Vitrine de Curiosidades

MAH

Portable Stove with Oven
Metalúrgica ALBA
Portugal (Aveiro – Albergaria-a-Velha), c. 1920–1950
Sheet metal and glass
MAH.R.2016.0662
H. 60 × W. 41.5 × D. 40 cm

This Cabinet of Curiosities features a remarkably unusual portable stove distinguished by the inclusion of a cylindrical oven fitted to one end, with a hinged glass door. The stove's two circular hotplates, designed to support pots and pans, are positioned above the cylinder, while on the opposite side two wrought iron legs raise the appliance off the ground and enable it to be moved wherever it is most convenient for the user. The stove was intended to operate in conjunction with a paraffin burner, which would have been installed between the legs.

The word ALBA, embossed on the metal panels, identifies the stove as a product of Metalúrgica ALBA, an industrial foundry established in 1928 in Albergaria-a-Velha, in the district of Aveiro, by Augusto Pereira Martins (Sever do Vouga, 1885 – Albergaria-a-Velha, 1960). An accomplished foundryman, he began working in the trade from an early age alongside his father and uncles.

While still a young man, probably in search of business opportunities and personal advancement, Augusto Martins settled in Ponta Delgada between 1902 and 1905. After a period in the United States of America, he returned to Ponta Delgada at an uncertain date and established a foundry there. In 1921 he returned to mainland Portugal and settled in Albergaria-a-Velha, where he founded the Fundição Lisbonense, later renamed Fundição Albergariense and, in 1928, Metalúrgica ALBA. Throughout much of the twentieth century, ALBA was one of Portugal's largest foundries. Its national and international importance is reflected in its substantial exports, particularly to the former Portuguese colonies.

The history of the ALBA factory mirrors Portugal's industrialisation during the Estado Novo period and represents a classic example of a paternalistic enterprise that contributed to the consolidation of the Portuguese corporatist state during the first half of the twentieth century. Within this framework, ALBA and its founder undertook a range of welfare and cultural initiatives, including the establishment of public dining facilities (a People's Kitchen and a Soup Kitchen for the Poor), the construction of a cinema and theatre, a hospital, a social housing estate and a children's centre to support the families of its workers.

The company also founded the Banda Alba (Band of the ALBA Metalworks) and Sport Clube Alba.

Well suited to outdoor activities, this portable stove and oven also stands as an enduring testament to changing patterns of leisure and to the growing appreciation of the natural environment during the mid-twentieth century, when camping became an increasingly popular feature of Portuguese summer holidays.

The object was donated to the Museum of Angra do Heroísmo in 1989 by Antonieta Belo Pamplona de Oliveira and forms part of the Ethnography Collection.