

GEORGE CHALLINOR, YAMAHANTO

George Miles Challinor was born in 1833. He arrived in Brisbane aboard the 'Fortitude' in 1849 and lived in Moreton Bay from 1849 to 1857. George moved to Ipswich and resided in Brisbane Street, Ipswich from 1857 to 1864.

A website about Early Photographers of Ipswich, Qld by C. Marcel Safier provided the following information about George M. Challinor: "He was the dispensing chemist for his cousin and Ipswich surgeon Dr Henry Challinor and he operated a studio at the rear of his cousin's surgery. Challinor took photos of notable citizens and of local aborigines (in May 1858). He set up a studio in George St, Brisbane during 1861. Later he farmed cotton at Warrill Creek and became clerk for the Esk Shire Council".

The West Australian Times on Thursday, 8 September 1864 carried an article on page 3 which read: A COTTON PLANTATION. – The Queensland Times of the 7th instant contains the following remarks in reference to Yamahanto, the cotton plantation of Mr. George Challinor, which it states is entitled to rank among the lions of Ipswich: - "It is distant about three miles from town, a little off the Warwick-road, and the quantity of land now under cotton crop is 34 acres. As we strolled through the plantation, meeting here and there the pretty rosy-faced maiden with her bag of cotton slung at her waist, her busy fingers rapidly adding to the store while the inevitable crinoline, it must be admitted, increased her labours rather than her grace; and, as we beheld acre upon acre bursting out with snowy pods, it was almost impossible to believe that less than twelve months ago the ground on which we stood had not been touched by the hand of man. Such, however, is the case; for Mr. Challinor only commenced ploughing in October, and he has been picking now for two months. The crop, nevertheless, is not more than a fair one, the rain having interfered very much with the growth. The quantity expected is from 20 to 25 bales. The character of the soil is light and friable, dark brown in color, with a depth of about 8 inches, and substratum of rotten rock. The kind of cotton with which Mr. Challinor has made this his first experiment is the Sea Island; but his intention next season is to plant New Orleans, of which he expects to obtain a crop double in quantity to his present one, while the price realized is within 5d. of the other. An additional quantity of land is also being got ready for next planting, which will increase the cotton ground to nearly 50 acres. The price paid to the girls for picking is 1s. per day."

On 1 April 1865, The Brisbane Courier reported that the following interesting article is taken from the Queensland Times of March 30: -

"We paid a visit to Yamahanto, Mr Challinor's cotton plantation, about a fortnight ago, but, owing to the absence of the proprietor, were not able to obtain all the information we desired. On Tuesday last, however, we were more fortunate, and had also the advantage of seeing the establishment in full work, the operation of ginning not having commenced on the occasion of our first visit. We also took a run over to Mr. Bell's field on Bandambah Creek, having learned that ginning was going on there also.

The crop at Yamahanto seems to have suffered more from want of rain than either Mr. Panton's or Mr. Bell's, the soil being, we think, rather more inclined to be sandy. The plants are not quite so luxuriant-looking, but the yield of pods is very great. The field is forty acres in extent, all, with the exception of an acre or two, planted with the New Orleans kind. The Sea Island has quite a

different appearance from the other, the plants being higher, greener-looking, more leafy, and not so forward.

There were about thirty pickers at work on Tuesday, and the quantity picked would be about a thousand pounds – equal to rather more than a bale of clean cotton. Mr. Challinor has introduced a new plan with his pickers this season. Instead of paying the children a shilling a day indiscriminately, and the women who act as overseers half-a-crown, he gives a half-penny a pound all round. When this was first proposed great discontent was manifested, but experience has proved that it is far better for the workers. We were shown one woman who, with the aid of a little child, earned 8s. 4 l. in one day; and from forty to sixty pounds is frequently picked by the children. So great is the satisfaction felt at the new arrangement that abundance of hands are always available.

The gin used at Yamahanto is a roller gin, and the engine a portable one of five-horse power. It appears to work very well, not pulling the cotton about too much; it does not, however, clean it so thoroughly from broken bits of leaves as the saw gin used at Mr. Bell's. The appearance of cotton as it comes out of the two gins is very different, that at Mr. Bell's being exceedingly beautiful to look at, light and delicate as hoar frost, and as white and gossamer looking as falling snow; while that at Mr. Challinor's is squeezed into flat flakes, and mixed with small pieces of leaves and twigs; the latter, however, through not being broken and tossed about so much, is said to be better for the manufacturer. Mr. Challinor expects at least fifty bales from his field this year. He has a small plot of last year's sowing, but it has not turned out at all well".

On page three of The Brisbane Courier, dated Wednesday 2 February 1870 the following appeared: "At Yamahanto,, the property of Mr. G. Challinor, there are this season about 80 acres of cotton, the whole of which looks remarkably well. About 30 acres of this is pruned. It is ripening fast, there being about half a bale already picked. Great care has evidently been bestowed upon this crop, which looks very healthy indeed, and is remarkably clean. Mr. Challinor has tried three methods of planting. About four acres of seed cotton has been planted with bone dust, salt, and guano, which certainly, as far as appearance goes, promises to be the best of the lot. It is very heavily podded, the pods being very plump and firm, while the plants have a particular freshness of color and are very full of leaf. A second method adopted has been to sow the seed with rotten cotton seed for manure; the remainder has been planted in the ordinary way. A small portion of the pruned seems to have missed here, thought not so much as in some other places. Ninety-day corn is sown wherever vacancies occur in the cotton. There are about ten acres of excellent maize on this farm, which is rapidly coming to maturity. The land here, as on most of the farms in the neighbourhood, is a black loamy soil, which is easy to work after the first ploughing, and appears to be well adapted for the culture of cotton. Scarcely any caterpillars have yet made their appearance either here or on any of the farms in this district. The greatest nuisance is the pig-weed, which is very difficult of eradication, and spreads in the most marvellous manner if not looked after with great care. **The labor employed on the farm consists of two white men and four Polynesians, the latter being found very serviceable**".

The Brisbane Courier dated Monday, 26 December 1870 on page 2 read: "Four Polynesians in the employ of Mr. G.M. Challinor, of Yamahanto, were charged with refusing to obey his lawful commands. Defendants admitted that they had refused to work, but alleged as a reason for so doing that they got an insufficiency of rations. In contradiction to this statement, G. M. Challinor deposed that on the day on which defendants refused to work the rations that had been given to them were as follows: - 4lbs. flour, 3 large cabbages, about a couple of pounds sugar, some tea,

and about 4lbs. slat mutton. Shortly after receiving the rations one of them returned the cabbage refusing to eat it; as a general rule potatoes were served out to them; this was the second or third time defendants had refused to work, which he attributed to their having got into bad company, Defendants were fined 5s. each and 2s 9d costs, to be deducted from their wages”.

George Miles Challinor died in June 1888 at Esk. The Queenslander carried an article on 2 June 1888 which read:

Death of Mr. G.M. Challinor

The news of the sudden death at Esk, on Saturday morning, of Mr. George Miles Challinor, who acted as returning-officer at the Stanley election, was (says our Ipswich correspondent) received with sorrow by the deceased gentleman's many friends in this district. On Friday he was in his usual health, and at night he slept well; but towards morning he was seized with a severe pain in the chest, which, however, did not continue long. A short time subsequently he was again similarly attacked, and Dr. Davies, who resides near by, was sent for, but Mr. Challinor expired before the doctor could reach him, death being attributed to heart disease. Mr. Challinor was born at Middlewich, in Cheshire, in 1832, and came to Brisbane by the Fortitude in 1849. For several years he was associated with his cousin, the late Dr. Challinor, as dispenser and chemist, and early in the flourishing days of the cotton trade they together took up Yamahnto, where cotton-growing was prosecuted while it was payable. In 1875 Mr. Challinor married Miss Anne Harlin, second daughter of Mr William Harlin, and sister of Mrs Robert Vernor and Mr. Thomas Harlin, who was some years ago mathematical, and subsequently head, master of the Ipswich Grammar School. Deceased, eight years ago, was appointed clerk and foreman of works to the Esk Divisional Board, and he occupied the former office up till the date of his death.