



press clip

# The man behind that iconic real estate name

DEBORAH ERWIN

THE real estate empire known as LJ Hooker has become a household name but until recently little was known about the late founder and his humble beginnings.

A few months ago, Mr Hooker's granddaughter Natalia Hooker published his biography *LJ Hooker The Man*, revealing details of his heritage, personality, pursuits and philanthropy.

"I'm proud of his vision, the fact he knew what he wanted and he went for it. He seemed patient and persistent. He really didn't reach his goal until in his 50s."

After six years of research and an intense 10 months of writing, Ms Hooker released the family tome with more than 400 images.

The story begins in Canter-

bury with the entrepreneur's birth in 1903. The author was surprised to find her grandfather's Chinese heritage. He was born Leslie Joseph Tingyou and was cared for by relatives after being orphaned at eight.

At 25, he changed his surname by deed poll to Hooker with the goal of setting up a successful Australian company.

He met his business partner Heck Adams while working as a ship's purser and the two became lifelong friends.

"My grandfather became bankrupt before he started up LJ Hooker and Heck was with him all the way," Ms Hooker said.



**Leslie Joseph Hooker**

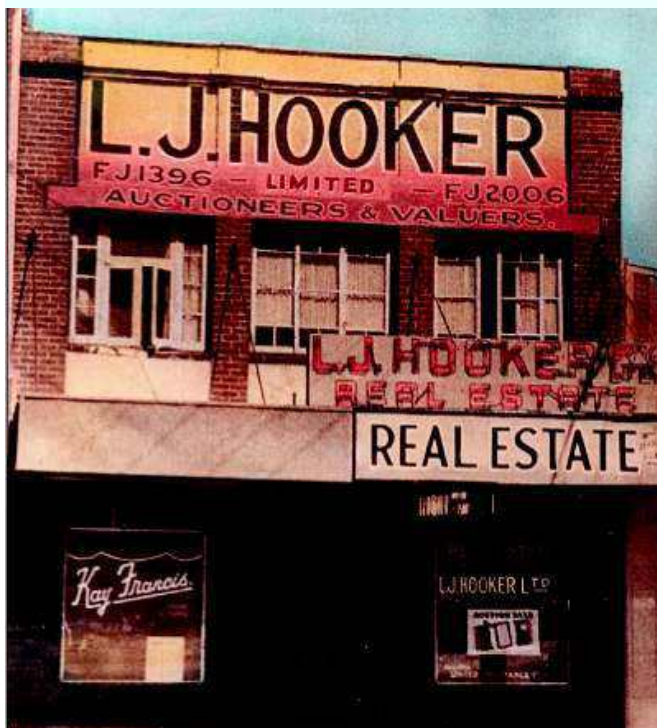
To amass capital for his first real-estate office, Sir Leslie sold a business, which turned grocery stores into licensed hotels, he owned with his uncle.

"They sold the business and my grandfather had quite a bit of money, almost £3000," Ms Hooker said.

The empire now has 658 franchise offices across Australasia, employs 6000 staff and collects an annual revenue of \$15 billion.

In recognition of his philanthropic contributions, Sir Leslie was knighted in 1973.

"He gave to churches, the Australian Olympic team and the Shepherd Centre," Ms Hooker said.



LJ Hooker's first office in Maroubra was established in 1928.