

WHITLOCK'S PICKLES OF NEW ZEALAND

Lawrence Otis recently came across some examples of the labels used by F. Whitlock & Sons Ltd., pickle and sauces makers of Wanganui, New Zealand. While the company ceased operations in 1990, they were in business for over 100 years. Records show the pickle business was launched in 1877 with



manufacture of Delhi Chutney Sauce. Frederick Whitlock knew the power of advertising and as early as 1878 ads were appearing in the Wanganui Chronicle "Ask for **WHITLOCK'S DELHI CHUTNEY SAUCE**, the purest and most economical preparation in the market, and a genuine local industry. *ANALYTICAL REPORT 'I witnessed the manufacture of Whitlock's Delhi Chutney Sauce; it is free of Copper, and composed entirely of wholesome ingredients. (Signed) J. DECIMUS TRIPE Reg. Med. & Sur. Pract.'*"

By 1895 the family were also selling Worcester Sauce and Tomato sauce as well as the Delhi Chutney. From 1887 to 1902 production was done from the back of the Whitlock's residence using large white enameled pots (note the "free of Copper" claim in their ad). By 1905 they were operating in their new factory built on the opposite side of their property in Wanganui. Products now included items such as Chow Chow, Piccalilli, Vinegar, Cordials and Liqueur flavourings.

In 1908 the founder, Frederick Whitlock died from complications of a broken arm following a horse and cart accident and in 1912 the Limited Liability company was established to refinance their growing operations and fund the necessary purchase of equipment to continue their expansion. They could now make their own packing crates and could purchase bulk spices and grind and mix their own ingredients to control consistency and quality.



A milestone was reached in 1924 when the debts to expand the business were paid they were able to purchase a new model "T" Ford one ton truck to replace the old horse and cart system that had been in place since they first opened in 1877.



The Company was stable enough to weather the depression but suffered some hard times during World War II with both Howard Whitlock and his cousin Maurice Whitlock away for nearly three years. Howard's father Percival carried on as best he could during this time. Following WWII the plant was overhauled again and updated and by 1960's when the fourth generation of the family entered the business it was a stable, modern and prosperous one. The new generation adapted the product line reflecting the changing market needs and the rise of

“supermarket” system that was to dominate food sales for the next generation.

Things ran smoothly until 1983 when factory manager, Fred Whitlock suddenly died of cancer at the young age of 43. The family decision following Fred’ death was that it was time to consider selling the business as a going concern. The 1980’s were a time of corporate take-overs, mergers and consolidation of businesses. Following fairly extensive negotiations the company was sold to the Australian company of R.M. Gow Ltd. Within a short time the company changed hands several times and finally in 1990 the plant and fittings were removed to Auckland and the Wanganui land and buildings sold. This brought to an end over 100 years of pickle manufacture by the Whitlock family in Wanganui.

One of our Whitlock Collection items is tall green glass pickle bottle from F. Whitlock & Sons, “Phoenix Brand Pickles” made about 1895. Frederick Whitlock’s family is detailed on our WHITLOCK43 chart, the Whitlocks of Ealing, London. This chart is headed by Mark Whitlock who married Elizabeth Living Oct.26,1772 at St.Mary’s, Harefield, Middlesex.

I had a chance to meet Howard Percival Whitlock (1913-1998) and his wife Marion during a stop in Vancouver on their way to England in the 1980’s. Howard was a long time subscriber to the Whitlock Family Newsletter. Much of the material for the above article is from the book *The Whitlocks of Middlesex* by Alison Honeyfield, 1997 (R1817) received from Howard. Also see my article in the March 1998 issue *The Whitlocks of Ealing*. My thanks to Lawrence Otis for passing on the pickle labels used in this article.

SOURCES:R1817; R2777