



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Bro. WALTER JAMES CRYER I
Wor. Bro. WALTER JAMES CRYER II
Very Wor. Bro. WALTER JAMES CRYER III

MASTER PRINTERS

From 1910 until 1945, there was scarcely a form or printed document of any kind that left the office of Grand Lodge that did not bear the name of the printer, and until 1920, that name was Gibbs, Cryer & Company. This Company also published and supplied bound lodge Minute Books, Dues Books and Presence Books and they also printed many of the lodge's notice papers and installation programs.

The Company also compiled, printed and published firstly, from 1905, the *Keystone* which became the *N.S.W. Freemason*. This first series of the *Freemason* ceased publication with issue dated February 1960.

Bro. Walter James Cryer Snr., established the Company in 1903 at premises in Kent Street, Sydney. They later moved to a building in Arnold Place off Oxford Street, Darlinghurst and later again moved to 99 Marriott Street, Redfern. Finally the Company operated from premises at 75 Union Street, Dulwich Hill.

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Bro. Walter James Cryer Snr., was born in 1861. He was initiated into Freemasonry in Lodge Wisdom No. 412 on 1st March 1911 and affiliated with Lodge Lindfield No. 362 on 22nd June 1927, having moved to that suburb. Lodge Lindfield No. 362 was consecrated in the Lodge Kuring-gai Lodge room at the Chatswood Town Hall on 8th October 1920.

Bro. Cryer was a kindly man, a lover of the Craft and an enthusiastic supporter of the proposal to build a Masonic Temple in Lindfield. He was elected to the committee to investigate the proposition. He attended many meetings regarding this matter and attended the Emergent Meeting on Wednesday, 18th July 1934 at which it was decided to go ahead and build. He was particularly pleased with the decision.

At 10.30 pm. that night he returned home from the meeting very happy and satisfied with the outcome.

He went to work the following morning apparently in good health but died suddenly in his office chair at about 10 am. on the Thursday (19th July 1934).

His son, Walter James Cryer II then took over the printing business and was appointed Chairman and Managing Director.

An obituary was published in the Freemason of 1st February 1940, following the death of Mrs Agnes Cryer, wife of Walter James Cryer Snr. It read:

The late Mrs Agnes Cryer.

Mrs Agnes Cryer, widow of the late Bro. W.J. Cryer, founder of the firm of W.J. Cryer and Co. Pty. Ltd., proprietors of *the 'N.S.W. Freemason'*, died after a short illness at her residence in Lindfield on Tuesday, 16th January, in her 82nd year.

Mrs Cryer was born in Liverpool, England and came to Australia fifty-seven years ago. With her husband, she was an active worker for the Methodist Church at Leichhardt, Homebush and Lindfield.

The largely attended service held in the Lindfield Methodist Church on 17th January 1940, conducted by Rev. G.E. Johnston, B.A., and the many floral tributes, gave evidence of the high esteem in which she was held. Following the service, the interment took place in the Northern Suburbs Cemetery.

Mrs Cryer is survived by two sons, Wor. Bros. W.J. Cryer II of Lodge Lindfield and C.S. Cryer of Lodge Service, and three daughters, Mrs M.A. Slinn, and the Misses Lily and Ruby Cryer.

Mrs Cryer took a great interest in the Craft. Her husband, the late Bro. W.J. Cryer, was a member of Lodge Lindfield at the time of his death. Her son, Wor. Bro. W.J. Cryer II is a Past Master, and her grandson, Bro. W.J. Cryer, jnr., is a Steward of that Lodge whose members showed their practical sympathy with Mrs Cryer during her illness.

Her other son, Wor. Bro. C.S. Cryer is a Past Master of Lodge Service No. 537 at Burwood.

The sympathy of the Brethren is extended to her family.

Wor. Bro. Walter James Cryer II was born at Leichhardt in 1892 and was educated at Burwood School. At the age of 14 years he commenced work with Gibbs, Cryer as a machinist, completing his course with that firm.

In 1913 he went to America to gain further experience in the printing trade and, on account of a seamen's strike, worked as assistant cook to reach America.

On his return to Sydney and at the outbreak of World War I in 1914, he immediately joined the Light Horse for service.

Shortly after the death of his father he became Manager of the firm and in 1919, was joined by his brother, Cecil who had just been discharged from the army to assist with the business.

In 1920 they purchased the interest of Gibbs and then became known as W.J. Cryer & Co. In 1923 he was appointed Manager and subsequently, Chairman and Managing Director in 1934.

In 1929 and again in 1938 he journeyed around the world combining business with pleasure.

The *Freemason* reported their departure in 1938 :

Wor. Bro. W.J. Cryer and Mrs Cryer left Sydney on Thursday 21st April by the Nieu Holland on a six month's trip, travelling via Java, India, the Continent, England, Scotland and America.

The staff of Cryerian House entertained them at Cahill's Restaurant, Pitt Street, on Tuesday, 19th April. The good feeling which exists between the Directorate and staff of W.J. Cryer & Co., Pty., Ltd., made the function a most successful and happy one. Wor. Bro. and Mrs Cryer were the recipients of gifts from the staff and Bro. George Rees provided excellent items of entertainment.

Again the *Freemason* reported on their return :

Wor. Bro. W.J. Cryer, Managing Director of W.J. Cryer & Co., Pty., Ltd., proprietors and publishers of the New South Wales *Freemason* returned to Sydney on Monday 3rd October 1938, accompanied by Mrs Cryer, after a six months business and pleasure trip to the Continent of Europe, England, Scotland and America.

He found Masonry in the European countries visited, under a cloud, and in some of them, non-existent. In London he visited the Peace Memorial Temple which every Mason should see when visiting the world's metropolis, as it is a magnificent building, craftsmen from all over the world, who were specialists in their work being employed, so that everything is of the best in the building, expense being a secondary consideration. The Grand Lodge room is a gorgeous apartment and there are 17 other Lodge rooms of various sizes, all beautiful in their way. The library and museum contain a wonderful collection of rare treasures, much of which has been donated by the surviving relations of deceased Brethren.

The report went on to cover his visits to Masonic Temples in Edinburgh, New York and Chicago and he also met the Editors of a number of overseas Masonic journals. He was not impressed by the manner of dress worn in American lodges and he gained the impression that there was a lack of dignity in respect to Masonry compared with Masonry in England, Scotland and Australia. He remarked that the outlook on life generally in America was very different to what it is in Australia and although he brought back many pleasant memories, he is still of the opinion that Australia is the best place to live in.

