

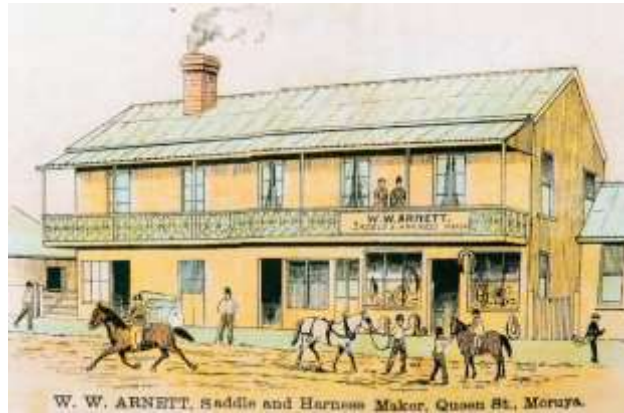
W W Arnett, Saddler

by Wendy Simes

1.



2.



We have in our photograph collection the two photographs above depicting the saddler shop of W W Arnett. One is undated and simply labelled Arnett's, Queen Street. The other is a sketch from a supplement to the Moruya Examiner of 1892 with illustrations of Braidwood and Moruya. Both photographs are obviously 19th century but which one comes first and why did Mr Arnett move his business?

We know from the Pioneer Directory¹ that W W Arnett was Walter Wilkinson Arnett the 3rd son of Edward Wilkinson Arnett and Emily Dent, and that he was born in the Goulburn district, probably Taralga, in 1867. His two closest siblings were also born at Taralga. Taralga was where his grandfather's sister Isabella lived who was the Taralga Post Mistress for some time. His grandfather Edward Simon Arnett had also moved there from Bothwell, Tasmania but returned to Bothwell after the death of his second wife in 1880. Tasmania was where grandfather Edward Simon Arnett was transported to in 1837. He and his sister Isabella were convicted of coining in March 1837, his wife Elizabeth (nee Wilkinson) who was also arrested was not convicted. It was a very well publicized case with the full story making the Sydney Gazette of 23rd March 1837. Elizabeth followed her husband out with their three children arriving in Tasmania in February 1839 on the coastal schooner "Marian Watson" which was running between Sydney and Hobart at the time.² Walter's father Edward Wilkinson Arnett was one of the children, moving up from Tasmania it is thought around 1855. Both Edwards were Carpenters or cabinet makers.

After moving from Taralga to the Braidwood area, then Wagonga Edward and his family finally settled at Wamban, Moruya. Here in Moruya his son Walter became apprenticed to Robert James Lamont, a local saddler.



Once he had completed his six years apprenticeship the Moruya Examiner of June 1888 reports "he has gone to Sydney to purchase stock with a view of starting a business in Moruya on his own account, and intends opening on Monday next in the premises lately occupied by a cash store in Queen Street opposite the new Roman Catholic Church."

So in 1888 at age 21 Walter is establishing the business shown in photograph 1.

¹ Moruya Pioneer Directory. MDHS

² Tasmania Passenger Arrivals 1829-1957.

There would appear to be a degree of animosity between the two saddlers. In May 1889 Walter sends a letter of complaint to the Show Society complaining about the judging of the saddles which Lamont won. In September of the same year he brings a case against Lamont for breach of indenture of £100. He was claiming he should have been taught collar making as part of his apprenticeship. The verdict went in Walter's favour and would have done little to improve the relationship between the two saddlers.

Walter fairly soon after establishing his saddlery moved down Queen Street to a more central location. His advertisement in November 1889 says the premises was formerly occupied by Mr. M. Lawler. This business featured in Photograph 2.

Presumably his saddlery was reasonably successful as in January 1892 he decides to marry. The paper reported that he married in Araluen to Miss Hoskins, arriving in Araluen with the Rev Spencer from Moruya to perform the ceremony. He evidently intended to make sure the event took place.

Soon Walter was to make the first of many moves around the state, each time establishing a saddlery business. From Moruya he moved to Braidwood but by July 1897 he had sold the business to Arthur White. He remained in the area and in December 1897 he has the refreshment booth at the Cycling Sports. October 1898 however sees the auction in Braidwood of all his furniture and effects including furniture, kitchen utensils, ornaments and a waggonette and harness. The advertisement states that Walter has already left the district. The family had moved to Bowraville where he again established a saddlery business. In June 1900 he places an advertisement in the local paper saying he has been established in the area 18 months³, however by September 1900 another advertisement appears saying he has decided to leave the district and all accounts must be paid.⁴

Next we find him in Katoomba where he purchases the saddlery and harness business of Mr Dillon.⁵ In September 1902 the premises he was in was sold so he had to move to a new shop in Katoomba Street. In May 1903 he was involved in a Stamp Duty Case where Ruth Tahyne proceeded against him for having given her receipts unstamped with a view to evade stamp duty. The full case can be read in the Blue Mountains Gazette May 15th 1903. He was found guilty and ordered to pay a fine of £2, 4/10 court costs, professional costs of £1/11/6 and one witness 7/6. The Mountaineer reported that the Druids lodge donated a guinea to assist Mr Arnett. However July 1903 saw the business sold to W. J. Marsh and the Arnett family were on the move again. He was reported as moving to Helensburg and establishing a saddlery business there.⁶ However he appears to have quickly moved to Moss Vale and in March 1904 there is an advertisement stating the Mr T Brown has purchased the business and stock of W.W. Arnett saddler of Moss Vale.⁷

We next find him in Bowral where he has a saddlery in Bong Bong Street. Here tragedy struck the family when his 11 year old son Roy was drowned in a flooded creek. By May 1909 the saddlery had been taken over by Sid Carey. Walter remains in Bowral though as in January 1913 we find him listed as having been granted a renewal of his Hawker's licence.

Eventually he was to move from Bowral to Rouse Hill and Riverstone and by 1920 he had the Mail run from Riverstone and Rouse Hill and was paid £60 per annum. In 1923 his mail run was enlarged and his payment went to £216 per annum.⁸ We know also at Rouse Hill he had a pig farm and later a general store at Riverstone with Mr Storey. He seems to have achieved more success with these businesses than with saddlery which of course was greatly impacted by the motor car. But Walter moved with the times and in February 1922 he obtained his driver's licence.⁹ While at Rouse Hill he had an altercation with one of his neighbours and ended up in court charging the neighbor with assault, coincidentally the neighbor's surname was Lamont, though not related to the Moruya Lamont's or at least not that I have been able to establish.

Walter died at his residence at 16 Carinya Road Girraween on the 29th January 1939. His funeral however took place at Bowral and he is buried in the Church of England Cemetery Bowral.

³ The Raleigh Sun (Belligen) 2 June 1900

⁴ The Raleigh Sun (Belligen) 28th September 1900

⁵ The Mountaineer 15th February 1901

⁶ Blue Mountains Gazette 31st July 1903

⁷ The Scrutineer and Berima District Press 5/3/1904

⁸ Commonwealth Government Gazette 22/3/1923

⁹ Windsor and Richmond Gazette 10/2/1922