

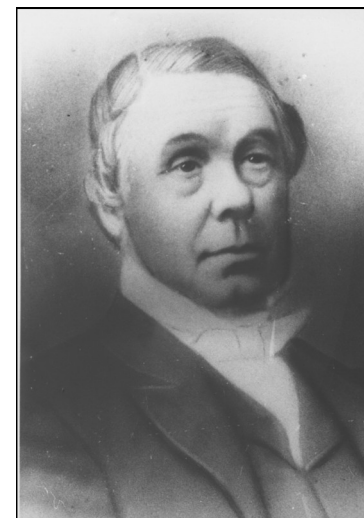
Original wooden Church built under Rev ThomasBell.



The Replacement church begun under Rev McGavin and completed under Rev Dr J FMcSwaine. D.D.

These pictures come from the Qld Presbyterian Archive Collection.

ST PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPRING HILL



**Sesquicentenary Cameos of
Ministers**

**Rev Matthew McGavin A.M
Cameo No 1**

In the Beginning

Matthew McGavin was born in Irvine, Ayreshire Scotland on the 23rd October 1807 to Robert, a grocer and his wife Mary nee Reid.

He completed an MA at the Synod Hall of the United Presbyterian Church in 1830 and was ordained in a parish called Stonehouse in 1831.

He married Elizabeth Cluff Chep in 1832 and the couple went on to have seven children. Elizabeth died sometime after the birth of the youngest child, Eliza in 1848. He later married Grace Ewing, a widow, in 1857 and they travelled to Australia on the 'Cairngorm' in 1863 with the youngest child, Eliza. Another son, James followed them to Australia in 1867. His brother had preceded them and was settled near Rockhampton with his family.

Scotland

Rev McGavin was the third minister of his first parish of Stonehouse, following one who went to Canada. In March 1841 he went to Wellwynd in Airdrie, Lanarkshire and remained there for 22 years until he and his family left for Australia. A new church building was opened and dedicated in 1847. His congregation did not want him to leave but he told them that their only course was to acquiesce because his mind was made up. He was 55 years old when he arrived in Moreton Bay.

He was a gifted musician and in 1853, with the organist at Paisley, Andrew Thomson, he published 'The Precentor's Guide to the Selection of Tunes'. He also wrote, amongst other things, a Psalm tune called *Clydesdale*.

Rev McGavin emigrated to Australia on the "Cairngorm" in August 1863 and found the Creek Street Congregation in need of leadership. He and his family were welcomed with open arms. His wife Grace and youngest child Eliza who was then sixteen, accompanied him. Several years later his son James followed. Cemetery records reveal that his three sons are all buried in Brisbane, as is his daughter Eliza(beth) Armour who laid the foundation stone of the new building.

Life in Brisbane

Hay in the Jubilee History of the Presbyterian Church in Queensland published in 1899 tells us that "Mr McGavin's ministry in later years was dogged by serious illness. He was a man of marked ability as a preacher, of sound scholarship, of calm and judicious mind and warmth of heart; strong in his convictions and fearless, yet courteous, in the expression of them. Few men have held a higher place in the respect of the community for sterling integrity."

In the Queenslander Jan 2 1875 an obituary which occupied much of page 2, says in part "His work in the pulpit was in no small measure supplemented by his pen on rare occasions in the public journals and from time to time under other more abiding forms. The community at large have expressed in equivocal terms their admiration of the dear, masterly logic and the massive yet polished diction with which he handled those subjects which he now and again spoke from the platform."

Not long before his last illness in December 1874, Rev McGavin delivered two lectures on 'The Claims of Popery' to benefit the Queensland Presbyterian Sabbath School Union.

Rev McGavin travelled to Sydney not long after this as he was very ill—sadly he died on 16th December 1874 and was buried in the Presbyterian section of the Willoughby Cemetery. Like his successor, Rev Dr McSwaine, he suffered with a throat problem.

A son James, married and settled at 'Whiteside', North Pine River. Sadly he died in 1875 just a month after the birth of his daughter. His stepmother, Grace went to live in Sydney where she remained until her death in February 1883.

Information for this article has come from the entry by R S Byrnes in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, The Jubilee History of the Presbyterian Church in Queensland by Rev Alexander Hay and from newspapers of the time, 'The Brisbane Courier' and "The Queenslander"