

First Missions – Queensland

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Queensland

Queensland

August 7, 2025

When did the workers first arrive? 1905

Who were the first brother workers? 1905 – John Sullivan and Jack Little

First mission: Melbourne Street, Brisbane

Who were the first sister workers? 1906 – Polly Hodgins and Lizzy Sergent

Who was the first to profess? Mrs. Sellin, Mr. and Mrs. Dobbin and 3 Kuhn girls decided, (Jane became Mrs. Bob Frances; Maggie became Mrs. F. Raddaty) Queensland's first fruits.

Who was the first native to go in the work? (need info)

When & Where was the first meeting? (need info)

When & Where was the first baptism? John Hardie came from New South Wales and baptized "the first fruits of Queensland" in the creek near Hornibrooke at Enoggera.

When & Where was the first convention? Mt. Gravatt 1910 till 1917

Where have subsequent conventions been held?

1918. In Norup's Paddock, Coopers Plains (one year).

1919. After some years at McKudys at Kuraby where grounds got too small were moved to Fischer's at Rochedale 1929.

A second convention ground was looked for on the North Coast, 1918.

A convention was held at Walker Street, Bundaberg.

1919. A convention was held at a siding north of Bundaberg.

Graham's Creek was next choice but difficult to get trains to stop at small siding so was moved to Mungar Junction; for several years.

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1922. A third convention started near Mackay.

1959. A fourth convention at Biddeston, Darling Downs.

Where is the convention currently held? Biddeston; Pilerwa #1 & 2; Chelona #1 & 2; Brisbane #1 & 2

Who have the Overseers been? John Sullivan 1906-1924; Thomas Turner 1924-1959; Archie Turner 1959-1972; Albert Barnes 1972- 2002; Ray Corbett 2002-died 6/27/14;

Workers Names mentioned in this account: (alphabetical by first names)

Brothers: Alec Fullerton, Charles Dudman, Charlie Morgan, Chris Williams, Ernie Holtham, George Billings, George Boon, Hubert Bent, Jack Little, John Hardie, Archie Murray, Jim McLeod, Jim Gorman, John Sullivan, Percy Hartland, Robert Becht, Sam McMullen, Sandy Hinds, Tom Turner

Sisters: Ada Cousins, Emma Mole, Gertie Clark, Laura Falkiner, Lizzie Sergent, Maude Kerns, Polly Hodgins, Regina & Annie Staier, Rose Speers, Ruth Harrison

John Sullivan was born in 1875 – Died in 1924 unexpectedly, age 50. Was from Dunmanway, County Cork, Ireland. Was a school teacher in Co. Tipperary, Ireland when he went in the work in 1900. From Goodhand Pattison Account: *"Not long after building the first hall a second was built in Mr. Cooke's premises in Moneygall, engineered and superintended by John Sullivan, who doubtless took a full share of workmanship also, being even then more than half a carpenter, although teaching his school most successfully."*

Tom Turner went to Western Australia in January, 1906 as part of the first permanent group to the continent, and after some time in Western Australia and Victoria spent the last 35 years of his life as the elder worker in Queensland where he died in 1959 at the age of 82. He was born in 1878 according to the 1951 "Hymn Authors."

Jack Little went in the work in 1901 and left the work and the fellowship within a couple years after arriving in Queensland in 1905.

Laura Falkiner went in the work in 1902. Went to West Australia in Jan.1906 – died there in 1967. Apart from a couple of years in Victoria and Queensland, she preached in Western Australia until her death.

Lizzie Sergent went in the work in 1903. She left the work and lived in Dublin, Ireland.

Polly (Mary) Hodgins went in the work in 1903. Came with **Lizzie Sergent** as the first pair of sister workers to Queensland in January 1907, at which time there were only six other workers in Australia. In 1908 she went to Victoria where she labored until she went to SA in 1915. Sister to **Francis and Jim Hodgins**, workers who were with the first group of 8 to New Zealand in October, 1905. **Jim** died of Tuberculosis in May, 1907 at the age of 22, possibly the first death among the early workers. **Francis** returned to England in 1910 and preached several more years then left the work and married. Polly was not able for active mission work after 1918 and returned to Ireland in 1930.

Pioneering Days of the Gospel in Queensland

Photographs of some of these people are in the [TTT Photo Gallery for Queensland](#).

See also Fred Allen's Account

In 1905, 52 Workers left Great Britain to take the Gospel to other lands. **John Sullivan and Jack Little, Tom Turner** and companion and **Laura Falkiner** and companion (possibly **Sarah Sullivan**) came out on the same boat. John Sullivan and Jack Little came to Queensland. Laura Faulkner and companion to Western Australia (Laura F. died in Western Australia, November, 1967).

John Sullivan and Jack Little's first mission was in Melbourne Street, Brisbane.

Next year **Polly Hodgins and Lizzy Sergent** came. They held Gospel meetings, at Strathpine and Bunya – no results – moved to Daybaro where they had Gospel meetings at Mt. Pleasant in Mrs. Dobbin's barn, later in Mr. Red Sellin's barn. Mrs. Sellin, Mr. and Mrs. Dobbin and 3 Kuhn girls decided, (Jane – Mrs. Bob Frances; Maggie – Mrs. F. Raddaty) Queensland's first fruits.

John Hardie came from New South Wales and baptized them in the creek near Hornibrooke at Enoggera. The 2 sister workers returned to Sydney for Conventions and to take out new workers. Ethel Harrison and Elma Finch came then. John Sullivan's companion left him.

John's sister, Mrs. Hornibrook, was in distress through the death of her husband. John thought he should help her so built her a house with his own hands. Then the thought came, if he could do it for himself; a battle went on in his heart and mind. It was then he wrote the hymn "Lord Jesus Lead, oh lead me lest I stray." (No. 13). He got the victory and went forth with the Gospel.

He went to Sydney for conventions and returned with a companion, **Charlie Morgan**. They held meetings at Cedar Creek, now Closeburn, in 1908 when Claphams, Woods, Morrisons, Gordons and Krauses decided – a little later **Gerlie Clark** also.

Fellowship meetings were started in Charley Krause's home. After his death, the meetings continued in Tom Clapham's home. Meetings continued there till 1950 when Clapham's left the district. They moved to Tom Gordon's home and continued there. After Cedar Creek mission, **John Sullivan and Charlie Morgan** moved to Samson Vale with no result. Then to Albany Creek where **Emma Mole** decided. From there to the Valley where Mrs. Doggett made a start – 1909.

Sandy Hines(sic Hinds) and George Billings returned to Daybaro in 1908 where Fred Selin and Bob Francis decided. There is a little doubt as to whether Ferdie Raddaty decided at the time or later, in about 1908, moved to Brookfield. One family started out but did not continue. A man and wife decided at Moggill and went on (name unknown). Then they moved to Mt. Gravatt where W. Scurr decided.

The first conventions were one day gatherings in 3 different places – Brookfield, Cedar Creek and Daybaro. Wilson McClung came for these conventions. After these meetings, **Charlie Morgan, Archie Murray and George Billings** returned to Sydney and **George Boon, Hubert Bent and Alec Fullerton** came to Queensland.

At the end of 1909, **John Sullivan** had meetings at Rosewood and Lanefield without results. Before going to convention in 1910, he cycled to Minden about 8 or 9 miles and booked a site to pitch his tent after convention. After convention, he and **Hubert Bent** railed his tent to Rosewood and got a carrier (horse and cart) and went to Minden. They were told you can't pitch your tent here, you are no Baptist. Not wishing to hold the carrier up they unloaded on a nearby reserve. They went across the road to old Mr. Milewski, who gave permission to pitch the tent on his property. After 6 weeks meetings (6 meetings a week was the usual) the Schultzs and Millewski decided; there were others who did not continue. The Schloss's attended some of those meetings, coming from Lockrose.

After this they went to Laidley Creek West where Mrs. Hansen and Mary and Ernie Anderson and his sister Sarah (who later became Mrs. Henry Hansen) and Martha Meibusch (who later became Mrs. Ernie McKay). Martha's parents opposed her going to the meetings. When locked out, she got in by the window; next night the window was locked. When her clothes were taken away she went in her working clothes.

After this mission **John Sullivan and Hubert Bent** went to Wondai district where Ernie McKay, Fred Schloss, Henry Hansen and Mrs. Peter Hansen decided (Peter Hansen decided later). They had their fellowship meetings in the open air. About this time **Jim McLeod and Jim Gorman** had meetings at Vernon near Lowood, where the Kennets were helped.

Christmas meetings 1910. **John Sullivan and Hubert Bent** came back to Schultz's where the Laidley folk came and some from Brisbane; the men slept in the barn. The Schloss's from Lockrose were there. After this John had a few meetings at Lockrose in an empty house when the Schloss's were further helped including, Agnes.

At the end of the Minden Mission, 1910, **Sam McMullan and Percy Hartland** cycled from Brisbane to Towoomba, spending a night at Schultz's en route. Among the first fruit of the Downs was the Page family, Jed Harvey and Evelyn Smitherson (later Robinson) at Drayton.

1913 – **Sam McMullan and Hubert Bent** worked Spring Creek (near Clifton) and Forest Springs where Mr. and Mrs. Herron decided. Lucy, Clyde and Grace later. 1913 after conventions; **Jim McLeod and Ernie Holtham** worked in the Maryborough district. At the island plantation Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Staier and Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Rasmussen and Mrs. Jensen decided. Then they moved to Graham's Creek where Mr. and Mrs. Hawes, Regina and Annie Staier and Mrs. Cleave decided. The next move was Yarra – about the beginning of June. Mr. and Mrs. Tom Ditchmen, Mr. and Mrs. Becht, Bob, Charlie and his wife and 5 of the Collins family decided.

1912 John Sullivan and companion worked around Boonah where Mr. and Mrs. George Jensen (Esme's grandparents) decided.

1913. John Sullivan spent around Rockhampton where Mrs. Underwood and Myrtle were helped. (Myrtle later became Mrs. Tunstall).

1914. John Sullivan went to Darling Downs (Cross Hill). Apelts, Jankes, Baartz and others. About this time Mr. and Mrs. Alf Martin were found at Evergreen. From here to Haden late 1914 where Mrs. Schultz was found.

1914. Emma Mole and Gertie Clark found the Micken family.

1909 **George Boon, Sandy Hinds** with different companions worked the districts around Nambour. At Buderim, Mrs. Rowland, Ernie and Amy (later Mrs. Herb English) decided. At Hunchy, Mr. and Mrs. Senescall, Mrs. Brake, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Blair (senior) Jane Wiseman. From there to Mapleton August 1909, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Johnson, their mother and May Stibbs (Mrs. Henry Wayer) decided. Next move was to Wulong where the English family and Pillengers decided. Mr. and Mrs. Ekin came to live at Burnside opposite Blairs, just after Blairs decided and the monthly meetings were held at Hunchy, Burnside and Wulong.

Ada (Cousins) Chedzey supplied the following –

1910 – **Ada Cousins and Ruth Harrison** came to Queensland. Some missions were without results. Mr. and Mrs. Bert Wilkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Wilkinson at Longlea being their first fruits. Jack Bowden, his brother and wife and Mrs. Hinds at Gilston. Mr. Hinds and George decided later.

In 1912 **Maude Kerns joined Ada** and Logan Village yielded the Manitzkys, Wendts and Potts. At Quinzey Flat they found Mrs Bishop, Charley... Then they went to Canungra where they met Mr. and Mrs. Jack Wilkinson and Mr. Parkinson (who worked there). He invited them to Woldene (his home) and there Mrs. Parkinson and Mr. and Mrs. Hart (Lily's parents and John Hughes' grandparents) and Willie Woolcott.

1913, **Rose Speers joined Ada** and they went to Pimpama where Jim, Harry and Willie Bishop decided. On to Pompana Island where they found the Ernsts, Schmidts, Mrs. Brehmer (Martha Meibusch's sister) and Max Bruckner. Evelyn Smithson was with Ada at Glenapp where they met Mrs. Hughes (John's Grandma) and Nestor Ferguson (Evelyn S. being Nestor's Aunt). After this, other Queensland sisters went into the work – **Gertie Clark, Emma Mole and Annie and Regina Staier**.

Rose Speers and Annie Staier had their belongings searched at Inglewood by police early in World War I, because Annie had a German name. Lindners and Frank Meech came out of that Mission. Later Ada and Rose with different companions were around Bundaberg including Annie Staier, also brothers – **Charlie Dudman, George Boon and Chris Williams**.

1915-1917. Those helped were Mr. and Mrs. Gus Johnson, Mrs. Samuels, Ronnies, Syd Green and his sister, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Bryce, Mr. and Mrs. Nash.

Ada and Rose went overseas in 1920. Ada to California, Rose to Oregon, USA. Winnie Mewes decided through **Ada Cousins and Gertie Clark** at Emu Vale. Other brothers and sisters went into the work and the Gospel spread North, South, East and West.

Conventions.

First Queensland convention held at Mt. Gravatt 1910 – continued till 1917.

1918. In Norup's paddock, Coopers Plains (one year).

1919. After some years at McKudys at Kuraby where grounds got too small were moved to Fischer's at Rochedale 1929.

A second convention ground was looked for on the North Coast, 1918.

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Oversight.

John Sullivan passed away in Brisbane in 1924.

Tom Turner took over till his death in 1959.

Archie Turner took over till he returned to Scotland to take oversight there in 1971.

Incidents.

Trouble sometimes experienced with louts, sometimes rotten eggs thrown and other things. At one place they punched **Percy Hartland**, broke his nose and teeth and thrashed Jim McLeod. Police came out next night and as he went out of the tent, they punched him, not expecting police. They scattered but were caught. The police prosecuted, they were fined, had to pay for Percy's teeth and bound over to keep the peace. This happened at the place where McKurdy's, Shums and Kahlers decided in Crows Nest area. Many incidents could be recorded.

Irongate mission (information by S. Hutchinson)

Preachers – **John Sullivan, Alec Fullerton, Robert Becht**, 1917. During April, May, the Gospel tent was the meeting place of a few who wanted to know how to be saved. (On Sunday nights came a crowd who didn't care) **John Sullivan** began to tear the veil of the religion of the times and as time went on, we came to see the hollowness of all existing religious systems and the effect of their teaching which was to lull the people into the sleep of death. New Testament Truths began to dawn on our minds with vivid clearness and we realized the awful need of ourselves and the whole world. God and His Son became a reality to us, also our soul's danger and need and by the mercy of the Father we were led to the place where we said "Yes" to Jesus.

PHOTOS OF QUEENSLAND WORKERS AND CONVENTIONS

Excerpt from a Queensland Paper By J. Woolcott, Reporter of the Irish Magazine about John Sullivan

TTT Editor's Note: Corrections or additions are most welcome; as well as other historical accounts for other countries.

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