

# **QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**

**CHS 22**

## **TIFFANY (NU STEEL) FURNITURE COMPANY COLLECTION**

**Furniture Making, Launceston**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

Tiffany (Nu Steel) Furniture Company, a large Tasmanian manufacturer of domestic and commercial furniture, was established in 1946 by James Norris Guy as a family business. From humble beginnings in a small shed near the wharves at 45 Foster Street, Launceston, it employed 85 staff at its peak, developing its Kings Meadows site, to which it moved in 1962, as both factory and showroom. It began selling directly to the public in 1982, although outlets opened in Burnie and Glenorchy (Hobart) a few years later were relatively short-lived. Surviving various difficulties over some 45 years, the Company remained wholly Tasmanian until it was forced into receivership in December 1992.

James Guy, founder and later general manager of the Company, was born in Launceston on 20 September 1916, the fourth of eleven children. Leaving school at the age of 14 during the Depression, he became a mechanic and metal worker in his brother Frank's car business. Towards the end of the Second World War, James Guy became interested in tubular steel furniture, setting up his own business with his wife Laurel and trading as J N & L M Guy. The first maker of steel furniture and original distributor of laminex in Tasmania, Guy decided to branch into the manufacture of timber furniture. The name Tiffany Furniture was registered in the mid 1950s. Early mass production of fire screens, laminex furniture, and stackable school furniture variously attracted buyers on the mainland, eg Myer's, Victoria, and in Tasmania, eg Coogan's, Hobart. The Company was the first to use television extensively for advertising purposes in Tasmania.

By the 1980s Tiffany (Nu Steel) Furniture Pty Ltd was equipped for the production of furniture in solid timber, timber laminations, timber veneer, steel frame fabrications and full upholstery techniques. It had its own design team, but also contracted independent designers and manufactured to design specifications for large projects, eg Sheraton Hotel, Hobart. The Company marketed successfully to homes, hotels, hospitals, and offices, and also exported its products to New Zealand. A Tasmanian finalist in the 1984 National Small Business Awards, in 1991 it was also the first Tasmanian furniture manufacturer to be awarded a contract to supply Federal Government departments and other agencies.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in February 1993 and March 1993.

### ***1.Scrapbooks***

- |      |   |           |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1/1  | Scrapbook with black and white product photographs and advertising leaflet  | nd        |
| 1 /2 | Scrapbook with newspaper cuttings; leaflets; photographs; business cards; invitations; letters; advertisements; advertising artwork | 1981-1994 |

### ***2.Photographs, Slides, Films and Videos***

- |       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| 2/1   | Furniture Product photographs (colour)  | nd    |
| 2/2   | Furniture Product photographs (black and white)   | nd    |
| 2/3.1 | Furniture Product photographs (black and white)   | nd    |
| 2/3.2 | Furniture Product photographs (black and white)   | nd    |
| 2/4   | Tiffany Sells Direct to You - Kings Meadows Factory exterior <b><i>Oversized item (vertically stored)</i></b>                       | 1980s |
| 2/5   | Tiffany Sells Direct to You - Kings Meadows Factory interior with male worker <b><i>Oversized item (vertically stored)</i></b>      | 1980s |
| 2/6   | Tiffany Sells Direct to You - Kings Meadows Factory interior with male worker <b><i>Oversized item (vertically stored)</i></b>      | 1980s |
| 2/7   | Tiffany Sells Direct to You - Kings Meadows Factory interior with male worker <b><i>Oversized item (vertically stored)</i></b>      | 1980s |
| 2/9   | Tiffany Sells Direct to You - Kings Meadows Factory interior with two male workers <b><i>Oversized item (vertically stored)</i></b> | 1980s |
| 2/10  | Factory and showroom (colour photographs)   | nd    |
| 2/11  | Chair hire service (colour lantern slide)   | nd    |
| 2/12  | Furniture Product - lounge room furniture -small cupboards, sideboard and writing desk, etc - 'Stylize' (35mm colour slides)        | 1957  |
| 2/13  | Furniture Product - glamour units and garden furniture (35mm colour slides)   | 1957  |

### ***3.Ephemera***

- |     |  |       |
|-----|--|-------|
| 3/1 | Advertising folder; catalogues and leaflet | c1988 |
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## **OTHER SOURCES**

QVMAG, Community History, CHS 21; CHS 29

QVMAG, Community History, 1993.OH.13A-B

Launceston Reference Library, Local History Collection, newspaper cutting files, 'Guy family' and 'Furniture Industry'