

CLEAVE VINCENT'S MANILLA EXPRESS 1900-1923

In the late 1890s, Arthur Vincent was one of a group of miners working the diggings at Crow Mountain. He had been an avid fossicker since retreating from everyday life for some solitude, following the death of his eldest son in 1880. Arthur was one of the large Vincent Family of printers, who, originally from England, thence New Zealand, established and operated many newspapers in country New South Wales from the 1850s through to the 1930s.

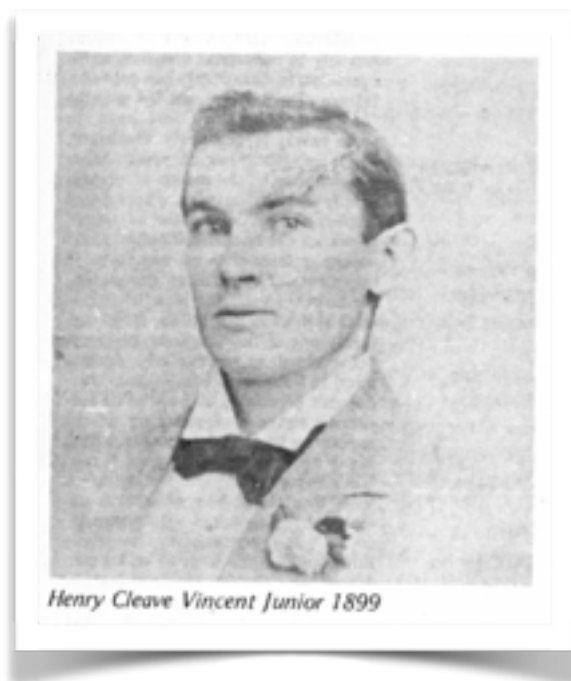
In 1898, fired with enthusiasm, Arthur, (founder of the Gwydyr Examiner at Moree in October 1883), came down from gold fossicking at the Crow Mountain mines to Manilla town and set about establishing a newspaper. Such was his enthusiasm for the potential of the town, that his brother, Henry Cleave Vincent, founder of the Glen Innes Examiner, was persuaded to provide finance for the initial setup. The recent purchase of plant from the former Deep Water Miner for £68 allowed the first edition of The Express to be printed on January 14 1899, bringing the Vincent publications in the New England to three, including the Uralla Times.

Arthur Vincent had worked with his brother Henry, on the Glen Innes Examiner for 8 years between 1875-83. He now threw himself into the Manilla Express project, using his columns for drumming up public support for new initiatives and agitating for common-sense solutions to community problems. By March 1899, Arthur had initiated a campaign against the prickly pear; advocated support for the foundation of a town band; and lobbied for an early start to be made on the School of Arts hall. He saw the need for a hospital to be built; a Pastoral & Agricultural society to be formed; and he wanted to see Local Government Incorporation. To demonstrate his commitment to the community, the paper from August 12th 1899, was put out in larger format with the claim:

"We are endeavouring to live up to our motto -- Advance!"

In September 1899, Henry Cleave Vincent Junior, was sent from Glen Innes by his father Henry C. Vincent Snr, to assist his Uncle Arthur Vincent in Manilla, and by October of that year, had taken over the daily running of the Express, by that time, swapping positions with Arthur, who stepped into young Cleave's job (and a quieter life) back at the Glen Innes Examiner.

In 1900 Cleave Vincent, whilst working at the Southport paper where he had been employed for 8 months, married the sister of the proprietor. In 1902 Henry, who had been easing back on the daily running of the firm as his sons took on more responsibility, leased the Glen Innes Examiner to his brother



Arthur and 3 others - his sons William and Astley and to John Hutton. Cleave by 1901, having become every bit the 'practical all-round newspaper man' in the model of his father and his uncles, now gave up all his leisure hours in devotion to the Manilla Express and the progress of Manilla District. In 1902, he bought the Manilla Express from his father Henry, and took his brothers Stuart and Cecil onto the Express staff. By 1903, his brother Astley was also assisting at the Express and in 1906, the paper went to twice weekly publication.

In February 1909, the Vincent Printers established a newspaper at Deep Water and it is thought Cleave Vincent was away from Manilla in 1908, setting up that paper, whilst Cecil took up editorship of the Express. By June of 1909, Cleave had returned to Manilla with his family. His father Henry C. Vincent, had leased the Glen Innes Examiner to Mr. Powter, remaining as editor for 6 years until Powter was ready to take up the position in 1914.

Between 1908 and 1914, the Manilla express was edited by Cecil Vincent. In the meantime, Cleave Vincent had sold his interest in the Manilla Express to T.A.Wilson, partner in the Snowcloud Flour Mill, who in turn sold the business to A.R.Macleod in 1919. It is thought Cleave had been kept busy overseeing all aspects of the family firm in the years up to 1914, when he returned to Manilla to manage the Express as editor for the nine years up to 1923.

In true Vincent fashion, Henry Cleave Vincent Jnr. highlighted the need for improvement wherever he saw it, his most passionate causes being the division of land for closer settlement, and the building of the railway to Boggabri. Through his writing in the existing editions of the

early papers and that of his brother Cecil, we have a vivid picture of everyday life in Manilla in the early 20th century.

This excerpt from the Express, which could set the scene for any of those days up to around 1910, is recalled in 'The Vincent Printers', written in 1980 by M.G.Vincent, daughter of Reg Vincent of the Don Dorrigo Gazette.



Staff of the Manilla Express, circa 1910-15.

'TEAM RACES'

"Early every morning, it is a common thing to see a race, between two or three teams, each with 10 or 12 horses, on the road to the railway station. Teamsters know that if they do not manage to secure a good position in or near the railway yards early, they will be stuck there all day, and possibly a little longer. 'First come first served' is the policy adopted when unloading wool teams at the inadequate wool dump, and the carriers are naturally very anxious to take up a strong position in the yards as early as possible.

Up Court Street and along Arthur Street, the horses are - aided by whip cracks and persuasive tongues - taken at a fair trot. Yesterday morning quite an exciting race occurred between a 12-horse wool team and a four-horse dray laden with chaff - the latter, occupying the side and softer track, eventually reaching the railway gates first. If the Railway Commissioners would provide a decent unloading stage, all this bustle, anxiety and annoyance would be done away with..."