

HOW HALF-A-CROWN BECAME HALF A MILLION

From a Hairdresser's Shop to Copley's Bank

Sam Copley's Return Revives Interesting Reminiscences :: Of the Man Who Started South Perth and Mount Lawley :: Bluff Character That Perth Will Remember Well.

WHEN Sam Copley first came to Western Australia his pockets were barren.

On Tuesday he will return here from England, possessed probably of half a million and with big financial interests that make his gruff voice heard where men of millions foregather.

And Sam made the first start of his wealth in a little hairdresser's shop in High-street, Fremantle.

There are still many of the old brigade in Perth and Fremantle who knew Sam Copley well.

It was about 1888 that he came here from England, stony broke, but full of a dogged courage.

In a little hairdressing saloon attached to the Commercial Hotel in High-street, Fremantle, Sam was set up by the proprietors, Farmer and Imray. And right from the start he showed the qualities that were later to make him wealthy and famous.

THICK SET AND STURDY

He took to hairdressing because in that game a man has only to take his scissors out of his pocket and start. And out of the few pounds that were paid him by his employers he carefully saved every possible penny.

To Sam Copley, while he wielded a very capable scissors came men who have since become some of Fremantle's best known citizens. He was a popular fellow, hale and strong; not one who mixed widely or in popular parlance "knocked about with the boys," but there's many a good story told of Sam and his friends of those early days at the Port.

The old Federal Hotel of those times was the meeting house of the Hiedertafel and here while Cingalese waiters fitted to and fro Sam sang ditties in a

ROUSING BARITONE VOICE

At the beach of a Sunday morning he was too a well-known figure.

It was a regular Sabbath meeting ground of the sports and Sam was always there.

And what great races they had! There was Billico's "Vision," a great little pony, and Imray's "Bee-wing" and other local champions. And bets were passed from hand to hand and excitement was keen as the horses galloped along the sand.

Sam Copley, always a sportsman, was one of the regular habitués here. Some say that Sam often knew what was going to win long before the horses went in the post. But if he did he usually kept it to himself in the manner of all shrewd punters. And he was popularly known

AS A STRAIGHT GOER

wherever the gee-goes raced. All this time he was saving

carefully. Before long he commenced moneylending on a small scale, a pound or two at a time repayable within a week or a fortnight. And he did well.

But Fremantle was a small town and Sam Copley's ideas were anything but small.

Hence his transfer to Perth. Here he set up a little office and began moneylending on a slightly bigger scale than formerly. And once more success was his, success, however, that

CAME FROM HARD WORK

and very shrewd, careful management rather than from luck. In the city too he did a little book-making and is said to have won in a raffle a racehorse "The Crown," who however proved somewhat of a wash-out.

For a mere song he bought a number of houses adjoining the Criterion Hotel in Hay-street, put new fronts on them and sold them at a fine profit.

"Luck again," some said, but no one else had thought to do it.

The creation of South Perth introduced Sam Copley to land investment in Perth. And he and the late Joseph Charles opened up this territory on a big scale, even going so far as to provide a service with two ferries, the "Countess" and the "Duchess," the latter of which is still running from the city to Mends-street.

Thirty years ago Copley and the late R. T. Robinson bought land in Mount Lawley.

It was a strip running from the river to Wanneroo-road, half a mile wide and three and a half miles long. And you have only to look at it today, decorated as it is with some of the finest houses in the metropolis, to realise what a

WONDERFUL INVESTMENT

it was. The Swallow Brewery on the premises of the present Redcastle at Burswood was another venture. The Swallow, however, later merged into

Bouquets, W. Cheapest at

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Harwoods and is now in liquidation and for all practical purposes extinct.

With his brother Ben Copley and Jim Patterson he purchased a station in the Nor-West which was later sold to Vestey Bros.

He ran a picture show in James-

cerns and Copley was bought out, reluctantly it is generally said.

This virtual commandeering of his ferry enterprise he seems to have felt considerably and it was not long after that he returned to England, considerably wealthier than when he had left it.



Mr. Sam Copley, who returns from England by the Maloja on Tuesday.

street for a time and was also instrumental in

INTRODUCING MOTOR BUSES

to this State, the service connecting the city with Victoria Park. This venture, however, was not a success.

When the Scaddan government was in office about 1912, the Ministers decided that the Perth ferries should be added to the State trading con-

One of his biggest and earliest ventures on his return to the world's metropolis was the W.A. Insurance company, of which the King is reported to have been one of his first clients.

Here again the Copley spirit manifested itself. It was war time and the risks were big. But the W.A. Insurance accepted risks that other firms had firmly rejected and won out.

Copley was the sort of man to

TRY ANYTHING ONCE

and in this case his gameness in the face of difficulties had results.

Copley's Bank is well-known and highly thought of. And in this and in all the other ventures that have known him the Copley touch seems to have worked wonders.

While on a visit to England with Fred Good, Sam Copley and his friend married two sisters, the Misses Sands of Bournemouth. And he has two sons and two daughters, being his ambition to make one of the latter a lady banker in London.

One of the crowning strokes of Sam Copley's life was his purchase of Huddersfield, a Yorkshire town.

This was Sam's native town and he left it practically penniless, some say with half a crown in his pocket. He returned and

BOUGHT THE WHOLE TOWN. The Sam Copley we knew has probably changed a lot.

One time his ambition was for a "good horse and a buggy." To-day liveried chauffeurs drive him to work in magnificent cars, while from the depths of their upholstery Sam Copley, sturdy and striking for all his seventy years casts a strong, clear eye over London, and then goes in to work just as hard as ever he did in the days when he clicked a scissors at Fremantle.

On Tuesday when the Maloja arrives Sam Copley, the man who bought his birthplace will

RETURN TO THE WEST

And there will surely be many of his old friends down to meet him. During his moneylending operations he naturally enough

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