



J.P. Sennitt

John Paul Sennitt

Ice and ice cream manufacturer

24

Famously remembered for its polar bear licking an ice cream logo, Sennitt's had its origins in the 1870s in a South African ice works where John Paul Sennitt began a long and productive career in ice manufacturing. From the mid-1890s, well before household fridges existed, Sennitt used a newly invented refrigeration system to make and sell ice and later ice cream to thousands of Melbournians.

Sennitt was born in Stretham, Cambridgeshire, England in 1851. As a young man he left for South Africa where he established the first Transvaal ice works. He married Harriet Coulbeck in 1875 then migrated with his family to Melbourne in the late 1880s.

Sennitt started work at the Melbourne Cold Accumulator Company and soon took over the business. From 1898, when his son William joined the firm, Sennitt's was promoted as clean and healthy, building the Sennitt reputation as 'benefactors of humanity'. By 1899, the South Melbourne plant and machinery expanded to occupy half an acre as ice was distributed around Melbourne by twenty drivers, horses and carts. They manufactured ice cream from 1904 and the J.P. Sennitt and Sons Ice and Refrigerating Company was formed in 1906.

Sennitt was a Master Freemason at the Admiral Collingwood Lodge. In May 1902 he was elected unopposed to Fawkner Ward in the South Melbourne Council, retiring in 1909. He was a Justice of the Peace and a council member of the Honorary Justices' Association. At one time he sat on the local Court of Petty Sessions.

He died in 1922 and is buried here in Coburg Cemetery. Sennitt's Icecream continued for another forty years under William's management until its sale in 1961 to Streets.

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