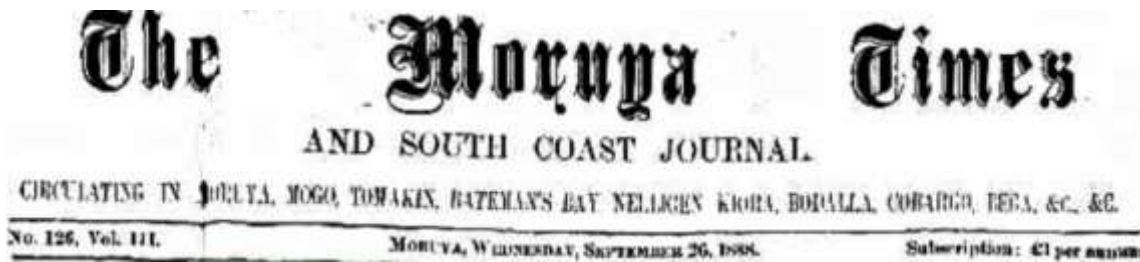




Moruya Newspapers and the people who ran them. Part 4

Wendy Simes

The Moruya Times



The Moruya Times commenced publication in 1886. The Illawarra Mercury of the 6th of May 1886 states “*the Moruya Times, a new paper, made its first appearance on Friday. It is a credible production and if there is any growth in that township of late years the new venture should have a successful career.*”

Currently this is the only Moruya newspaper that has been included on Trove. The earliest issue that has survived however is September 26th 1888 which was no. 126 Vol III as shown in the masthead above. None remain from the time of its founder Walter Bennett.

Walter Bennett

Image from www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers



Walter was born in New Zealand in 1864 and started his journalist career in the Wairarapa - Wellington District.

He married Margaret Mahony in December 1884 at her parents' home in Dunedin. They had one child in Lytleton, which is south of Christchurch before leaving for Australia in late 1885. By 1886 they had settled in Moruya and started the Moruya Times. Here in March 1887 their second child was born. In November of 1887 during H.W. Barton's leave of absence he was appointed Warden's Clerk and Mining Registrar for Moruya.

1888 saw him selling the Times to become the owner of the Dungog Chronicle. In Dungog he evidently found his niche and in 1898 he became the member for the area remaining in the NSW Parliament until his death in 1934.

Walter sold the paper to William Boot in 1888.

William Boot

William was the 4th son of Doctor Edward Boot and his wife Catherine Morrison and was born at Yaragee on the 23rd of July 1854. After finishing his education William opted for a career in banking, joining the Bank of NSW¹. He worked for a number of different banks before deciding to return to Moruya and take up a career in Journalism. While working in South Australia in 1881 he married Ada Dempster.

¹ Obituary Moruya Examiner 28th July 1924



He purchased the Times newspaper plant from Mr Bennett in 1888 and continued to produce the newspaper. However in January 1890 he decided to move the plant to Cobargo and continued publishing as the Cobargo Chronicle and South Coast Journal.

Around 1895 he took a break from journalism and decided to promote his father's patented Boot's Indigestion Cure in Sydney but this was not a success so he returned to Moruya working for Harvison as a Auctioneer. However journalism had got into his blood and he returned to Cobargo and established the Cobargo Chronicle moving from there to start the Bega Budget where he remained for 18 years before retiring back to Moruya. The advertisement on the right is from Shoalhaven News 4th April 1895.

Once again the libel laws caught up with yet another of our newspaper proprietors. In February 1900 a case he labelled The Police versus the Press Henry Roberts sued him for libel. Young constable Roberts on his first posting was evidently too enthusiastic about his duties for the people of Cobargo and was described by William in the following terms. *"Ever since his location in the district, has made himself obnoxious to a large section of the public by his impudent officiousness and pragmatical behavior"....A meddling officer....This policeman's presence in Cobargo is a positive danger to the people...His evidence stamps him as one of the most dangerous and unscrupulous police witness that ever kissed the bible.... he should be taken back to the depot and taught something of his duty before being let loose on Society.* Needless to say the verdict went against William.

Constable Roberts appears to have been received better by the community of his next appointment Yalgogrin with the Wyalong Advocate of 22nd August 1903 reporting on the recapture of two prisoners states *"The prompt and plucky capture executed by Constable Roberts is deserving the highest praise."*

Like the previous owner of the Moruya Times William Boot was interested in politics and tried three times to get elected as the local member. He was not however successful. He stood on a political platform of Protectionism.

Advertisements from the Moruya Times 3rd October 1888 after William Boot took over.

THE
Moruya Times
THE [MOST POPULAR AND OUTSPOKEN JOURNAL]
IN THE DISTRICT,
HAS THE
Largest Circulation in the District.
**PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
MORNING.**

Terms of Subscription :
Five Shillings, per Quarter

ADVERTISING :

First Inch	3s.
Every Additional Inch	1s 6d.

Money to Lend.

WILLIAM BOOT,
TIMES OFFICE

WILLIAM BOOT
(For 12 years in the Bank of N.S. Wales),
AUCTIONEER,
VALUATOR, FINANCIAL
INSURANCE
AND
GENERAL COMMISSION AGENT.
MORUYA TIMES OFFICE.

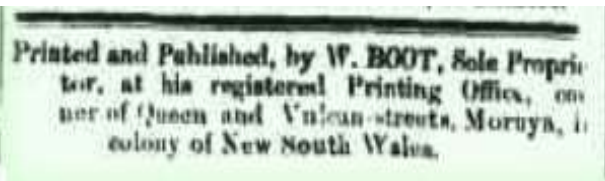
CURE.

PREScribed by a legally-qualified Medical Practitioner for the past 10 years. It is
Not a "Cure-all,"
but an absolute cure for
INDIGESTION.

SYMPTOMS:— Flatulence, Biliousness, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Headache, Colic, Drowsiness, Lowness of Spirits, Heartburn, Pains in the Chest, Dizziness, Offensive Breath, Backache, Pains between Shoulder Blades, Disagreeable Taste in the Mouth, and all disorders of the Digestive Organs.

TRY IT AND PROVE IT.

Laboratory, 35 Sussex-st, Sydney.
WILLIAM BOOT Proprietor.



The address to the left would indicate that the Moruya Times was published on the site of the old Post Office which was on the corner of Queen and Vulcan Streets, perhaps with the same machinery used by the Moruya Telegraph?

Lionel James Lecher Hurley

William Boot sold his newspaper business to **Lionel Hurley** who continued publishing as the Cobargo Watch and South Coast Journal with vol.1, no.1 on October 21st 1898. This title continued until April 16 1902 with the next issue of April 26 published as v. 1, no.1 of the Moruya Tilba Times. He continued to run the paper until October 1911 when he took up a post in London as Immigration Agent and later Trade Commissioner. There is some confusion as to whether Lionel or Albert Walker owned the newspapers, Albert, I think, owned the plant but there are conflicting reports.

Lionel was the son of John Hurley, miner and politician and Elizabeth Ann Lecher and was born in Sydney in 1879. He married **Henrietta Maude Bate**, daughter of William and Caroline Bate in Tilba in June 1904. At the time of his marriage his address was given as Moruya and his occupation Journalist. In 1901 he was appointed Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board of Tilba and in 1902 Magistrate Central Tilba. In 1903 he was granted an auctioneer's licence for the Moruya District and in 1904 became the Council Clerk.

His brother Norman (Sidney Norman) who was killed in WW1 also served in the Boer War with his record giving his occupation as printer so Lionel may have some previous knowledge of printing. During WW1 he was with the Army Service Corps and the War Office rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.



From the Corkhill Collection

Lionel continued a career in the public service and in 1929 was appointed to the censorship board. Both Lionel and Henrietta died in 1955.

The Shoalhaven Telegraph of the 2nd October 1912 reported that Mr S W Tate had taken over the paper. This would have been a misspelling it would have been S.W. Bate.

However from 1913 **George Stewart Haslock** was the proprietor of the paper. George has previously worked for the railways in the Carriages, Wagon and Paint Shop branch at Everleigh. He was the Treasurer of the workshop Committee.² He also appears to have been the Secretary of the Canterbury Loyal Orange Lodge prior to his moving to Campbell Street Moruya. George unfortunately died in July 1915 and would appear to have been close to bankrupt at the time of his death as his name appears in the State Records bankruptcy index 10th December 1915. There is also an earlier entry for Bankruptcy of George Stewart Haslock in 1889, at the time his occupation was given as builder. The other name mentioned in this period is Lindsay.

John Lindsay was George Haslock's son-in-law. He married Louise Haslock in Sydney in 1910. Their first child Lionel was born in Canterbury in 1910 and their second Linda E was registered in Eden in 1912.

We know little about Lionel as a Newspaper editor but we do know about his drinking prowess, he would have made Martin Keating proud! When in Sydney in August 1916 his exploits were reported in most of the regional papers under such headings as "**Newspaper Man Beer Proof**". He started drinking with a friend in a Sydney hotel then invited two strangers to join them. They all then visited two other hotels, then all went in a taxi to a place they could drink in comfort. In the taxi while he had his arm around the woman's waist he claimed she stole his money. He told the court he could not get drunk on beer at all. He could sit tight on about 30 glasses,

² Sydney Morning Herald 17th September 1901

but about 10 glasses of spirits would make him drunk. He had no limit on beer. The magistrate discharged the case.

His wife Louise died in 1966 at Kogarah. I haven't found the death of John.

The Moruya Advance



William Daniel Pfeiffer

This publication was short lived and produced by an ex employee of the Moruya Examiner **William Daniel Pfeiffer**. The only issue in the State Library collection is v.2, no. 92, July 6th 1892. The Moruya Advocate did not last long. William had married Annie Metcalf on the 25th October 1892 in Moruya. Their first child Eric was born in Moruya in 1893 but by the time their second son Roland was born in 1898 the family had moved to the Eden District. Their third son Roland was also born here in 1898. William had made the decision to leave Moruya and to set up the Pambula Voice which proved successful. The first issue published was in August 1892.

Printed and published by WILLIAM DANIEL PFEIFFER, at the "Advance" office, Queen-street, Moruya, in the colony of New South Wales.

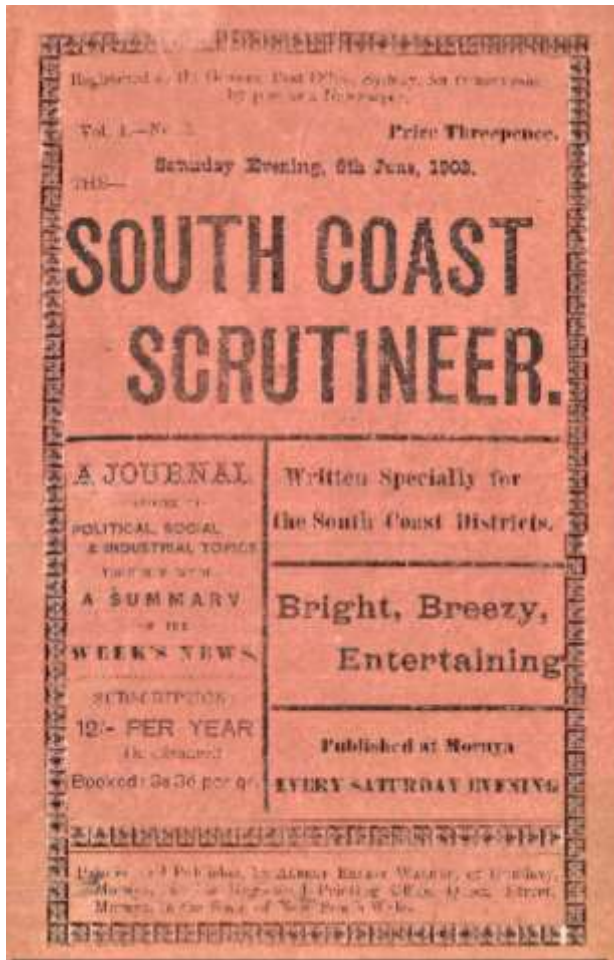
He sold this newspaper in 1905 and the family moved to Sydney for a few years before moving to Grenfell where he printed the Grenfell Observer from 1907 to 1927. He was a staunch member of the Methodist Church and according to an ex staff member G. Neagle he was an excellent employer, fair and considerate.³

Unlike many of his contemporary newspaper proprietors William was well liked by the community he lived in and did not seem to be involved in any legal battles.

William died on the 26th December 1947 and Annie on the 8th August 1947.

A copy of the first issue of his newspaper can be downloaded from our web site www.mdhs.org.au/References/Moruya_Advance.pdf

³ Grenfell Record 8 January 1948



THE SOUTH COAST SCRUTINEER

Albert Ernest Walker

The South Coast Scrutineer only ran for a very short time, the first issue appearing on the 6th June 1903 and the last one with number 13 on the 5th September 1903. It was a Journal size publication rather than the larger Newspaper format. Its proprietor was Albert Ernest Walker who like a number of his counterparts seemed to be continually on the move.

Albert was the youngest child and only son of Matthew Walker and Jane Holliday. He was born in Brisbane in 1857 where for a short time his father ran a hotel. Matthew had come to Australia in 1829 with his regiment. Prior to moving to Brisbane he had been with the Convict Police Force stationed on Norfolk Island having been there previously with his regiment. Albert's mother died when he was one, his father remarried and once again joined the Prison Service working as the jailer at Braidwood and Goulburn.

One report says Albert was said to have started his career in newspapers in Brisbane, however the Cobargo Chronicle of the 22nd February 1919 in writing his obituary says he served his time as a printer with the Penny Post, presumably this is the Goulburn Penny Post. The same article says he was part owner of the watch with George Campbell.

He married Mary Agnes Gannon in 1895 in Cobargo. Mary was born at Yarragee, Moruya in 1867. In Cobargo Albert took over the Cobargo Watch, presumably as editor of the paper, when William Boot went to Sydney. The paper was not reported to have been sold by William Boot until 1898 when it was sold to Lionel Hurley. Walter continued working for Lionel Hurley when he moved the plant to Central Tilba and established the Tilba Times in 1898. In April 1902 the plant was again moved, this time back to Moruya where Lionel Hurley established the Moruya-Tilba Times. Albert Walker also moved to Moruya. The Cobargo Chronicle of 11th April 1902 reported the Central Tilba community gave the Walkers a send off prior to their departure to Moruya and states the proprietor of the Times, Mr Hurley, intends starting a second paper in Moruya. However referring to Albert Walker the paper also states "some years ago he joined the staff of the Cobargo Watch subsequently purchasing the property. After a time he removed the plant to Central Tilba and established the Tilba Times and has been identified with that paper ever since." So Hurley owned the paper but whether Hurley or Walker owned the printing press is not quite clear.

The Tilba Times definitely was owned by Lionel Hurley and was moved to Moruya by him with Albert working for the paper. We find Albert well established in Moruya by June 1902 where he is reported as the Secretary of the new Tennis Club. The Cobargo Chronicle of the 12th December 1902 reported that he had left Moruya having secured a billet in the Government Printing Office, but by May 1903 he is back in Moruya and about to start his own paper.

We know he set up the Scrutineer to be a journal devoted to political, social and industrial topics with a summary of the week's news⁴. He begins the first issue with an open letter to the Mayor, John Emmott. He terms the letter a friendly overture and is throughout the letter polite and co-operative. However he was not always so polite in the same issue writing "*a certain snuffle-busting land-grabber, known to the Moruya District, who spends his Sundays pulpiteering... and puts the balance of his waking moments in breaking the 10th commandment.*" Or discussing an attack on the Customs Minister Mr Kingston refers to his attackers "*as a bloated crowd of fatmen, the Colonial Sugar Refining Co*". We also know he was a strong Labor Party supporter and very much on the

⁴ The Examiner 19th October 1956

side of the poorer members of the community evidenced by his ideas on share farming which he was against. He states the mission of the paper was “*to preach the gospel of decentralization*” and is scathing in his comments on the centralization of power in Sydney and particularly the “**Sussex-street man.**”

Unfortunately his Scrutineer newspaper was only to last for 13 weeks. From Moruya he moved to Bemboka to manage the Bemboka Advocate but by 1906 he was starting the Nimitybelle News. In 1909 the Nimitybelle News was leased to the Cooma Express.

Of course during the course of his career there was the inevitable libel action. In July 1907 while he was the proprietor of the Nimitybelle News Owen Eugene Silk sued him for damages. Walker did not appear in court nor was he represented by an attorney. A verdict was given for the plaintiff and £50 damages was awarded plus the payment of the expenses of the witnesses and costs.

The Police Gazette of 14th October 1908 reported a warrant had been issued by the Nimitybelle Bench for Walker’s arrest on the charge of wife desertion. He was described as 51 years old, 5 feet 10 of a thin build, fair complexion with a full beard and moustache, a white patch on side of head, a roman nose and speaking with a drawl. It was said he was addicted to the drink. Interestingly it was suggested he could be in the company of a woman named Annie Spencer.

Presumably the court costs could not be met and Albert did not reappear in Nimitybelle as the Bega Budget of 17th July 1907 reports the sale of the Nimitybelle News plant by the Cooma District Sheriff. The property was purchased for £63 by P.J Gannon his wife Mary’s brother. The Nimitybelle News was to continue under another editor. The Nimitybelle News was for sale but was not sold at the time, and in January 1909 it was leased to the Cooma Express. Mrs Walker was said to be residing in Cooma at the time. Mary was evidently left to pick up the pieces of her husband’s newspaper enterprise with 6 children the eldest of whom was 11. She had also at this time had a baby on the 28th June 1907 which unfortunately died the same day. Somehow she managed to raise her 6 children, all of whom were still alive at the time of her death in 1934 when she was living in Randwick.

By 1914 Albert was reported to be back in Brisbane. He died in 1919 in Charleville Queensland where he had been working for the Charleville Times and was said to have previously worked for the Cunnamulla Watchman.



The first edition of the South Coast Scrutineer can be down loaded from our web site if you wish to read more.
www.mdhs.org.au/pdfs/References/Scrutineer.pdf