

## **The butcher, the baker, the bicycle maker *Clarendon Street 1855–2006***

The beginning of South Melbourne's development was marked by two key events in 1851: the separation of the Colony of Victoria from New South Wales and the discovery of gold. Land was needed to accommodate Melbourne's sudden population boom caused by the Gold Rush. Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle turned his focus to South Melbourne and the first 67 allotments of the 1852 subdivision were auctioned on 18 August.

From the beginning of settlement at Emerald Hill, Clarendon Street emerged as the main shopping thoroughfare. Until the 1930s residents could satisfy all their requirements locally through goods available in the emporiums, clothing stores, newsagents, dairies, numerous banks and building societies. There were often several similar businesses located along the street at any given time. The number of grocery shops and fruiterers in 1871, for instance, totalled fifteen. Clarendon Street was of great importance to the local community. Working class residents were inclined to shop locally in contrast to the wealthier citizens who shopped in Melbourne.

The area boomed in the 1870s and 1880s as a suburb fuelled by heavy industry. For many manufacturers South Melbourne held numerous advantages. It was centrally located and convenient to wharves and the railroad. The production of furniture and household items increased markedly and there were several large warehouse establishments along Clarendon Street by 1890, including Maples, Tye & Co and Tyson's. By 1890 a cable tram connected Clarendon Street to the city and the framework of the suburb was largely in place.

Over the years the street has seen numerous changes. Unemployment during the 1890s Depression caused many factory employees to leave the suburb in search of work. After the great 1930s Depression, South Melbourne never quite returned to its time as an inner city industrial suburb. In the late twentieth century, however, Clarendon Street slowly emerged as an enclave of increasingly diverse business as well as a residential and entertainment district.





### **Clarendon Street, West Side, 1889**

Corner Bank and Clarendon Streets

Photographer, David Wood

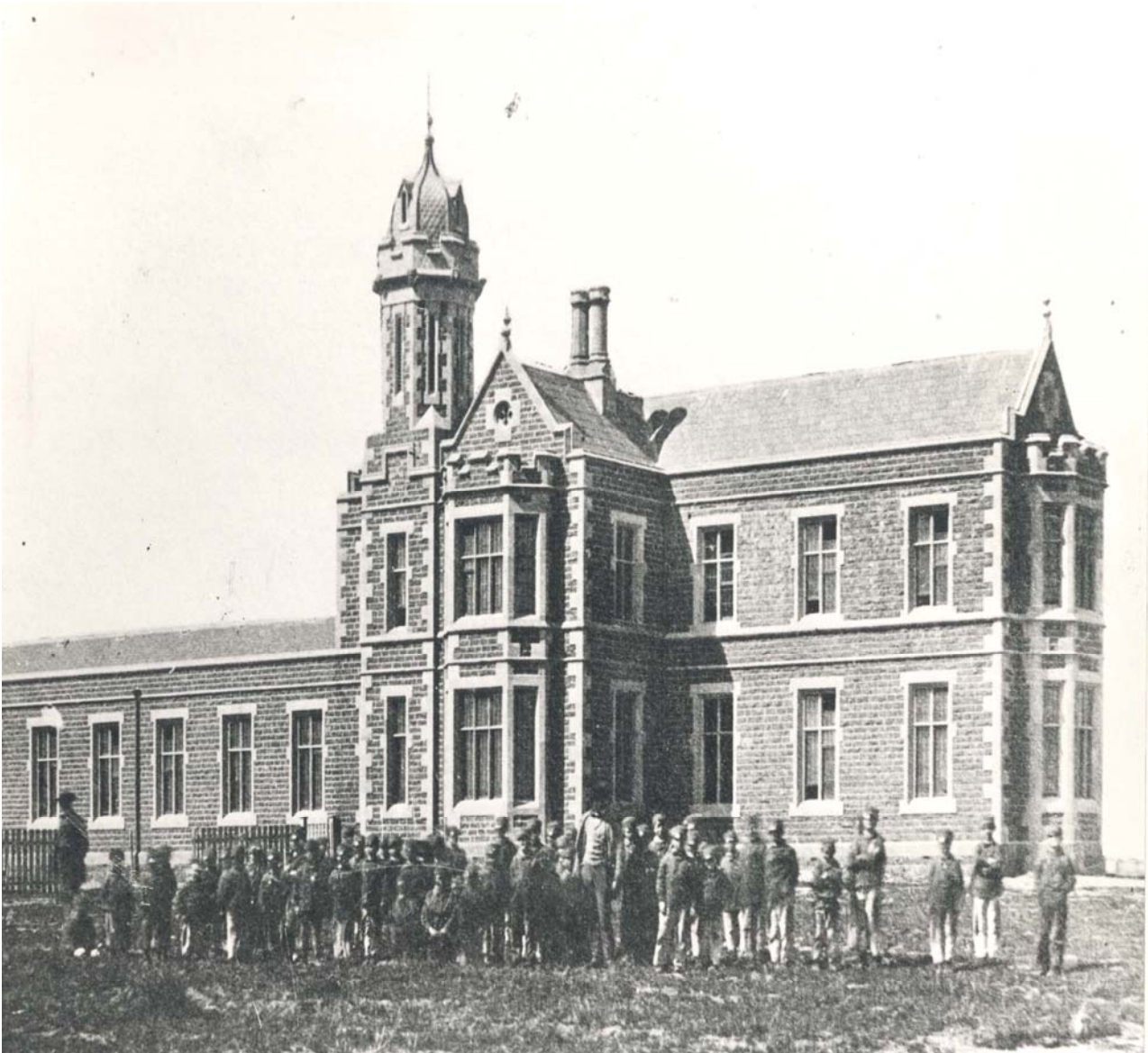
On 17 June 1890 the Melbourne Omnibus Company replaced its horse-vehicles with cable trams. This image shows the actual laying of cable tram tracks in progress as well as the horse drawn omnibus. The area shown is the west side of Clarendon Street, and includes the Commercial Bank Ltd on the corner and other shops built on the former orphanage site.

Port Phillip City Collection sm0430



**The Hall of Commerce, Drapery Warehouse, 1905**  
269–275 Clarendon and Dorcas Streets

This drapery and clothing warehouse was opened in the late 1890s by Thomas Crawford, on land leased from St Luke's church. Crawford was, one of the first contractors in the building of the St Kilda Pier. His clothing business was so successful that in 1905 he had a staff of around 55 people. In 1973 the warehouse was demolished to make way for Coles Supermarket. The Hall of Commerce was also known as Crawford's Emporium. A big event in South Melbourne occurred on Christmas Eve each year when local residents could look forward to the release of hundred of balloons from the building's tower on Clarendon Street.



### **Melbourne Orphan Asylum, 1870s**

Bounded Clarendon, Dorcas, Park and Cecil Streets

The Melbourne Orphan Asylum, which commenced as a charity in Melbourne in 1851, was urgently required due to increasing numbers of children being orphaned or abandoned during the Gold Rush. The ten-acre site was opened in 1856 and housed 120 children and staff. The orphanage moved to Brighton in 1877, but retained ownership of the land. The subsequent redevelopment and subdivision of the site enabled greater access to Clarendon Street.

The current shops were still providing rental income to the Melbourne Family Care Organisation (the successor to the Orphan Asylum) until 1973 when the Federal and State governments purchased them. Their ownership by one landlord for nearly a century contributed towards their state of relative preservation.





**Emerald Hill Post and Telegraph Service, c1875**  
319–321 Clarendon Street

In 1863 this building was owned and occupied by Andrew Fordyce, a grocer. It was not until 1874 that the building's use as a post office was first recorded. Margareta Aspinall was the post-mistress who processed the mail that was conveyed to and from Melbourne and Sandridge. The following year management of the Emerald Hill Post and Telegraph Office was transferred to Isabella Landells. In 1882 the building ceased to operate as a post office and the postal services were transferred to the South Melbourne Town Hall in Bank Street, which had opened in 1880.



**Clarendon Street Presbyterian Church, 1905**  
277–291 Clarendon Street

There were two congregations of Presbyterianism in Emerald Hill in the 1870s, known primarily by their locations. Dorcas Street started out as a tent church in 1854. The Clarendon Street Presbyterian Church arose out of a difference with the Free Church Presbytery, Melbourne. In 1859 it successfully sought a grant from the government to build opposite St Luke's. The building was erected (commenced?) in 1864 and finished some time later. On May 20, 1869 The Record newspaper carried a commentary on the grandiose design of The Presbyterian Church, which did not reflect the working class suburb:

*'The Presbyterian congregation worshipping at Clarendon Street, have determined to beautify their place of worship and complete original design by the erection of a bold and lofty portico on four Corinthian columns... It is gratifying to find that we have craftsmen on the Hill who can turn out such really commendable work'.*

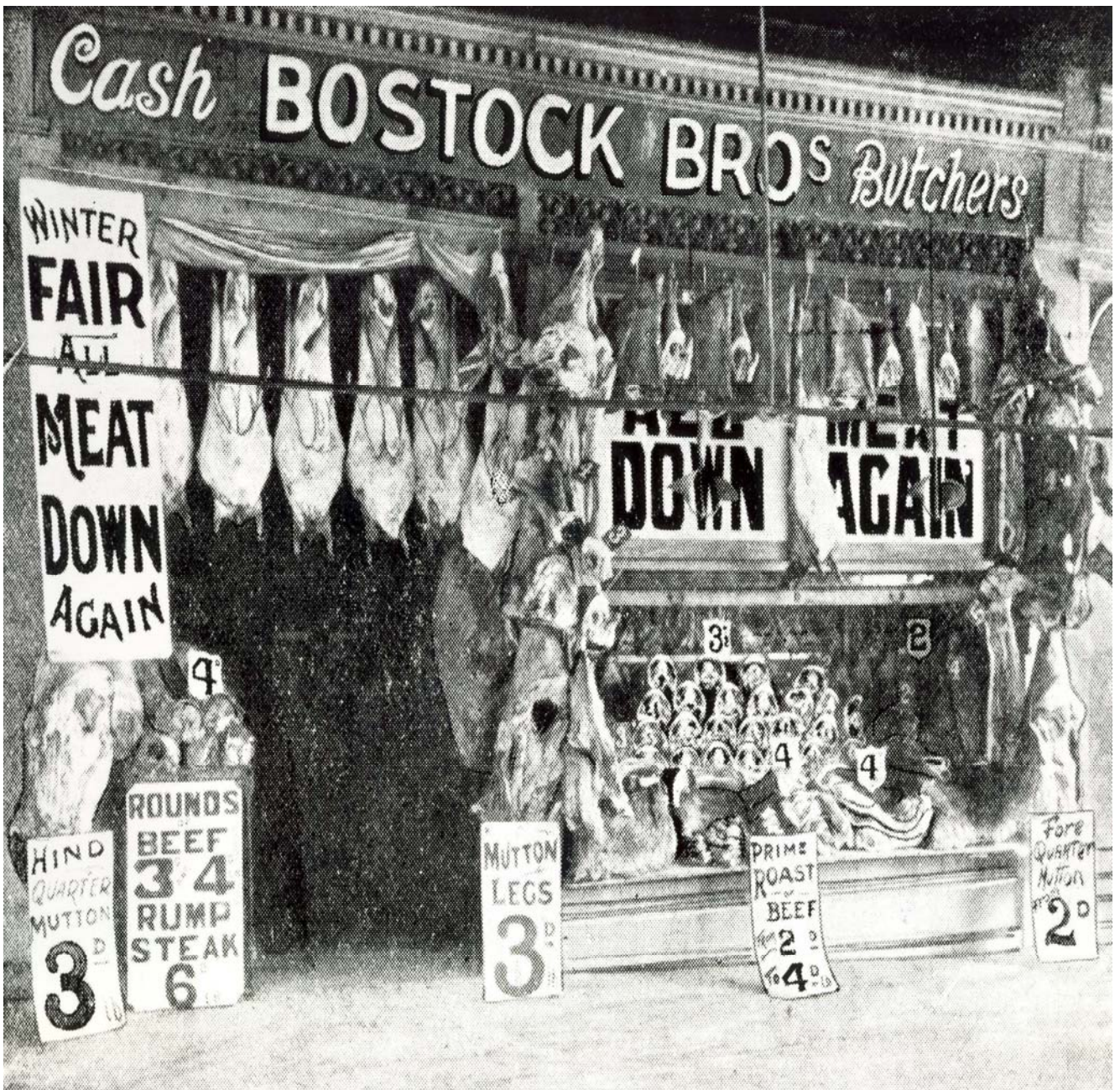
The building was demolished in 1909.



### **ANZ Bank, Clarendon Street, 2006**

This was the former site of the English, Scottish and Australian chartered Bank.

Photograph courtesy of Helen Stitt



**Bostock Bros, Butchers, 1905**  
212 Clarendon Street

Port Phillip City Collection sm1434



**Whitworth & Co, Grocers, 1905**

386 Clarendon Street

This business was started in 1867. Whitworth & Co operated as a retail grocery store as well as a wine and spirit merchant and sold tin ware and dairy produce. They bought goods from Australian markets and ran a successful importing business.

Port Phillip City Collection sm1427



**Maples Furniture Warehouse, 1905**  
258–264 Clarendon Street

This business was established in 1887 in a small shop in South Melbourne. By 1946 Maples had three stores in Clarendon Street, 258-264, 245-247 and 162-168. The proprietor, Benjamin Nathan, was so successful in business that he was able to purchase Ripponlea from the Sargood estate twenty years later. The show rooms, covering a floor space of 22,000 square feet, were filled with 'every description of furniture and furnishings', including a gallery for the display of pianos and organs. Maples also erected similar warehouses in all the principal suburbs of Melbourne.



Lot 1.

SOUTH MELBOURNE

Nos. 226, 228, 230, 232 CLARENDON STREET.

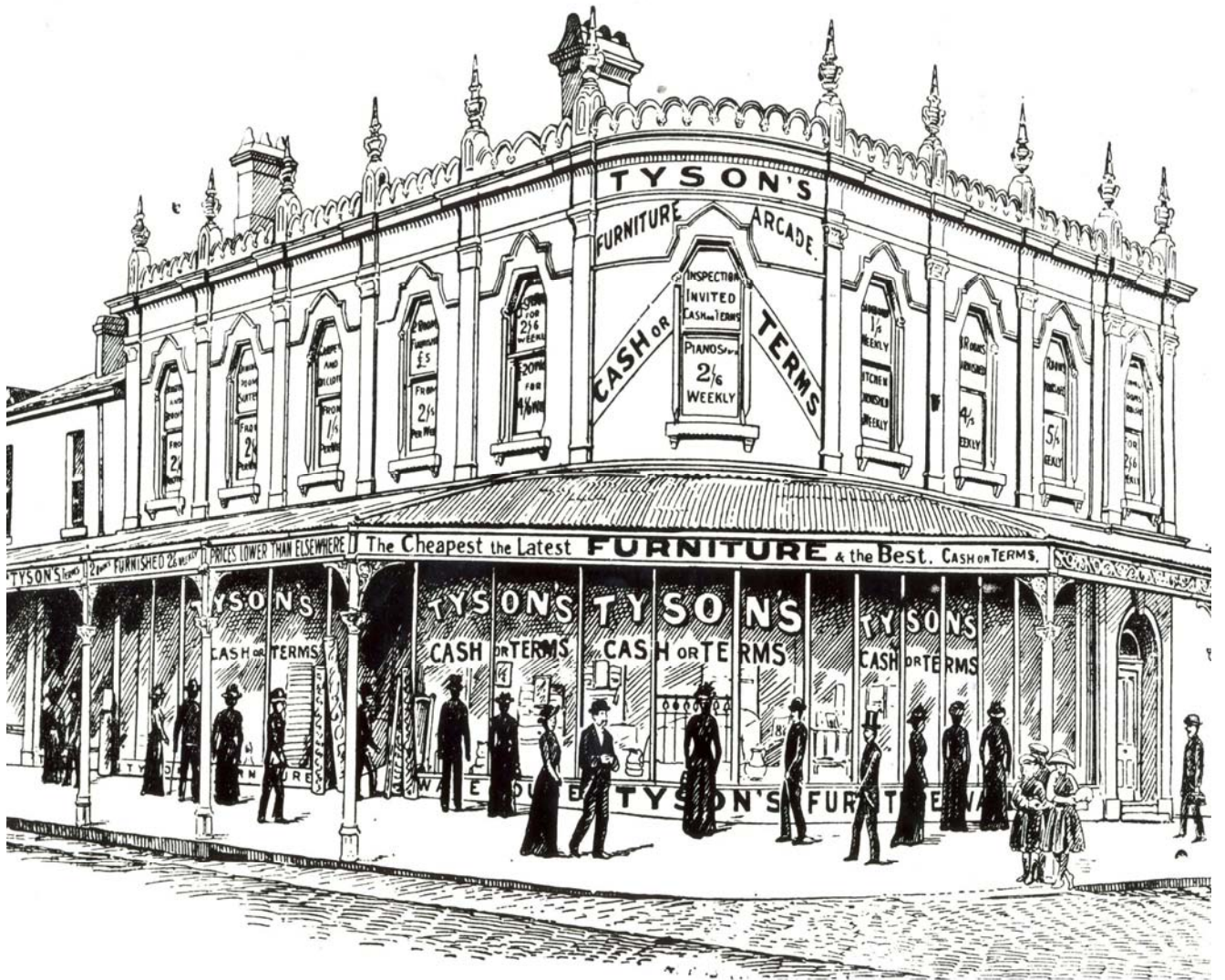
MODERN BRICK TWO-STORIED BUILDING COMPRISING  
FURNITURE SHOPS AND SHOW ROOMS.

Leased to Tye & Co. Pty. Ltd. at £520 per annum. Tenants paying Rates, Insurance, Painting and Repairs. Lease (originally 5 years), expiring 31st March, 1927. Land, 67 ft. 2 ins. by 73 ft. 1 1/2 ins.

*This is a very imposing Retail Warehouse with splendid display windows, situated in one of the best business positions in Clarendon Street.*

**Tye & Co Pty Ltd, 1924**  
Home Furnishing Stores  
226-232 Clarendon Street

During the 1880s Tye & Co Pty Ltd secured numerous buildings across South Melbourne, including in Clarendon Street and Sturt Street, making their factory one of the biggest in Australia. They manufactured household furniture, carpets, bicycles and horse and cart harnesses and also provided an exchange service for used furniture.



**Tyson's Furniture Warehouse, 1905**  
162-166 Clarendon Street

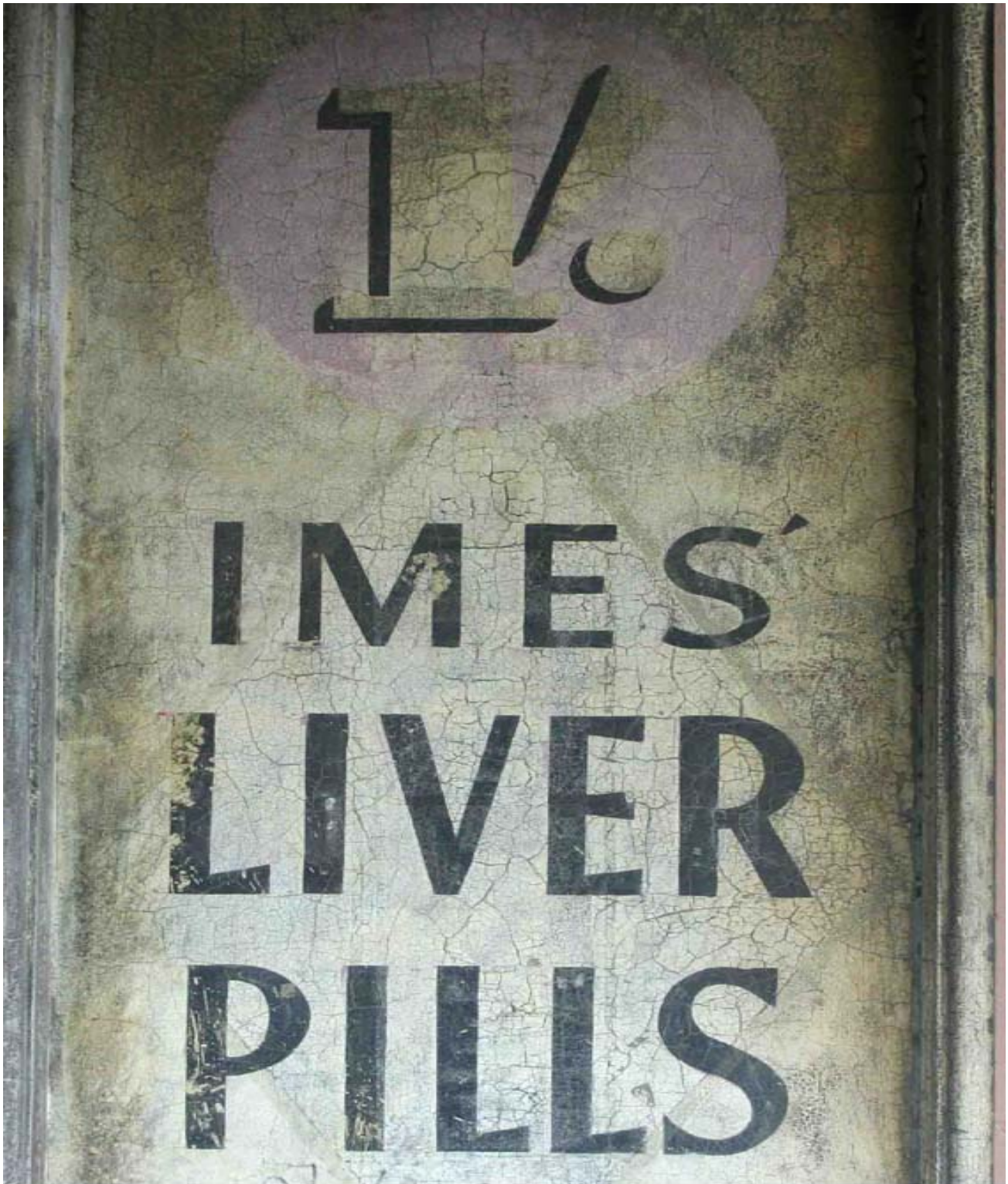
This sketch shows Tyson's Furniture Warehouse business. Maples eventually bought Tyson's out.

Port Phillip City Collection sm1450



**C. G. Imes Chemist, South Melbourne, c1909**  
 343 Clarendon Street, corner Park Street

Charles Gideon Imes was a well-known chemist in Clarendon Street. Both his son and daughter also entered the profession. The effigy of the lion located on top of the central image originated from the arch erected over Sandridge Road in 1869 to celebrate the arrival of Australia's first Royal visitor, Prince Alfred, second son of Queen Victoria. The business operated at three different locations. The Dorcas and Park Street site is still operating as a chemist today.



**Advertisement for Imes Liver Pills,**

C. G. Imes also had a dispensary located on the corner of Clarendon and Dorcas Streets. A sign on the wall in Dorcas Street still advertises his Imes' liver pills.

Photograph courtesy of Helen Stitt, 2006



**Mitchell & McCabe, 1989**  
306–308 Clarendon Street.

The motto of Mitchell and McCabe was 'To be well dressed is to be largely armed against unhappiness'. A menswear business has operated from this site since 1901.

Port Phillip City Collection sm1490



**E.A. Wells & Son, Central Auction Rooms  
& Estate Agents, 1905**  
301 Clarendon Street

Ernest Alfred Wells was born in Eaglehawk and moved to Emerald Hill in 1868. He was educated at Albert Park School and at the Model School in Melbourne. He then followed his father, W. E. Wells, into business as an auctioneer and estate agent. The family was unusual for the fact that three generations occupied a mayoral chair in South Melbourne. Ernest Wells was on the



**Dobell Brothers Dairymen, 1905**  
359 Clarendon Street

Established in 1883, this business supplied State Government officials with milk and dairy produce.



### **Downie's Baking Factory, 1905**

375–377 Clarendon Street

Thomas Downie, the founder of the firm, was born at Bannockburn, Scotland. Shortly after his arrival in the Colony of Victoria in 1858, he went into business as a baker at 191 Clarendon Street. He continued there until 1871 when he moved to 179 Clarendon Street (now 375 and 377). In 1887 he erected a new building, which was built in Liverpool England and bolted together on site in Clarendon Street. He died in 1896 and his son J. A. Downie carried on the business. It was the oldest baking factory in Melbourne with a reputation for producing high quality goods.



**G. C. Macgibbon's Bicycle Shop, 1905**  
239 Clarednon Street,

Port Phillip City Collection sm1387



## Clarendon St South Melbourne, c1910

**This view of** Clarendon Street shows the various modes of transport along the street, including trams, a man pushing a handcart, and several ladies on foot carrying parasols.

Port Phillip City Collection sm0603



**Ceremony, driving of the first tram on the new South Melbourne Electric Tramway, Clarendon Street, Saturday 24 July 1936.**

Port Phillip city Collection sm2394