

Mapleton's Memorial Trees

- The Richards Family

Arthur James Richards was born in 1889, one of 5 boys and 2 girls. Arthur's father, James, born 1862 in Penzance, Cornwall, England, arrived in Queensland with his parents at the age of 6. They started banana farming at Sampson Creek, Samford, with a cousin, Tom.

James married Maria Fredricks Weber in 1888 and in later years started banana farming at Kiel Mountain and lived in Arundel Avenue, Nambour. Maria passed away in 1932, James in 1946.

Ida Smith was one of seven daughters and one son of William James and Annie Smith, some of the first settlers in Mapleton. Ida grew up in the family home, now known as "St. Isidore's" and attended the local school.

Ida married Arthur at Mapleton at 3pm on 23rd December, 1916, the same time and date as Ida's parents, William and Annie's silver wedding anniversary. Later, Ida and Arthur's daughter Myrtle married Robert Simpson at the same time and date in 1941.

Maurice Richards was born in 1927 at Mapleton and had two older siblings, Ronald and Myrtle. Ronald tragically drowned at the age of 18, while Myrtle married Robert McBaun Simpson in 1941.

Ida and Arthur Richards farmed citrus most of their working life, and their farm was situated across the eastern front of the Mapleton range on the Flaxton road. The farm had close to one thousand trees, and in the season after picking most of the day, Ida and Arthur then had to pack the lot in wooden cases, often with a kerosene light.

The Mapleton tramway (the old 'Shay') passed along the lower part of the farm and would stop at their siding around 8.30am, load the produce and take them to the Nambour railway station, then by train to the Brisbane markets.

Ida was a good dressmaker, and between packing oranges, kept most of the family and friends well dressed. The top part of the farm was beside one of the guest houses, which had a tennis court; Arthur often wondered why these orange trees didn't have many oranges!

Arthur would often help other farmers in busy times, as they would help him. Ida, as well as dressmaking, made butter. Maurice would often walk a few miles to deliver clothing and butter, and return with a bag containing beans, peas, meat and other local produce. No money seemed to change hands.

The original road from Nambour to Mapleton had a very narrow track up the Kureelpa/Dulong range, so Arthur and many of the local men assisted in the construction of a new winding road with their own tools, horses and scoops. When completed, a chain with padlocks was erected across each end and only those who worked on this 'Private Road' were given a key.

Myrtle, Ron and Maurice attended the Mapleton school, while Maurice also attended the Nambour Rural School. The only way there and back each day was by push bike, eleven miles, gravel road, one hour down, one and a half hours back.

Entertainment? Sunday consisted of Sunday school in the morning, church in the afternoon, with sometimes a dance in the Mapleton Hall. Arthur often played his button accordion, with carbide lights and kero tins full of boiling water provided on the fire outside for a cup of tea, along with those unforgettable washing tubs full of fresh sandwiches. Tennis was a popular sport, with many, including Myrtle, walking miles each weekend to play tennis.



Arthur James Richards



Arthur, Ida and Ron - heading for Nambour.

1927, (when Maurice was born) must have been a good year for citrus. Arthur and Ida bought a new car, a 1927 'Capitol Chevrolet Tourer' for 195 pounds. I can remember during the winter months riding in the back seat, blue with cold, raining, and dad fitting chains to the back wheels to get up the paddock to the house.

Mapleton was a small, quiet and friendly town. Whalleys store and post office, the butcher shop, the bakers shop and hotel was all there was in those days. We had little money, but saved up for the trip to Nambour to buy an icecream from Collins cafe.

During World War II, Mapleton was home to a large number of army soldiers, trucks and bren carriers. This changed the outlook of most residents, but friendship took over and many a night or afternoon a few soldiers would be sitting around the kitchen table having a laugh and a cup of tea and cake. But later, when the army suddenly moved out, the question was, what next?

Mapleton slowly changed. Arthur and Ida's farm became a housing estate, the old tramway went, the roads improved and more shops opened but Mapleton will always have fond memories of the family that made most of it happen.

Arthur and Ida sold their farm in 1955 and moved to a small farm in Palmwoods for a few years. This is where Maurice met his future bride, Edna Myrtle Duffield, whose family owned the Brooklodge Jersey Stud dairy farm nearby. A few years later, unknown to both families, the couple decided to retire and take it easy on a few acres in Buderim. Edna's mother was from the Burnett family and Uncle Burnett offered some of his farm land. Ida and Arthur settled on a small farm, again, two farms away.

Arthur passed away in 1965, Ida in 1970. The Richards family will always remain an important part of the history of Mapleton. Maurice and Edna often visit the Mapleton hall grounds to say "good day" to the tree planted in memory of Arthur and Ida.



The WELLNESS ZONE

Dominique Finney

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July is always a busy month in my dispensary for flues, nagging coughs sore throats, stomach bugs and general winter illnesses.

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Dominique is a qualified Naturopath, medical herbalist and author of *The Wellness Zone*. MNHAA. Visit her free clinics each week at the Eumundi Markets or make an appointment at her Mapleton Herbal dispensary.

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