

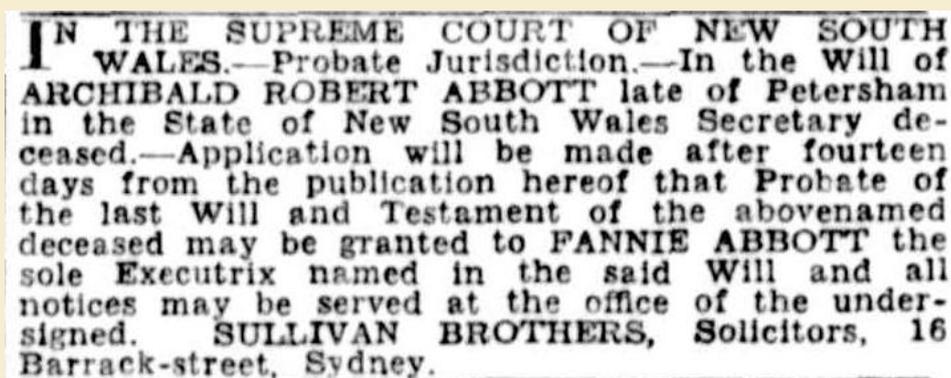
## A. R. ABBOTT

(-1935) Not much is yet known about Archibald Robert Abbott other than his role as the secretary and treasurer of [Clay's Bridge Theatre Company](#). His connection with Harry Clay dates back to at least 1900 when both men were with Walter Bell's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company. It is not clear, however, if Abbott was engaged as a performer or in a managerial position. In April that year Abbott, Bell and Clay were each summoned to appear in a Sydney court for various breaches of New South Wales law. In Abbott's case a fine of £2 was imposed after he was found guilty of contravening the Lotteries Act during the company's Masonic Hall (Sydney) season. The *Sydney Morning Herald* records that "each person paying for admission to the entertainment participated in the drawing for the suite of furniture." Bell, as the proprietor was fined an additional £3. He and Harry Clay were also fined 10s for having caused a pig to be cruelly treated. "The animal was introduced in connection with an Irish song during one of the company's performances" (11 Apr. 1900, 8).

Abbott continued his association with Harry Clay following the disbanding of Bell's company, touring New South Wales and Queensland with the entrepreneur in late 1900 and throughout much of 1901. Although his name doesn't appear on any advertising bills, it is included with the company on a shipping manifest during part of the Queensland leg. In this regard Abbott most likely acted as business manager, and possibly helped finance the tour. With Clay and [Harold T. Morgan](#) he later formed a partnership to build and operate the Bridge Theatre, Newtown. Abbott may also have operated a hardware store at 511 George Street in Sydney around 1914, in addition to owning several properties throughout Sydney. One of these was at 1/3 Denison Street, directly across the road from the Bridge Theatre. The building apparently served as the theatre's office. He also owned 7/13 Bedford Street, Newtown; a property in Railway Ave, Eastwood (where he lived for several years prior to 1925), and is believed to been the owner of another at 8 Paisley Rd, Croyden, from 1926 onwards.

According to information included in Harry Clay's Deceased Estate File, Abbott purchased a block of land from Clay at Lot 1, Dampier Parade Sutherland in January 1917. There was never any documentation made out with regard to either Clay's purchase of the land or his sale to Abbott. Strangely, in 1953, Catherine Clay made a Statutory Declaration stating that she had only recently become aware that the same property should have been included in Clay's estate. The reasons behind this are not clear at this stage, although there seems to be some inconsistency involved in Abbott's statements to the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, in which he declared that the property was his and that all moneys had been paid to Clay prior to his death in 1925.

Abbott's role with Clay's after 1925 is not clear. Given his long association with Harry Clay it is likely that he remained with the company for some time after this date. Abbott died in Sydney in 1935.



**I**N THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES.—Probate Jurisdiction.—In the Will of ARCHIBALD ROBERT ABBOTT late of Petersham in the State of New South Wales Secretary deceased.—Application will be made after fourteen days from the publication hereof that Probate of the last Will and Testament of the abovenamed deceased may be granted to FANNIE ABBOTT the sole Executrix named in the said Will and all notices may be served at the office of the undersigned. SULLIVAN BROTHERS, Solicitors, 16 Barrack-street, Sydney.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 28 Nov. 1935, 2.

### SEE ALSO

- [Harry Clay](#)
- [Bridge Theatre](#)

Last updated: 26/04/2018

First published in: Clay Djubal, "Harry Clay and Clay's Vaudeville Company." MA Thesis, U of Qld (1998), Appendix E.

**NB: The URL for this PDF will change each time it is updated. If you wish to cite or link to this record please use the following:**

Australian Variety Theatre Archive • <http://ozvta.com/industry-people-a-l/>