

Hornung - Hornung - Hornung - The Hornung Papers

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| Level | Collection |
| Alt Ref No | Hornung |
| Title | The Hornung Papers |
| Date | 1890s-1980s |
| Extent | 64 boxes and 12 volumes |
| Description | <p>The administrative records of Hornung & Co Ltd, empire builders, founders and owners of the Sena Sugar Estates in Mozambique, the Compania de Cha Oriental Estate in Malawi, sugar refineries in Portugal and the West Grinstead Stud in West Sussex, amongst other concerns.</p> <p>Comprises: memoranda and articles of association; statutory documents; minutes of Directors' and other meetings; annual reports; ledgers and financial records; copy letter books and correspondence files; African estate title deeds, plans and concession papers; sugar production charts and reports; 'African diaries', recording estate work and production on the Mozambican sugar estates; Stud record cards and racing files; family papers, including inventories of West Grinstead Park, the Hornung family home since 1913.</p> <p>Please note that the papers have been sorted but have not yet been catalogued; however, a detailed box list is available.</p> |
| Related Material | <p>See also Add Mss 41180-41211 for records of the West Grinstead Stud (1924-1984).</p> <p>See also Lib 18916 for Vail and White's 'Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique' (1980) which has useful background information about the creation and eventual sacking of the Sena Sugar Estates.</p> <p>Although pockets of records exist elsewhere - most notably, some estate records and a photographic archive in Lisbon (Portugal) and Maputo (Mozambique), and some relevant but uncatalogued directors' records and accounting information survive amongst the Vivian Oury Archive at the Borthwick Institute (University of York) - it is understood that many of the company's records were destroyed, along with the estates, during the 1980s.</p> <p>BM Collins' biography of John Peter 'Pitt' Hornung, 'JP Hornung, A Family Portrait', includes information about the establishment and success of the Sena Sugar Estates, up until the death of Pitt Hornung in 1940.</p> |
| AdminHistory | <p>Early Years</p> <p>John Peter "Pitt" Hornung was the third son of Johan Petrus and Harriet Hornung. Johan Petrus Hornung came from Mediasch in Transylvania and was involved in the shipping industry. He trained to</p> |

be a lawyer at the University of Vienna in the early 1840s; he found the career did not appeal to him and took a job with a shipping firm in Hamburg. From here he moved to Middlesborough where he traded in iron, coal, and timber. It was in the north east that Johan met Harriet Armstrong, his future wife; the couple married on 30th March 1848 and Pitt was born on 3rd June 1861 at Marton, near Middlesborough.

In the late 1860s, Pitt was sent to boarding school at Hampton Wick, in the south of England; and from 1873, he attended Edinburgh Collegiate School. After school he began to study law as an articled clerk to a firm of solicitors in Middlesborough. However, Pitt did not last long in this role as his parents did not approve of his relationship with a cobbler's daughter; in order to quell the relationship, Pitt was sent to Uruguay to work on a family friend's ranch.

After 18 months working on the ranch, Pitt decided to return to Britain; in order to do so, he worked his way home on a ship as a butcher's assistant. The ship stopped at the port of Lisbon en route to Britain, and the city must have made an impression on Pitt as, upon his return, he told his father that he wanted to pursue a business career there. Johan wrote a letter of introduction for his son to an old Austrian friend living in Lisbon, a merchant named Gruis.

Business

Pitt successfully secured a job at Gruis's firm and he began to enjoy an active social life in Lisbon. In 1883 - possibly on his 22nd birthday - he met his future wife, Laura de Paiva Rapozo. Despite Laura being only 15 years old at the time, she and Pitt were engaged within two weeks and they married in Lisbon on 28th April 1884. Laura's father, Ignacio Jose de Paiva Rapozo, was born in Lisbon in 1821, and was the son of Alentejo land owners. A notorious gambler, he squandered his family's inheritance playing cards. After spending some time in India, Ignácio became familiar with the opium trade and, upon his return to Lisbon in 1877, he applied to the Portuguese Ministry of Trade and Colonies for a lease of 20,000 hectares of land in the lower Zambezi delta, in Mozambique, for the growing of poppies. The first opium was produced in 1879, but a revolt in Mozambique in 1884 meant that the opium estate was sacked and looted. Ignácio abandoned the estate and returned to Portugal.

By the time of Pitt's marriage to Laura, he had set up his own company in Lisbon. In partnership with his friend Simão Sabroso, and financed by Pitt's father and a Lisbon bank, they obtained a contract to pave certain Lisbon streets. However, disaster struck the Hornung family towards the end of

1885, when Johan's business failed and he was forced to declare himself bankrupt. Pitt wound up his business in Lisbon and returned to Britain to help out. The family moved to London but Pitt's father died a year later.

In 1887, Pitt's thoughts turned to Africa, the continent where he would make his fortune. Pitt took over his father-in-law's lands in Mopeia, Mozambique, with the intention to enter the opium trade. After some initial success, disaster struck again when the Zambesi River flooded and destroyed most of the poppy fields; Pitt therefore decided to return home to Britain. On the voyage home the ship called at Durban and, whilst in Natal, Pitt met Michel Dumat, a French sugar cane planter, who suggested that Pitt tried to grow sugar cane on his lands in Mopeia. This chance meeting encounter with Dumat was to lead to the establishment of one of the biggest sugar estates in the world.

When Pitt returned to London he began to research the sugar cane industry and the possibilities of setting up a plantation on the Zambezi River. Pitt succeeded in gaining backing from friends in Portugal and the Banco Lusitano, and founded and became General Manager of the Companhia de Assucar de Mocambique in 1890. After some teething problems in transporting machinery and constructing the plant, the first sugar cane was milled in Mopeia on 3rd June 1893. A difficult five years followed; but from 1898 onwards, there was a steady rise in production and Pitt was able to set up another estate, near the village of Caia, in 1905 - the Sena Sugar Factory. Pitt established himself as Hornung & Co. in 1906, a profitable business entity which achieved much of its prosperity as a result of assets acquired in Africa and the percentage fees it received as managers and selling agents in Lisbon. In the same year, Pitt was introduced to the world's leading sugar broker, Julis Casear Czanikow, who agreed to become Chairman of Pitt's new company.

Pitt started to buy out other, less successful sugar cane concessions in the Zambesi region and transformed them into successful entities; this included a concession at Marromeu in 1909. A new company, Hornung & Co., Limited, was established in October 1914; according to its Articles of Association, the object of the company was to 'plant, raise, refine, import, export and deal in sugar, starch, glucose, molasses, and the like'. It further claimed to be in the market of dealing in "sugar, rubber, tea, coffee, tobacco, coconuts, coconut fibre, cocoa, spices, cinchona, opium, wines, rice, padi, cereals, cotton, flax, grain and fruit, copra, silk, pepper, guano, and bone or other artificial manure."

Pitt's business went from strength to strength, and

he established a sugar cane empire. By 1920, Pitt and his backers had several interests in the region, which were amalgamated to form the Sena Sugar Estates. This company controlled some 14,000 square miles of Portuguese East Africa and comprised three sugar estates, a fleet of river craft, a coastal steamer and a sugar refinery in Lisbon; in 1924, a fourth factory opened in Zambesia, and 25 locomotives and 2,000 field trucks were required to serve Sena's factories, such was the scale of their output. Many of the company's fleet of vehicles - including its paddle steamer and locomotives - were made in the north of England and shipped out to the estates in Portuguese East Africa, where many remain to this day.

Prior to 1932 Hornung & Co. Limited had held directly or indirectly the selling rights of all Sena Sugar Estates products throughout the World's markets. It was considered advantageous, with a view to saving Income Tax, that part of the selling rights should be separated from the managerial business of Hornung & Co. Limited. An agreement between Hornung & Co. Limited and Sena Sugar Estates in January 1932 assigned to a Portuguese company the rights to sell Sena products in Portugal and all areas outside of Europe. The new Portuguese selling company was formed by the shareholders of Hornung & Co. Limited and named Agencia Comercial Africa Portuguesa. Over the next few years, the directors of Hornung & Co. Limited and Sena Sugar Estates believed it would be beneficial for business reasons to liquidate the selling companies before forming new ones; this eventually led to the creation of the selling agency Agencia Colonial Mocambicana. Pitt Hornung's business interests were not limited to sugar cane and he also established two tea companies; the Sociedade Cha Oriental in Malawi, and Sociedade Agricola do Milange in Mozambique. During this period two further versions of Hornung & Co. Limited would be established, first in 1920 and again in 1932, for financial reasons

After Pitt's death on 5th February 1940, the sugar estates and various businesses passed to his son, Charles Bernard Raphael Hornung. The sugar plantations continued to be successful and, by the 1960s, they employed some 14,000 people; in 1956, the 12th President of the Portuguese Republic, General Francisco Craveiro Lopes, visited the Sena Sugar Estates, an indication of the success and importance of the estates. However, by the 1970s, many of the estates' working practices were outmoded and the businesses went into decline; the dying days of the Hornung empire would be overseen by Stephen Peter Hornung - Charles's son and Pitt's grandson. The onset of Mozambique's lengthy civil war in 1977 - just two years after it gained independence from Portugal - and the general intransigence of the Hornungs, who refused to change their working practices, saw the

Sena estates sacked and abandoned in the 1980s, bringing an abrupt end to one of the 20th century's largest, most successful and influential sugar cane empires.

Stud

Pitt Hornung's sugar cane enterprises brought him significant financial reward. Such was his wealth that, in 1913, he purchased the Manor of West Grinstead, along with the manor house, West Grinstead Park, in 1913; this enabled him to live the life of a country gentleman. Pitt's fortune also allowed him to indulge his passion for horse racing, particularly the breeding side; in 1924, he took over the bloodstock and racing stables at Woodland and Green Lodge, Newmarket. He also started a stud for breeding race horses at Park Farm, the home farm of the West Grinstead Park Estate, and registered this as the West Grinstead Stud on 20 March 1924. The stud was run by Pitt, with his two sons, Charles Bernard Raphael Hornung and George Hornung.

Pitt enjoyed some considerable success in this new venture, breeding 129 winners over 25 years. However, his purchase of the Epsom Derby winner, Papyrus, for £35,000, proved to be one of his least successful transactions. Despite his success on the racetrack, Papyrus was largely a failure as a stud, producing very few winners - although 'Shergar', the 1981 Epsom Derby winner (but perhaps more famous for being kidnapped), was one of his descendants.

After Pitt's death, West Grinstead Park was sold and the stud became part of the National Stud in 1949. Charles Hornung founded a successor stud at High Hurst Manor Farm, in Cowfold, in 1950. After Charles's death in February 1964, the stud passed to his eldest son, John Derek Hornung. The horse 'Aunt Edith' was bred by Charles, but only began racing in the year of his death. Aunt Edith proved to be a successful horse; in 1966 - ridden by the jockey Lester Piggott - she became the first female to win the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes; and in 1965 and 1966 she was the highest-rated filly in Europe. John Derek Hornung was succeeded by his younger brother, Stephen Peter Hornung, in August 1978. The estate in West Grinstead and Cowfold was eventually split up, and the stud was put into voluntary liquidation on 23 March 1984.