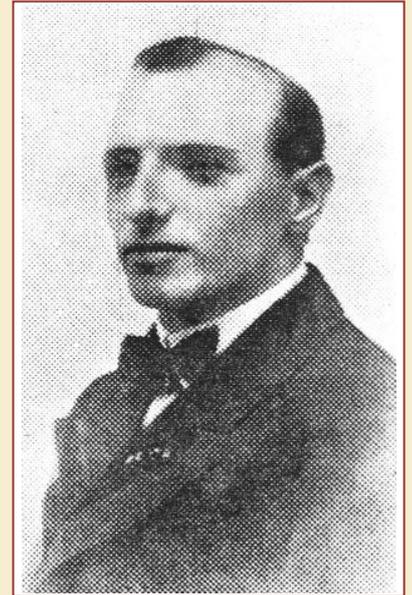


## JAMES H. WHITE

James H. White established himself as a theatrical manager around the turn of the century and by 1915 was operating as a theatrical agent out of the offices of *Australian Variety*. He also worked as a journalist for the magazine with his regular column "Whitie." In 1916 he became the manager of Harry Clay's Vaudeville Enterprises before eventually taking it over himself. White also joined forces with Norman Bambury (1924-25) and Bert Howard around 1928/29.

While much of James H. White's early life and career are unclear at this time, he reportedly entered the field of theatrical management around 1902, putting together a company for shows at Liverpool (on the outskirts of Sydney). In an article published in *Australian Variety and Show World* in 1917 White recalls having "secured a financier (a Greek waiter) with a fiver." He subsequently proceeded to "select a company of a dozen... next securing 500 two-coloured day bills, putting the same out at Liverpool, where [he] had booked the hall for a Tuesday night two weeks hence." With his financier pulling out a few days prior to the show, and having spent his last 10/- on dodgers, White apparently still needed to find the fares to get his company to the show. "Never at any previous or subsequent period in my life" wrote White, "do I ever recollect feeling quite so miserable." To add to his woes a circus had turned up unannounced in the township bringing unwanted competition to his first foray as a showman. In the end, however, a severe storm developed into tornado type conditions, ripping the circus tents to shreds and allowing White's show to catch the locals to himself. The end result was a house record, cash profit in his pocket, and a greater desire to continue in the business.<sup>1</sup>



*Australian Variety* (Sydney) 9 Feb. 1916, n. pag.

White later began to make his mark as both a young manager, and a writer for the *Hawklet*, being its Sydney representative. "In addition to representing James Donnelly's tabloid companies," noted *Australian Variety* in 1914, "he is the sole agent for the Musical Gardiners and other acts."<sup>2</sup> Initially he operated his small entrepreneurial business at 183 Pitt Street, sending acts to various managements such as the Szarka Brothers at their *Enmore Theatre*. By 1915 White was conducting business through the Australian Variety Booking Agency, in partnership with editor *Martin C. Brennan*. White's clients included at this time T.M Halls Lyric Theatre (Goulburn, New South Wales); R.L. Baker's Stadium (Rushcutters Bay, Sydney); Thornton's Mascot Theatre (Rosebury, Sydney); and *Harry Clay's Bridge Theatre* (Newtown, Sydney)

### James H. White

("Whitie").

THE INDEPENDENT BOOKING  
AGENT.

is once again located at the office of  
"Australian Variety," 250 Pitt Street,  
Sydney, and is prepared to hear from all  
reputable acts.

Now booking for Baker's Stadium, James  
Craydon, and many others.

All business is conducted on strictly  
honorable lines.

MANAGERS INTERVIEWED DAILY  
from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

ARTISTES will be booked ONLY by let-  
ter, wire, or 'phone' This rule will be  
strictly enforced.

ONLY GOOD ACTS NEED APPLY.

Watch for my advert. in next week's  
"Variety."

*Australian Variety* (Sydney) 31 May 1916,  
n. pag.

In early 1916 White had established a business relationship with artist/manager *Joe Lashwood*, the organisation being known as the *Lashwood and White Theatrical Booking Agency*, with operations having expanded quite considerably. However, in August 1916 he accepted an offer from Harry Clay to become manager of Clay's newly opened theatrical booking agency. The Clay/White relationship was to continue for a number of years. In 1921, and under his management, the agency's name was changed to the Australian Theatrical Bureau. It is not known whether Harry Clay continued his association past this point or not. It had for some time, though, been referred to unofficially as "White's Agency."

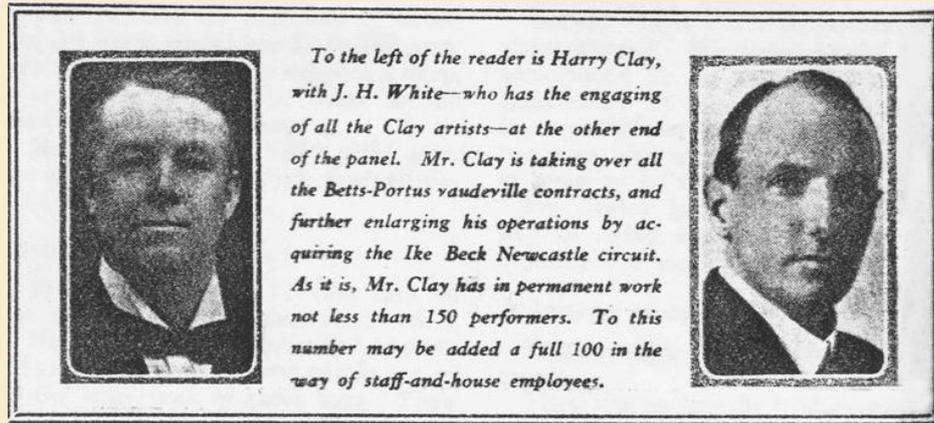
White later operated a booking agency in Sydney with former Melbourne-based performer/film exhibitor and vaudeville agent, *Frank Cane* (ca. 1923)<sup>3</sup> and in 1924 he joined forces with *Norman Bambury* to establish *Bambury and White*. The agency is recorded as having booked artists for city, suburban and regional venues through until at least mid-1925. Among the biggest names linked to the agency were *Arthur Tauchert*, *Louie Duggan*, *Slavin and Thompson*, *Arthur Elliott*, *Will Hastings*, *Joe Rox*, *Cass Mahomet*, the *Cracknells*, *D.B. O'Connor*, *George Dean*, *Ted Tutty*, *Harry Coyle*, and *Scott and Graham*. Bambury and White also sent its own touring company, the *Gay Crusaders*, through Queensland in 1925.

<sup>1</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 17 Jan. 1917, n. pag.

<sup>2</sup> *Australian Variety* (Sydney) 19 Aug. 1914, 6.

<sup>3</sup> "Vaudeville Jottings." *Everyone's* (Sydney) 4 Apr. 1923, 27.

During the 1920s White also continued to turn his hand to management running shows at several theatres including, in 1925 Leichhardt's Strand Theatre. By the late-1920s (around 1928/29) White joined forces with Bert Howard, managing his Sydney circuit while the "Droll" was recuperating from a serious illness.



*Theatre Magazine (Sydney) Mar. 1922, 24.*

### SEE ALSO

- [Harry Clay's Theatrical Enterprises and Booking Offices](#)
- [Bambury & White](#)
- [Gay Crusaders](#)
- [White-Cane Agency](#)

### FURTHER REFERENCE

- Djubal, Clay. "Harry Clay and Clay's Vaudeville Company, 1865-1930." (1998). MA Thesis.
- "Here and There." *Everyone's* (Sydney) 28 Dec. 1921, 21.
- "Play and Otherwise, The." *Everyone's* (Sydney) 25 Feb. 1925, 32.
- "Play and Otherwise, The." *Everyone's* (Sydney) 27 May 1925, 35.
- "Whitie." "The Luck of the Game." *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 17 Jan. 1917, n. pag.

#### See also:

- Australian Variety:** 23 Dec. 1914, 13 • 29 Dec. 1915, n. pag. ["The Count."] • 27 Oct. 1915, n. pag. • 9 Feb. 1916, n. pag. [Hean's Tonic Nerve Nut testimonial] • 10 May 1916, n. pag. • 24 May 1916, n. pag.
- Australian Variety and Show World:** 16 Aug. 1916, n. pag. • 12 July 1918, 7 • 3 Oct. 1919, n. pag. • 10 Nov. 1919, n. pag. • 3 Dec. 1920, 16 [Harry Clay's Vaudeville ad].



*Australian Variety (Sydney) 23 Dec. 1914, 13.*

Last updated: 15/04/2021

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:**

Clay Djubal. "James H. White." *Australian Variety Theatre Archive*, Industry: People M-Z.

<http://ozvta.com/industry-people-m-z/>