

New Lynn's brickmakers (1860s to 2015)

The early brickmakers

Early brickmaking operations in the New Lynn area date back to the mid 1860s, when Richard Ringrose, Alfred Bayes and John Redfern set up small-scale works near Delta Avenue near the New Lynn Bowling Green and (later) behind the former site of the Delta Theatre, until at least the early 1870s.¹

Alfred Ramsden, a brickmaker and building contractor, set up a temporary brickyard to supply the bricks for his New Lynn Hotel construction project on Great North Road in 1882,² and went on from that to be a contractor working in the central city,³ then Napier, and then Melbourne, where he apparently found success in that city's 1888 land boom.⁴

From 1883⁵ until 1890,⁶ James Archibald operated what was a substantial brickmaking operation for the time on around 3 acres of railway reserve land in New Lynn. This was not received with universal approval among nearby settlers, who took an unsuccessful petition to their parliamentary representative to try to have Archibald's lease of the land he used cancelled.⁷ In May 1889, there were only four known brickmaking firms in operation south of the Whau River: Malam, Laurie, Hepburn and Archibald.⁸

At some point from at least 1904 until around 1914, William Thomas and his sons operated a small brickworks on Riverview Farm (today the site of parts of Rimu, Miro and Nikau Streets, as well as Queen Mary Avenue, Durrant Place and Kuaka Place, beside the Whau River). According to Trevor N Price in a family history,⁹ the family built a scow and conveyed their bricks to Auckland for such projects as part of the Chelsea Sugar Works and the Parnell Post Office. However, references to the brickworks in contemporary newspapers are scant. One notice has been found referring to "Thomas

¹ "Pencil note on scrap of paper, Crums' office, 1979," file ref 1269 BNE, J T Diamond research collection, West Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries; "Early Clayworkings", Crums Mss 1951, file ref 1269 BNE, J T Diamond research collection, West Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries. See also Research Summary for 52 Delta Avenue by L J Truttman for David Pearson, 2006

² Licensing notice, *Auckland Star*, 13 May 1882, p. 1(7); Licensing Committees, *NZ Herald* 5 June 1882, p.6

³ *NZ Herald*, 11 July 1882, p. 4

⁴ Table Talk, *Auckland Star*, 30 October 1988, p. 1

⁵ Advertisement for labour, *Auckland Star* 2 April 1883, p. 3(2)

⁶ Advertisement for sale of plant, *NZ Herald* 14 February 1890, p. 8 (1)

⁷ *Auckland Star*, 20 July 1882, p. 2

⁸ Letter to the editor, *NZ Herald*, 30 May 1889, p.3

⁹ *William Thomas & family*, 2001, pp. 87-99

Bros' Brickworks, New Lynn" when an engine and boiler were for sale.¹⁰ The property was subdivided and advertised for sale in 1907, including reference to "One Manufacturing Business, with 20 hp steam engine and boiler,"¹¹ but the business continued, with Thomas Bros. of New Lynn listed in 1909 as one of the firms affected by a brick, pottery and clay workers award of the time.¹² In 1914, J C Thomas of the firm advertised for tenders to purchase the complete plant of the New Lynn brickworks.¹³

Reference here should be made to the brickmaking and pottery firm which was to have great influence over the history of brickmaking in New Lynn in the 20th century: R O Clark Ltd of Hobsonville. Exactly when Rice Owen Clark I formally entered the business of making pottery (he began, so it is said, by making field tiles with machinery obtained from his relatives back in England to drain his farm)¹⁴ is not known. It is believed that a Mr Berry set up a small brickmaking business in the district, probably in the early to mid 1870s, and R O Clark I's eldest son Edwin Latimer Clark joined Mr Berry in his operation. (This brickmaker named Berry has not been identified). The business was not successful, and R O Clark I took it over.¹⁵

By 1879, Clark's works, described as the oldest in the district, was still horse-powered with a single kiln.¹⁶ At that time, there was apparently a three-man partnership: R O Clark I, plus his two sons Edwin and R O Clark II, under the name Clark & Sons. In August 1883, R O Clark I and Edwin withdrew from the partnership, and R O Clark II took on the business on his own account.¹⁷

Another aspect of the history of West Auckland brickmakers that influenced those in New Lynn was the establishment of briefly existing, then more long lasting, associations of brickworks owners. The earliest attempt at creating a collective group of independent brickmakers in the greater Whau district was in 1872, with four Whau brickmakers (Malan, Archibald, Minay, and Hepburn) met to fix a standard price for their bricks, and regulate prices in the future.¹⁸ Then in late 1886, a so-called Auckland Brickmakers Association appeared, agreeing amongst their members to raise the price of bricks, in response to recent sales at a loss.¹⁹ Neither of these lasted very long, but the concept of associations to enhance the profitability of local brickmakers would see two more such organisations appear in the following century.

¹⁰ *NZ Herald*, 23 December 1904, p. 1(5)

¹¹ *NZ Herald*, 20 February 1907, p. 10 (3)

¹² Arbitration Court report, *Auckland Star*, 3 May 1909, p. 3

¹³ *NZ Herald*, 25 June 1914, p. 14 (3)

¹⁴ Athol Miller, *The Clark Family History*, 1989, p.30

¹⁵ Miller, p. 30

¹⁶ *NZ Herald*, 2 May 1879, p. 6

¹⁷ Testimony of Edwin Latimer Clark at his bankruptcy hearing, *NZ Herald*, 28 January 1886, p. 3

¹⁸ *Auckland Star*, 22 April 1872, p. 2

¹⁹ Table Talk, *Auckland Star*, 9 November 1886, p. 1

Gardner Bros and Parker -- 1902-1929

The next major brickmaking operation in New Lynn was that of the Gardner and Parker partnership: John Gardner, John Owen Gardner, Charles Fisher Gardner, Rice Owen Gardner (all of Glorit, sons of one of Rice Owen Clark I's daughters Louisa, therefore connected with the Hobsonville story) and William Johnson Parker junior on the western side of Rankin Ave, the land put under title to that partnership in August 1903.²⁰ This western yard was well in operation by February that year, predating the sale,²¹ and according to recollections by family member Charles Gardner in 1950 had been in operation two years prior to that.²² However, it is more likely that the yard's preparation began in 1902 at the earliest; the Gardners were involved with lining the Tahekeroa tunnel on the railway line north of Helensville, and this work did not commence until October 1901.²³ According to family members, the brothers (with their uncle Edwin Latimer Clark) were also involved with the earlier Makarau rail tunnel, completed in 1897.²⁴

Thompson & Gardner Brick and Tile Company -- 1903-1905

The block bounded by Rankin, Margan and Astley Avenues and Clark Street comprises parts of Allotment 257²⁵ (western side) and 16²⁶ (eastern side) of the Parish of Waikomiti. In the 1860s, these allotments were subdivided into farmlets. In 1871,²⁷ Auckland bookbinder John Foley purchased part of Allotment 257, and operated a farm there until his death at the age of 79 in 1893.²⁸ In 1903, this property was purchased by orchardist²⁹ William Charles Thompson,³⁰ just over 19 acres immediately to the east of Rankin Avenue. Thompson had been farming at New Lynn near the railway station since at least 1893,³¹ perhaps on Foley's land, leasing it from the estate. At the time when he formally acquired the title for the former Foley farm in December 1903, he then leased it to a partnership which

²⁰ NA 44/249, LINZ records

²¹ *NZ Herald*, 27 February 1903, p. 6

²² Address given in 1950, JT Diamond collection, West Auckland Research Centre

²³ *NZ Herald*, 30 September 1901, p. 3

²⁴ Address by G L Gardner at the opening of Gardner Reserve, New Lynn, 21 February 1988.

²⁵ See NA 132/249, LINZ records

²⁶ See NA131/207, LINZ records

²⁷ Application file 4300, LINZ records

²⁸ Report on Auckland Fruitgrowers Conference, *Auckland Star*, 20 April 1893, p. 6

²⁹ See *NZ Herald*, 6 December 1901 p. 7

³⁰ Application file 4300, LINZ records

³¹ Advertisement, *Auckland Star* 26 April 1893, p.1 (6)

included himself, Charles and John Gardner along with Edwin Latimer Clark,³² under the name of Thompson & Gardner, for £52 per year for a 10 year period. This was known later as the “No 4 site”.³³ Clearly the Gardner family stood to dominate New Lynn brickmaking at that point.

Then Charles Gardner died 20 January 1905.³⁴ The firm was now run by his son John Gardner, son-in-law Henry Alfred Hooper, and Thompson.³⁵ In February 1905, Edwin L Clark sold his interest in the lease of the Thompson & Gardner property for £100,³⁶ during the process which led to the incorporation of the Thompson & Gardner Brick and Tile Company on 10 March 1905. Controlling shares, 50 each, were held by Thompson, Gardner, and Ernest Hauswell Bennett, an Auckland carrier and coal merchant. Other shares went to Hooper, ship owner George Valletort Edgecumbe, coachbuilder Edward Rogers Atkin, and Glen Eden nurseryman William Levy.³⁷ Thompson was managing director.³⁸ The newspapers in March that year reported that new brickmaking plant had just been erected in New Lynn,³⁹ possibly by Thompson & Gardner. From around August, though, negotiations were apparently underway with Albert Crum and Hugo Friedlander in Ashburton to take over the business and the New Lynn property.

NZ Brick, Tile and Pottery Co -- 1905-1929

Almost immediately, Crum and Friedlander set to work. Tenders were awarded in early September to the Ashburton engineering firm of Reid and Gray to supply boilers for the new NZ Brick, Tile, and Pottery Company in New Lynn;⁴⁰ Albert Crum arrived in Auckland on 8 October to make arrangements with the local banks and the brickyard’s owners, pay wages to those already working at the yard, and to start to arrange further equipment;⁴¹ in November the remaining partners surrendered the lease, and Thompson sold the property to the NZ Brick Tile & Pottery Company that month.⁴² As

³² Application file 4300. See also probate file for Charles Gardner’s will, dated 15 April 1904, where the quarter shares of the four partners are described: BBAE A48 1569 R21446069, Archives New Zealand

³³ Address given by Charles Gardner in 1950, JT Diamond collection, West Auckland Research Centre

³⁴ Obituary, *NZ Herald*, 25 January 1905, p. 6

³⁵ Memorandum of Association of Thompson & Gardner Brick and Tile Company, closed company file, BADZ A13 5181, R9093483, Archives New Zealand

³⁶ Application file 4300

³⁷ Certificate of incorporation, closed company file, BADZ A13 5181, R9093483, Archives New Zealand

³⁸ Listed among the guests at the opening of the Taupiri South coal mine, *Auckland Star*, 3 July 1905, p. 2

³⁹ *NZ Herald*, 15 March 1905, p. 1

⁴⁰ News in brief, *Ashburton Guardian*, 6 September 1905, p. 2

⁴¹ Albert Crum’s diary, from transcript by Heather White. Original lodged with Auckland War Memorial Museum

⁴² Application file 4300

well as a kiln which required restoration such as excavation from under clay and replacement fire bricks, plus other equipment, the new company took over 128,000 green pre-fired bricks.⁴³

Crum and Friedlander didn't necessarily start from scratch in the business. Both men had long experience with managing brickworks in Ashburton, Friedlander from the 1880s and Albert Crum from 1895,⁴⁴ and they used their hometown resources. Apart from Reid and Gray as engineering suppliers, Ashburton brickmakers were also recruited, such as Hugh Sargeant Barrett in 1908, who served as an engineer at the brickyard.⁴⁵ The newspapers of the time also noted that "*up-to-date machinery from America*" was imported,⁴⁶ to ensure that the new company was fully up and running by the middle of 1906. In December 1905, Crum wrote to the Brightside Foundry and Engineering Co Ltd in Sheffield, Yorkshire, ordering a brick press to imprint "Crum" on the bricks. It appears that he had dealt with the firm before, during his days with the Ashburton Brickworks.

*"I may mention here that I am associated now with the NZ Brick Tile & Pottery Co Ltd, New Lynn, Auckland, and as regards this company's bona fides I beg to refer you the National Bank of New Zealand here through their London office. The company named is just [illegible] erecting extensive works and hopes to have them in full swing in almost five months time."*⁴⁷

Crum and Friedlander's NZ Brick, Tile and Pottery land holdings in New Lynn was in three sections. The other two sections which are part of the old Allotment 16 comprised 51 acres fronting Clark Street, Astley and Margan Avenues, including land to the north of the railway line (today's Puriri Street and surrounds), sold by Arthur King to Albert Crum and Hugo Friedlander's son Arthur Jonas in June 1905;⁴⁸ and a 10 acre section fronting Clark Street (later part of the Crown Lynn section of Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Company's operations in the block) which was leased by John Neale Bethell to Crum's firm in 1915, and later sold outright to Amalgamated Brick in 1929.⁴⁹

⁴³ Crum's diary

⁴⁴ Friedlander Bros in Ashburton purchased the Montgomery & Co works in early 1882, and enlarged it to become their Kolmar Brick and Pipe Works (*Ashburton Guardian*, 2 July 1890). In 1895, the Friedlanders sold their yard to Albert Crum. (*Ashburton Guardian*, 31 May 1895)

⁴⁵ Message by Murray Reid of Howick to Rootsweb site, 2000, via <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/NEW-ZEALAND/2000-05/0958799595>, sighted 28 May 2015

⁴⁶ *Auckland Star*, 11 October 1905, p. 5

⁴⁷ Handwritten copy of letter, not original, on JT Diamond collection

⁴⁸ Application file 4251, LINZ records

⁴⁹ Deeds Index 21A.28, LINZ records. This may have been leased to the new company earlier in an undocumented transaction, as advertisements appeared towards the end of November 1905: "*Tenders wanted for Lease of Orchard and Vinery at New Lynn, about 10 acres, with right to occupy Cottage on the Property, Good Crop of Plums, Apples, Lemons, etc.—Further particulars to be had from A Crum, N.Z. Brick, Tile, and Pottery Co, New Lynn.*" (NZ Herald 25 November 1905 p.9)

In May 1906, temporary foundations for one of the boilers collapsed, crushing worker Robert Ezzy (who later died of his injuries) and injuring the supervising engineer John Colinshaw (crushing part of his face).⁵⁰ In July that year, tenders were advertised for erecting a chimney shaft at the brickworks.⁵¹

Progress, 1 March 1907 offered this description of the works at that time:

"The works of the New Zealand Brick, Tile, and Pottery Company, New Lynn, Auckland, are being laid out with the intention of making them the most up-to-date plant of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Many New Zealanders will be surprised to hear of the extent of these works when completed. They stand upon 73 acres of land, and clay has been tested as far down as 150 ft. One machine is capable of turning out 100,000 bricks per day on the plastic system, of any colour that may be required; but though the machine has this large capacity, it is doubtful if the bricks can be removed in their plastic state as fast as the machine is capable of making them. The plastic system generally is not supposed to give such a perfectly formed brick as the various press machines, but this particular machine turns out bricks wonderfully true, square, and smooth.

"After leaving the machine they are dried by artificial heat in one day, and are then burnt and ready for market in about two weeks. The kiln is of the continuous kind, with a capacity of from 30 to 40 thousand daily; the draught is specially controlled and arranged in such a way as to be away from the workmen, making it much more pleasant to operate. Sanitary ware will be specialised, and very soon glazed bricks and tiles will be made. The larger kinds of pottery, as demi-johns, bread pans, sinks, etc., will be also made here. Fire-clay goods will constitute a fair percentage of the output, as a specially good clay is available. The abattoirs at Otahuhu are taking the first of the company's output.

"As artificial drying forms a feature in the process of manufacture, a large Hornsby steam boiler of 390 hp, working pressure 160 ft per sq in., is installed and supplies heat for artificial drying and steam for the engine, which is one of Tangyes' 105 hp.

"The managing director is Mr Hugo Friedlander of Ashburton. Mr A Crum kindly showed our representative around, and we hope when these works are in regular running order to supply our readers with some views of them."

By July 1908, the company advertised that they were at that point able to offer for sale "fire bricks, fire tiles, glazed drain pipes, also farmers field tiles" with enquiries received at the New Lynn works or via the company's agent, S Kohn, of Fort Street.⁵²

The first move towards the rise of the Amalgamated Brick & Pipe Company probably came as early

⁵⁰ *NZ Herald*, 31 May 1906, p. 5

⁵¹ Advertisement, *NZ Herald*, 2 July 1906, p. 8 (5)

⁵² Advertisement, *NZ Herald*, 13 July 1908, p. 1(5)

as 1910, with the establishment of the second Auckland Brickmakers Association, a registered limited company which initially set the price of bricks of member firms in response to workers' awards,⁵³ and undertook "*the control, purchase and disposal of the output of any manufacturers of bricks, pottery, pipes, tiles or earthenware of any kind,*" carrying into effect agreements with Avondale Brick and Pottery Company Ltd (J J Craig), Gardner Brothers and Parker, NZ Brick Tile and Pottery Company, Laurie Brothers and other brickyard owners. The original shareholders were William Elkin Hutchinson, Auckland contractor; Lemuel John Bagnall, merchant; Joseph James Craig; John Thomas Julian, Auckland contractor (proxy director for Hugo Friedlander); Charles Fisher Gardner of New Lynn; and James Shaw Laurie and Robert Laurie of Henderson, brickmakers.⁵⁴ Archibald Brothers of Avondale became shareholders from 1911.⁵⁵ The association wound up voluntarily at the end of 1920,⁵⁶ possibly due in part to the takeover of Craig's Avondale brickyard by John Melville and James Fetcher that year, as well as the closing of Hugo Friedlander's business in Ashburton.

The First World War may have been a challenge for Albert Crum. While he was a British citizen by birth, his partner Hugo Friedlander, although probably naturalised, was viewed as an enemy alien. In Ashburton after the war, the Friedlander businesses shut down for good. It was difficult for businesses to operate in New Zealand during the war if the proprietors were seen to be citizens of the German Empire.

Added to that, the building product business was also curtailed somewhat during the war years. During an appeal by Charles Gardner against being called up for war service in 1917, it was found:

*"... there were no less than five firms carrying on the brick trade ... Counsel had discovered that since the war, the firms engaged had found it necessary to curtail the output, and some had decided to close down certain of their works in common bricks with one exception – that of Gardner Bros. and Parker. The firms which had closed down were receiving a bonus as their share of the undertaking to close down."*⁵⁷

In the case of the NZ Brick, Tile and Pottery Company, according to J T Julian, the firm still carried on making fancy bricks, at a rate of 20,000 per day, as part of an agreement with Gardners not to produce any common bricks.⁵⁸ The two firms, acting together, are said to have brought about the closure of two other firms in order to conserve trade.⁵⁹ J T Diamond's notes, taken from a note written in pencil in an exercise book from 1918, showing 1919 figures, has it that NZ Brick, Tile and

⁵³ *Auckland Star*, 30 September 1911, p. 5

⁵⁴ "Memorandum and Articles of Association of The Auckland Brickmakers' Association Limited", closed company file, BADZ A13 5181, R9093819, Archives New Zealand

⁵⁵ Letter to the registrar, 6 December 1911, BADZ A13 5181, R9093819, Archives New Zealand

⁵⁶ Notice of liquidation, 24 December 1920, BADZ A13 5181, R9093819, Archives New Zealand

⁵⁷ *Poverty Bay Herald*, 11 December 1917

⁵⁸ *Auckland Star*, 10 December 1917, p. 2

⁵⁹ Testimony of Charles F Gardner, *NZ Herald*, 2 March 1918, p.8

Pottery produced 600,000 bricks, compared with 620,000 for Gardner's and 600,000 for J J Craig at Avondale. The other two noted were Lauries', 160,000, and Archibald's, 64,000, all of these members of the Auckland Brickmakers' Association.

The next step towards amalgamation came in 1925, when Thomas Edwin Clark senior (son of Rice Owen Clark II, and nephew of Edwin L Clark), from the Hobsonville works became a managing director of NZ Brick Tile and Pottery, with his Hobsonville company of R O Clark Ltd holding a controlling block of 44,996 shares.⁶⁰ Before then, the company probably had just the partnership of Crum and Friedlander as major shareholders, and the name does not appear to have been registered back in 1905. The old partnership of the NZ Brick, Tile and Pottery Company liquidated to form a new company of the same name with shareholders in 1925. However they found that the formal registration under the Companies Act was blocked, as the first NZBT&P company (a Christchurch enterprise from 1886) had neither formally liquidated nor relinquished the name. The Christchurch registration office did the paperwork, seeing as the first company had ceased operations around 35 years prior, and approval for the name NZ Brick, Tile & Potteries was finally and formally granted in July 1925.⁶¹ The company registered again in April 1926.⁶²

In August 1928, yet another reported Auckland Brickmakers Association organised a tour for a number of architects around the Glenburn works at Avondale, conducted by T E Clark and R O Gardner.⁶³ Glenburn from 1923 had been operated by Fletcher Construction, and with the amalgamation of R O Clark Ltd, Gardner Bros & Parker, the NZ Brick, Tile and Pottery Co and Glenburn Fireclay & Pottery Co Ltd in March 1929, James Fletcher assumed the role as the first chairman of directors, with C F Gardner and T E Clark as joint managing directors.⁶⁴ Albert Crum remained a shareholder of both Amalgamated Brick & Tile, and the parent company Consolidated Brick & Pipe until the late 1930s.⁶⁵

Crum Brick, Tile and Pottery Company – 1929-1975

The Crum Brick, Tile and Pottery Company was located at the corner of Portage and Great North Roads, registered on 14 October 1929, set up by Albert Crum in response to the Amalgamated Brick & Tile takeover. The shareholders were Crum's sons: Colin Albert Crum, Jack Albert Crum, Gordon

⁶⁰ *Auckland Star*, 4 July 1925, p. 14

⁶¹ File on the company, BADZ 5181 477, Archives New Zealand

⁶² *Auckland Star*, 28 April 1926, p. 9

⁶³ *Auckland Star*, 15 August 1928, p. 8

⁶⁴ *NZ Herald*, 6 February 1929, p. 10

⁶⁵ Company files, Archives New Zealand

Albert Crum and Harry Albert Crum.⁶⁶ A deputation of ratepayers protested the granting of town planning approval by the New Lynn Borough Council in October that year.

“Mr. Putt ... addressed the council. The petitions, he said, were not the outcome of any feeling of antagonism. Mr Crum was a most esteemed citizen of New Lynn and residents would never forget his generosity in the past, more particularly for his donation of land for road purposes in front of the school. ‘No one wants to see the pottery industry crushed in New Lynn, but we think such a heavy industry should be relegated to the correct quarters. It should be zoned, as far as possible, to the railway frontages.’

“Mr Putt said it was proposed to erect the new works right at the gateway of New Lynn. Such a proposal should be opposed both from aesthetic and land value points of view. New Lynn would become a large residential district and they could look forward to the time when it would be a desirable place for middle-class people. If the only entrance to the borough was to be defiled by unsightly buildings, many residents would suffer, because properties would rapidly decrease in value ...

“Mr Crum, who was allowed to be present at the meeting, denied that land values would recede if the pottery works were erected. He had been offered an alternative site on the other side of the Whau Creek, and if the council decided that the works would not be erected on the site intended, then they would be erected across the boundary in the city area.”⁶⁷

The Borough Council, despite the opposition, granted Crum approval.⁶⁸

A new type of slotted brick for reinforcing was developed by Albert Crum at the works in 1931, after the Hawkes Bay earthquake of February that year.⁶⁹ This was further developed and was demonstrated at the works in 1935 to “a large gathering of local body representatives, civil engineers and architects,” as well as members of Parliament.⁷⁰ The works at Great North Road closed down around 1975, acquired by Ceramco.⁷¹

⁶⁶ *Auckland Star*, 15 October 1929, p. 4

⁶⁷ *Auckland Star*, 8 October 1929

⁶⁸ *NZ Herald*, 9 October 1929

⁶⁹ *Auckland Star*, 4 September 1931, p. 3

⁷⁰ *NZ Herald*, 28 May 1935, p. 5

⁷¹ *Ceramco Limited, a history*, p. 23

Amalgamated Brick & Tile/ Consolidated Brick / Ceramco (A B Bricks/NZ Brickmakers) – 1929-1989

The two Amalgamated Brick and Pipe companies, in Auckland and Wellington (the latter since June), further consolidated in August 1929 as Consolidated Brick and Pipe Investments Ltd.⁷² This was to remain essentially the parent company of the New Lynn brickworks for the next 60 years, with T E Clark senior as the first managing director.

The new company with its subsidiaries was created in a difficult economic period. The recession of the 1920s gave way to the depression of the early 1930s; 100 men had to be laid off in 1931 at the former NZ Brick and Tile plant, while the former Gardner works just to the west ceased production altogether.⁷³ From March 1935 to February 1936 however, Amalgamated Brick and Pipe offered a scheme of free plans for brick homes under £900.⁷⁴ The Gardner plant reopened in July 1935.⁷⁵

1938 saw the beginnings of the manufacture of electrical porcelain at the No 4 Pottery on the former NZ Brick and Tile site in New Lynn, from which the crockery business later dubbed Crown Lynn originated as an extension to that part of the business.⁷⁶ T E Clark junior recalled in the late 1960s how he came up with the idea to help the firm survive both the after effects of the depression and increasing Government concerns regarding the company's monopoly and brick pricing. The directors of the company provided a budget of around £5000 to set up an experimental section, with which he first made bricks for the floors of abattoirs, then moved on to electrical porcelain for radio firms. He then branched out further into crockery production to service demand during shortages in the 1940s during the Second World War, including supply to American forces.⁷⁷

The company had to weather restrictions on building materials after the Second World War, but by the late 1950s, the Auckland factories were split into two divisions: Fine Earthenware (Crown Lynn) and Heavy Clay (Amalgamated Brick, later A B Brick, then NZ Brickmakers).⁷⁸ The company's first brick dryer was built in 1959, and in 1964 a second major oil-fired kiln and dryer facing Clark Street was built, to produce hollow ware and bricks.⁷⁹

⁷² *Christchurch Press*, 27 August 1929, p. 10

⁷³ *Auckland Star*, 19 February 1931, p. 8

⁷⁴ Advertisement, *NZ Herald*, 9 March 1935, p. 5 (8)

⁷⁵ *NZ Herald*, 29 July 1935, p. 8

⁷⁶ *New Lynn News* 17 December 1958, p. 7

⁷⁷ "New Challenge for the Battler", via Auckland Scrapbook March 1969-, p. 97, Auckland Libraries

⁷⁸ *New Lynn News* 17 December 1958, p. 7

⁷⁹ *NZ Herald*, 13 July 1964

A circular building at the corner of Totara Ave and Great North Road, to house a new ICT computer for the Crown Lynn and Amalgamated Brick divisions of the company, was built in 1967-1968,⁸⁰ later known as the Ceramco Building.

In 1974, the Consolidated Brick & Pipe Investments parent company was renamed Ceramco Limited. The subsidiary companies at the time moved into autonomous divisions.⁸¹ During the 1980s however, Ceramco sold off its brickmaking and ceramics interests in the New Lynn area. In 1984, the former Gardner site west of Rankin Ave, used as the company's pipeworks, was closed, and the land cleared for sale as industrial and commercial lots.⁸² In 1986, the pipeworks kilns and buildings were demolished,⁸³ leaving only what is now known as the Ambrico kiln. In 1989, Ceramco sold the NZ Brickmakers subsidiary to Monier Tile, the New Zealand subsidiary of Monier PGH, one of Australia's largest brickmakers, which was at the time a joint venture between CSR (formerly The Colonial Sugar Refining Company) of Australia and Redland plc of Britain.⁸⁴ This operation, so it has been reported,⁸⁵ will finally shut down in New Lynn during the last half of 2015, ending the district's over 150 year association with the firing of clay on an industrial scale.

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⁸⁰ *NZ Herald*, 4 October 1967

⁸¹ *Ceramco Limited, a history*, 1979, p.17

⁸² *Dominion*, 1 July 1989, p. 12

⁸³ *NZ Herald*, 8 August 1986

⁸⁴ *Dominion*, 1 July 1989, p. 12. See also "History of CSR Limited", www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/csr-limited-history, sighted 19 May 2015

⁸⁵ Whau Local Board agenda, 20 May 2015