

# The Archives of Lindeman (Holdings) Limited

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*While the origins of Lindeman (Holdings) Limited can be traced to 1843, the company's archives was not established until 1979. This article gives a brief history of the company, followed by an account of the circumstances leading to the foundation of the archives, and a description of the record holdings and current procedures. Finally a number of issues common to business archives in their early development are examined.*

## **Historical Background to the Company**

The origins of Lindeman (Holdings) Limited can be traced to Dr Henry John Lindeman, who was born on 21 September 1811 in Egham, Surrey, England. After completing his medical training and travelling widely, Dr Lindeman emigrated to Australia, arriving in Sydney 18 August 1840 with his bride of six months, Eliza Bramhall. Within a short time he moved to Gresford near Maitland, where he established a flourishing medical practice.

On 12 January 1842, Dr Lindeman purchased at auction a property on the Paterson River at Gresford called "Cawarra", meaning 'by running water' in local Aboriginal dialect. The following year he began to plant vines and, drawing on the knowledge of wines and production methods he had gained while travelling in France and Germany, he quickly established a reputation for quality wines.

On 13 September 1851, the wood-built winery and cellar of Cawarra were razed by fire, incurring damages estimated at 20,000 pounds. However, after several years employment as a doctor on the Victorian goldfields, Dr Lindeman acquired enough money to rebuild Cawarra and resurrect his business. Cawarra wines achieved success at the International Exhibition in London of 1862, the Melbourne Exhibition of 1866, and the Paris Exhibition of 1867. Locally they were regarded as one of the finest of the colonial wines.

Owing to increased production and demands for cellar space, the headquarters, winery and bottling equipment were transferred in 1870 to



*Dr H.J. Lindeman, (1811-1881).*

*"By the application of intelligent energy to the work, it was not long before he produced wine of excellent quality . . ."*

*Australian Men of Mark, Vol. 2, Sydney, 1889, p.142.*

the Exchange Cellars at the corner of Pitt and Gresham Streets, Sydney. Two years later, in response to a preference by the public for full-bodied dessert wines Dr Lindeman purchased Haffner's Vineyard at Corowa, west of Albury. In 1879 he took three of his five sons, Charles Frederick, Arthur Henry, and Herbert William, into partnership in the firm of H. J. Lindeman.

Dr Lindeman was an enthusiastic promoter of the benefits of wine as opposed to spirits, and lobbied for changes to the Colonial Wine Act, as expressed in the following extracts from his public correspondence:

To get people to drink wine in the streets without shelter — as insisted upon by the Colonial Wine Act — is too great an absurdity for any class of men, other than our law-makers to expect. The wine-growers did their best to get a bill passed under the auspices of Mr Holroyd to facilitate the sale of our wine, and to remove the curse of Tantalus from the colony, but they found "King Rum" in the ascendent... When such a desirable state of affairs shall come to pass, what a boon it will be to the colony!

And how soon it will be found that the power to gratify natural instincts and requirements will modify our vitiated taste; and how soon our refreshing exhilarating and restorative wine will take the place of poisonous spirits. We shall then rapidly become a sober, instead of a drunken community.<sup>1</sup>

. . . we should benefit both in health and morals if it (wine) became our national beverage. I have spent many years of my life trying to bring this about by doing everything within my limited orbit to inculcate a taste for a pure, dry, and thoroughly fermented wine, free from excess of undecomposed sugar, and light in alcohol...<sup>2</sup>

Dr Lindeman died at Cawarra on 23 May 1881, and is buried at Saint Anne's Anglican Church, Gresford.

The business was carried on by his three sons and in 1899 the head office and cellars were moved to the Queen Victoria Markets in York Street, Sydney. In 1906 a private company, Lindeman Ltd, was incorporated and the following decade saw the acquisition of further vineyards in the Hunter Valley, notable among them being Ben Ean in 1912 and Kirkton in 1914.

By 1923, however, the financial state of the company had deteriorated and as a result Leo Buring, the technical advisor to a number of well-known companies, was appointed general manager. He held this position until 1930 when he left to start his own business. A receiver appointed in 1931 then carried on business until 1947, when control was handed back to the shareholders.<sup>3</sup>

In 1953 Lindeman Ltd was converted to a public company, and the head office was transferred from Kent Street, Sydney, where it had been since 1934, to Erskineville. In 1960 the company name was changed to Lindemans Wines Pty Limited, and the headquarters again transferred, this time to Marrickville. One year prior to this Lindeman (Holding)

Limited had been incorporated as a private holding company, which during the following years acquired a number of wine and spirit companies, including Leo Buring (Holdings) Ltd in 1962 and Crawford and Co (Australasia) Pty Ltd in 1970.

In 1971 Lindeman (Holdings) Limited was itself acquired by Philip Morris (Australia) Ltd, although the Lindeman board and management continued to run the business of the company. In 1973 the head office was moved from Marrickville to Lidcombe. A year later the Karadoc Winery, near Mildura, was completed, becoming one of the most modern wineries in Australia. Today the Lindeman Group is a major Australian wine producer, marketing a range of wines and spirits comprising some two hundred products.

### **The Origins and Development of the Archives**

The concept of establishing an archives at Lindemans Wines originated in the company's Legal Department, although it was by no means the result of a single, conscious decision. Rather, the idea developed from the continual frustration experienced by the legal staff in only rarely being able to obtain from other departments information which was necessary to sustain trade mark applications and oppositions. It was generally found that these records had either been destroyed or misplaced.

Accordingly, in 1979 the possibility of consolidating records relevant to the Legal Department and storing them in the one location was considered. The idea of establishing a single storage facility for all the company's non-current records crystallized at this point. The objectives were stated in a memo written by the Legal Administration Officer to support the proposal:

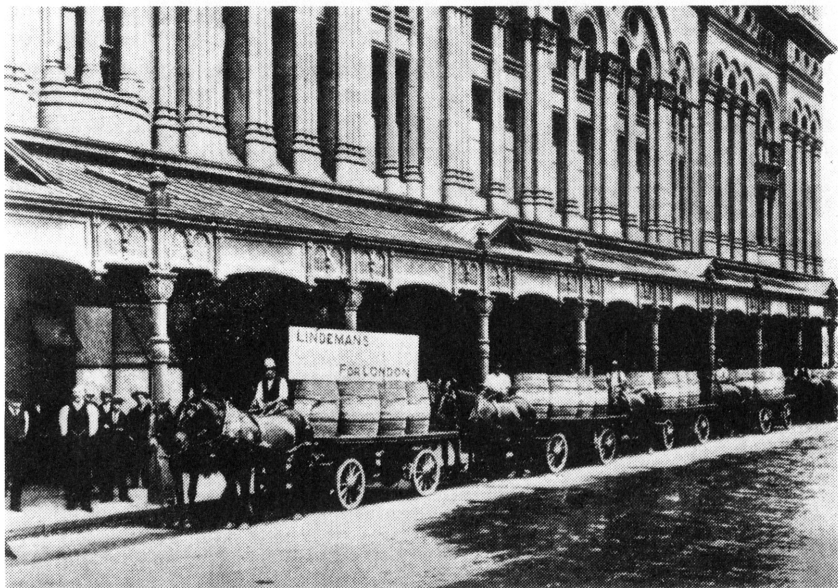
- (1) To collate all relevant information about the Company into a complete, detailed historical library. The library will use Legal, Financial, Marketing and Technical information, and will include a literature section made up of books presently in the Company (and others that may be required).
- (2) To provide secure and accessible one-location storage of Company records, information and confidential documents. There would be no copies of documents held in the library (other than those duplicated for security purposes).
- (3) Eventually, to record information which is not normally available in document form, and which disappears as people leave the Company.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, strong support for the proposal was received from the Financial Director, and authority to proceed was given.

Initially, advice was sought from the School of Librarianship, University of NSW, and a discussion was held with Peter Orlovich and Baiba Berzins. Towards the end of 1979 arrangements were made for several students studying the Archives Administration course to work part-time at Lindemans, sorting and listing the large volume of records



*Cawarra, the homestead and winery c.1900.*



*Queen Victoria Markets, 'Lindemans for London', c.1900.*

*"One of the sights of Sydney is the cellars of the firm at the Queen Victoria Markets, which are the largest metropolitan cellars in Australia. To those who have not visited them it may be said at once they are a revelation and an education."*  
*Old Times, Vol.1 No.1, April, 1903, p.77.*

which had long been gathering dust in the warehouse.

At the same time plans were drawn up for a repository which was to be situated at one end of the company's underground car park. This was completed early in 1980 and took the form of an air-conditioned concrete-walled room fitted with a twelve bay compactus. Additional storage space was also made available in a nearby room with fixed shelving.

In these early stages emphasis was placed on the physical control of the records, particularly those of a confidential nature (such as directors' files, personnel records and minute books) and those deemed to have historical value (such as photographs, advertising materials and legal documents). During the next few years, these and other records were listed, boxed and some of the more important series were identified.

The present writers were employed on a part-time basis in November 1982, joining the company's Secretariat (formerly the Legal Department), and reporting directly to the Legal Administration Officer. The most pressing task was to develop a system of intellectual control whereby the records could be retrieved efficiently. It was essential that such a system should be as self-sufficient as possible owing to the part-time nature of the archivists' employment. With this in mind it was decided to classify the records according to groups reflecting their departmental provenance or form, for example, Export, Planning, Photographs. Within these groups each series is assigned a control number. This, together with a short description of content, date range, retention period and confidentiality is entered on forms which are arranged alphabetically within individual groups by series title, and placed in loose leaf folders to form the main finding aid to the holdings. In addition a card index has been instituted in which the records are listed according to subject matter.

The main body of the holdings covers the company's development, policies and performance from the mid 1950's, the strengths being in the Marketing, Financial and Technical Departments. Prior to this the holdings are thin, most having been either lost or destroyed when their currency expired. It is particularly regrettable that the oldest Lindemans minute book extant dates only from 1950.

The earlier years of the company are presented by a series of late 19th century and early 20th century legal documents and related correspondence, personal papers of the Lindeman family, annual balance sheets from 1906, annual reports, wine blend books, and a fine photograph collection which documents views of wineries, vineyards and cellars from the turn of the century. The archives also contains substantial holdings relating to Leo Buring. The concentration of this material again lies in the post-war period, but major exceptions include correspondence and vintage notes, a series of labels dating from 1930, and an extensive collection of photographs, the oldest of which has been dated at 1885.

The physical condition of the records is generally sound, and micro-conservation is not a vital issue at this stage. Nevertheless, basic preventative measures have been introduced, such as the duplication of nitrate negatives and the provision of acid-free envelopes for photographs and wine labels. In addition an important series of management reports has been bound.

At present the policy regarding access specifies that the records be made available to members of staff only, with the further restriction that confidential material may be recalled solely by its creator or other authorised personnel.

### **Archival Issues**

The development of Lindemans and its archives presents some of the issues and problems encountered in many business archives in their embryonic state. It is not uncommon for a considerable period to have elapsed between the formation of a business and the establishment of its archives,<sup>5</sup> and many of the difficulties which the business archivist faces can be seen as a function of this time span.

The catalyst for the establishment of Lindeman's archives was the immediate need to arrest inefficiency in records management, and to facilitate the future retrieval of records. As well as this it was necessary to preserve the company's historic documents. Unfortunately, within the company these dual tasks are not regarded as interdependent. Rather, the archives is interpreted as a repository for intermediate records which have only limited administrative use, and for certain 'old historical material', which is retained by virtue of its age. A result of this is the prevailing opinion that all the historical documents have already been created, and that most records currently being produced have little permanent value or historical potential.

Symptomatic of this view of archives administration has been the difficulty experienced in implementing a records disposal schedule. A schedule would assure both effective records management, and the continual transfer to the archives of all records which warrant permanent preservation. (Indeed, endeavouring to work without one is not dissimilar to attempting to heal an Amfortas wound). These attitudes can lead to moments of historical self-consciousness in the record creators when they discard items which have little importance in their opinion, while often preserving items of whimsical information or baroque form. Although these items should generally be preserved, and can be useful for advertising and public relations, it is the material considered mundane by its contemporaries which, ironically, more often forms a balanced, and heterogeneous record of the company's workings, and so proves to be the richer historical source.

Incomplete awareness of the value of all those records which provide a

continuing insight into the company's development reflects the very practical purposes for which the archives was established. Associated with this is the fact that, at present, only head office records are being transferred to the archives. The result is, of course, that only a limited record of the company is being preserved. This is particularly lamentable in the absence of "any adequate and reliably professional history about the Australian Wine Industry", and the necessity for such a history to "be based squarely on its records, especially its business records."<sup>6</sup>

These and other issues which may conceivably arise in the near future, such as the possibility of access by external researchers to material which is often sensitive, will hopefully be resolved as the archives matures and receives greater recognition within the company. In order to gain such recognition, it is necessary to actively promote the archives as an integral part of the company, as is the case for all business archives. The utilitarian value of the archives in such areas as litigation, policy formation, advertising, public relations and staff education needs to be continually demonstrated. To survive and develop, a business archives must provide a useful, commercial service to the whole company, and it will best achieve this if adequate resources are allocated and it is run according to accepted standards of archives administration.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. H. J. Lindeman, Letter to the Editor, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1867.
2. H. J. Lindeman, "Pure Wine as a Therapeutic Agent, and Why It Should Become Our National Beverage", *NSW Medical Gazette*, Volume 2, July 1879, p 311.
3. The last member of the Lindeman family to be actively involved in the running of the company was Frederick Harold Lindeman, a grandson of the founder, who was a director of the company until his death in 1938.
4. The content of the memo is such that the term 'archives' as well as 'library' should have been used. Certainly the holdings of library material are only a small proportion of the total holdings.
5. A time lapse of 136 years for Lindemans, while other examples include 138 years for Westpac, and 145 years for John Fairfax Ltd.
6. Lloyd Evans, *Towards a Social and Economic History of the Australian Wine Industry*, 1973, p.1.