

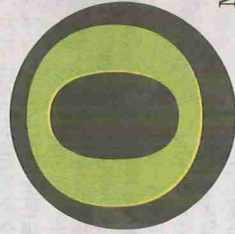
A busy day on Fitzmaurice Street as people gather on the corner of the Wagga Court House, with the David Copland and Co building on the opposite side of the street, just down from the still-standing Hunter's on the Hill building.

what you need to know

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at the archives
Wayne Doubleday



One of the largest businesses in Wagga in the early 1900s was David Copland and Co - a very successful department store in Fitzmaurice Street.

One of the "Big Merchants of Provincial New South Wales", David Copland arrived in Wagga, from Melbourne, in 1872.

David Copland entered into partnership with John Thomas Roberts, who had previously been in business with William Love.

In 1873, Roberts and Copland started as general storekeepers in the new two-storey building known as "The Hall of Commerce" and traded as Roberts, Copland and Company.

John Roberts' health soon failed and on medical advice he went to Sydney for a "change of air".

However, the usually jovial kind-hearted business man died from hepatitis on November 5, 1879.

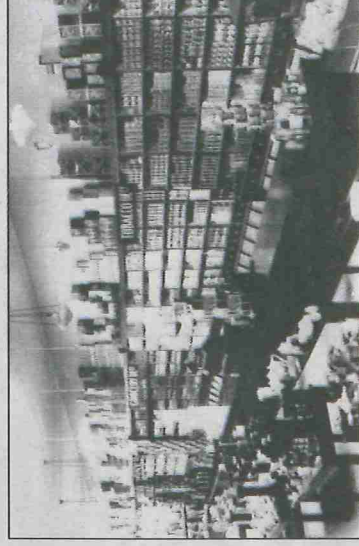
David Copland became the sole owner, trading as David Copland and Co and he continued to expand the business, employing 25 people by 1888.

In 1896, Copland was able to purchase the Hall of Commerce from the estate of MN Callaghan - having previously obtained the drapery store from Charles Corthorn, which was situated between the Hall of Commerce and WC Hunters' building, allowing an extensive frontage to Fitzmaurice Street "in the heart of the busiest part of town".

David Copland had a keen interest in the

Big businesses

David Copland & Co brought the world to Wagga in the 1900s



Inside David Copland and Co.

welfare and progress of Wagga and his successful firm gradually grew to such an extent that it was often referred to as the "Anthony Hordens of Provincial New South Wales".

Frank Copland, eldest son of David, attended Sydney University and then spent 10 years employed by the firm of Burns Philp and Co.

In 1904, he returned to join his father's business as general manager; later he became a partner, becoming sole owner on the death of his father in 1920.

Modernisation

EXTENSIVE renovations were needed to modernise, and in August 1910, there was a "grand opening of David Copland and Co's new emporium". The New Hall of Commerce was designed by Wagga architect George Shepherd and Messrs Hardy and Company carried out the construction work.

The three-storey building had three huge "modern" plate glass windows on the ground floor, with two entrances allowing customers to approach the upper floor by using the broad staircase, which divided half-way up, allowing access to showrooms on either the left or right. Frosted glass skylights in the roof were used for lighting.

With the renovations, the latest pneumatic cash carrying system was installed throughout.

allowing customers the benefit of the quickest possible way to receive change after purchasing goods.

Only two years after the huge transformation of the building, a fire in the furniture department caused considerable damage and the rear of the premises was completely destroyed.

Among the chaos of rebuilding, a fully equipped ironmongery department evolved and the people of Wagga were invited to inspect the new premises at the opening on January 18, 1913.

The departments of the emporium included drapery, millinery, ladies wear, men's wear, children's clothes, footwear, furniture, floor coverings, manchester, ironmongery, crockery ware, fancy goods, tailoring and dressmaking.

The advertisement reported that most of the comprehensive stock was imported directly from world manufacturers for "Home Farm and Station" and their huge turnover was obtained by working on the idea that it was more successful that a "big turnover with a small profit" was more desirable than the reverse.

The capable and courteous staff were highly respected by their employers and to prove this, many stayed with the firm for their whole working life. Long-serving employees included William Hinton, George and Edward Wunsch, John Davies, JH Wilkins and Bert Percy, with many more people remaining for a period of 10 to over 40 years.

Frank Fawcett Copland died at St Vincent's Private Hospital in Sydney on August 21, 1941.

The store continued trading as D Copland and Company until it was sold to David Jones Ltd in February 1953, ending 80 years of wonderful service to the people of Wagga in providing quality merchandise.

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1896; Aug 13, 1910; Jan 18, 1913; Aug 22, 1941;

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■ Compiled by June Dietrich