

Arnold's fruit needed wooden cases

Noel Jackling

In 1922, 21-year-old Edwin (Eddie) Arnold, came to work for Harry Arnold & Co, a retail fruit and vegetable business in shops in Olive Street, Albury run by his brother Hermann (Harry) Arnold. Cousins J E (Jack) and W F (Bill) Arnold, with their father J G Arnold, ran the wholesale fruit and vegetable business of J G Arnold & Sons, now Arnold's Fruit Market.



Edwin (Eddie) Arnold in his factory.

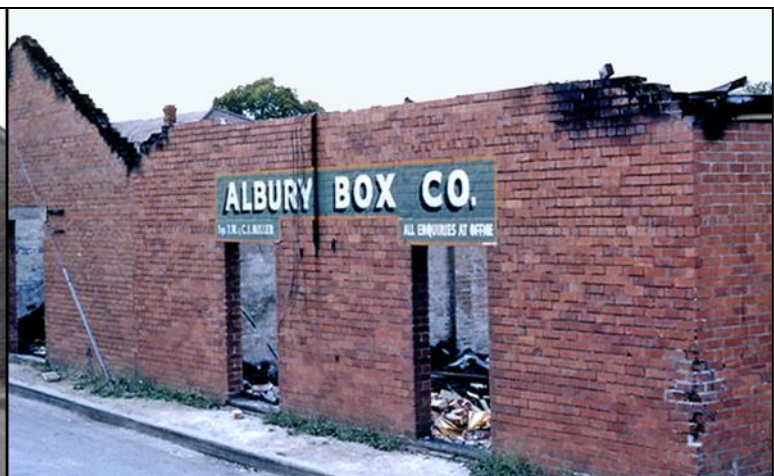
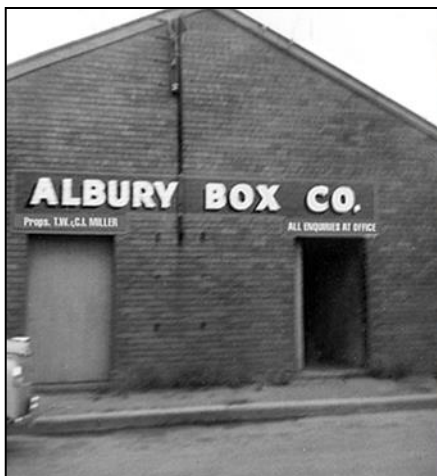
The Arnold wholesale and retail fruit and vegetable businesses both needed wooden cases. Eddie Arnold started to meet this demand by repairing fruit cases and bags.

In 1926, Eddie Arnold established his own business in a small tin shed at the rear of the Olive Street shops. He began making fruit cases by turning inside out left-over wooden cases used for the transport of petrol cans.

In 1932, Eddie purchased a property with a frontage to Arnolds Lane (now part of the Centrepont Shopping Centre). There he established a modern factory for manufacturing cases such as orange cases and strawberry punnets. This business, Albury Box Co, at its peak in the 1950s, manufactured up to 30,000 cases per year, most of them for J G Arnold & Sons.

In 1955, Eddie Arnold sold the case factory to Tom and Shirley Miller. On 15 January 1965 fire ravaged the premises, following which Eddie repossessed the property, and on 26 February 1965 sold it at auction to a J G Arnold & Sons related company.

Eddie Arnold speedily secured premises at 236 Macauley Street, South Albury, constructed a small shed on it and equipped it with machinery and kiln



The Arnolds Lane factory before and after the 1965 fire (photos Wendy Moriarty).

salvaged from the fire. By the end of March 1965, Albury Box Co was back in operation, although it soon changed its name to E Arnold Albury Sawmilling Co.

During the latter part of the 1960s and into the early 1970s, Eddie Arnold made seedling boxes for nurseries and apple boxes and fruit bins used to collect fruit from farms. By this time, cardboard cartons were being introduced. This change in packaging methods caused the demand for wooden boxes to decline. Eddie again relocated the business to even smaller premises in Atkins Street, South Albury.

New custom came in for wooden boxes—from Haberfields Dairy for cheese, Borg Warner for transmissions and Australian Training Aids for military targets. Nevertheless, by the early 1970s, the association with J G Arnold & Sons, which had started in 1922, had come to an end, and by the time of Eddie's death in 1976, the demand for any wooden cases had ceased altogether.