

Information Sheet No. 32



City of
Greater Geraldton
Regional Library

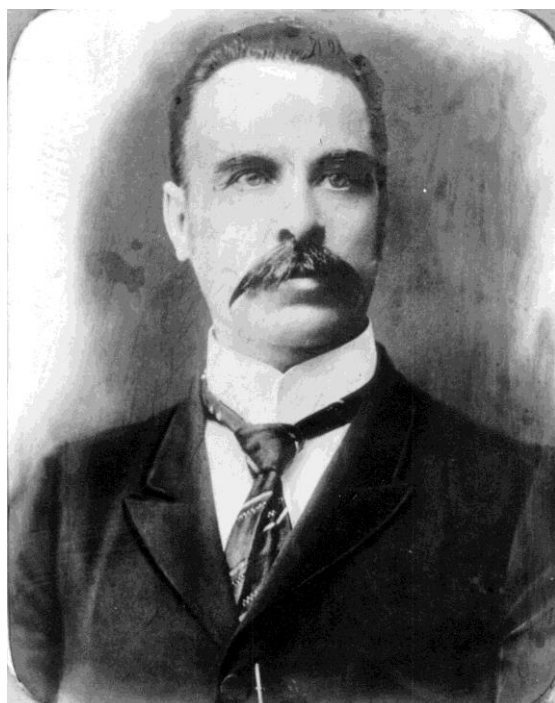


Heritage Services

Geraldton Regional Library

HENRY (SPALDO) ARTHUR SPALDING – “Man of the Park”

1851	- Born in England.
1877, Dec 22	- Arrived in Western Australia.
1890-1891	- Geraldton Municipal Councillor.
1891-1892	- Mayor of Geraldton.
1893, Feb 2	- Opened the Exchange restaurant in Marine Terrace.
1895-1896	- Geraldton Municipal Councillor.
1896-1897	- Mayor of Geraldton.
1904	- Geraldton Municipal Councillor.
1911, Nov 20	- Died in Leederville, WA.



Henry Arthur Spalding. Photograph courtesy of Northampton Historical Society.

Like many of his contemporaries, Henry (Harry) Spalding, also referred to as “Spaldo”, was involved not only with Geraldton but also with the life of the mid-west coast. He arrived in the district in the late 1870s, working as Northampton’s Postmaster and Station-Master. In 1884 Henry’s railway career led him, his wife Margeret Honanan and young family back to Geraldton, again as a Station-Master. By 1890 he was serving as a Geraldton Municipal Councillor, the first of several terms. The following year he was elected as Mayor for a one-year term, serving again from 1896 to 1897.

During the 1890s he pursued a range of business interests: Spalding & Co provided services as sharebrokers, land commission and

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financial agents, and auctioneers. On 2 February 1893 he opened The Exchange on Marine Terrace, a restaurant, general store and bodega, and about the same time purchased J J Landers's The Dolphin wine and beer business on Marine Terrace. Spalding complemented sustenance with rest, offering patrons accommodation at the Sea View cottages. The Exchange also offered books in a circulating library, at 3d. per book per week. To complete the self-sufficient nature of his business, Spalding leased Cuddy Cuddy swamp near Northampton to supply the restaurant with fruit and vegetables. Local press claimed the 2.16kg, 56 cm diameter, turnip he picked from there in September 1893 to be the State's largest.

At his suggestion the Municipal Council lobbied the WA Government for a Public Park. In July 1891 the Council was granted about 500 acres of Crown land close to the mouth of the Chapman River, at that time uncleared. In 1897, at a ceremony of which a photo of collected dignitaries survives, Spalding Park was named in Henry's honour (as was the adjoining suburb of Spalding in February 1979). In the intervening century the park has survived a number of reductions in size; about 150 acres being sold for housing and, more recently, dissection by a highway deviation. In 1959 the local branch of the Tree Society spent some time developing the recreational facilities now found on Chapman Road along the western edge of the park. A 1965 survey of plants growing in the park revealed 151 species, which led the local botanist and historian Clem Burns to comment that 'The Park is a possession any Town might envy'. More than that, the park is a lasting reminder of Henry Spalding's contribution to Geraldton.

References

*Text taken from **Geraldton: 150 Years, 150 Lives**, Local Studies Department, Geraldton Regional Library, 2001, p. 155.*

Copies are available from the Library, 37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton (PO Box 101, Geraldton, WA, 6531) for \$27.50 (plus \$6.50 postage and handling).

