the throne, and yet her attainment to that position. 2nd. Our prayer for the Queen, "God save the Queen;" save her from political intrigues, save her from the hand of the assassin, save her with an everlasting salvation. The service concluded by the hearty singing of the National Anthem and the doxology.

Report from Jireh Church in Qld Freeman March 1882

Order Form ♦ Baptist Historical Society of Qld.

With the launching of two new publications on the weekend of the 1995 Family History Field Day, the BHSQ now has a varied list of items available. Here is your order form - it also includes brief details of membership and subscription to this new-look journal. More related publications are available from other sources. Contact the Society for further information.

Monographs:

Baptists in Queensland - a Guide to their Life and Faith, David Parker (ed.) (1994) \$2.50 + \$1.00 post

Cameos of Baptist Men in 19th Century Queensland, Mel Williams (1995) \$5.00 + \$1.10 post

Christian Camping - Baptist Camping in Queensland, Joan Maxwell (2 vols) (1991, 1993) \$10.00 set + \$1.10 post

A Fellowship of Service, J.E. White (official history of the Baptist Union, 1977) \$7.50 posted Qld; \$10 other

The National Guide to Australian Baptist Historical Resources and Services, David Parker and Keith Applegate (1995) \$5.00 posted

So, Your Ancestor was a Baptist in Queensland! Eric and Rosemary Kopittke (1995) \$5.00 + \$1.00 post

Guides - informative leaflets on various aspects of Baptist history (gratis with large s.a.e.)

The Baptist Archives, Qld - A Guide - basic information about the holdings and procedures of the Archives of the Baptist Union of Queensland

Church Archives Register and Inventory Form - for organizing and recording historical records

Managing Local Church records - a Guide - helpful information on caring for and using local church records

Your Local Church History - a four page guide to preserving and presenting church history

Periodical: *The Queensland Baptist Forum* (3 times p.a.) \$2.00 or free with BHSQ membership

Membership: BHSQ Membership - annual subscription: Individuals \$8 Families \$10 Organizations \$20

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