

Source: "Manufacturing in N.Z."
1959.



Photo: Sparrow Industrial Pictures

An Industry where family tradition and pride of workmanship play a vital part

CRUM BRICK, TILE AND POTTERY CO. LTD New Lynn, Auckland

In 1875 Albert Crum emigrated to New Zealand from the West Country of England and settled in Ashburton. His father had been a stone carver but saw no future in it for his growing family. Against this background and that of his forbears, who were yeoman farmers accustomed to manual work, young Albert decided to direct his ability to the making of bricks. Along with two other men he began pugging clay, using wooden moulds and producing an average of 300 bricks a day, considered at that time to be a fair number.

Construction work on the New Zealand Midland Railway, connecting Canterbury with Nelson and the West Coast, gave a fillip to this industry. Crum bricks, even in those days, were selected for lining the Oira tunnel. The Hoffman kilns in which these bricks were baked are still in use today!

The turn of the Century

About the year 1905, Albert Crum visited Auckland, where he decided to settle. Soon afterwards he established the business known as the N.Z. Brick, Tile and Pottery Co. Ltd., on a 64-acre site adjacent to the New Lynn Railway Station. Opposition naturally emanated from other established interests, and, to add to his difficulties, local clay, as such, was found to be unsuitable. However, by trial and error, he hit upon the right mixture which allowed for fluctuations during drying and firing processes. It is interesting to note that clay at that time was being dug from pits where Carlaw Park now stands, in the vicinity of the Playhouse in Karangahape Road, and near Tuarangi Road, Grey Lynn.

Much of the machinery still in use today was blueprinted but never patented by Albert Crum, and patterns were generously passed over to friends in the business. Only when necessary was plant imported from England.

The present Company, a partnership of four sons, was established in 1929, following the merging of other firms into the present Amalgamated Brick & Pipe Co. Ltd. During the years of depression, erection of the works went on slowly, and it was not until 1934 that the first sale of flower pots was made. The earthquake disaster in Hawke's Bay in the 30s made clear the practical necessity for a building brick which would withstand the stresses of earthquake conditions, and

following experiments such a brick was introduced by Crum. Later, field tiles and earthenware pipes and fittings, which comprise a large part of today's production, were added to the Company's lines.

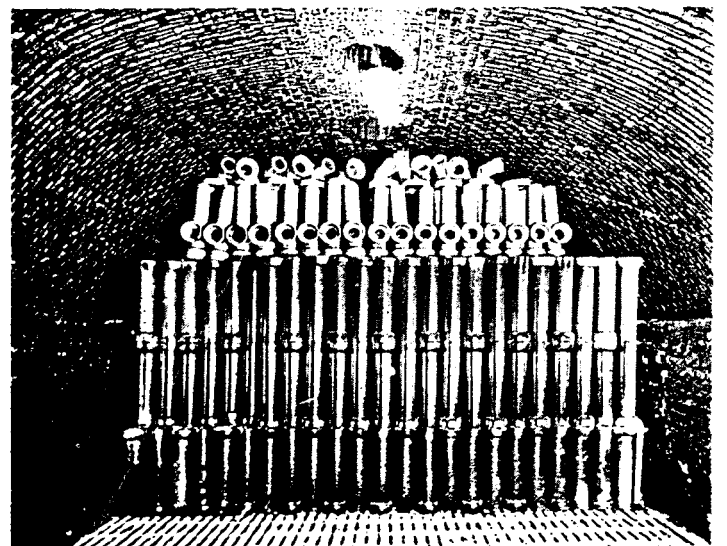
Under the guidance of Mr. Albert Crum until his death in 1951 and through the aptitudes of his sons, the business has continued to thrive. The loyalty of the staff did much to tide the Company over a difficult period, and it is worthy of note that the firm has never been involved in any internal industrial trouble.

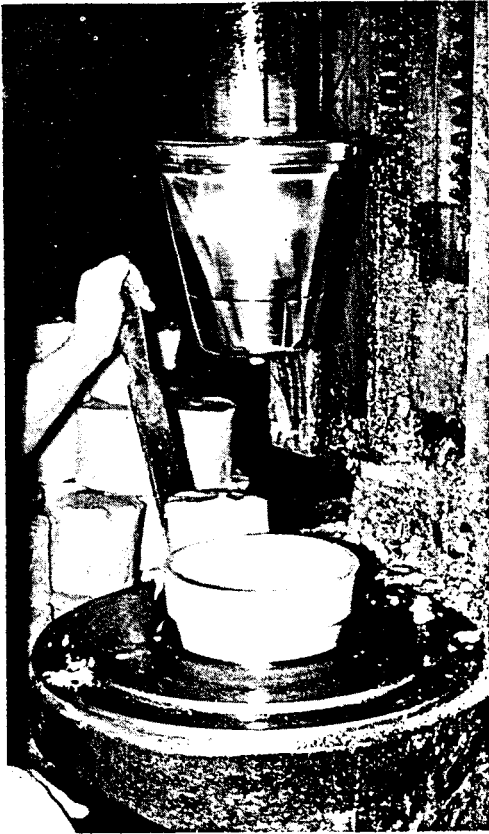
The beginning of a New Company

The foregoing spirit has undoubtedly been reflected in the workmanship of this company's products. Quality sewage and drainage ware and earthenware products are to be found throughout the Auckland Province and beyond. The Company has built up for itself a reputation for complete satisfaction as a result of its high standard of manufacture.

GLAZED EARTHENWARE in the kiln.

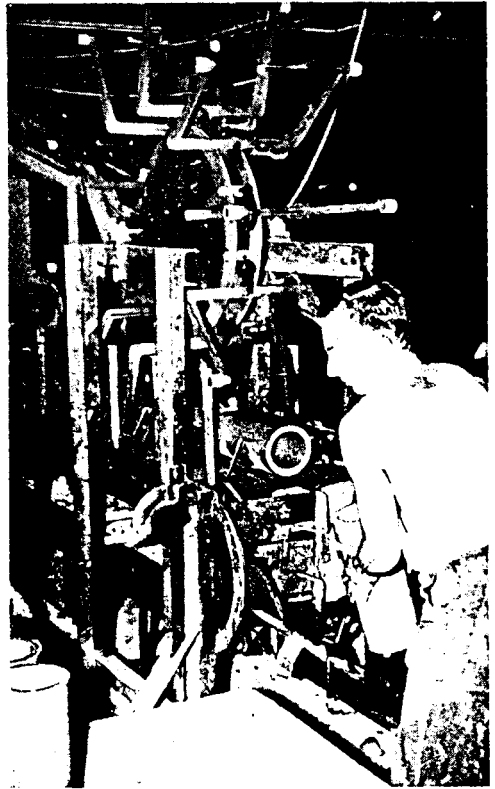
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A FLOWER POT being fashioned from the clay — one of the many different sizes made by Crum.

FIELD TILES come off the machine. Many miles of these are made for use in drainage in the Auckland Province.



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SEWER PIPES BY THE THOUSAND stand in rows for finishing and drying.

Photo: Rod Harvey

