

Rural Australian Retail Grocery Innovation 1929-36: Clary Hill & Co.

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During a period of seven years spanning much of the Great Depression, 1929 –36, Clary Hill & Co. introduced a number of significant innovations to Australian rural grocery retailing in the Riverina district of New South Wales, Australia. An approach to business which owes much to Clary and Elsie Hill's ethical beliefs, a dynamic, forward looking approach to technology, and a willingness to try new business models and methods saw two particular innovations which appear to have been radical for their time and location. The first is the use of long distance haulage via semi-trailer trucks in supply logistics. The second is the use of a 'cash-and-carry' retail model that presages 'self service' and the modern supermarket, at a date well before other reported similar innovations in this area. The paper offers an example of historical research of a type that may help overcome an evident gap in our knowledge of the development of grocery retailing in Australia.

The history of retailing is one of dynamic, and at times rapid, change. Conceptual development that attempts to explain such change has been discussed extensively but somewhat inconclusively (Brown, 1987; Roth and Klein, 1993). Even in terms of observed 'facts' there are competing claims. This is so concerning the origins of 'cash and carry', 'self service' and related grocery retailing practices that prefigure the modern supermarket. For example, The Great American Tea Company claim to have established a 'cash and carry store', offering plain furnishings and fixtures, no credit or deliveries, but low prices, with the A&P Economy Store in Jersey City, N.J. in 1927 (A&P 2004). The Supervalu company points to the Winston and Newell Company affiliation with the Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA) as introducing concepts of self-service and cash-and carry in 1928 (Supervalu 2004). Clearly supermarkets grew up following innovations such as these by smaller general grocers using these concepts to sell dry groceries such as coffee, tea and tinned goods in relatively high volume at low margins. A later period sees a pattern of increased store size and the emergence of large chains of stores that completes the transition to a recognizably modern supermarket.

Very little literature exists concerning the history of retailing during the 1920s and 30s in Australia. With rare exceptions (Briggs and Smyth 1965) what little specific Australian retail research that exists explores modern day food retailing (Treadgold 1996; Polonsky and Jarratt 1992). A major Australian government inquiry into the retail grocery sector was held in 1999. The report includes a chapter over viewing the structure of this industry, which begins with an historical survey (Commonwealth of Australia 1999). This very limited history is offered concerning the pre world war two period:

Up to the 1940s, most grocery stores were independently owned. As suburbs developed around Australian cities, many consumers came to rely on shops that took orders and delivered to the home on a cart. ...perishable items were delivered daily. Experimentation with different retailing formats in the 1920s was stifled by the Depression and stagnating incomes in the 1930s, then by World War II. ... the first fully self-service grocery store open(ed) in Sydney in 1950.

Our paper reports historical research indicating that these prefiguring concepts of 'cash and carry', and also of the use of large-scale semi-trailer truck logistic supply, were imported to Australia at the very early date of 1929-36. The role of marketing pioneers Clary Hill and Co. in this process is explored.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research utilized personal interviews with eye-witnesses, combined with examination of the archive of the *Riverine Grazier*, covering the period 1929 – 35, and other contemporary print sources. The researcher interviewed Lt. Colonel. Rowland Hill O.A.M. in detail many times over the period 1992 –2004 (Hill 1992-4). Rowland Hill is the eldest child of Clary and Elsie Hill. He was born in 1926, and hence was an eye-witness as a young child during the period discussed. He is a retired Lt. Colonel in the Salvation Army, who was awarded the prestigious civic award the Order of Australia Medal, in recognition of his services to Christian journalism. On Wednesday, July 1, 1992 Rowland Hill placed a request for interviews of former employees

and associates of Clary Hill and Co. in the 'Haywire' column of the *Riverine Grazier* newspaper (p2). Through this means he traced Bob Ridges, Thelma Keanelly (nee Parsons) and Thelma Wall, all former employees of Clary Hill & Co during the period in question. Each of these he interviewed in detail (Keanelly 1992; Ridges 1992; Wall 1992). These primary sources, informed by secondary historical sources, are used as the basis for a case study of two marketing entrepreneurs and their business activities in a particular context not hitherto explored. We content that this context is indicative of a transitional period between dominant models of grocery retailing. The case is presented as an historical narrative.

FINDINGS

Born in Broken Hill in 1902, just a year after the formation of Australia as a nation, Clarence Hill (known to all as 'Clary') left home at the age of eleven. He went working as a sheep drover in the Australian outback. At the age of 14 Clarence Hill bought a 'Flanders' motorcar and commenced his first business, distributing goods in far western New South Wales. A few years later Clarence became a Salvation Army officer, serving with his wife Elsie in several appointments. In mid 1929 Clarence and Elsie Hill left full time work with the Salvation Army in Warracknabeal in the Wimmera district of western Victoria, as a result of a number of disappointments. Probably with a loan, Clarence bought a 'chassis only' Ford 'A' model 30 cwt. truck, and built a wooden body on the chassis. He then drove his wife, two infant children and few possessions 200 kilometers to Mathoura in New South Wales, a small town north of the river town Echuca, where his father had a grocery business. He rented a dwelling and shop in the main street.

The couple worked hard and soon built a thriving business. Clary regularly traveled to Melbourne, some 300 kilometers, in the model 'A' truck, returning with grocery supplies for the store. He became the Ford agent for the town, and soon purchased a second model 'A' truck, with an extra axle and two more wheels behind the original four. This arrangement was known as a 'Malcolm Moore' attachment, apparently because it was developed by Port Melbourne business Malcolm Moore Pty Ltd. This increased the nominal 30 cwt. load capacity to about four tones. Unfortunately the brakes, engine power and the number of driving wheels in the mud were not increased. This truck was usually driven to and from Melbourne by Clary's brother Clyde, who was now employed by the firm.

At this time the dominant mode of interstate transport was the railway. The Hume and Northern 'highways' traversed were little more than dirt tracks. The climate was harsh, with 40 degree (Celsius) heat in summer and rains in winter that would often wash out the dirt 'roads', creating treacherous and dangerous mud bogs.

Within a few months of arriving in Mathoura, Clary loaded his truck with groceries, drove North to Hay, a

larger town on the Murrumbidgee River, and sold them in the streets. For several weeks Clary often stayed over night in Hay, selling on the streets by day and sleeping in the cabin of his truck at night. His cut-price groceries were rushed by the housewives of Hay. There was some opposition to his success. Suspecting that his vehicle or load might be sabotaged, he approached the local Sergeant of Police, showing his 'hawker's' license. The local jail was at that time unused, and the Sergeant arranged for him to drive the truck in through the gates of the jail, leaving it inside overnight, sleeping in the cabin.

Grocery prices were high in Hay. All the stores freighted their goods from Sydney, which was more distant but also easily, if expensively, accessible by rail. The Hay stores also gave credit to customers, necessitating account keeping and consequent bad debts, as Clary explained later in advertisements that he published. He adopted a 'cash and carry' approach, continuing this when a month or two later he rented a home and built a small shop/storeroom next to it. This business model meant that customers paid cash for goods that they themselves selected and gathered. This was a strong departure from the dominant grocery retail model of a grocer behind a counter collecting the goods on the customer's behalf, with customers usually running accounts at the store. Like the innovation of semi-trailer trucks for long distance logistics supply, it appears that Clary learned of this approach from American retailing magazines, quite likely at a reading library, which was his habit.

The family was soon actively involved in the activities of the Salvation Army corps at Hay. Clary and Elsie were generous in many ways, giving to the corps (church) and to those suffering misfortune. Clary gave a series of Bible study addresses at the Army, using the knowledge gained from a lifetime of early morning Bible study. This background is important to note as it places in context the 'mission statement' contained in a subsequently published newspaper advertisement, and the ethical commitment that underpinned the Clary Hill & Co. approach to business. This highly unusual statement appeared in a huge advertisement published in the *Riverine Grazier* on March 27, 1931:

To use what gifts I have as best I may,
To help some weaker brother where I can,
To be blameless at the close of day,
As when the duties of the day began
To do without complaint what must be done,
To grant my rival all that may be just,
To win through kindness all that may be won,
To fight with knightly valour when I must'

A highly distinctive combination of elements appears in the copy for this and other advertising placed by the business. Clary advertised *himself* as the business, presaging a practice to become common many years later in retail advertising. This particular advertisement (March 27, 1931) contains a pen portrait of Clary the man.

While Broken Hill was still in her prime the youthful Clary Hill was known far and wide as an active and successful purveyor of food commodities. At the age of fourteen he was conducting his own business...'

He also explains the business model he has introduced:

'...the Cash and Carry basis ... A policy of cash was built into the organization from the commencement, with the result that at the present time there is not one account on the books. Consequently no bad debts are incurred, and the saving in this direction which would amount to approximately 5%, taking book-keeping, office expenses and bad pays into consideration, is not put on to the selling price... approximately 90% of all goods (are) brought to Hay by the firm's own motor trucks. Some of the advantages of this system are ...

- (a) Freshness of goods. No need to pile up tons of groceries in a storeroom. An order no matter how large can be supplied immediately. In the case of butter, and the new line just added, small goods and other perishable matters, they can be transported overnight from Melbourne to Hay.
- (b) Transport costs are halved ... freight is the principal item in the difference between city and country prices, it is not hard to reason out why selling costs are lower.
- (c) ...it is the only business in Hay that is selling groceries exclusively. No pretence is made to be anything by grocers, consequently losses from another department have not to be made up on the grocery department, and overhead is reduced...

This quite extraordinary manifesto then moves (but only for approximately 25 percent of the space in the whole document) into a specific sales promotion, 'snap prices (which) will operate until Easter Saturday', with a listing a tinned fish offerings, no doubt targeted at Good Friday. The statement of ethical intent in verse, quoted above, then follows.

The firm used every available promotional method. On Thursday afternoons Clary took a truck and with two teenage employees, direct marketing via personal delivery of his handbills to every home in the town. This presages the modern 'catalogue in the letterbox'. Saturday night sales of fruit and vegetables etc., with Clary 'shouting' the specials on the footpath outside, created huge interest and crowds.

Around 1932 Clary employed a versatile artist, 'Miss Gribble'. She and another senior staff member, Miss Murray,

manager of the Deniliquin shop, were always referred to in this way, rather than on the Christian name basis of junior employees. Clary made distinctive and imaginative use in both Hay and Deniliquin of Miss Gribble's work. She wrote all the bright price tickets in the shop and outside, and illustrated the extensive print advertising. The firm's advertisements stood out from the bland, relatively featureless pages of the newspaper. They stand out even today as one looks at them. Miss Gribble climbed a ladder to the veranda roof of the shop to write the main signs. She made cartoons of current happenings, such as a drawing of Clary being hit on the head with a mallet, representing the Lang (State) Government Road Transport Act, which imposed a heavy tax burden on transportation. Such cartoons were used in the advertising and on display at the shops. The firm's shops became visually the liveliest in the towns.

While 'cluttered' by modern advertising standards, this March 27, 1931 advertisement is highly unusual in its combination of personal appeal, business mission, sales promotion and ethical stance. In one page it seems to capture elements of business practice that, apart from complete 'self service' (which was attempted later in the Deniliquin store- see below) came to fruition in the modern supermarket. We also see a surprisingly modern approach to innovative to promotion, and even a glimpse of the 'ethical marketing' that today is a part of the positioning of firms such as Body Shop chain.

In 1932 Clary stopped the handbill promotion method and offered the free copies of the *Grazier* to those who could not afford to buy it to read the Clary Hill and Co. advertisements. In another example of promotional innovation, Clary built a huge 'Weeties' (breakfast cereal) box, finished in design and colours by Miss Gribble. A man climbed inside it and walked the length of the main street at the busiest times. The 'Weeties' special sold at a fabulous rate.

A store was opened in Cressy Street, Deniliquin, between Hay and Echuca, in the same year, 1930. Clary continued to operate his own transport from Melbourne to Hay. His brother Clyde briefly took over operation of the Mathoura store. Clyde eventually moved on, taking over one of the Ford 'A' model trucks. This business was disposed of. Clary moved the Hay business in January 1930 to a store in the Tattersall's Building (since demolished) in Lachlan St., and then to a larger store on the corner of Lacklan and Moore Streets. The *Riverina Grazier* carried innovative advertisements announcing these developments written by Clary in his own distinctive style. These featured dramatic headlines not common for that time ('Clary Hill's Thunderclap!'; Dynamite!; Bump!).

The Ford trucks were replaced with a tough four-wheeled English Thornycroft and a faster American Reo 'Speed Wagon', with dual rear wheels. Two friends, Edward ('Snowy') Beaumont and Robert ('Bob') Ridges joined the growing workforce in the Hay business. 'Bob' Ridges was a motor mechanic as well as a grocer. This was

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necessary to keep the trucks moving through the summer heat and hundreds of miles of mud and bogs in winter.

Staff morale was high. Staff picnics were held by the river on the Wednesday half-holiday. However, the economic and political background to this story is the Great Depression. This bleak period of massive unemployment saw large numbers of Australians living on a weekly government 'dole' payment of just seven shillings and four pence (A\$0.73 cents) for a single man for a week, or a pound and fourteen shillings one penny (A\$3.41) for a married man with children. These modest payments went a lot further at Clary Hill & Co. Thousands of unemployed took to the countryside looking for work. In Victoria authorities 'unlocked the Defence Department warehouses, and out of the mothballs they took the old surplus great-coats and tunics and dyed them a dull black' (George 2001). These WWI artifacts were issued to keep the workless poor warm.

In early 1931 the stores of Hay, which had been taking turns to accept the dole coupons, declined to continue the practice, due to the lengthy time the federal Government took to reimbursement their value. Dole coupons were supposed to be reimbursed within 30 days. The whole State, indeed the nation, was in political turmoil. The Lang Labour (N.S.W.) government was threatening to repudiate debt of 958,763 pounds to British bondholders. In Adelaide on the 9th of January 1931, 1000 unemployed stormed the Treasury building, protesting the withdrawal of beef from the ration issue. The riot lasted an hour and many were injured, one of several such incidents (Cathcart 1995, 587). It was probably the nearest time Australia has come to a violent revolution since the Eureka Stockade rebellion of miners in 1854. In Sydney unemployed fought a pitched battle with police. A protester even disrupted the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge ceremony, riding in on a horse and slashing the ribbon with a sword. A newspaper report describes a large protest meeting (twelve hundred people) held on a sports oval in Hay to protest both Federal and State government policies. 'The microphone and amplifiers were used in Hay for the first time' (*The Riverina Grazier*, 31 March, 1931).

Clary Hill stepped in to take on the role of accepting the dole coupons. People queued up down Moore Street with hessian sugar bags and other containers to exchange them for one of several pre-organized packages of goods. In doing this Clary took a considerable financial risk, given the long and unreliable payment period of the Government, and the turbulent context. It was a time of great stress for the business, for the Hills and the employees. They faced a crippling financial burden, out of compassion for the unemployed, despite being the newest store in the town. The people appreciated his action however, and he made reference to it in later advertising:

The firm would draw attention ... to the fact that although the youngest and possibly of all the Stores least able to stand the heavy strain of supplying the

Groceries to those on the dole, yet when all others refused they have stood by the workers and supplied the goods (*The Riverina Grazier*, March 27, 1931).

Events during severe flooding of the Murray-Darling river system underlined the difficult, pioneering nature of Clary's long distance supply transportation strategy. Early in 1931 the Murrumbidgee river spread out far across the Riverina plains. Clary attempted to bring in one more load of goods before the road was cut. With two additional drivers, Clary raced the Thornycroft the 810 kilometers to Melbourne and back, through Deniliquin towards Hay, through the flood waters. (Top speed would have been at about 75 kph). A report in the *Riverina Grazier* (July 17, 1931) explains:

Yesterday forenoon Mr Clary Hill, with the aid of a team of eleven horses, driven by Mr Frank Best, drove his Thornycroft truck from Mungadal to Hay, that being the last stage of a journey from Melbourne commenced on Sunday, 5th July.

Mr Hill left Melbourne on Sunday week, hoping to get back before the flood waters made the road impassable. He had a good, although rough trip, to the Black Swamp, which was reached about 8 o'clock. Mr Hill was accompanied by Mr Bob Ridges and Mr Edward (Snowy) Beaumont.

At the Black Swamp the engine and headlights of the car suddenly disappeared into about three feet of water in a stream across the road, which two days before had been only a few inches deep. The back of the lorry stuck up into the air. The water completely covered the engine and the headlights.

The party crawled out and as they had no food, other than oatmeal, coffee and condensed milk, with which commodities the lorry was loaded, and no fire, set to work to keep warm by working at getting the car out.

About 4 a.m. on Monday, they decided that it was useless to try and drag the car out backwards, as the step and engine were up against a bank of solid clay, and their efforts with block and tackle had proved ineffectual...they decided to sleep on the floor of the truck. When daylight appeared ... they set to work to cook the only food they had, porridge, in a petrol billy. ... After this simple repast, efforts were made to pull the truck forward and by 10 o'clock all was in readiness for a final pull when a car arrived and lent a hand. By one o'clock the truck was once more on high ground ...

The engine had to be drained of water, and the magneto taken to pieces and the parts dried in front of the fire. About nightfall everything was ready to depart...The party pushed on to arrive on the Mungadal boundary, the other side of the flood waters on Tuesday (7th) mid-day, when the lorry got firmly bogged once more. From here Mr Hill had to walk into Hay, wading through about half a mile of flood waters, to get assistance. The party were very glad to have their evening meal in Hay on Tuesday. The lorry stayed on the other side of the flood waters for over a week, and was yesterday drawn into Hay, the waters having receded ...'

The *Grazier* report does not mention that the goods were actually unloaded into a rowing boat and many laborious trips made to where the 'Reo' truck had been driven to the limit of the solid ground. Mr Bob Ridges, when 82 years of age and living in Melbourne, recalled that in one of the two bogs mentioned in the report, the truck was pulled out by a large team of horses. Lt. Col. Rowland Hill, Clary and Elsie Hill's eldest son was five years of age in 1931. He recalls the flood clearly, and wrote an article on the in 1939 aged 13, for the *Fortian*, the magazine of Fort Street High School (Sydney).

The trucks used in Clary Hill & Co. during this time had custom design elements in advance of their time. The later vehicles (circa 1931) had two extra headlights near the windscreen, and were fitted with wide sleeping cabins, which could also seat four people. They had semi-rotary hand pumps with which to supply petrol from 44 gallon drums to the engine. They carried tire chains, blocks and tackles with long heavy ropes, and powerful battery torches. The black and white photos available do not reveal that they were painted a spectacular red.

In 1931 Clary hired a fleet of four trucks with four-wheeled trailers from a Melbourne carrying firm. They attracted much attention lined up along Lachlan Street Hay, outside the store. Each carried a sign 'Hired by Clary Hill and Co.', and was necessary to get the wool clip to Melbourne on time.

In 1932 the family moved to Melbourne. Clary Hill and Co. rented a large storeroom dept near the Salvation Army Citadel in suburban Moonee Ponds. Clary spent much time on the road and at the Deniliquin and Hay shops, which now had managers. Elsie caught a tram into the city to the Jessie McPherson Hospital for the birth of their third child, Harold.

Also in 1932 the firm imported a GMC truck, a heavier version of the Chevrolet, from the US, and ordered a semi-trailer for it. This articulated section was the third such semi-trailer built by the engineering firm of Malcolm Moore Pty. Ltd. Port Melbourne. As noted, it appears that Clary read about semi-trailers in an American magazine. Bob Ridges stated that when he went to pick up the new vehicle, he had never before seen a semi-trailer truck. At

this time motorists had to call at border police stations for an interstate permit for every trip. Bob Ridges supplied to the researcher a permit certificate for one such border crossing which occurred in the Thornycroft in July 1932. Ridges stated that the police at Echuca (on the Victorian – NSW border) told him that the GMC he drove was the first semi-trailer to enter the Riverina from Victoria, and also the first to bring wool from the Riverina into Victoria. Rowland Hill traveled to Melbourne with his father in the GMC at least twice. He recalls how the truck would literally stop traffic, with people lining the street to see it. So successful was the GMC semi-trailer, that the Thornycroft was also converted to a semi-trailer. However, by 1933 it was found that the GMC alone could handle all the work.

During the winter of 1932 the long hours of driving, wearing wet clothing, getting trucks out of bogs, and overlooking the two businesses caught up with Clary. He contracted pleurisy, then a very serious illness. His life was in jeopardy. It was three months before he was back at work.

This seems to have marked a downturn in the fortunes of the business, which had been without either of its enthusiastic leaders for those months. Clary maintained his commitment to volunteer work in the Salvation Army. At the Moonee Ponds Corps he became Young People's Sergeant Major (in charge of Army work with young people). Rowland remembers at least one year when Clary's semi-trailer took the whole Sunday School and equipment for a picnic in Wattle Park, Melbourne.

In 1933 the family moved from Melbourne to Deniliquin, renting a recently built home with a wide surrounding veranda and a row of shady peppercorn trees along the side driveway. Deniliquin is located on the Edwards River in countryside more pleasant than the black soil plains that surrounded Hay. Teenager Nellie Wharton cared for the three children so that Elsie could join the staff of the Deniliquin shop in Cressy Street.

This shop ran as a self-service store. Bob Ridges recalled that it was difficult to persuade people to come in and serve themselves, which is a virtually universal grocery practice now. This again shows how Clary was in advance of his times. It also reveals a likely error of approximately twenty years in the reported date for the opening of the first Australian self-service grocery store in a recent Australian government report (Commonwealth of Australia 1999). However, subsequent research examining the files of the contemporary Deniliquin newspapers revealed no further documentary confirmation of Ridges recollections. The store is elsewhere referred to as 'cash and carry', like the Hay and Mathoura stores.

The children enjoyed their school days beside the river, with paddle steamer visits and 'yabbing' in several nearby lagoons. Rowland recalls borrowing a three-wheeler delivery bike for the shop and riding down busy Cressy Street with his young sister Stella in the big box between the two front wheels. Both survived. Clary and Elsie

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continued their volunteer work with the Salvation Army, again focusing on after school children's work.

During 1930-31 Clary bought a new 'A' model Ford sedan, used for deliveries and for pulling the trucks out of bogs. This was traded in on the GMC truck. At Deniliquin they had a tiny new Triumph delivery van, used for deliveries and transportation of perishable goods. A staff member crashed this van at high speed. A tree at the site on the approach to Deniliquin still bears the scar 60 years later. At this time Snowy Beaumont had taken other employment and Bob Ridges opened his own store a few doors away from Clary Hill and Co's shop. A new driver was employed.

A theft of the GMC semi-trailer truck at this time was a major setback to the firm. The stolen truck was later found in Melbourne, with severe mechanical damage. Apparently a load of petrol in 44 gallon drums had been sold off along the way at huge discount prices to station owners (farmers). The thief, who was well known to the Hills, had claimed that 'Clary Hill needed the cash urgently'. The thief was apprehended in Queensland. However, because interstate extradition for a trial at that time would have involved heavy const for the Hills, with no prospect of recovering any cash, goods or damages from the offender, they did not press the extradition. The thief was never brought to justice.

Clary and Elsie were hard-pressed to cover the losses sustained in 1932 and 1933. Probably in late 1933 they returned to live in Hay, with the result that the business there again moved forward. The 'International' truck agency was secured and a demonstration utility was also used for deliveries. It was also used to cover the town with amplified news of the special at the store. There were no by-laws against this practice in 1933, and it provides a further example of the Hill's early adoption of helpful new technologies.

By this time there were other transport operators on the Hay-Melbourne run. As there were at that time no regulatory limits on driver - hours and few requirements regarding vehicle safety, they were able to cut prices. The Clary Hill and Co. carrying business, hit hard by the theft of the truck was not as significant a part of the business as formerly. In addition, the cash strapped N.S.W. government introduced a transport tax of sixpence per tone, per mile, which hit hard.

Many of the people of Hay, mindful of Clary as a benefactor during the dole payment crisis, petitioned the N.S.W. government for an exemption to the tax. Amazingly, given the parlous condition of the government finances at that time, this was granted for a period of twelve months. However, in the longer term the long distance going became unprofitable.

Clary's long illness at Moonee Ponds, the theft of the GMC and load, plus the costly mechanical damage, with other losses, took a heavy toll on the business. Early in 1934 Clary called a meeting of his creditors. All but one, a city based tire company, agreed to help Clary Hill and Co. by not pressing for full payment of accounts for a few

weeks to enable recovery of the business situation. Like so many Depression business people, Clary and Elsie were unable to continue the business as it was.

On February 13, 1934, the Melbourne firm of Officer and Guthrie Pty. Ltd took over both businesses, inserting an advertisement to this effect in the *Grazier*. With Clary continuing on as manager of both stores, and with fresh capital, the business continued to thrive. Life continued on much the same for the Hill family, or at least for the children, for over two years, until 1936. Clary and Elsie however, had pledged all of their own money and possessions in trying to recover the position of the business before its loss. When they decided in 1936 to move to Sydney to start anew, they had very little to take with them beyond their most treasured personal possessions.

Clary joined the National Cash Register Company in Sydney, renting a flat for the family at 46 Darley Rd, Manly, and then two other rented homes. Putting the sum of all the hard work, innovation, success and disappointments behind them, the family moved forward. Clary and Elsie determined to keep their trust in God, to keep clear consciences and to provide a positive future for their children and themselves. They went on to a succession of entrepreneurial business ventures, eventually retiring with the sale of their successful Foodland supermarket and coffee shop at Broadford, Victoria, in 1973.

CONCLUSION

This paper has reported in narrative form the context, historical and personal, of two key innovations that anticipate later developments in grocery retailing. These innovations include the use of long distance truck haulage in grocery supply logistics. Australia has vast physical size, and a strong concentration of most its population in a small number of coastal cities. However it also experiences continuing economic dependence on farming and mining activity outside of these urban centers. Given this context, it is not surprising that Australian companies (such as Lindsay Fox's LinFox, founded in 1956, now operating in nine countries - see <http://www.linfox.com/Linfox>) have developed highly competitive transportation and logistics skill.

It is timely to record and acknowledge the role of pioneers in long distance transportation and logistics, and in that of transitional grocery retailing practices such as 'cash and carry'. Further research is needed to establish the relationship between the 'cash and carry' and logistic innovations we have reported and such developments elsewhere in the country. The scant historical resources available indicate Clary and Elsie Hill may well have predated such innovation elsewhere in Australia, and within a short time of the development of such concepts in far away America. This report underscores the paucity of research in Australian marketing history, and the urgency of capturing what evidence may remain in terms of eye-

witness reports, documentary and other sources, while these are still available.

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