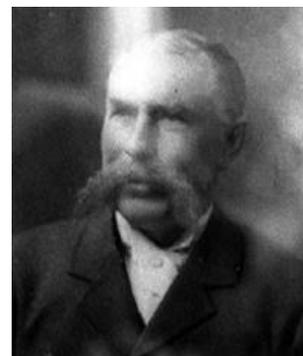# THOMAS HUNTER GRIFFITH & CHARLES LUCAS GRIFFITH

The Griffith brothers were born to Irish parents in the West Indies. Their father, Thomas Griffith, owned a sugar plantation in St Croix, Virgin Islands. He died just prior to the birth of Charles Lucas, his second son. Shortly after Thomas died, his wife, Mary Ann (née Hunter), with her two sons and a daughter, returned to Ireland.[1]

THOMAS HUNTER GRIFFITH 1842-1913

The older brother, Thomas Hunter Griffith, was born at Christiansted, St Croix, Virgin Islands on May 13, 1842. He spent most of his youth in Ireland before returning to Santa Cruz to manage sugar plantations. He came to Australia, via New York, whilst still a young man.

THOMAS HUNTER GRIFFITH

In Australia he farmed in the Loddon Valley area of Victoria and in gold rush days he was a trader for some time. In 1883, after a number of years of successful farming and trading, he sold out his interests and joined his brother Charles in Albury. He continued as a partner with his brother in the firm of Chas L Griffith & Co, until they sold their business to Dalgety & Co in 1908. Thomas continued as joint manager of Dalgety & Co, until March 1910, when he finally retired from active management. He was, however, retained by the company as local director and business adviser until the time of his death.

Thomas Griffith was an alderman of Albury Council from 1886 to 1892 and mayor in 1887 and 1891. He was elected to the seat of Albury in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in July 1898, holding the seat until July 1904.[2] He was also President of Albury Club in 1906-07 and 8 and when the Albury Bowling Club formed in 1905, he was the first president.

According to his obituary in the *Border Morning Mail* of August 16, 1913, Thomas:

> was distinguished for his splendid business capacity. He was one of the best judges of livestock in the district. On account of this, he had the complete confidence of all graziers and farmers throughout Riverina and the North eastern districts of Victoria ... He was for a number of years alderman of the Borough Council of Albury, as the Municipal Council was then called. He was twice mayor—in the years 1887 and 1891. It was during his term of office, and largely owing to his advice, that the streets of the town were planted with the trees that now beautify them ... For six years the late Mr. Griffith represented this electorate in the State Parliament. He was first elected in July, 1898, and sat until the dissolution of that Parliament in 1901. At the elections in July 1901 he was again elected, and sat until the dissolution in 1904 ... He entered the State Parliament as a strong supporter of Federation, and it was while he was serving in the first Parliament to which he was elected that the Federation of the States was finally completed ... He constantly and consistently pushed forward the claims of Albury to be made the Federal capital.
>
> For a long while Mr. Griffith was an active and invaluable member of the Albury P A & H [Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural] Society. He was also a member of the Albury Licensing Bench.
>
> A loyal member of the Church of England was the deceased gentleman, and he always contributed most liberally to its funds. For many years he was a church warden of St Matthew's Church, Albury.

https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/112123860

In 1907, Thomas and his wife donated an English oak Altar to St Matthew's Church in Albury in memory of their grandson Harold who died in 1906.[3] Thomas died at Walbundrie on August 15, 1913 aged 71.

Thomas was married to Elizabeth Heylinger "Bessie" Dewhurst – in addition to Harold, their family included Dr Claude Hunter Griffith a dentist who was killed in a car accident on Burrumbuttock Rd in October 1929[4] and Charles Hunter Griffith who lived in Albury and was

manager of Dalgety's. Charles died in September 1940 and according to his obituary in the *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga):

> In his early days he was a keen sportsman ... He was a foundation president of the Albury Rotary Club and an active member until the time of his death. He had also filled the position of president of the Albury Show Society and the Albury Club, and was a member of the Commercial Club. For many years he had been the manager of the Albury branch of Messrs Dalgety and Co, Ltd, having been appointed to the position when the company took over the business formerly carried on by his uncle and himself, and known as C L Griffith and Co ... His ability as a judge of stock became widely known and he established a splendid stud of Shorthorn cattle at his property, 'Delaware,' near Albury.
>
> https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/144317702

CHARLES LUCAS GRIFFITH 1848-1923

Charles was born on May 4, 1848 at St Croix, Virgin Islands and returned to Ireland with his mother as an infant.

The *Albury Banner* published a biography of Charles in July 1923, about a month before he died. The biography reports that he:

> arrived in Albury on 28th October, 1878, having purchased the business of Mr T F Waller, which at that time was chiefly a land agency business, the stock and station section being negligible. At that time Albury was a place of minor importance except as the crossing station into Victoria. Practically no business was done in stock. The people interested in stock had to journey to Beechworth, where the principal Border market was established ... The waste involved in this system was soon recognised by Mr Griffith, who determined to establish a market in Albury, and to that end built his first yards at the corner of Smollett and Townsend Streets ... His operations embraced a wide field and frequent journeys as far as

CHARLES LUCAS GRIFFITH

> Narrandera were made, with the object of stimulating interest in the Albury market. For some time he practically lived in the saddle. Later the stock sales took place on the present site of the Presbyterian Church, and yards were subsequently erected at Woodstock, near the railway station. ... Prior to coming to Albury, Mr C L Griffith occupied land on the Lower Loddon, in Victoria, adjoining the holding of his brother, the late Mr T H Griffith, who in 1883 joined Mr C T Griffith in the Albury business, which was conducted under the title of Chas L Griffith and Co. The brothers, although possessing separate pastoral and other interests, worked together in the most cordial manner in the interests of the firm for a quarter of a century, and as the result of a courageous and straightforward policy placed the business so high in repute that in 1908, when Messrs Dalgety and Co Ltd proposed establishing themselves in Riverina, they bought the business of Messrs C L Griffith and Co.
>
> https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/112687916

It was reported that during the five years prior to the sale of his business to Dalgety's the sales of sheep, directly and indirectly, averaged 1,000,000 per annum and the sale of cattle in the neighbourhood of 50,000 per annum.

The "Beehive Building" on the corner of Dean and Townsend streets was built by Charles in 1889 and he retained ownership of the building long after the sale of his primary business. After retirement, Charles moved to Toorak in Melbourne but maintained his interest in Albury - he gave generously to local causes including the Albury District Hospital, St Matthew's Church, the Albury and Border P A & H Society, and various patriotic funds. On three occasions, in 1903-4-5 he was president of the Albury and Border P A & H Society, and for a time he was president of the Albury Club. Charles was reputed to be one of the best judges of cattle in Australia. In March 1910, Charles and his brother Thomas Griffith were tendered a banquet by the citizens of

Albury to mark the appreciation that was felt for their valuable business and public services to the town.[5]

Charles was married to Isabel Georgina Bunton and they had four sons and two daughters. Eldest son, Lionel Charles Griffith was (according to his 1947 obituary) one of Australia's leading stock salesman, he remained in Albury and was manager of L C Griffith & Co, auctioneers.[6] Their second son, Gerald Thomas Griffith, was a grazier and was accidentally killed at Albury Railway Station in 1915.[7] Major Henry Hunter Griffith, their third son, died in England of pneumonia during the influenza pandemic of 1919.[8] Fourth son, Geoffrey Carmichael, was killed in action at Pozieres, France on August 9, 1916.[9]

Charles died in Toorak on August 3, 1923 aged 74.[10]

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1   http://www.whosyerdad-e.com/families-w/family.php?famid=F721
2   https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/profiles/griffith_thomas-hunter.aspx
3   https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/99831839
4   https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/16596726
5   https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/109803765
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10 https://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/112689646