

Site of the Riverina Hotel

Martin Murphy, Proprietor

At approximately 3.00pm on Monday, 10 February, 1879 Martin Murphy stepped out of his Riverina Hotel and was promptly beckoned by the neighbouring fruit shop proprietor, Jim Fox, to be told that something strange was going on down at the western end of town.

Jim explained that people had been observed entering the Royal Mail Hotel or the adjoining Bank of New South Wales since 11 o'clock that morning, but nobody had been seen coming back out. The fruit shop owner offered the opinion that the Bank was being 'stuck up'. Another shop owner joined the conversation, stating he had heard a rumour the Kelly Gang was in town to rob the Bank.

In scoffing at the story, Mr Murphy bet Fox, the fruit shop owner, half a sovereign that there was nothing to the yarn.

While standing there, the three gentlemen noticed a crowd gathered in front of the Post and Telegraph Office, whereupon Mr Murphy decided to stroll down and see what was going on.

On arrival, he was promptly pressed into service by Ned Kelly, who handed him an axe and ordered him to commence chopping down the telegraph pole in front of the Post and Telegraph Office. Ned quickly noted that Mr Murphy was inexperienced with an axe and subsequently ordered him to hand over the axe to another onlooker, by the name of Thomas Brown.

Mr Murphy beat a hasty retreat back to his Hotel, with Mr Fox later lamenting that he never received payment for the winning bet!

History of the Riverina Hotel

Martin Murphy, at 23 years of age, came to Jerilderie in 1870 and opened a restaurant.

In 1876, Miss Jane Dennis arrived in Jerilderie. On her marriage to Martin Murphy in 1878, the restaurant was expanded into a Hotel, receiving its licence in November of that year.

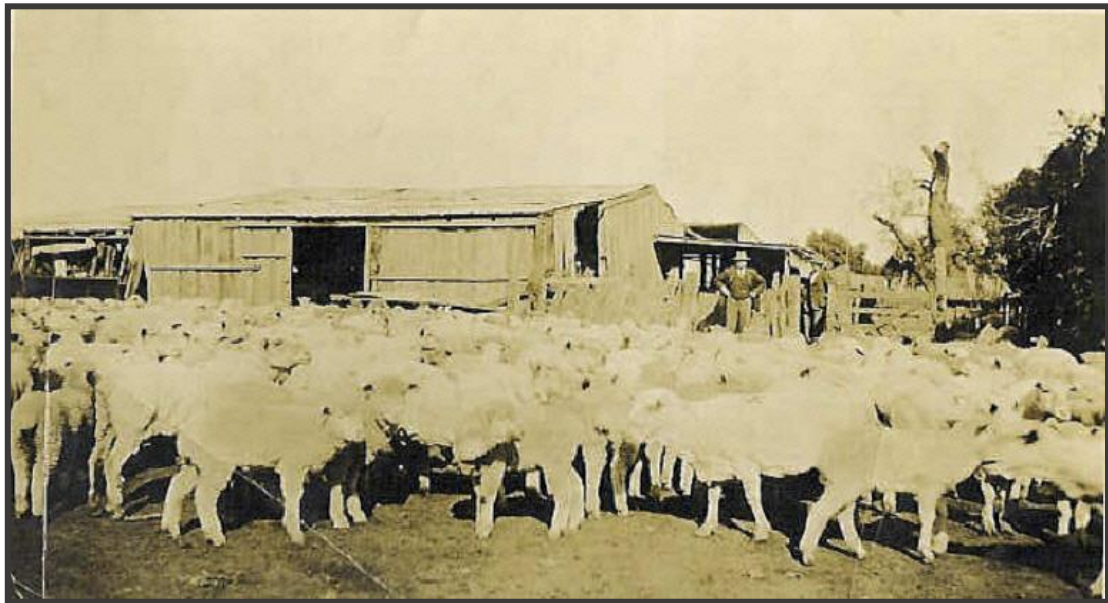
Martin Murphy died on 10 March 1887 at just 40 years of age, and is buried in Row A Lot 29 of the Roman Catholic section of the Jerilderie Cemetery.

Mr Michael Curtin, an auctioneer in Jerilderie, who also had links with the Kelly Gang, wrote to his younger brother, Cornelius (Con) J Curtin, who, at the time, was living in the central New South Wales town of Brewarrina, to advise his brother of a young widow in Jerilderie with 'prospects'.

Mrs Murphy subsequently married Con Curtin in 1889.

She died on 27 September 1927, and was also buried in the Roman Catholic section of the Jerilderie Cemetery, Row A Lot 26.

The Riverina Hotel was substantially rebuilt in 1914, remaining in the ownership of the Curtin family until September 1951.



In the early 1900's Con Curtin had a shearing shed located at the rear of the hotel, which caused quite a deal of controversy with the Board of the nearby Public School.

The Hotel licence was eventually sold and transferred to Sydney in preparation for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, with the Hotel being demolished.



Photograph taken in 1999 from the rear of the Riverina Hotel, with demolition underway.