

THE HISTORY OF MOUNT ST BERNARD COLLEGE

Mount St Bernard College is named after Fr Bernard Patrick Doyle, who had come from Ireland in 1906, as it was his idea to establish a boarding school on this part of the Atherton Tablelands. Fr Doyle had a dream of one day establishing a boarding school in his parish. Many times he discussed his idea with the Sisters but some groundwork had to be done first. But eventually during 1920 the MSB building was built and on 21st September, 1921 the College was opened.

During the first half of that year, forty-six boarders came to Herberton. Some of those were primary school students and attended St Patrick's School while the remainder were secondary student and were taught in MSB College. St Patrick's School was a separate, old-fashioned, timber building on high wooden blocks, standing on the site of the present administration block, beside the top recreation area. Many local children attended classes there over the years. However, in 1939, it was shifted to a new spot. Primary School day students and boarders attended St Patrick's School until 1977, as MSB took only secondary students from then on.

In the early years the College catered for the primary education of boys as well as girls. The boy's dormitory, known as St Joseph's, was situated in a very large house on the corner opposite the Convent; the site is now part of the Herberton State School sports grounds.

1939 saw the building of the big Sacred Heart wing of dormitories and classrooms. For many years the middle floor of that block alternated between being used as a dormitory and as classrooms as the accommodation needs changed. In 1941, the Battle of the Coral Sea swung into action.

While the war raged along the coast, parents sent their girls and boys to MSB College, because of its safer, inland location. Accommodation at the College was in great demand then, and beds were fitted into every available space. This included a row of "double-deckers" down the center of Our Lady's dormitory. The kitchen was originally housed on the ground floor (the present Home Economics rooms). A wood stove graced the alcove there and two tiny windows and a tall chimney completed the homely set-up. If those rooms could only speak, what stories they could tell of thousands of meals, meeting bells, ingenuity and deadlines!

1971 and 1985 saw extensive and wonderful renovations. New classrooms and science laboratories were built. A new dining room, kitchen, music and art rooms and the Main Hall were opened.