

JACK CAMPBELL

(1866-1929) Tour manager, advance representative. Jack Campbell was one of the best-known advance reps working in Australia during the early decades of the twentieth century. The entertainment organisations he was associated with, either in this position or as manager, included the Fitzgerald Bros Circus, Harmston's Circus, James Brennan, the Coleman-Taylor Pantomime Co and Harry Clay.

The son of a Dublin-born Irishman who had reportedly been employed by Madame Tussaud as a modeller and hair worker, and who is also said to have owned the first wax works show ever seen in Australia,¹ Jack Campbell pursued a career in popular entertainment that largely involved publicity and management. His name has first been located as advance rep for Harmston's Grand Circus and Menagerie of Performing Animals between 1897 and 1899.² In 1900 Campbell was acting as representative for Valdare's Vaudeville and Novelty Company.³ He is also believed to have worked in a similar position with the Fitzgerald Brothers' Circus around this period.

Campbell's association with Harry Clay likely began in 1908 when he undertook the position of advance rep for the entrepreneur's dramatic company tour of Queensland. Around 1912, he became [James Brennan](#)'s manager at the Hippodrome in Newtown, before returning to Clay's in 1913, whereupon he again toured Queensland. For this tour he took on the role of tour and business manager during the interim between the [Jimmy Boyle](#) and [Wally Edwards](#) eras. Whether he played any further role with the company is unknown at this stage.

Theatre Magazine (Sydney)
Jan. 1912, 21.



As early as 1912 the *Theatre Magazine* described Campbell as one of "the most popular, experienced, and reliable 'advances'" in Australia."⁴ Following his death in Sydney in April 1929 the *Maryborough Chronicle* noted that Campbell's career had also included representing the Flying Jordans, [John F. Sheridan](#), Edward Lang's American Travesty Stars, the [Mutoscope Biotint Company](#) (1904), Woolcott's Colossal Moving Theatre, J.C. Williamson's World Wonder Show, Public Health Films (*The End of the Road*), and Alf Coleman's Pantomime Company (ca. 1928). He previously toured Queensland as the advance for Taylor and Coleman's Pantomime Company (ca. 1917-1919).⁵

SEE ALSO

- [Harry Clay](#)
- [Harry Clay's NSW/Qld Tours, 1901-1918,1927, 1929](#)

HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. In its obituary for Campbell the *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* provides some background information on Campbell's father which came from an unnamed theatrical journal (furnished by Arthur Ward, a friend of Campbell's). In the *Chronicle* piece the writer records:

The deceased's father was a native of Dublin, Ireland, and was in Australia for sixty years. In London he was with the celebrated Madame Tussaud as wax modeller and hair worker. Later in Australia, he was in business in both capacities, and at one time owned the first wax works show ever seen in Australia. In early days Mr Campbell was a fine cricketer, and was one of Australia's representatives in the first England v Australia match.

A few weeks later the *Brisbane Courier* also made mention of the waxworks and cricket in its brief report on Jack Campbell's death.⁶

Two pieces information from these articles should be regarded with circumspect, however.

¹ See "Historical Notes and Corrections" below for issues relating to Campbell's father.

² See "Local News" *Age* (Melbourne) 31 Jan. 1898, 7; and *Brisbane Courier* 22 Apr. 1899, 2. Advert.

³ *Brisbane Courier* 28 July 1900, 14. Advert.

⁴ *Theatre Magazine* Jan. 1912, 21.

⁵ "Theatrical Advance," 4.

⁶ "Maryborough." *Brisbane Courier* 30 Apr. 1929, 22. This par was likely sourced from the *Maryborough Chronicle*.

(i) With regard to the first test match between Australia and England (1877), for example, no record of anyone by the name of Campbell has yet been identified with either team.

(ii) Also, while it is possible that Campbell's father had been employed by Marie Tussaud in London and later brought his skills to this country, it is yet to be determined if he was the first to present a waxworks exhibition here.

FURTHER REFERENCE

Djubal, Clay. "Harry Clay and Clay's Vaudeville Company, 1865-1930." MA Thesis, The University of Queensland, 1998.

"Theatrical Advance Agent: Mr Jack Campbell's Death." *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* (Qld) 19 Apr. 1929, 4.

See also:

Australian Variety: 30 Nov. 1917, n. pag.
Theatre Magazine: Jan. 1912, 21 • Feb. 1913, 19.

Coming by Two Special Trains.
HARMSTON'S GRAND
CIRCUS
AND
Royal Managerie of Performing Animals
The Largest Amusement Enterprise in the World, will perform at
GAWLER, THIS EVENING & SATURDAY, JUNE 10 & 11.
TWO NIGHTS ONLY.
SPECIAL AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE SATURDAY, June 11th, for the convenience of Schools and Families residing at a distance, when the Children will be admitted for Half-Price to all parts of the Circus to the Afternoon Performance.
REMEMBER—Positively Two Nights only, Friday and Saturday, June 10th and 11th, Doors open in the Evening at 7 o'clock ; to commence at 8 sharp.
Afternoon Performance To-morrow (Saturday) at 2 o'clock.
PRICES OF ADMISSION—Reserved Chairs, 4s.; Dress Circle, 3s.; Stalls, 2s.; Pit, 1s.
M. A. ANDERSON } Advance Agents.
JACK CAMPBELL }



Bunyip (Gawler, SA) 10 June 1898, 3.

Caricature by Pas (aka Donald MacDonald)
Truth (Sydney) 10 Mar. 1912, 4.

PRETTY PICTURES
JACK CAMPBELL.
(Of the Newtown Hippodrome.)



Everybody knows Jack Campbell,
He's one of the "good old pros,"
Which is seen by anybody at a glance.
And there's no part of Australia
But what our Jack Campbell knows,
For, you see, his watchword ever is
"Advance."

Now Jack Campbell, at the Amphi.
Nearly every night is seen,
From the opening turn right on to the
finale.
And he's allus looking happy,
And contented and serene.
He barracks, too, like hello for Prince
Charlie.

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