

Thomas John Quilty and Olive Marion Underwood. Owner-managers after Tom's brother Paddy died in August 1938 (TCPJ, 30-8-1938: Clement, 2002: 42-43) until they sold out to Snowy Kenna in 1950. Tom was born at Normanton, Queensland, on either April 1st (*North Queensland Register*, 15-4-1967: 21) or on April 4th 1887 (Clement, 2002: 42-43). He was the second of six children of Irish-born Thomas Quilty and his wife Mary (née Griffin). Tom was home-schooled for a period before attending Nudgee College, Brisbane. After finishing at college he joined his brothers helping run the family properties Oakland Park and Euroka Springs in the Gulf Country.

In 1909 his parents and two of his sisters moved to Sydney where Thomas senior increased the family fortune through property investments. According to Bolton (1953: 181) the Quilty brothers acquired Bedford Downs (formed from the earlier Idamere and Carolla stations) in 1917 for £34,000 – almost £5 per head of stock, twice the rate that Ord had sold for three years earlier. Patrick managed Bedford while Tom managed Euroka.

In 1919 Tom married Charlotte Byrne. They had four children but their marriage failed when Tom became involved with Olive Underwood, the daughter of a neighbouring station owner. Tom and Olive moved to the Territory in late 1937 and took over the running of the Six Mile Hotel in Wyndham. Paddy and Tom had previously purchased Bradshaw station and on his death in 1938 Tom and Olive sold the hotel and moved to Bradshaw. Their initials and the date '38' are on a boab near Bradshaws Tomb and on another boab near the southwest end of the Yambarran Range (Bradshaw) with the date March 1940 (Lewis, 1996c: 70-72; Lewis, 2000: 159-161).

They purchased the adjoining Coolibah station in 1939 (TCPJ, 4-4-1939) and the two stations were run as one. In 1940 they surrendered the western part of Bradshaw (4,067 square miles). This was later taken up by Dave Fogarty and Frank McMahan and named Buffalo Springs. Tom 'closed for Springvale on April 1, 1948, for £17,000'. He and Olive continued to live on Coolibah-Bradshaw until they sold out to Snowy Kenna in 1950. They then they moved to Springvale station.

Beth Beckett who got to know Tom and his family in the late 1940s says that his nickname was 'Treacle Tom' and she remembered him as a man with:

an outgoing personality and a reputation as an outstanding cattle and horse man. ... Renowned for his generosity he would back anyone he thought worthy of assistance and more than once helped those down on their luck. Now almost a legendary character, he was a great benefactor of worthy causes ... Tom was larger than life, hardworking, hard drinking and boisterous and he had a seemingly endless supply of energy and wit (Beckett, 1998: 84).

Quilty also earned a reputation for being hard on the Aborigines. In August 1944 the Timber Creek police met him and:

enquired re his complaint runaway abos and informed him his method of harshness towards the blacks would have cease otherwise he wont have a single one on the place inside 12 months. In 1942 advised T.J Quilty re his working & feeding & clothing of blacks. Blacks on Stn state the boys ran away because of no clothing & insufficient food.'