

Deposited on loan by Risby Bros. Pty Ltd., 1970

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RISBY BROTHERS. SAWMILLERS, TIMBER MERCHANTS.

Thomas Risby arrived in Van Dieman's Land from Norfolk Island in 1808. He was a master boat builder, specialising in whale boats and his sons joined him in the business. In 1844 one of the sons, Joseph Edward Risby, went into the timber business and established an office and sawmill at the corner of Elizabeth and Davey Streets close to Franklin Wharf. The mill was known as 'The Franklin Wharf Steam Saw and Bark Mills'. In 1878 this mill was burnt down, but was rebuilt and enlarged.

Some of the timber was brought from the Tasman Peninsula, also from Maydena and, later Ellendale. A fleet of timber carrying ketches was built up. There were also three steam ships, 'Yolla', 'Koonyah' and 'Moonah', which were sometimes used for passenger pleasure trips. The Risby vessels flew a house flag of a blue square on a white background. Occasionally timber was purchased from overseas.

In 1920 the Franklin Wharf mill was again burnt down and this time not rebuilt. A second mill in Collins Street had been leased from Henry Clark & Co. and was later purchased, although the office remained in Elizabeth Street. The Elizabeth Street and Franklin Wharf site was not finally sold until 1936. Another fire occurred in 1954 which destroyed the boiler room and fuel store at Collins Street.

When J.E.Risby retired in 1885 his three sons, Arthur, Sydney and Walter continued the business as Risby Brothers. They were later succeeded by Harry E.Risby and his two sons, Charles Arthur and Jack. Charles Arthur Risby entered the business in 1932 (with a break for military service in the 1939-45 war) and became managing director in 1955.

A history of the company was prepared by David Brownlow, as part of his studies for the degree of B.A.Honours; 'Risby Bros. Pty Ltd., The rise to prominence in the Tasmanian Timber industry, unpublished BA. thesis, University of Tasmania, 1969.

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- 1 1823 Thomas Risby's promise to pay 100 to John and Henry Morrisby and Grace Smith, at the age of 21, being the consideration for premises purchased from their father, James Morrisby.
- 2 1879 Diary of Artnur E.Risby, Franklin wharf.  
  
This is a personal diary, includes notes of the weatner, Huon Regatta, sailing, arrival and departure of boats; also some notes from 1878 - the mill burnt down, 'Helen' and 'Esk' started for London.
- 3 1880 Diary  
  
Personal and family diary, as above; a few references to the business.
- 4 1888 Diary.  
  
Personal diary. References to trips on 'Koonya', telephone went wrong (17.2.88), Eaglehawk neck, etc.
- 5 1891 Summons to A.E.Risby, S.W.Risby and C.W.Risby to appear at the suit of Charles James Barclay.
- 6 1895 Diary  
  
Personal diary, refers to Hobart Cup, departure of boats, occasional references to the business
- 7-12  
1887,  
1888 &  
N.D. Poster bills announcing pleasure trips by SS 'Koonya' and regular service to Saltwater River and East Bay.
- 13 N.D. Advertisement for Risby Bros. Franklin Saw & Moulding Mills, timber merchants.
- 14 N.D. Photograph of illuminated address to J.E.Risby thanking him for his serviced on the committee of the Hobart Town Regatta.
15. N.D. C 1890-1910 Photographs of sawmills.

- 16 N.D. [pre 1878] photograph entitled, ms.: 'The late "Franklin Wharf Steam Saw Mills" destroyed by fire March 8th 1878'.
- 17 N.D. [post 1878], Risby Bros. office (single story brick house, shingle roof).
- 18-19 N.D. [ ? pre 1878 as above]. Franklin Saw Mills, groups of workmen posed on weighbridge in front. (Photo F.Spurling & Co.)
- 20 N.D. Photographs of sailing ketches and steamboats, including 'Yolla', SS 'Wiena', 'Koonya'. (22 photographs).
- 21 1910 Sydney Morning Herald, Sat. 21 May, 1910, miniature souvenir edition (funeral of King Edward VII).

#### TIMBER ACCOUNT LEDGER.

22 June 1880 - 1894 Account Ledger.

An account ledger of timber merchant (unknown but could be Risby). Ledger accounts headed by name of client. Entries, dated, record: number, description, sum (with debit and credit in columns on the same page). Items mentioned are mainly timber but also include shingles, palings, freight, cartage, painting, insurance. Payments are noted as cheque or cash, or sometimes 'goods', or bacon, tea, sugar, soap, tobacco, castor oil.

The volume includes an alphabetical index of clients names. These include many well-known names and, where addresses are given, are usually, but not only, residents of Hobart. Several clients are described as builders. Sleepers were supplied for the Government railways and timber for the Hobart Exhibition. Amongst clients' names are, for example, W.Batt, builder, Sandy Bay; Bidencope; Burn & Son; Cascade Brewery; Clark, undertaker, Brisbane Street; Currie, Murray St.; Cygnet Coal Co.; Gas Co.; Government Railways; Hobart Corporation; Marine Board, Mcgregor & Co. Mill; Oates Dock; H.Priest, Melville St.; Public Works Telegraph Dept.; Risby; R.Shoobridge, New Norfolk; E.Tolman; Walch; A.G.Webster.

The provenance of this volume is not known. It was not received with the Risby archives listed above, but may, in fact, relate to the Risby business.