
F. Humphris and Sons Ltd

PRG 1645
Series 32
History

Humphris' Emu Factory was founded by Edrnund Humphris, who came to South Australia at the age of six with his parents from Gloucestershire. After marrying Frederina Gotte in 1864 he farmed in the Strathalbyn district, raising ten children. In November 1872 he purchased allotments 11-14 in the north east of Jamestown and built one of the first houses on Ayr Street allotment 25. Humphris became the towns first butcher and took an active part in the early community life of the town, being a foundation Councillor in the Corporation, a position he also held at his premature death, at the age of 38, in 1882.

Humphris had purchased, in 1880, from Stephen and Company the first aerated waters factory built on allotment 15. He brought a brewer from Macclesfield by the name Bryan, who extended Humphris' range of drinks into alcoholic XX and XXX Emu Beers, these being produced at the 'Emu Brewery' in Leamington. Bryan died in 1881, and the brewing of beer ceased, however Frederina, after her husband's death, carried on the aerated waters factory in order to support her family of ten children. Frederina extended the business into the manufacture of tomato sauce in 1887. In that year five tons being manufactured in a household copper over an open fire. In 1895 the firm expanded into the manufacture of butter, whole milk being purchased from farmers at 3d a gallon, the cream being skimmed off for the butter factory.

The Humphris firm became a limited company in 1902, operating under the name of F. Humphris and Sons Ltd, with two of the sons, Ralph E. and Frederick W., managing the firm. The firm had 750 suppliers of cream in 1908 and by 1912 it had increased to over 1000. The products produced at the factory included four sauces and chutneys, five pickles, five 'non-intoxicating ales', seven 'sparkling champagnes', nine cordials, eleven bitters and liqueurs and ten aerated waters, as well as butter. In 1899 the firm opened a factory in Adelaide in Carrington Street, and most of the manufacturing of the sauces and pickles was transferred to this factory from Jamestown, due to the greater availability of raw materials. In 1909, thirty people were employed in this Adelaide factory.

The depression of the 1930s took its toll and in 1932 the Emu Factory closed its doors at Jamestown, the Butter Factory and Aerated Waters Factory being taken over by the Jamestown Butter and Trading Company, a subsidiary of R. J. Finlayson & Co although Ralph Humphris continued to manage the butter manufacturing plant until his death in 1946. Aerated waters were still manufactured in the factory until 1965.

[Extract from : Cooper, Leith, 1978, *Jamestown: A Photographic Study: A History of Jamestown*, The Corporation of Jamestown, pp 94-96].