

CARGO POST OFFICE HISTORY

With compliments of The Director, Posts & Telegraphs, GPO Sydney.

INTRODUCTION

The first seven “country” post offices in NSW were established in March 1828, at Parramatta, Liverpool, Penrith, Bathurst, Windsor, Newcastle and Campbelltown.

As the settlement of the hinterland continued other offices were opened, including Orange on 1st January, 1849, and Toogong on 1st August, 1865.

Request for Postal Facilities.

A letter from “Davy’s Plains” forwarded by William Weber on 28th September, 1868, asked for a post office or loose (mail) bag for “Cargo” near Toogong.

Weber said :

“I the undersigned have opened a store and a bakery on a new gold field known as Cargo, Davy’s Plains, there is a population of Three or four hundred persons on the ground which is daily increasing and the want of a post office felt very much there being none nearer than Toogong, a distance of 16 miles. I believe that arrangements for transmission of mails are made by private letter bags, a loose bag left at Thomas’s union Inn would be the nearest place to the said diggings where the mail at present passes, if to obtain a loose bag from the post office a memorial is necessary I would send one....”

Andrew Irvine, a postmaster at Toogong, reported in October, 1868, that he had visited the “cargo” diggings and believed that there was a population of six or seven hundred people. He gave the distance from Toogong as about 11 miles and said that if mail communication was to be established at the diggings it would be best to have the branch mail from the Toogong Post Office as it would have communication with the up country mails as well as the down country mails. Should a post office be established he recommended Frederick Trembath for appointment of postmaster as he was a responsible storekeeper and resident on the gold field.

Alan Tipper and Richard Sheridan, trading as Sheridan and Tipper wrote from Orange on 13th October, 1868, advising that they were “putting up a building on the diggings to be used as a general store”, which was to be in charge of Frederick Trembath, and asked that a Post Office be established at their store. References from the police magistrate and the postmaster at Orange were enclosed.

An application was received from W Wigmore of Summer St Orange, who advised that he had opened a branch store at the new gold field of Cargo, situated in a central situation in the main street of the township.

Sheridan and Tipper wrote again in November, 1868, urging the establishment of a post office at Cargo, where “the population was increasing and large quantities of gold were being brought to the surface.”

A petition received in November, 1868, requested the establishment of a post office at Cargo. It was claimed that the population was already estimated to be over 1,000. William Wigmore, general storekeeper was nominated as postmaster.

The petition was accompanied by a letter from Wigmore. He wrote that he had a store in the course of erection which would be more suitable than any other building because its position and superiority of construction, being a “complete weatherboard” structure well adapted for use as a post office. He expected the building to be completed by Saturday 14th November, and had arranged for a separate portion for the sole transaction of postal business. His application was supported by the signatures of W.T Truppets, George McKay J.P., M.L.A., James Dalton J.P., H.H Swain J.P., and others.

An application for appointment as postmaster was also lodged on behalf of a Mr D.L Bayliss.

Post Office Opened.

Representatives by J. Peisley of Orange, apparently were successful in gaining the appointment of post master at Cargo for Francis W. Peisley of Forage Stores Cargo.

At the direction of the Postmaster General, F.W. Peisley was appointed postmaster on 1st December 1868, when the post office opened.

Peisley named Sureties Charles Stockwell, innkeeper, and William F Wynne, cordial manufacturers, of Orange. The salary was £12 per annum.

Post mark number

Following the introduction of the first adhesive postage stamps in NSW in 1850, a number was allotted to each post office. This was used on an obliterator for cancelling the postage stamps, and a separate postmark which showed the post office name and the date of posting, was applied on the clear space adjacent to the stamps.

The postmark number for Cargo was 513

Postmaster Peisley wrote on 6th February 1869:

“I have taken the liberty of removing the Cargo Post Office to a few doors down Belmore Street. My place being hardly secure enough and I now find that I should first have had your sanction. I have removed it to Mr Wigmore’s stores. It is the most secure place on the diggings, at which place I attend to it the same as before.”

Peisley added that the place was infested with some of the “very worst characters”. As his own building was of bark only, and Mr Wigmore’s was of wood, he thought it would be much safer there. The removal was approved.

Peisley wrote again in April, 1869, advising that he was about to sell his business to Mr Wigmore and sought approval to transfer the office to him.

William Wigmore became postmaster on 1st April, 1869, with a salary of £12 per annum.

Absentee Postmaster

Soon after Wigmore was appointed postmaster there were some complaints concerning the conduct of the office. This was not uncommon when local business people were competing to have the office at their store.

In April 1869, Charles S Sloane complained of the “disobliging and ungentlemanly” conduct of the postmaster at Cargo whom he described as a “mere brat”. Sloane accused the postmaster of delaying the delivery of newspapers.

It would appear from the correspondence that Wigmore was in Orange and had left the office in charge of an assistant. John B McCure (or McCleure) replied “on behalf of W Wigmore the postmaster, that Sloane and others had entered the store where the post office was kept, and threatened to have it removed.

A letter signed by B.B Buckley, also on behalf of the postmaster, indicated that he was conducting the office and referred to McCure as the “late P.M”

Sloane complained again about the postmaster's conduct in a letter which also bore the signatures of Francis Hunter, Donald MacDonald and D Buchanan. This letter was accompanied by an explanation signed by B.B Buckley, postmaster:

"I was not here at the time this occurred the postmaster Mr McCure has left; but I believe those parties were very abusive to him and with the exception of the complainant he is liked by all the diggers here"

Another letter from Buckley explained that Mr Wigmore of Orange was the postmaster and Mr McCure was acting for him at the time of the incident, and said that J.B McCure had left Mr Wigmore's employment and gone to live in Sydney.

Wigmore was reprimanded for not obtaining authority to place the office in charge of other persons, and fined . (5)

A letter from W. Wigmore, from orange on 29th June 1869, advising that the store at cargo was only a "branch" and that he had left it in charge of McCure and Buckley, who had taken the necessary declarations. As he could not be present at cargo he sought permission to entrust his duties as postmaster to the assistants, Messrs. Buckley and Collie. This was approved.

A petition dated October 30th 1869, asked that 'the postmastership' be given to J.W Grounds, stationer, of Belmore St.

A letter from Thomas Hiles of Orange, agent for trustee's in W. Wigmore's Estate on 24th December 1869. advising that owing to the closing of Mr Wigmore's business, he would not be able to continue to take charge of the post office, and that Mr Bayliss had offered to continue working it until a postmaster was appointed. Hiles later advising that Wigmore had "assigned his estate".

David L Bayliss, storekeeper and innkeeper, was appointed postmaster on 3rd January 1870. His Sureties were Benjamin Nelson, storekeeper and Charles Stockwell, innkeeper, both of Orange. The postal allowance was still £12 per annum.

Money Orders

Money order facilities had been made available at Cargo soon after the opening of the post office. It is believed that the facility was introduced there during 1869.

Complaints

J.W Grounds complained in January 1871, concerning negligence at the post office, advising that he did so on behalf of "the miners and business people of this gold field". Grounds claimed that the postmaster held a public house adjoining the post office and was very deaf, and offered to forward a petition supporting the complaint..

Letters said to be delayed at the post office included one addressed to Jane Gibson at Cargo and one to Mr H Zeplin, White horse hotel, Cargo near Orange.

Complaints made in February 1871, concerning the detaining of letters at the post office were signed by James McDonnell, Charles Edwards, John Rickey, John Bailey and Donald McKay.

Alleging malice on the part of Messrs. Grounds, Zeplin etc. postmaster Bayliss in February 1871, forwarded a reference in his favour signed by business people. These were:
R Hutton - Manager Daltons store

J Campbell	-	Manager Nonclad Company
William Boyne	-	Manager R Sheridans store
Frederick beer M.D,C.D, O.D.-	-	Manager of Cargo Company
Wiilaim Drapper	-	Nonclad Company
Sergeant Thomas Purcell	-	Mining Registrar
C. Riedtmann	-	Cargo Quartz and crush co
Francis Haughey	-	Engineer
W.H Couch	-	Farmer & Grazier
George gee	-	Butcher
John MacKay	-	Blacksmith

Postmaster David L. Bayliss, whose address was shown in a postal directory as storekeeper, Belmore St in answering complaints claimed that Henry Zeplin was the keeper of a low gambling house called the White Horse Hotel.

A petition was forwarded through Mr Lord, M.P in September 1872, seeking the removal of the postmaster.

Later in September, the minutes of a public meeting held in favour of the postmaster were forwarded by A. Sangster of Cargo who claimed that the meeting had been held at the Robertson Post office hotel on 24th August 1872, and attended by not less than 200 people. The meeting referred to a court action taken by postmaster Bayliss against Zeplin and contained a resolution that a collection be made towards the costs of the court action on behalf of Mr Bayliss.

In his defence against the petition the postmaster claimed that many of the signatures were forgeries, and that as a discharged former employee Zeplin was endeavouring to get him removed from the post office.

A number of people signed statements mainly concerning the retention of letters at the post office. One of these mentioned that the post office was situated in the public house kept by Mr James Robertson.

Postmaster Cleared

A postal inspector visited Cargo on 30th January 1873, where he accepted statements and called a public meeting concerning allegations against the postmaster. The chairman was Mr J.G Church, J.P, and when the petition for the removal of the postmaster was read it was found that many of the persons who were alleged to have signed had left Cargo, and some denied signing it at all; others stated that they were misinformed as to the purpose of it, believing that the postmaster had resigned and that the petition was merely for the appointment of the school master, Mr Medcalf. Only five people of those who acknowledged signing the petition came forward at the meeting to explain the causes of their complaints.

The inspectors report showed that Zeplin, who was being sought by the police, had left Cargo and that Zeplin and Grounds' complaints were mostly due to malice. Concerning location of the post office, he said

“The post office is kept in a separate room adjoining the postmasters store and the people can get their letters without going into the store at all. Adjoining the store but away from the post office is a public house which I am informed the postmaster has an interest in although his name does not appear over the door; because as Mr Grounds says he could not obtain a license.....”

The inspector added that the hotel could not affect the post office because they were separated from each other by the store. The report showed that the majority of the people were in favour of the postmaster's retention, and that most of the complaints against him were unjustified.

When bayliss forwarded his resignation and advised in 1874 that he was leaving the district, he nominated his successor at the store, James Powers, as postmaster.

Powers was appointed on 15th April 1874. His Sureties were the same as those of his predecessor.

Telegraph office

On 17th February 1882, it was reported that the Telegraph Department had completed all arrangements for the opening of a telegraph office at cargo. This had been made possible by the completion of the Canowindra-Cudal-Cargo line.

An early register recorded that the Cargo telegraph office was opened on 20th February 1882, and staff lists showed that the telegraph station master, Charles Arthur Monkhouse, was appointed on the 9th February 1882, with a salary of £120 per annum (It was usual for the station master to be appointed prior to the opening of the telegraph office)

The department decided to amalgamate the two offices under the control of Monkhouse and to pay him a postal salary of £20 a year. However these papers gave Monkhouse's telegraph salary as £104 per annum.

Charles Monkhouse became postmaster on 1st April 1882, when the post office and telegraph office were amalgamated.

Strangely at the time of the opening of the telegraph office, a report mentioned (apparently in error) that James "Parsons" had been postmaster since April 1874. James Powers later reported that he had handed over the office to Monkhouse.

Official Status

When Monkhouse took charge on 1st April 1882, the office became an official post and telegraph office. The old office fittings were purchased from non-official postmaster Powers for £3.

Mails - 1882

The mail contractors in 1882 were Edward Hogan and William S Stabback.

Hogan, of Cargo, held the Toogong, Cranbury and Cargo, twice weekly by Horseback service for £37. 9.0 per annum.

Stabback of Orange, held the Orange, Germans Hill, Cave Creek, Cargo, Canowindra and Cowra, three times weekly by coach service for £267 .10.0 per annum. (At the same time Cobb & Co had the contract: Orange, Borenore, Cheesemans creek, Cudal, Toogong, Murga, Eugowra, and Forbes, six times weekly by 4 horse conveyance, for £1,150 per annum)

Official Building

An early register of buildings recorded that in July 1883, when Dr Ross M.P, made representations for the erection of a post office building at cargo, Mr James Powers had offered a site, free of cost viz portion of allotment 17 section 13, situated at the corner of Molong and Belmore Streets.

Proposals were made for the erection of a “redwood house” (an imported prefabricated structure) for the post office.

Powers site was described in the buildings register as being at the corner of Molong and Belmore streets, facing Molong St and adjoining the post office premises. Approval for the acceptance of Powers offer was given on 29th January 1884.

Approval was given for the purchase of the redwood house for £135, in June 1884.

There was some opposition to the erection of the building by some residents who considered that it should be erected on Government Land, at the junction of Canowindra road and Old Belmore Street.

The postal inspector recommended that the building be placed on the Government land and the Postmaster general Norton approved of this in July 1884.

Jas and Henry Sully had agreed to erect the building for £81, and the postmaster advised in July 1884 that the contractors would prefer building on the Government site.

Eventually the contractors erected the building on the Government site. It was occupied on 26th January 1885.

Savings bank

A petition forwarded by Charles Hendrey in April, 1884, bearing many signatures, asked for the establishment of a branch of the Savings bank at the post office. This was approved to date from 23rd June 1884.

Monkhouse was dismissed, and Lewis A Tomkinson became postmaster on 10th June 1884. the postal salary was still £20 per annum.

L.W. Quick took charge of the post office temporarily on August 28th 1885, pending the arrival of Mr Alfred S.H Perry who had been appointed to the position on 1st October 1885, with a combined salary of £140 per annum.

Tomkinson had been transferred to Mitchell by the telegraph department.

Perry who had resigned did not take up duty and the next postmaster appointed was William F Burgess who took over from Quick on 13th January 1886. His salary was £100 per annum. (This salary was increased to £120 per annum by March 1888)

In February 1886, when postmaster Burgess asked that his wife be allowed a small salary to act as assistant during his absence from the office, correspondence showed that previously a telegraph probationer had worked at the post office and delivered telegrams. Burgess advised that it was necessary for him to close office during business hours to deliver telegrams in the township which he claimed comprised about 50 houses. He added that there were about 300 callers at the office..

Inspector Maquire supported the postmasters statement and approval was given to pay Mrs Burgess £12 a year as assistant.

Burgess wrote in January 1888:

“My wife resumed her duties this morning as postal assistant at this office. I may say that the salary my wife is receiving is too small to enable her to keep a servant and my wife cannot give as much time as required to attend to office duties, and I cannot manage without some help.

May I engage an assistant to take my wifes place at £26 per annum and my wife will resign upon another assistant being appointed. I can hardly afford to give up the £12 per annum that my wife is receiving, but it is very inconvenient as I am now placed”

Business - 1888

A return of business provided in 1888 showed the following:

Letters posted weekly	-	300
Mail sent & received weekly	-	36
Night attendance weekly	-	2 at 8am
Telegrams sent per annum	-	754
Money order transactions per annum	-	518
Savings bank transactions per annum	-	33
Annual revenue – approx £178.		

About two telegrams were delivered daily.

The postmasters’s application to engage an assistant was unsuccessful.

Benjamin Cox succeeded Burgess as postmaster on 25th May 1889. His salary was £200 per annum. Mrs Cox became assistant at the same time.

Postmaster Cox, in May 1890, asked for an increase in salary pointing out that the “necessities of life” were much more expensive living in the far west, away from a railway line; and he claimed that the insanatory state of the building and its surroundings resulted in his doctor and chemists accounts increasing. He said that he had been more than 17 years in the Department and had only received one increase of £10 since 1887. Cox’s salary was then £210 per annum. His application was unsuccessful.

Old Building

Cox, in December 1891, claimed that the “redwood house erected by the Government in 1885” was not habitable, and that he was forced to send his wife and family away. He unsuccessfully applied for a rail pass for their fares.

Cox said “”The dwelling part of this being confined to two rooms and a kitchen necessitating the four of us sleeping in one room through walls of which the rain beats and the wind blows freely.”

In a report in January 1892, the postal inspector considered that accommodation with “a little energy and common sense” could be arranged to meet all the postmasters family arrangements. (Two rooms were in use for official purpose, where one would be sufficient.) he described the premises as comprising 4 good rooms and detached kitchen. His report showed that at the time Mrs Cox was being paid £40 a year as assistant, and there were two messengers receiving £65 a year. Because of the small amount of business he recommended that Cox be noted for transfer as soon as arrangements could be made to reduce the status of the office. This was approved.

A report by the postal inspector in February 1892, showed that there were two assistants. H.E Quick had joined the Department on 5.1.1889, as a probationer at 2/6 a week, and was appointed messenger on 1.7.1891 at £39 per annum. Eden P Love, a messenger, received £39 per annum. Both were described as capable assistants and operators.

H.E Quick was promoted as a n operator at £75 per annum, and transferred to Urana in May 1892, after it was shown that the Cargo office had been over staffed. The revenue was £299 per annum and the expenses were £318 per annum.

Eden . P Love, the messenger appealed against a decision to dispense with his services. He pointed out that he had had three years service during which time he had qualified himself as an operator and sound (morse) reader. The Department eventually decided in December, 1892, that Love who was a capable junor officer, be allowed to continue at Cargo until a suitable transfer could be arranged for him.

When it was suggested that Mrs Cox’s allowance of £40 per annum be discontinued and that the office be staffed by the postmaster and one messenger, postmaster Cox was placed in the position where

he had to deliver telegrams himself, or have a messenger appointed and lose the £40 a year allowance paid to his wife as assistant.

Declining Business

Reporting on the decline in postal business at Cargo, the postal inspector in November 1894, mentioned that Cargo exchanged tri-weekly mail with Orange, Germans Hill, Cave Creek (receiving office), Canowindra, Avenal, Cranbury and Cudal – all small mails”. It was recommended that as soon as possible postmaster Cox be transferred to another office, and another postmaster on a smaller salary be appointed.

Eventually approval was given for Mrs Cox to be paid £26 a year and for a messenger to be employed at the rate of £26 a year for telegrams delivery etc.

Mr C.D Logan was appointed postmaster on 1st July 1895 with a salary of £140 a year and took over on July 18th.

Building Exchange

In October 1898, proposals were made to purchase an additional strip of land from Mr Collins to allow an addition to the post office building. However in May 1900 the inspector said that the structure was not worth repairing “being made perished”. He recommended the erection of a building on a site close to the post office, which Collins proposed to exchange for the old office and site. -The Department to have free use of the old office until such time as the new building was erected. This was approved.

The new site was at the corner of Molong and Powers Streets. It was described as being “part of allotments 17 71/15 , 6 and 7 Section B”. The transfer was completed in 1902.

The union journal “Transmitter “ of 17th June 1901, had commented on the old building:-

“Great dissatisfaction is shown at the Government not proceeding with the erection of our new post office” says the Cargo correspondent of the Molong Argus, May 17th. “The old structure is a miserable shell, it has no lining, the wind and rain come through several splits in the walls. It is cruel to expect that our worthy postmaster and family should abide the winter months in such miserable shelter as the present building affords. The rent charged is £20 a year”.

In July 1902, the Post master general approved that the arrangements at cargo continue, and that a rental of 7/6d a week be paid to Collins from the previous January 1st.

By December 1906, proposals were being made to reduce that status of the office tot hat of Contract (semi-official) post office. Under terms of this arrangement the semi –official post master was required to devote all of his time to the conduct of the office.

An extract of a report in the Sydney Morning Herald in December 1906, advised that proposals to reduce the status of the office and remove the morse instruments were criticised at a public meeting at “Marsdens”.

A report suggested that should the office be made Contract, the morse instruments could be removed and public business transacted over the existing condenser telephone services from Cargo to Orange, and Cargo to Cowra. This was the first mention of a telephone although it is possible that a private line had been connected earlier.

The revenue for 1905 was £227 per annum and the expenditure was £187.14.0

Thomas Geraty forwarded a protest against the proposals through T. Waddell, M.L.A following a public meeting.

Other representations included largely signed petition. The main objection seemed to be the removal of the morse telegraph instruments. The Department then decided to call tenders for the conduct of a contract Post and Telegraph office, retaining, the morse instruments.

Contract Post Office

Eventually William J O’Heir, formerly a telegraph messenger at Bungendore, who had retired from the Department was appointed postmaster on 1st October 1907, and the office became a Contract or semi official post and telegraph office.

The postmaster's annual allowance was £140 which comprised:

Postmasters living allowance	-	£78 <i>pa</i>
Messenger	-	£26
Rent	-	£26
Maintenance – light, fuel, cleaning etc		<u>£10</u>
TOTAL		<u>£140 <i>pa</i></u>

As O'Heir was only about 18 years of age, he was required to have his father join him in the agreement to conduct the office. His father was John J O'Heir of Braidwood.

Business 1909

A return for 1909 showed that the revenue had increased to £327 per annum.

Business conducted was :

Articles posted p.a	-	26595
Mails sent and received	-	2808
Telegrams sent	-	926
Received	-	737
Money order transactions p.a	-	570
Postal noted paid	-	358
Savings bank deposits (1908)	-	131
Withdrawals not recorded	-	

Telephone Exchange

The return for 1909 had shown that one private telephone line was connected to the post office. The subscribers name was not shown.

The telephone exchange was opened on 29th April 1910. The earliest list of subscribers available is that which appeared in the directory for April 1911, listing the two subscribers as follows:-

(9am to 1pm, 2pm to 6pm, 7pm to 8pm)

Daily (Sundays and Holidays excepted)

2 Glassons , J.K.

1 Glasson, S.S. Laanecoorie'

Half Day Holiday

Approval was given on 24th November 1910, for the office to be closed one half day a week. It had been opened from Monday to Saturday all day. Wednesday after noon selected.

A memorandum from the postmaster advised that the half day holiday was changed from Wednesday afternoon to Saturday afternoon on 10th January 1911. After that date the office was closed at 1pm on Saturday. The postal inspector mentioned that a shopkeepers ballot had decided that the Saturday be observed as the half day holiday at Orange, and as that town was the chief business centre for Cargo, it was decided that there would be less inconvenience if the same day was observed at both places.

As the annual revenue was only £251 in 1912, consideration was being given, the following year to reducing the status of the office from that of Contract to non official post office. At the same time postmaster O'Heir advised that he did not wish to renew his agreement with the Department, and intended seeking permanent appointment on the official staff. He was described as a first class telegraphist and a good all round postal hand.

Morse Link

As Cargo was linked on a morse telegraph circuit with Blayney, Orange Cudal Canowindra Cowra Carcoar and Bathurst, it was considered desirable to retain the morse telegraph system at the office. The alternative was to use the condenser telephone system at cargo which was not considered satisfactory.

During the postal inspectors visit, a meeting of residents and business people protested against the proposed removal of the morse instruments.

Held at Collins hotel on 14th August 1913, the meeting was attended by Councillor Bulkley (Chairman) and Messrs. Young, Hamilton, Cameron, green, Hicks, Jenkins, R.P.Bulkley, Collins, Leepy, Livingstone, Geraghty, Quick, Manon, Byrnes and the district inspector.

The inspector reported:-

“Various speakers attributed the fall in the revenue to the temporary diversion of trade owing to business houses having been destroyed by fire, also to crop failures, and non activity in mining circles. The Chairman reported that the Iron clad gold mine of 26 acres had again been leased as from the 23rd July and between the management could make the necessary arrangements, employment would be found for from 30 to 40 men. One or two large local holdings were to be cut up into farming blocks which would give additional population and prosperity to the locality. The chairman also announced that the telephone revenue suffered from the fact that the residents did not appreciate the condenser service, and did not care to conduct any special business over such a circuit. He added that if a proper telephone service were given it would be welcomed and that the revenue would correspondingly increase. He was confident that now the residents understood the position the revenue for cargo for the year 1913 would reach £300. The chairman further notified that in the event of the Department erecting a telephone circuit connecting with Cudal and Orange that at least 10 telephone subscribers would connect with Cargo office, and in all probability 15.....”

When a non-official postmaster capable of operating the morse instruments could not be found, it was decided to continue the office under Contract conditions.

O’Heir agreed to renew his agreement if necessary. However in September 1913, he gave notice of his intention to terminate the agreement as from 1st November 1913.

Later O’Heir applied for three months leave of absence from 1st November, and advised that his sister, Nora H Mary O’Heir who was over 21 years of age could relieve him, if the morse instruments were cut out during his absence, and telegraph business conducted by the telephone. He added that his parents resided on the premises which were privately owned and would continue to do so during his absence. A report showed that a brother, previously employed as a messenger at Cargo, would be willing to assist Miss O’Heir.

Extension of Telephone lines

It was noted in August 1913, that tenders for the Orange to Cudal, and for the Cudal to Cargo – Canowindra telephone lines were to close on 17th September 1913.

R.P Bulkley was asked to name the residents who would be interested in having a telephone connected to the cargo Post Office.

Proposals to remove the morse instruments even temporarily were opposed by residents, and it was found that O’Heir did not intend returning to cargo after his leave.

Arrangements were made for assistant, O. Foley, from Orange to take charge temporarily at cargo from 1st November 1913.

Butler Colbran then advised that he was willing to take charge under contract (semi-official) conditions.

Colbran was a temporary assistant at Newtown and had been semi-official postmaster at Manildra.

A testimonial to the resigning postmaster, O’Heir was forwarded by some leading citizens in October 1913. These included A.H.T Sherwin, J.P; Shire Clerk Cudal: A. Atkinson, Canowindra; Dunn Bros, Canowindra; William B Busby, Cargo; W M Collins, Cargo; S S Glasson, Cargo; George Middleton, Cargo; and M J Fisher, cargo;

Butler Colbran commenced as semi-official postmaster on 8th December 1913.

R.P Buckley and others had obtained the signatures of 10 people who were willing to become telephone subscribers. Residents hoped that the additional revenue would result in the status of the office being raised to that of official post office.

Post master Colbran complained about a 10% deduction from his personal allowance for rental of quarters at that post office building. His annual allowance comprised the following:-

Personal Allowance	-	£110
Messenger	-	£39
Rent	-	£26

Maintenance	-	£10
Attendance private telephone	-	£0.10.0
Total		£185.10.0

As a single man, the postmaster pointed out that he only occupied one room of the residence. However he was advised that, as in the case of official postmasters, a full rental of 10% of the personal allowance was payable. He was allowed £26 a year for the rental of the whole building and then charged 10% for his personal occupation of the residence section.

Additional Telephone Connections

A letter from the postmaster, in November 1914 showed that 9 additional telephones had been connected since July 31st, making 10 telephone subscribers. He was allowed an additional £4.10.0

On 17th November 1914, Colbran advised that the “Webb, Fisher, Balcomb and Davis party line” was connected on that day, making eleven connections and fourteen subscribers at this office with 10 exclusive service and one party line (no 4 party)”.

The revenue of the office had steadily declined from £244 in 1910 to £159 in 1913 and £135 in 1914. 1914 was described as a period of “unpredictable drought” which had affected the revenue.

The telegram delivery facility was withdrawn on 1st January 1919.

Colbran was succeeded temporarily by the assistant, Miss Dorrington, when he resigned on 10th April 1919.

A break occurred in the records to July 1921, when S.P White was postmaster. White resigned and was succeeded by Leo A Stinson on 4th July 1924.

P.O site - 1924

A letter from A.H.T Sherwin of Cargo in August 1924, and subsequent report by the postal inspector provided some interesting information concerning the location of the post office. (Available postal records did not show when the office was moved from the former official building)

Sherwin wrote:-

“There is movement on foot here to get the post office removed from where it is now to premises next to the Commercial Hotel, Cargo; and I think that it should never have been taken away from where it originally was, for many years, and think that it should if removed at all be taken back to the original site;- and as it is for sale, I would urge upon you the necessity of purchasing this site, rather than put it next to the hotel further up the street. The premises originally owned by the Department and sold to W.M Collins can be purchased for £300 and consists of a six roomed wooden dwelling and kitchen, with shed at back, and Mr Collins is prepared to give another 20 feet of land at the back to give more room, and is also prepared to take the block of land owned by the Department lower down the street at a valuation, as part payment. Probably £250 would buy the property and I would urge upon you to consider this proposal seriously, before renting other premises. The Department have now paid away enough in rent to have built or purchased premises over and over again.”

A rough sketch (copy attached) showed the location of the properties mentioned in the letter.

The postal inspector reported on 29th September 1924:-

“..... Cargo is an office of semi-official status with a revenue of slightly under £400 per annum. At one time it had official status and the premises were owned by the Department. I understand that some years ago the Department exchanged the official premises for a block of land in the same street, but continued the occupation of the building for a number of years paying the person to whom they transferred it a rental of £26 per annum. Complaint was made about three years ago of the difficulty experienced by pensioners in getting up and down the steep flight of steps leading to the office, and a request was made to have the matter remedied. The landlord refused to do anything to the premises and authority was given for removal to another building. This latter, which is the portion of an estate now under offer to any likely purchaser and the question to having repairs effected prior to obtaining a lease cannot yet be dealt with.

Mr E.H West, hotel keeper, has submitted an offer to this Department for the provision of premises next door to the hotel at a rental of £52 per annum. I have inspected the premises and apart from its close proximity to the hotel, the building is old and dilapidated and no amount of repair would make it habitable....”

The department decided that the original post office building was not suitable for postal purposes as sufficient accommodation was not available and the steps leading to the verandah were dangerous. Approval was given for the office to remain in the premises then occupied.

Post master Stinson tendered his resignation from 25th February 1925, claiming that the place was not fit for habitation and he was unable to get the landlord to renovate the residence.

A letter from the inspector showed that the premises were owned by Mr J.P.Simeon of Cowra, who proposed to renovate the building for an increased rental.

Following Stinsons resignation, assistant Strahan of Orange took charge temporarily, from the 27th February 1925.

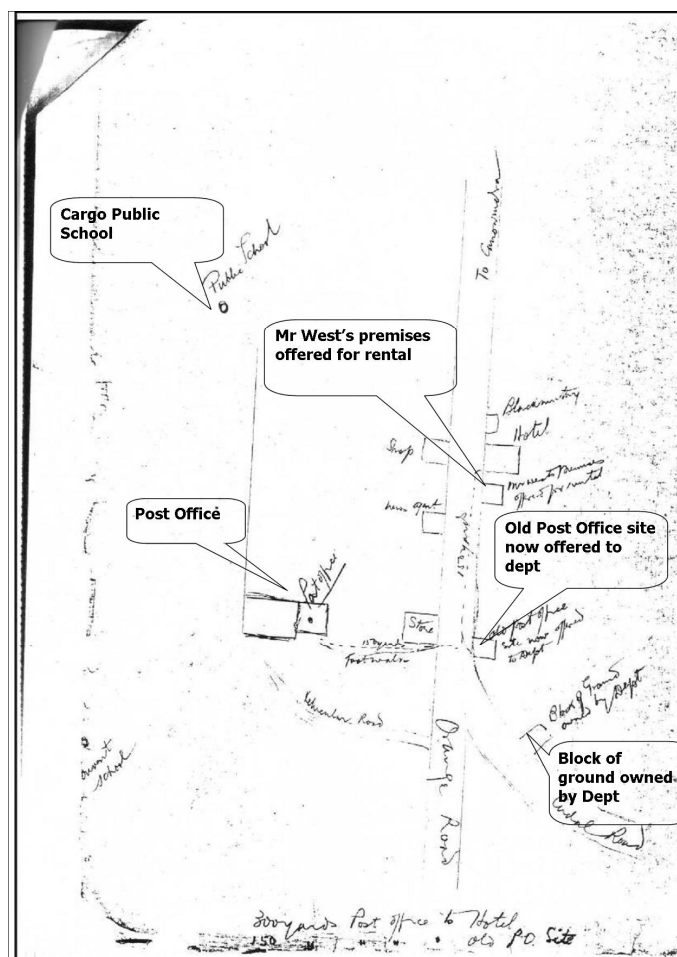
In the meanwhile the department paid the rental to Mr Simeon. The office section had been renovated and repairs to the residence were in progress.

Mr James P Sullivan was appointed semi-official postmaster on 2nd May 1925. he was then responsible for the rental of the premises.

Correspondence in April 1932, showed that the post office premises were being rented by the postmaster for 17/6 a week, from Mrs J.G.Collins of Anson St Orange, a widow.

As a result of legislation during the economic recession, a 22% reduction in rentals was introduced, and in March 1932, a rental paid to Mrs Collins was reduced to 13/6 a week.

Cargo – 1936



A report by the postal inspector in January 1936, described Cargo as: “ a small village, and at a standstill. It comprises two small stores, hotel, bakery, and a few private residences.” Postal business was being conducted in an office added to the side of the residence owned by Mrs Collins. The office portion, made of wood, had been erected ten years earlier.

The rental was increased to £1 a week from 1st June 1936, following repairs to the office premises.

Post master James Sullivan in 1954 wrote that he had bought the premises where the post office was kept on 21st December 1951.

The department decided to reduce the status of the office to that of non-official post office following Sullivan’s advice in May 1958, that he intended to resign.

It was reported that the semi-official post office was being conducted in weatherboard premises owned by the postmaster. Forty nine subscriber services were connected to the manual exchange, and continuous service was provided except during the hours 2 pm to midnight Saturdays, and noon to midnight on Sundays and public holidays. A letter delivery service was not provided

and telegrams were delivered on a restricted basis.

Non-Official Status

Mr Bernard W.J Sullivan became postmaster on 26th June 1959 and post office became a non-official office from 25th June 1959.

Mr Gordon J Rawson succeeded B.W Sullivan as postmaster on 1st July 1961.

CARGO POST OFFICE - POST MASTERS

Cargo post office established on 1st December 1868, in charge of Francis W Peisley who was paid £12 per annum.

Other postmasters appointed after Peisley were:-

William Wigmore	-	1 st Apr 1869	-	£ 12 pa
David Lovisson Bayliss	-	3 rd Jan 1870	-	£ 12 pa
James Powers	-	15 th Apr 1874	-	£ 12 pa
Charles A Monkhouse	-	1 st Apr 1882	-	£ 20 pa
Lewis Alexander Tomkinson	-	10 th June 1884	-	£ 20 pa
Alfred Sydney Haddy Perry	-	1 st Oct 1885	-	£ 140 pa
William Foster Burgess	-	13 th Jan 1886	-	£ 100 pa
Benjamin Cox	-	25 th May 1889	-	£ 200 pa
C.D.Logan	-	1 st July 1895	-	£ 140 pa
William O'Heir	-	1 st Oct 1907	-	£ 140 pa

Thanks to the following for this information:-

N.S.W POA1073 J.J.O May 1974

Refs:- Aust Govt Archives Office (NSW Br) Syd
Register of Post Offices
Reports of Postmaster – general 1869-1890
Post office Buildings Registers 1876-1900
Telephone Directory 1911
Post Offices Branch records GA352.

Mrs Kathy Sands who collated this information...