

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 Holy Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries 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.

Going postal

A look at our communication past

at the
archives

Wayne Doubleday



telephones were the norm, long distance communication operated out of Post and Telegraph Offices around Australia.

B Wagga's first post office was established on January 1, 1849. Frederick Thompson was appointed post master. In 1868, George Forsyth became post master at Wagga; a year and a half later, Patrick S Murray took over.

While Forsyth and Murray were in charge, the post office was in Forsyth's store on the corner of Kincaid and Fitzmaurice streets.

Andrew McCracken was the first telegraph station master in Wagga in 1861. One of his duties was to keep the telegraph line in order - a job that would have taken him halfway to Urana and then halfway to Gundagai, where the next telegraph stations were at that time.

The telegraph office was in Kincaid Street until the first purpose-built Post and Telegraph building in Wagga was constructed in 1869.

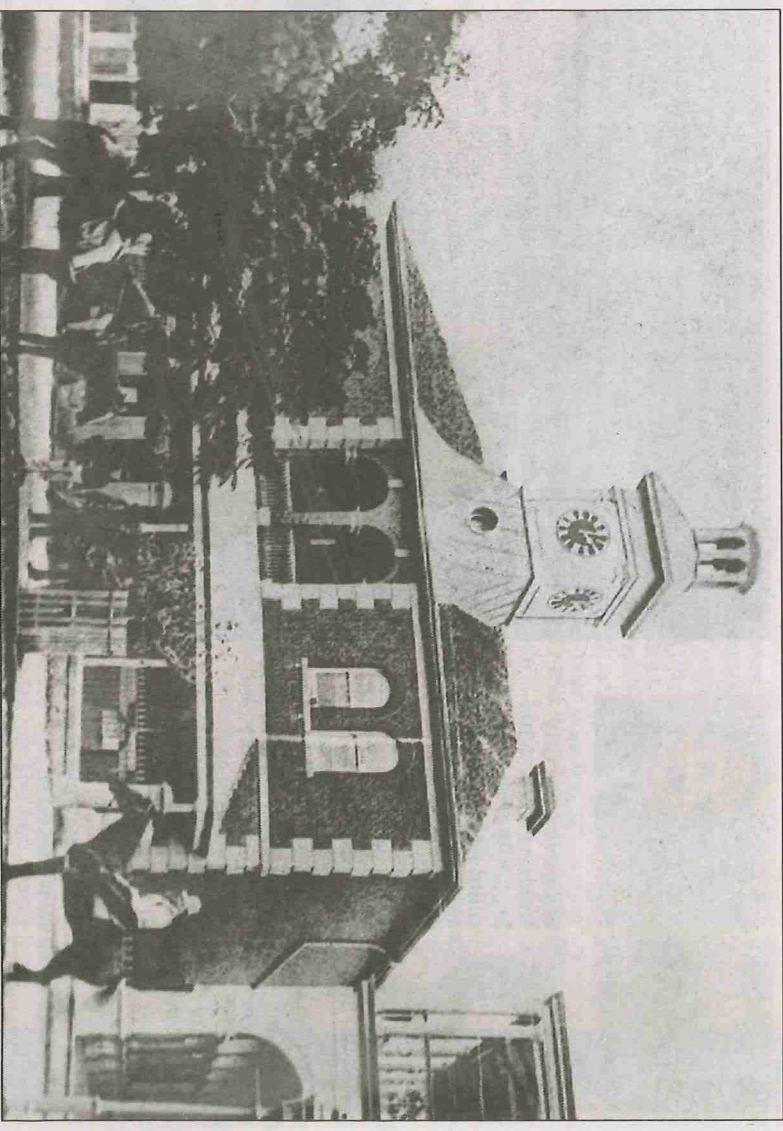
This building was located between the court house and the Commercial Bank in Fitzmaurice Street, the site of which has since been used by a number of banks, including the CBC and National Australia Bank.

It was a two-storey, red brick structure with a clock turret. The clock itself was only installed nine years after the building was in place, in July 1878.

In 1886, plans began to be made for a new post office. It was to be for postal purposes only - the telegraph services were to remain in the old building.

This new office was constructed next door to the existing post office, the building that is currently the Wagga court office.

The Tuesday following the opening of the new building on August 6, 1888, the editor of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* gave a scathing, and, at times, sarcastic, report on the



Wagga's first purpose-built Post and Telegraph Office, built in 1869 (RW5/103/14).

"Government job".

"The 'cheap and nasty' character of this building, viewed externally, has long been the subject of common talk..."

He went on to extend that criticism to the interior: "The post master's office is not much larger than a good sized bathroom which may, perhaps, account for the absence of a fireplace, or any heating apparatus.

"It is nothing new to discover a want of capacity on the part of the Colonial Architect's Department; but in the present instance that Department would seem to have excelled all previous efforts in the same direction..."

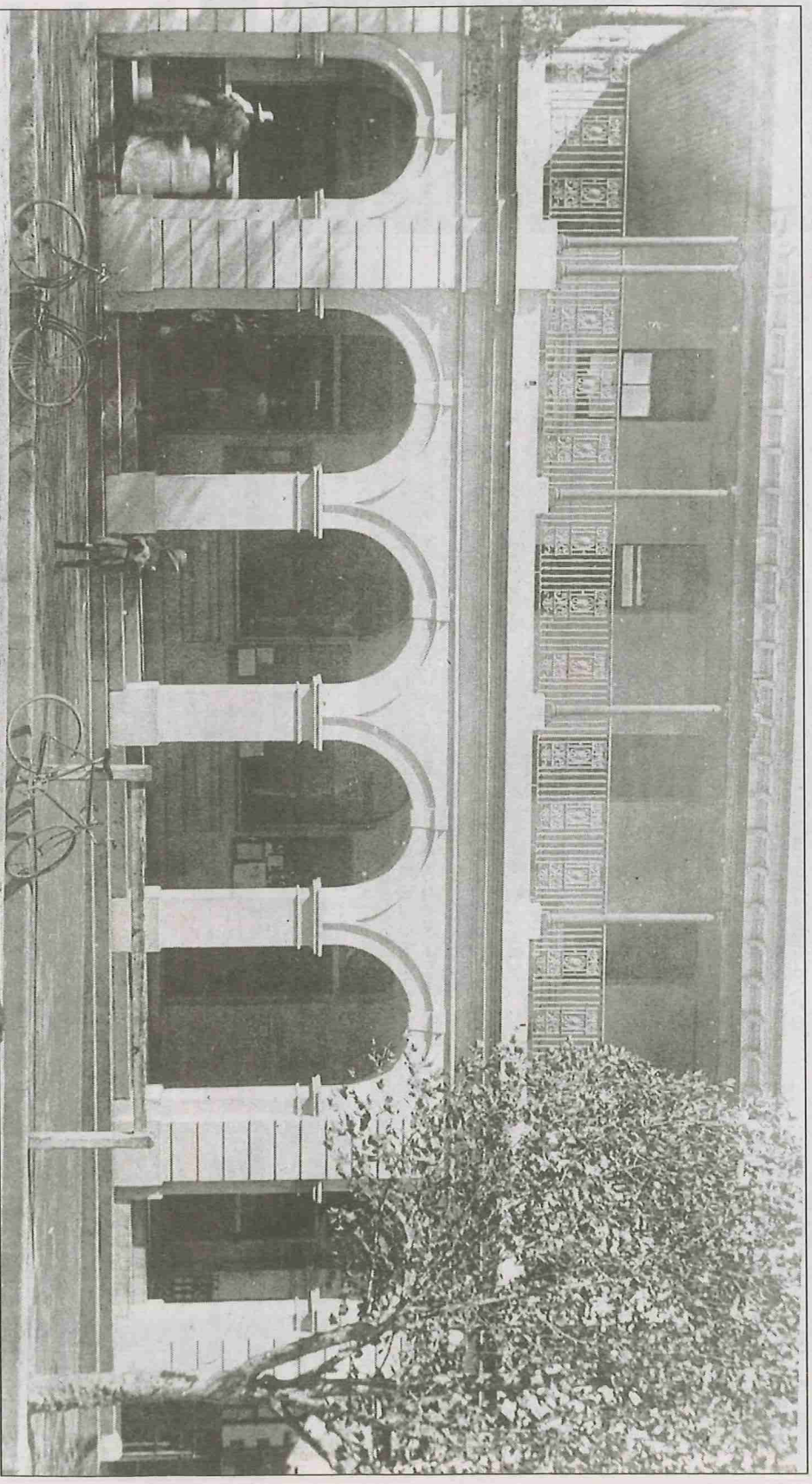
"From whatever point of view regarded the new post-office appears to be a Government 'job' of a very decided, not to say characteristic, sort."

The new arrangement of separate offices for post and telegraph remained in place for only a few years for, in 1895 additions began on the post office so that telegraph services could again be conducted in the same building.

In 1993, the post office moved from the building it had been in for more than 100 years to Best Place at the corner of Baylis and Morrow Streets; three years later, another move was made to the newly established Wagga Marketplace.

■ Sources: *Wagga Wagga Post Office Centenary booklet*, 1888-1988, RW2446, CSURA; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, August 9, 1888; Morris, S. *Wagga Wagga - A History*, pg. 218; Gornly, R.J.E., *Card Indexes on Wagga*, on microfiche, CSURA.

- compiled by Jillian Kohlhaugen



A view of the "cheap and nasty" exterior of the 1888 post office (RW123/10).