

What's in a street name?

In 1924, a new avenue (Hardy Ave) running off Docker Street, was named in honour of the Hardy family, in particular, Charles Hardy (1833-1908) and one of his sons, Walter Slade Hardy (1878-1951). Charles Hardy is well known for erecting many of the prominent buildings in the area. He was also appointed as the first Municipal Valuer of the Borough of Wagga and served as the mayor from 1902 to 1904.

Hardy was born in the village of Corte Castle, Dorset, England. He learnt his trade as an apprentice carpenter in London before immigrating to Melbourne in 1854. Charles married Ellen Downey at Queanbeyan in 1857.

After moving to Wagga in about 1860, Hardy formed a partnership with Thomas Hodson. They constructed many prominent buildings in Wagga, among them, the Methodist Church, the ANZ Bank, the post office, the Commercial Hotel and the court house.

Hodson left Wagga in 1869, and so the firm Charles Hardy and Co became responsible for most of the significant buildings in Wagga. These included a variety of structures, such as the Council Chambers building, various churches, school buildings, railway stations, banks, flour mills and houses.

To ensure the highest standard of work possible, Hardy brought many of his tradesmen over from England and personally supervised most of the building himself, travelling many miles in a sulky.

His contracts led Hardy far beyond Wagga. His operations



Part of the Hardy building empire.

extended to Albury, Corowa and Deniliquin. He was responsible for the construction of the Euston Post Office and also a number of bridges in the Newcastle district.

Hardy had a timber yard by 1874 and by the 1880s, his many businesses included a steam joinery and a brick and tile works in Wagga, steam sawmills at Devil's Sliding (Gannmain), and near Narrandera. Later he also owned sawmills at Cockatoo Island (40 miles from Wagga), and the Federal Brick and Pottery Works in Gurwood Street.

In 1907, Charles handed over his business to two of his sons, Charles and Harry, and the Federal Brick Works to another son, Walter.

Charles Hardy's contribution to the community extended further than construction. He served as a council alderman from 1874-77, 1883-89 and 1899-1908 and was

appointed mayor of Wagga during his last term. He died on May 9, 1908.

Walter Slade Hardy was born on March 15, 1878, in Wagga. He was a master brickmaker and took over the management of Federal Brick and Pottery Works in Gurwood Street from his father. In 1924, he built the brickworks in Edward Street West and transferred the plant to that site.

He was notable for being the first native of Wagga to be elected to the Municipal Council and he served the council as an alderman for three separate periods, totalling 14 years.

Walter was interested in the history of his native town and carried out a lot of research in this particular field. He was also a charter member of the Rotary Club of Wagga in 1929.

Walter married Rhoda and in his capacity of subdivider in Wagga, named Rhoda Avenue

after her. He died on March 24, 1951.

The building industry attracted many skilled tradesmen of various sorts to Wagga. Be that as it may, Charles Hardy and his descendants could be considered the most significant of these. He and his family conducted their businesses in Wagga for over a century and a large number of the buildings they were involved with can still be distinguished in the city today, a number of them being classified by the National Trust.

■ **Compiled by Jessica Dietrich, while on work experience at the CSU Regional Archives.**

■ **References: A History of Wagga Wagga by Keith Swan; Wagga Wagga: A History by Sherry Morris; The Street Names of Wagga Wagga compiled by William R Ellis; Biographical Index of Wagga Wagga compiled by Sherry Morris**

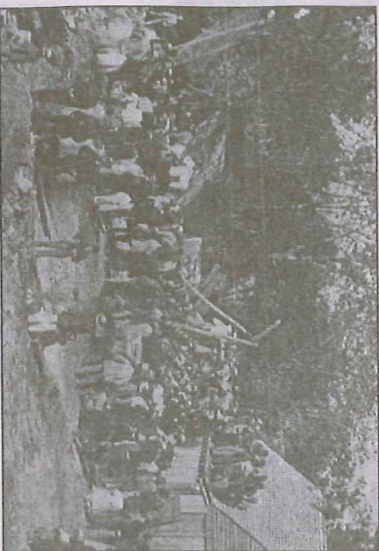
Laying Masonic hall foundation stone

Freemasonry, being one of the oldest of the world's fraternal organisations, has had a long history in Wagga, dating back to 1860 when the first known letter relative to the formation of a lodge was written on May 22. Wagga's first Masonic Lodge was founded on the June 24, 1861, as Lodge Harmony 410 SC.

Some of the oldest original correspondence held by the CSU Regional Archives can be found in the Freemasonry Collection (RW2463), the first of which was written on April 11, 1846 at 35 Bloomsbury Street, London. The material in this collection was largely gathered over a long period by Wor Bro P A Mills and was kept in a safe at the Lodge-room. It has been transferred to the regional archives for preservation in a controlled environment.

The site of the first Masonic Hall that was to be built in Wagga was on the allotment of the "Waterview" estate. The contractor was James Martkey James Calder from Sydney was the architect and the Superintendent of Works, Thomas Hodson.

The gala event of the laying of the foundation stone of the first Masonic Hall had long been looked forward to by the members of the craft, as well as the general public and was held on Thursday, October 6, 1870. For some years, the headquarters of Lodge Harmony had been the Commercial Hotel and for this occasion the hotel reportedly looked quite majestic with



The foundation stone laying ceremony.

decorations. The ceremony was to have begun at 3pm; however, the *Wagga Advertiser* reported that well beforehand, the streets were lined with the "smart dresses of the ladies, the handsome regalia of the Oddfellows and the lively uniform of the Town Band". The Oddfellows had offered their assistance and joined the Masons as they marched from their Lodge at the Commercial, led by Worshipful Master A J Hooke Esq.

The Shareholders of the Masonic Hall Company requested that Mr Murray, the oldest Mason in the district, present the silver trowel to Bro Alfred John Hooke to be used for the

occasion. Local newspapers and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as some current coins, were placed in a cavity and the stone was lowered to solemn music played by the band, followed by prayer. A mixture of corn, wine and oil was poured over the stone after which the band played *Rule Britannia*.

When completed, the hall became quite an asset for the people of Wagga. It was used for a wide variety of entertainment, as it had a stage, a gallery, supper and dressing rooms and a good floor for dancing.

On the evening of October 15, 1880 there was a terrible fire that destroyed the Masons' Arms, the Criterion Hotel, the Masonic Hall and a number of other buildings.

The roof of the Masonic Hall, being shingles, caught on fire and could not be contained. Mr Edney, a draper, and Mrs McGregor, the fancy goods and tobacconist, who occupied the shops under the front of the hall, lost considerable stock.

The hall was rebuilt soon afterwards in Fitzmaurice Street and was later owned by the Loyal Southern Star IOOF Manchester Unity Friendly Society.

■ **References: Wagga Advertiser, October 8, 1870 and October 16, 1880; Brief History of Lodge Harmony, No 419 SC No 22 UGL NSW, May 1961, CSU Regional Archives Collection RW2463**

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.