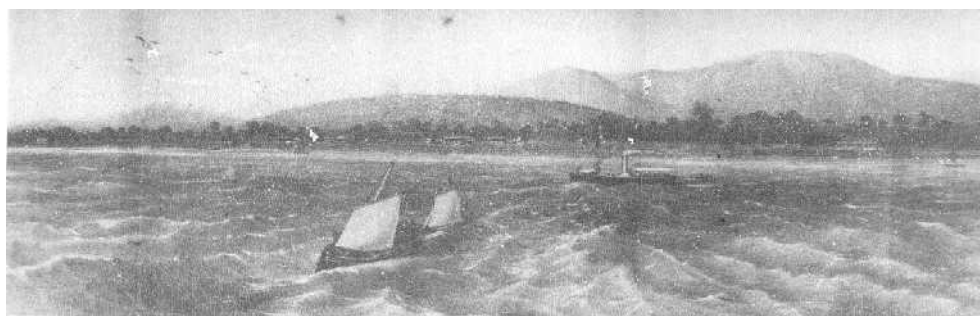


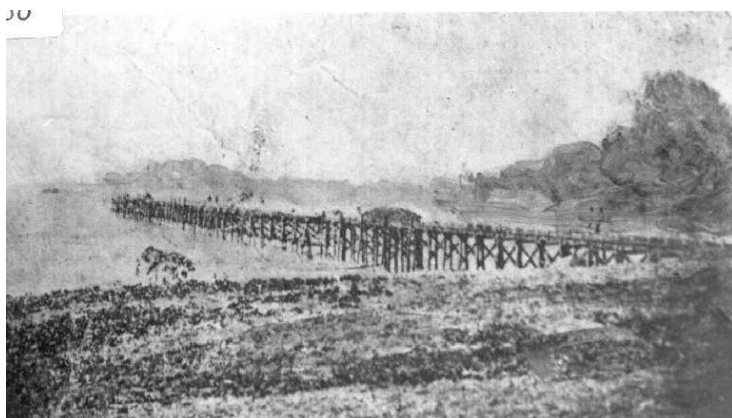
Cardwell's Jetties

Rockingham Bay, over 1000 miles north of Brisbane, was chosen as the best location for the development of a port which would serve the settlers of the Valley of Lagoons and the lands of the Upper Burdekin as they were being developed west of the ranges. The first settlers arrived in January 1864 and the Port of Hinchinbrook was proclaimed a Port of Entry and Clearance on 21 May 1864. The township was later named Cardwell by Governor Bowen.



Cardwell in 1872

Cardwell was a frontier outpost, with all commercial activity relying on the sea lanes for some years. The shipping activities are central to Cardwell's early history.



Cardwell's first jetty was commenced in 1872, and was built over the water in front of the Post and Telegraph Office at the southern end of the town.

The offshore shallows and mud prevented larger ships from unloading easily.

This jetty suffered cyclone damage and the planks were removed in 1889. Stumps of three piles can still be seen on the shore.

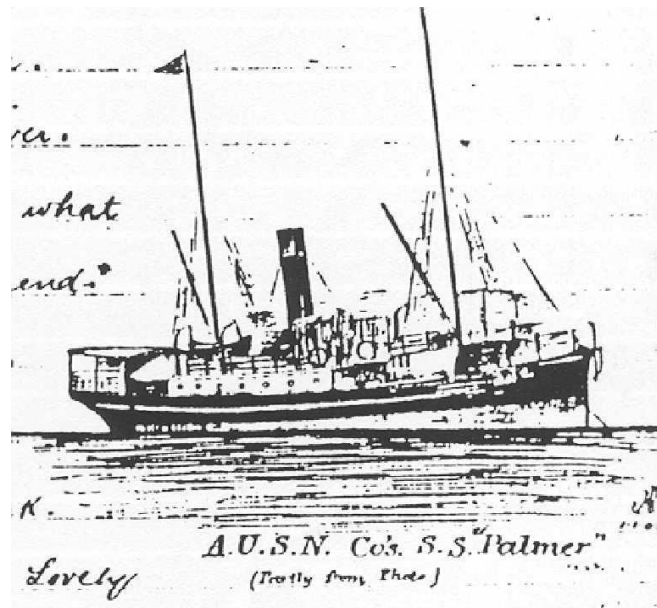
The first impressions of the coastal explorers were that this location would make an excellent harbour, but it soon proved that Cardwell as a port did not prosper for long. As well as the steep rainforested ranges behind the town restricting travel and transport inland, a good deep harbour was also lacking.

The water offshore was shallow for a considerable distance and the mud very sticky, which was no hazard to small craft which unloaded on the beach at high tide. However, as the size of shipping increased, the shallows caused great difficulties in unloading stores and livestock and the limitations of the port became more of a problem as time passed.

The first jetty was already damaged, particularly the woodwork of the structure when the final collapse came.

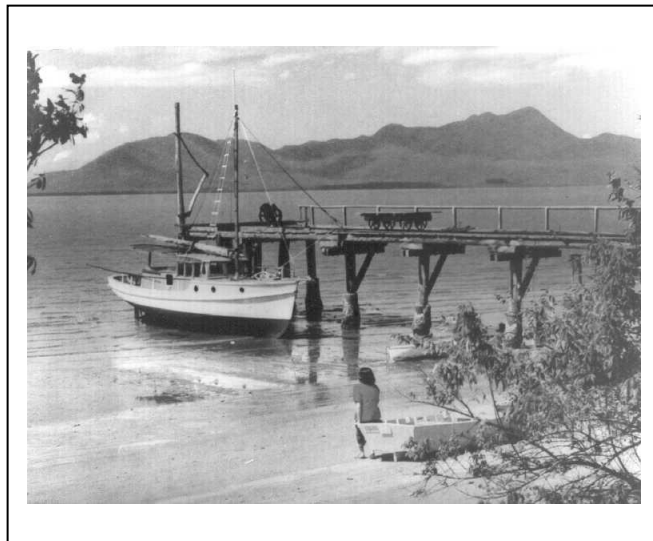
The mail steamer *Palmer* came alongside and had unloaded on to the jetty only 3 tons of cargo. As the structure came apart persons on the end of the jetty barely escaped from drowning.

Some of the cargo was salvaged, the rest of it was lost.



The steamer *Palmer* (a twin-screw steamship built in 1884) was one of three steamers that called frequently at Cardwell, on both northern and southern trips in the 1890s.

The second jetty to cater for local shipping needs was under construction during the 1890 cyclone, but survived and was completed at a final cost of over £900 in 1892. It was 530ft long and was located adjacent to where the present jetty was later constructed. It was a 'one pile' structure with a depth of only 18 inches at the T-Head at LWST. It was damaged by the 1918 cyclone and only repaired to a considerably shortened length but continued in use. It was utterly useless except at high water and then only for small vessels.



Steamers calling at Cardwell, such as the *Kuranda*, *Mourilyan* and *Lass O'Gowrie*, anchored a mile off and all passengers, goods and mails were taken to and from the jetty by small motor launch. Shipping services were reduced during the First World War and those restored after 1918 were largely withdrawn when the north coast railway was completed in 1924.

The present concrete jetty is the third to be built at Cardwell, it is 620ft long and it was officially opened in 1969.