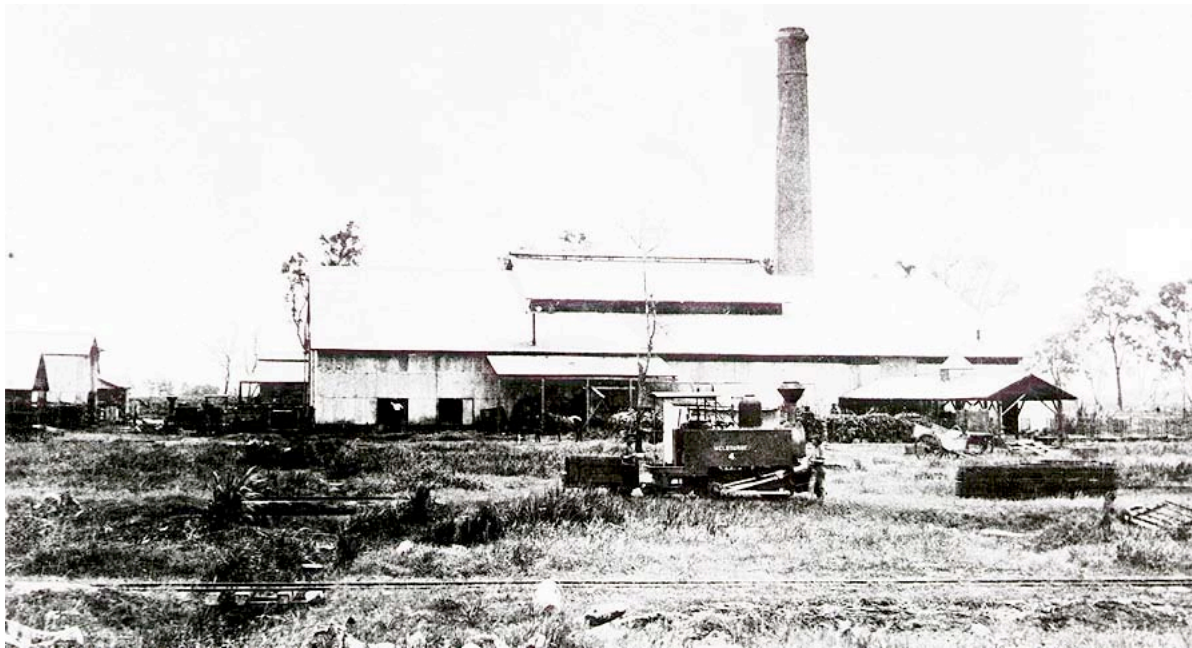




Victoria Mill (Ingham, Qld) over the Years



CSR Limited: 'Victoria Mill, circa 1883'. Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU. Deposit No: Z303/46 (D3.0/2/11); Negative No: 6528. The locomotive (centre) is the original #4 'Melbourne' but there is at least one more locomotive between the two buildings in the left distance. There is a pile of portable track sections in front of #4 with several two wheel wagons and a row of loaded wholestick trucks behind.

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) established a mill on the Herbert River near Ingham in 1883 for "the manufacture of grey refining sugars from sugar cane".

Buildings were iron throughout: cast and wrought iron columns, tie rods and roof work; roof and sides sheathed with corrugated galvanised iron sheeting [1]. The 1885 crush was 3,823 tons, rising to 40,246 tons in 1885 and a yield of 3,649 tons of sugar. By 1933 the crush had risen to 247,261 tons for a total production of 32,074 tons of sugar [2].

In the mill's earliest years cane was primarily sourced from the company's own plantations but increasingly local farmers were encouraged to supply cane, especially following the change from Polynesian (Kanakas) to white labour after Federation. The mill also encouraged mechanisation with steam ploughs used from 1882 [3].

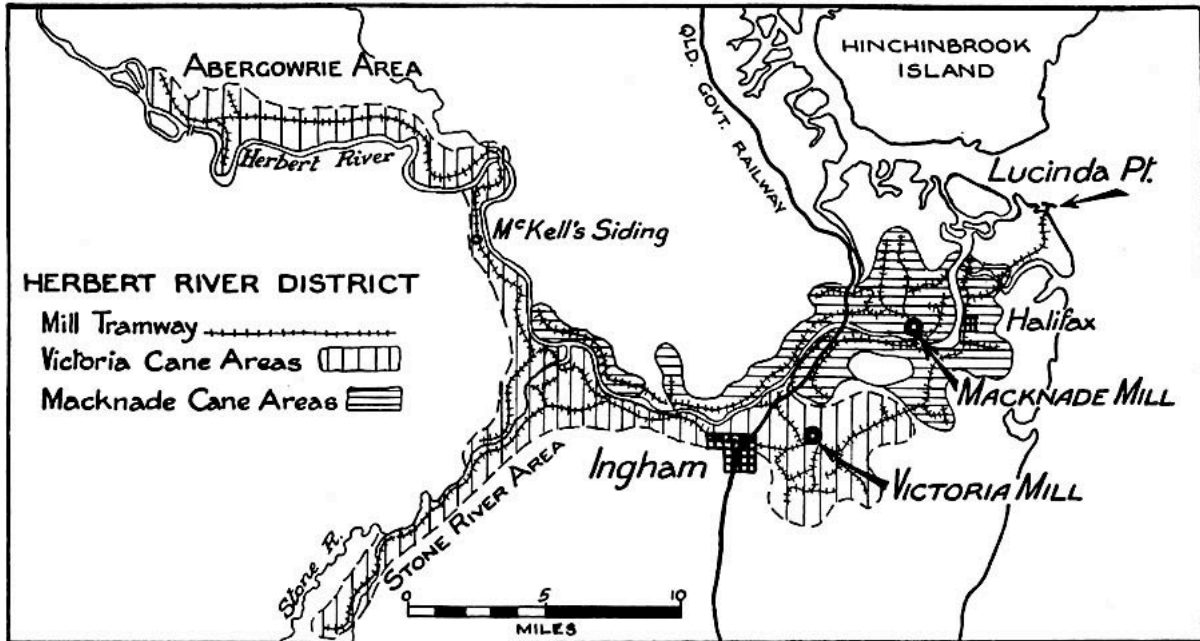
In New South Wales some of the early plantation owners employed Kanakas and in Queensland they relied almost entirely on coloured labour. Nowhere in the world, except in C.S.R. mill areas in the semi-tropical districts of New South Wales, was cane farming work done by white men. The Queensland pioneers, most of them recent

immigrants from temperate European countries, accepted without question the belief that white men could not undertake hard manual labour under the tropical sun. Despite their successful establishment of a community of independent white farmers in New South Wales, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Queensland accepted the belief for a decade.

From the start of operations at Victoria Mill in 1883, the company had been buying cane from farmers in the district as well as from its own plantations. This was reported to have been "the first case of farmers growing cane for a mill in the North". [4]

The mill has been modernised and expanded several times over the years. By the mid-1950s (see illustration on next page) following a major expansion to the mill and to its growing area it had become one of the largest in Australia and the Ingham district was anticipating its first 1 million ton cane crop.

Interestingly Victoria Mill, an early adopter of chopped cane bins and diesel power, was also one of the last to retire its steam locomotives. Today (photos pg 2 & 3) the mill is still one of the largest and most modern in Australia.



The cane growing areas in the Herbert River District follow the river systems and extend out some distance from the mills, thus the need for the tramway system. Lucinda Point is the sugar wharf for the area. Source: Lowndes, A G (1956). South Pacific Enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, p 121.



A restored CSR-type wholestick cane wagon on the Durundur Railway (ANGRMS).



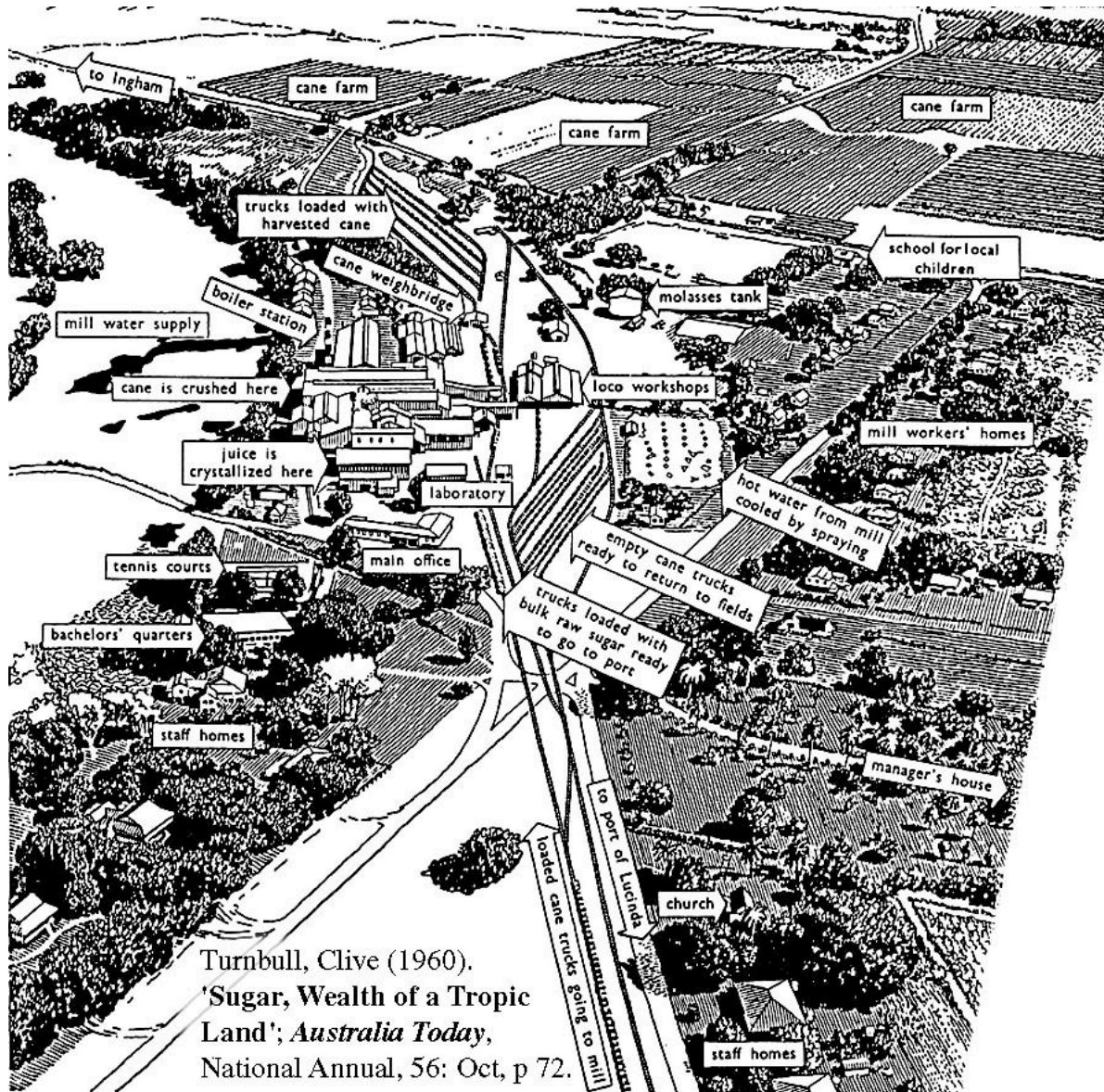
Second generation 3 ton bins utilised Victoria Mill wooden stanchion wholestick trucks. Bins were transported into the fields for filling and then transferred to rail for movement to the mill. CSR photo from the collection of C Hart.



Victoria Mill's 0-6-0 *Melbourne*, built in 1938 by Hudswell Clarke of Leeds #1701. It's been restored and is one of the two operating steam locomotives on the Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society's Durundur Railway at Woodford, Qld. Photographer: Lynn Zelmer.



Modern diesel power at Victoria Mill: *Clem H. Mccomiskie*, a Walker's rebuilt bogie diesel hydraulic locomotive, at the 3 Mile on its way to the mill with empty sugar bins from Lucinda Point wharf. August 2000. Photographer: C.Hart.



Turnbull, Clive (1960). 'Sugar, Wealth of a Tropic Land'; *Australia Today*, National Annual, 56: Oct, p 72.

Victoria Mill in 1960 from an aerial photo showing the layout of the tramway servicing the mill. Another common mill design looped the bins through the mill itself and back around to empty bin tracks which sat beside the full tracks, rather than the two end-to-end yards above.



The modern Victoria Mill, the crushing season, August 2000; sugar train at left. Greg Stephenson photo.

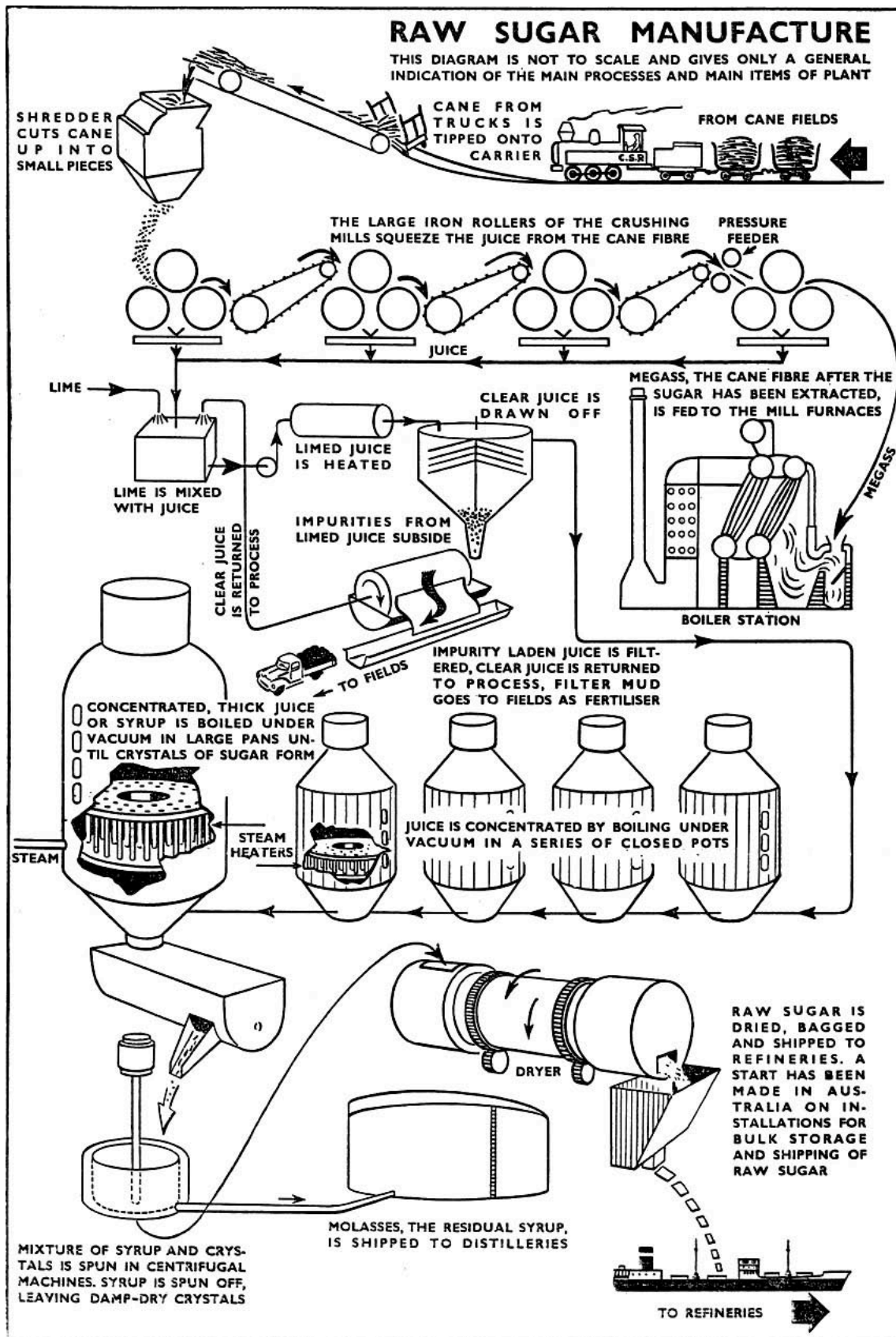
References

[1] *Victoria Mill 1953*, The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Ltd, p 32.

[2] *Ibid*, p 30.

[3] *Ibid*, p4.

[4] Lowndes, A G (1956). *South Pacific Enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, p 28.



The sugar milling process is constantly being improved but this diagram from the mid-fifties provides a reasonable description of what happens within the mill. The raw sugar must still be refined before delivery to the customer. Source: R Wiles collection, originally from Lowndes, A G (1956), South Pacific Enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, p 139.