

The CSU Regional Archives is extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of every month. On these days, the archives will be open from 10am to 3pm. The next Saturday opening will occur on November 3. This trial initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives on weekdays during normal business hours. It is hoped that enough researchers and visitors will avail themselves of this service to warrant it becoming a permanent occurrence.

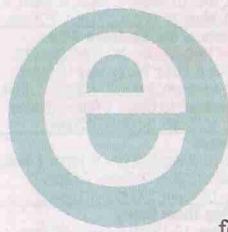


## what you need to know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on 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 straight-forward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour including copying and postage. For further information, phone 02 6925 3666, email [archive@csu.edu.au](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au), or visit our website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

# Key to long history

at the archives  
Jillian Kohlhagen



everyone has a favourite fish and chip shop from their childhood.

Mine happens to be the Silver Key Café in Baylis Street. Little did I know at the time, though, that whenever I stopped in there for something to eat or drink,

I was participating in a history that reached back 60 years before I was born.

In 1924, the Silver Key Sundae Shop opened at 24/26 Baylis Street under the proprietorship of Samuel Apostle, a Greek immigrant, and his family.

The first hint I had that the Silver Key might have a lengthy history was a small advertisement found in the souvenir publication for the "Back to Wagga" celebrations in 1927.

It showed a grainy photograph of a man in a shopkeeper's apron standing under the verandah of a narrow shopfront, the sign above him proudly proclaiming, "The Silver Key" and each window displaying a large key.

The advertisement recommended the café to the people of Wagga, saying, "For Attention and Prompt Service - The Silver Key Sundae Shop, Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga".

### THE APOSTLE FAMILY

THE proprietors of the café, were Messrs Samuel and Akon.

Samuel Apostle (Solirios Apostolopoulos) had arrived in Australia in about 1910, from Akrata, Greece. He married Miss Vassiliki

Economopoulos (Akon) in 1922 and they went on to have five daughters, Koula, Athanasia, Litsa, Mary and Marguerita, and one son, Andrew.

The Mr Akon that Samuel was in business with was probably one of Vassiliki's brothers, as she had at least three who were running the Ridge Café in Tamworth in the 1930s.

By 1919, Samuel was running a fruit shop in Tumarumba, which was destroyed by fire in September 1923.

This fire may have been a catalyst for the family to move to Wagga, as Samuel and Mr Akon purchased the brick shop and residence situated at 24/26 Baylis Street from the Bannatyne estate on May 31, 1924.

By September 13, 1924, The Silver Key was open for business.

Samuel placed an advertisement in *The Daily Advertiser*, proclaiming they had, "The most up-to-date refreshments in town" and, in recommending their famous cream pastry, the advertisement stated, "A trial is all we ask".

Another advertisement from January 1925 proclaimed that "Sundaes and specials made with our famous ice cream cannot be beaten." Samuel Apostle died aged 46, on October 29, 1934.

The local paper reported extensively on his funeral and included following statement, "Wagga had never before witnessed a congregation of so many Greeks who came to the funeral from a radius of over 400 miles to Wagga to show their respect for their fellow citizen, who was held in so high esteem by every Greek with whom he had ever come in contact, also by every business man with whom he had dealings in Wagga and other parts of the Riverina.

"The cortege, which was a very large one, showed the very high esteem and respect in which the late Mr Apostle was held..."

At the graveside Mrs Apostle, "...said 'Goodbye,' and hoped that the soil of Australia would give the deceased the same hospitality as the people of Australia had given him."

### CAFÉS IN WAGGA

CAFÉS, as we think of them today, have a long history of reincarnations and amalgamations.

At various points in time, Australians looking for a sweet snack, a quick lunch or a cold drink could visit a confectioner, a tea room, a coffee palace, a fish and chip shop, a fruiterer, a refreshment room, a sundae shop, and even an oyster saloon.

In 1925, as the Silver Key was newly open for business, Wagga had a population of somewhere near to 9000 people.

Of those businesses that advertised as a place to eat in the *Sands Directory* that year, there were seven refreshment rooms, three cafés, one tea room, one dining room, one caterer, one restaurant, one coffee palace, one oyster saloon, and one confectioner.

However, just 10 years previously, in 1915, Wagga could only boast three confectioners, two oyster saloons, one tea room, one refreshment room, and one coffee palace.

From various advertisements, it is known that the Silver Key sold cream pastries, sundaes, and ice cream in its first 10 years, and the shop itself had a new electric refrigerator soda fountain installed in 1929.

By the 1970s, the café had been through various changes to become much more of a fish and chip shop.

In this particular reincarnation, many people would remember Despina and Niko Kolovelonis who ran the Silver Key for many years, and today, Kim Nguyen and Thien Dang have now been the proprietors for 18 years.

References: "Back to Wagga Souvenir" Oct 16-22, 1927 [CSURA RW1574/154]. *The Daily Advertiser*, Sept 13, 1924; Jan 1, 1925; Oct 30, 1937; Nov 2, 1934. Australian Marriage Index, 1788-1950. Biographical Index of Wagga Wagga, by Sherry Morris. Melbourne Argus, Sept 25, 1923. *Sands NSW Directory* 1915 and 1925. Wagga Wagga Municipal Council Rate and Valuation Registers [CSURA RW1429].