

Parramatta Park Riot, Cairns 1932

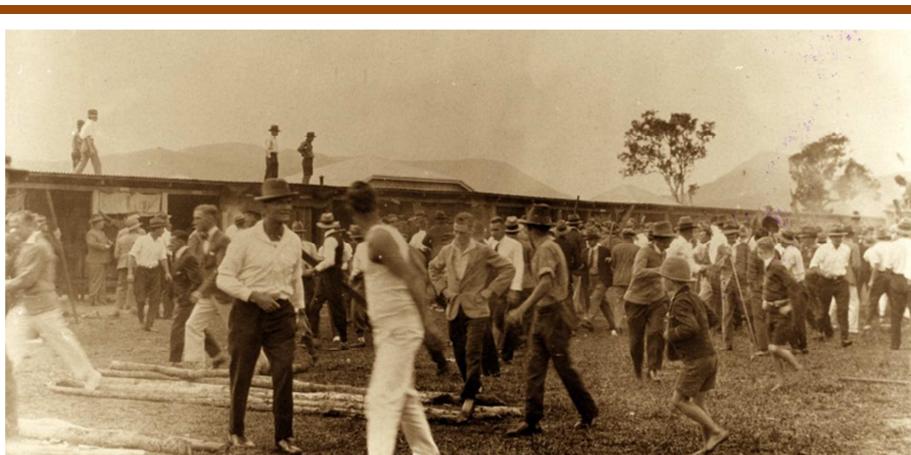
On 17 June 1932 the Cairns City Council asked unemployed vagrants living in Parramatta Park, to leave the grounds for the duration of the Cairns show. They refused to go and by July the town's people were getting frantic and angry because they could not set up for the show. On July 17 police were called in to forcibly remove the men from the park, many towns' people also took part in the hostilities and a riot broke out. A number of people were injured and the majority of the vagrants were "run out of town".

This is how the event was reported in the Cairns Post of 18 July 1932:

LAW & ORDER: Yesterday's page in the history of Cairn will be regarded with some-pride but also with regret - pride that its citizens rallied so wonderfully well on the side; of , law and order, and regret that the necessity; for such an exhibition of solidarity was ever needed. For several weeks a large: encampment of unemployed had hurled defiance at Cairns citizens who desired to have the show ground for their own use for a abort period. The defiance went further - it was a flick of the thumb to law and peacefulness. They had refused the offer of temporary shelter and made all sorts of impossible demands. When the gage was accepted 500 citizens and 34 police clashed with over 100 of the unwanted residents of the showground, and blood was spilled; in fact, within ten minutes, the scene of the melee might have been a slaughter yard.

THE CULMINATION: The battle of Parramatta Park was fought and won by the massed forces of law and order, within ten minutes, and within another ten, incensed citizens had returned from chasing a body of fugitives nearly a mile off.

BARBAROUS WEAPONS: A large number of primeval but none-the-less deadly weapons were used by the defenders of the encampment to which they had no right, and in the melee, stones, bottles and pieces of iron flew left and right. When the reckoning came there were at least 80 injured, eight being detained in hospital. Included among the injured were a large number of influential citizens of the town, but the usurpers suffered most.



The dying moments of the Parramatta Park riot.