

History Bytes

ADAMS' (METROPOLITAN) HOTEL



The timber one-storey Adams' Hotel was built for Walter Adams during 1872-73 at which time Walter was granted a liquor licence. The name was changed to the Metropolitan Hotel in 1879 and this hotel still stands today on the same site, having been refurbished several times since.

Despite the original Adams' Hotel being thought good enough to last for fifty years, in 1885-86 the timber structure was making way for a new two-storey brick building, designed by architect A. Hettrich and built by E. Boyle. The *Bundaberg and Mount Perry Mail* of 9 October 1885 reported:

During the past three years...this one storied wooden structure has appeared dowdy and out of place beside the large brick two-storied buildings now doing duty as hotels. Consequently Mr Adams has wisely determined to pull down the dingy roadside inn and erect in its stead a presentable brick edifice to grace one of the best sites in town.¹

Interestingly, the original Adams' Hotel was repurposed as the top storey of the Bellevue boarding house on the corner of Barolin and Woongarra Streets. The Bellevue was erected for Walter Adams and leased by Mr H. Williams.

The newly constructed two-storey Metropolitan Hotel opened for business on Wednesday 7 April 1886. It boasted a "spacious balcony" around both sides, was of a "pretty appearance" and was "well appointed"². The impetus for the rebuild was possibly that...

Watty [sic] was amongst the lucky ones who picked up land when it was cheap about there, and, last year, when there was a little land excitement on, disposed of a large paddock for £6000. With a portion of this sum he determined to replace the measly looking pub he kept himself on one of the best corner sites in the town with the present neat building...³



Preparing the ground for the ANZAC memorial in front of the Metropolitan Hotel, 1920. (bun00540).

Barolin Street, Bundaberg, with Metropolitan Hotel on left. (bun01608).



According to Richard Laurance Connor and John Kingsley Connor, descendants of Walter Adams, the Metropolitan Hotel went through the following licensee changes:

- Sep 1886 Licenced transferred from Walter Adams to his son George Manus Adams (likely for Walter to meet the criteria for becoming an MLA)
- 1888-98 Cecilia Adams, wife of George Manus Adams, took over the licence after George's premature death
- Jun 1898 Publican Martin Moran took over the licence
- 1901-10 Licence held by Thomas Corrigan
- 1911 Licence held by W.J. Corrigan (possibly Thomas's nephew)
- 1912 Licence transferred to T.B. Cross. This appears to be the point at which the Metropolitan's ownership left the Adams' estate - the Metropolitan sold in 1912 for £9,500.

Walter Adams, 1830 - 1892

Walter Adams was born in Yeovil, Somersetshire in 1830 and arrived in Sydney in 1849. He moved to Queensland in 1853, and a year later married Mary Shannon in Gayndah. He and Mary then moved to Maryborough and Walter began taking up land. He also went on to serve as an Alderman on the Maryborough council.

The Adams's made their way to Bundaberg in 1871-72. Walter purchased land in and around Bundaberg and became a great pioneer of the fledgling town. He served on the council, and was Mayor in 1882-83. He helped develop the town's infrastructure, including the cemetery, racecourse, hospital, telegraph line to Burnett Heads, Queen's wharf, and a bridge over the bywash to link the town to the Woongarra in the east. Adams was also heavily involved in the Catholic Church (he was raised Church of England, but adopted his wife's faith) and in education and the School of Arts. Eventually he became a State member and served in the Queensland Parliament.

Walter travelled to Sydney with his wife Mary in early May 1892 for medical treatment. He passed away in Sydney on 15 May 1892 and is buried in Bundaberg's Catholic Cemetery.

Peta Browne, Bundaberg Regional Libraries

References:

- ¹ *Bundaberg and Mount Perry Mail*, Fri 9 Oct 1885, p2.
 - ² *Bundaberg and Mount Perry Mail*, Fri 9 Apr 1886, p2.
 - ³ *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, Sat 17 Apr 1886, p5 (Trove online newspapers, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>).
- Bundaberg: a history from the newspapers 1862-1903*, Volume 8 Commerce, Part 1 & Volume 9: Commerce, Part 2. Bundaberg Genealogical Association, 2009.
- Connor, R.L. & Connor, J.K. 2012. *Bundaberg's Beginnings: the endeavours of its very early pioneers, with particular reference to Walter Adams MLA*.

Photos: Picture Bundaberg



The Metropolitan Hotel stands behind the almost-finished ANZAC memorial statue (the soldier would be placed on top on 7 July 1921), 1921. (bun00286).

Metropolitan Hotel,
 Bourbon and Barolin Streets.

THE Proprietor's many friends and the public generally are informed that this New and Commodious two-storied First-class Hotel is NOW OPEN.

Best Accommodation at moderate charges. Wines and Spirits of A1 brands only kept. Superior Stabling.

The Metropolitan occupies one of the leading sites of the town, being in the immediate vicinity of all Public Offices and Wharves.

WALTER ADAMS, Proprietor.

Bundaberg & Mt Perry Mail,
 Tue 20 Apr 1886, p1.

Bellevue Boarding House,
 CORNER BAROLIN & WOONGARRA STS.,
 Bundaberg.

FIRST-CLASS Accommodation, Cleanliness, and Civility. New two-storey house, fine view. Charges strictly moderate.

H. WILLIAMS, Proprietor.

Bundaberg & Mt Perry Mail,
 Tue 13 Apr 1886, p1.

Barolin Street, Bundaberg, looking south, Metropolitan Hotel on left. (bun01041).

