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Massey University

Master of Arts (History) Thesis

Kate Durkin

Shopping and Consumer Culture in Palmerston North c. 1945-

85

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master of Arts in
History at Massey University

2026

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the different meanings of shopping and consumerism between 1945 and 1985 in Palmerston North, New Zealand. Shopping and Consumer culture in Palmerston North are examined within the wider context of both specific developments in Palmerston North and contemporary trends in New Zealand. Shopping and consumer culture are investigated in three categories. Chapter Two examines changing trends in consumer culture in central city department stores. Chapter Three investigates shopping and consumer culture in suburban contexts, including the Manawatu Co-Op network and the emergence of seniors as a consumer group in their own right. Chapter Four focuses on the impact of Massey University on shopping and consumer culture, in particular the emergence of students as a market for local stores. The relationship between shopping, consumer culture and gender roles will also be discussed during the thesis, as this was an important dynamic in the period under review.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my Thesis supervisor, Dr. Geoffrey Watson, for the invaluable feedback, critiques, and overall guidance as I navigated the journey of planning, writing, and revising this thesis.

My research would not have been possible without the aid of those who assisted in my deeper investigations. The Massey University Library in Palmerston North assisted with identifying primary and secondary sources that would be relevant to my research, with Dr. Pauline Knuckey, the Special Collections Librarian, being a particular help with locating local newspapers and journals for my investigation. Additionally, the Massey University Archives provided valuable assistance in locating relevant Massey University magazines to investigate student advertisements, to which I owe the Massey Archivist Louis Changuion many thanks for his assistance.

I owe gratitude to the team at Te Manawa Museum in Palmerston North, particularly Cindy Lilburn, as her team assisted in locating scrapbooks and local advertisements and allowing a space for me to view these valuable sources.

I also extend a thank you to Jude Tewnion at 'Stuff' for allowing permission of certain images from the *Manawatu Standard* to be used in this Thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank the team at Palmerston North City Library, particularly Ralph Body and Heather Glasgow for finding Palmerston North City Council records and archives relevant to my research.

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Introduction

Post-war New Zealand saw a major shift in the way the society evolved with regard to everyday lifestyles. With newfound ideas and values dating from the conclusion of the Second World War, New Zealand began to witness new trends of leisure, spending, and more materialistic lifestyles.¹ Consumer culture, as historians have referred to it, became a fundamental aspect of society in the second half of the twentieth century, shaping the economy, gender roles, and social classes. As a smaller nation, New Zealand was influenced by trends seen overseas, with new brands and appliances becoming available to consumers. With increasing numbers of women entering the workforce in the post-war years and higher numbers of men entering white collar occupations, financial income in the homes began to be spent in a variety of ways. This left a lasting impact on gender roles and social classes in particular, altering the way women at home completed their home duties whilst also changing how women would spend their money in retail areas. The culture of shopping also changed, with suburban shops complementing central city shopping areas. It has been argued that social class distinctions became prominent because of consumer culture. With the change in consumer culture, differing levels of possession of material goods created a social hierarchy. Divisions of wealth would become far more recognisable in these post-war years, leading to the culture of spending that defines people's wealth and status seen today.²

Palmerston North, the focus area for this thesis, developed rapidly as a prime consumer location following the Second World War. With population levels doubling from 1945 to the mid 1970s, Palmerston North's central business district developed swiftly to cater for the increasing demand.³ Businesses including retail and commercial industries encouraged consumer spending, changing the way citizens viewed status and leisure. With the Manawatu region providing a

¹ Jenny Carlyon and Diana Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand since 1945* (Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2013), 2.

² Terry Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One: The Appliance Age in New Zealand* (New Holland Publishers: Auckland, 2021), 265. See also Graeme Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern,' in G.W. Rice (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992 edn.), 451-81.

³ Ian Matheson, *Council and Community: 125 Years of Local Government in Palmerston North 1877-2002* (Palmerston North City Library: Palmerston North, 2003), 38.

substantial rural hinterland, farmers and their family roles also participated in consumer culture, with new technology available that changed their day-to-day work.⁴

This thesis will evaluate the development of shopping and consumer culture in Palmerston North, with reference to wider trends in New Zealand, between 1945 and the mid 1980s. I intend to investigate how various products were advertised towards a particular audience and the ways in which consumer culture changed in Palmerston North during this time. The period between 1945 and the mid-1980s was selected because it has been recognised by historians as an important and rapidly evolving era in shopping and consumer culture.⁵ Women began to have more disposable income due to an increased participation in the workforce during this time.⁶ Within this period, there was a general political consensus on protecting domestic industry to avoid the slump in the economy seen after the First World War. From the 1980s, however, this changed with the Fourth Labour Government's programme of economic liberalisation. Particularly significant here was the relaxation of regulations surrounding imports and initiatives such as the introduction of weekend shopping and late-night hours on a Friday.⁷

Research Questions

As noted, the primary focus of this thesis is on how shopping and consumer culture evolved in Palmerston North and how this reflected gender roles between 1945 and 1985. The principal research questions are:

1. What patterns of shopping and consumer culture were evident in Palmerston North between 1945 and 1985 and how did these change over time?
2. To what extent did shopping and consumer culture reflect and influence gender roles?

⁴ Robert Billens and Leslie Verry, *From Swamp to City: Commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of the City* (Palmerston North City Council: Palmerston North, 1937), 66,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/b828bbde-a47e-4c4e-82de-dcb57ec6a273/pdf>

Russell Poole, 'Building the City,' in Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson and Kerry Taylor (eds.), *City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2020), 104-125.

⁵ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 3. Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern', 476-77.

⁶ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 213.

⁷ Dorothy Pilkington, "Remembering what we used to do on a Friday night," Stuff, July 16, 2022,

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/300638266/remembering-what-we-used-to-do-on-a-friday-night>

Scholarly Literature on Shopping and Consumer Culture in New Zealand

Several texts have discussed the development of consumer culture in New Zealand, with some work completed on the Manawatu region. Many of these works focus on the post-war period as this is the period where shopping and businesses began to boom in a more prosperous time for New Zealand. Several texts focus on larger cities including Wellington and Auckland, such as Paul Moon's *Auckland: The Twentieth Century Story*,⁸ while others look at New Zealand as a whole, for example, James Belich's *Paradise Reforged*⁹ and Gordon McLauchlan's *A Short History of New Zealand*.¹⁰ These texts offer important understandings of how New Zealand shifted into a modernised materialistic world and how trends were followed from overseas.

The idea of consumerism can be defined in various ways. Chris Brickell, who wrote about consumer culture in the immediate Post-War period, defined consumer culture as, “the consumption of goods - along with the needs they express and the desires they engender - deeply affects individual lives and social relationships.”¹¹ Historians sometimes discuss the culture of consumerism with reference to evolving trends of promoting goods to a customer to enhance trade and create a financial gain.¹² James Belich regarded shopping as an important element of Pakeha culture in post-war New Zealand. There are many different types of consumer activity. My research focuses on how shopping developed in the Palmerston North area, how shopping was promoted to prospective consumers and how this impacted gender roles in society. The introduction and relevance of department stores, supermarkets, and other retail stores impacted the way citizens spent their time and money. From this, lifestyle changes were made. The establishment of family benefits and rising incomes added to the trend of households having more disposable income.¹³ Women's roles in the home changed with a new balance of labour work and new appliances to aid in completing domestic tasks. With increasing numbers of

⁸ Angeliqe Kasmara, “*Auckland: The Twentieth Century Story* by Paul Moon,” Aotearoa New Zealand Review of Books, April 5, 2023, <https://www.nzreviewofbooks.com/auckland-the-twentieth-century-story-by-paul-moon/>

⁹ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Allen Lane: Auckland, 2001), 307-316; 348-353.

¹⁰ Gordon McLauchlan, *A Short History of New Zealand* (Penguin Books: Auckland, 2004), 1.

¹¹ Chris Brickell, “The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 40, no. 2 (2006), 133, <https://www.brickell.co.nz/docs/politicsconsumerculture.pdf>

¹² Brickell, “The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture,” 133.

¹³ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 179.

women entering the workforce alongside men, that meant money could be repurposed to enjoy a more simple, leisurely life.¹⁴

Some research has been done on shopping and consumer culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Paula Richardson's thesis "Shopping for Pleasure?", focusing on the evolution of women's shopping in Wellington, investigates shopping as a leisure activity allowing women to enter the public sphere and how women chose to spend their time and money in an evolving bustling, retail world in New Zealand's capital city.¹⁵ Focusing on the period between 1850 and 1910, Richardson was able to investigate the original establishments of shopping in the city rather than the already developed scene in which I am investigating. One of Richardson's key questions was whether the act of shopping was detrimental to the freedom and independence of women. The author compares Wellington's activity to that in Europe and America, and through primary evidence including literature, personal diaries, newspapers, and letters, Richardson determined that consumer culture did allow women to achieve a sense of independence regarding extending their boundaries beyond the home.

In the past two decades there have been some important works on shopping, notably by Helen Laurenson and Bronwyn Labrum. Laurenson's *Going Up Going Down: The Rise and Fall of the Department Store* investigates what made department stores in New Zealand so popular in the first half of the twentieth century, with their gradual decline taking place from the 1960s.¹⁶ The book discusses the themes of modernity and consumption, two themes which are heavily present in this thesis, and their impacts on the experience of shoppers in department stores.¹⁷ Laurenson explores how customers were enticed into department stores and how window displays and ground floor arrangements of products played a role in consumer attraction.¹⁸ She also discusses features of typical department stores such as children's departments and tearooms, which, in

¹⁴ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 179. Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern,' p. 471.

¹⁵ Paula Ellen Richardson, "Shopping for Pleasure? Female leisure, fashion and independence in Wellington, 1850-1910" (Masters Thesis., Massey University, 2021), ii, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/bd6a2c03-960b-4b90-b281-6593a17c6e7d/content>

¹⁶ Helen Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down: The Rise and Fall of the Department Store* (Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2005), 1.

¹⁷ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 8.

¹⁸ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 10.

turn, explains how different types of consumers were attracted to the stores. The book takes a broad approach, looking at general trends in New Zealand department stores, particularly in the four main centres, although, with the exception of one photograph it does not refer to Palmerston North. In this regard, it is particularly useful as a source for Chapter Two of this thesis.

Bronwyn Labrum's *Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s* provides an overview of how New Zealand life shifted in through these decades based on the objects that shaped how New Zealanders lived.¹⁹ Labrum labels the book as "an example of material history: it shows how, through this focus on objects, their uses and their meanings, we might gain a different view of the postwar period."²⁰ The objects Labrum refers to range from items found in New Zealand postwar homes, such as appliances to fashion and style accessories that were in trend at the time, and the popular products that New Zealanders shopped for in this period.²¹ One chapter, 'Going Shopping', is particularly relevant to this thesis.²² It describes how New Zealanders found pleasure in shopping again after the war's conclusion and how consumer culture boomed with the increased accessibility and desirability of goods as the economy recovered after the Second World War.²³ The chapter also discusses the gender connotations within shopping and the different types of stores that became staples of New Zealanders regular shopping trips.²⁴ There are some references to Palmerston North shops in the book, but no sustained analysis of shopping in Palmerston North.²⁵

Jenny Carlyon and Diana Morrow's *Changing Times: New Zealand since 1945* examines New Zealand society since the conclusion of the Second World War, and how modernity was established in New Zealand's changing social norms and economy. The authors discuss the boom of consumer culture, and how gender roles were shaped accordingly, in multiple chapters, describing the period from 1945 to the 1960s as a type of "golden age".²⁶ The authors explain

¹⁹ Bronwyn Labrum, *Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s* (Te Papa Press: Wellington, 2015), 15.

²⁰ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 15.

²¹ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 15.

²² Labrum, *Real Modern*, 243.

²³ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 243.

²⁴ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 250.

²⁵ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 256.

²⁶ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 73.

how cultural trends in New Zealand drew from Britain and America. With New Zealand's historical ties to the United Kingdom, the nation naturally followed their lead in many respects.²⁷ However, America was steadily rising as a 'super-power nation', and accordingly became more influential in New Zealand society, with the twentieth century commonly referred to as the 'American Century'.²⁸ Carlyon and Morrow argue that trends from overseas were a significant influence for the way shopping and consumer culture planted itself in New Zealand during this time.²⁹

Another useful general history is James Belich's *Paradise Reforged* which covers a general history of New Zealand and its people from 1880 to the conclusion of the twentieth century.³⁰ The book includes chapters discussing postwar society in New Zealand, including two parts, "Part 3: Better Britain at Bay, 1920s-1960s" and "Part 5: Beyond Better Britain, 1960s-2000s", where Belich argues that it was a period where a 'cult of romantic domesticity' prevailed, in which state welfare and a prosperous economy finally allowed families to live with a degree of comfort, free from war and economic depression.³¹ The book advances the notion of 'recolonisation', the argument that between the 1880s and 1960s New Zealand identified itself both economically and culturally with Great Britain, an important concept when considering consumerism in relation to trade and cultural influences from Britain.³²

One common feature among discussions of consumer culture in postwar New Zealand is the notion of modernity. Helen Laurenson characterises modernity as a term with many definitions.³³ She describes it in both social and economic terms, caused by the changes through urbanisation and industrialisation.³⁴ She argues that much of this modernisation occurred both in the early twentieth century and in the mid-twentieth century.³⁵ Modernity changes with time, with evolving trends in a consumer society affecting what modernity looks like within different time

²⁷ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 73.

²⁸ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 73.

²⁹ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 73.

³⁰ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 1.

³¹ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 491; 243-321; 391-460.

³² Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 27-31.

³³ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 11.

³⁴ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 11.

³⁵ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 11.

eras.³⁶ Comparably, Carlyon and Morrow describe the new sense of modernity experienced in the early years of the post-war period as “a vision of ordered, comfortable domesticity”, made possible by an investment “in the future and in youth”, seen through social welfare benefits, healthy and safe housing, and economic stabilising.³⁷ In this definition, modernity is seen through the investments made to create a safer, happier society in contrast to the war weariness experienced during the Second World War. Another measure of modernity relevant to this study is the way technology and consumerism allowed a higher level of everyday convenience. Terry Moyle in *Every Home Should Have One: The Appliance Age in New Zealand* characterised home appliances and advanced technology as “indispensable” in the post-war period.³⁸ Moyle argues that whereas much of this period is viewed as a time of great historic events the experience of these significant events is backgrounded by the new technologies that aided the transformation of everyday life.³⁹ At an everyday level, modernity was also self-defined by retailers. Throughout the period under review, shops presented themselves as ‘modern’ and their advertisements consistently appealed to consumers to experience shopping in a ‘modern’ environment within an evolving modern society with changing gender roles.⁴⁰ References to modernity had a particular local resonance in Palmerston North which consistently promoted itself as a modern city.⁴¹

In addition to discussions of consumerism in general histories, some books and specialized articles have focused on consumer culture. Chris Brickell’s “The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture” in the 2006 edition of the *New Zealand Journal of History* discusses the issue at a nationwide level, offering relevant insights into consumer culture in the post-war period from a political approach.⁴² Brickell explains how the different New Zealand Government parties

³⁶ Laurenson, *Going Up Going Down*, 11.

³⁷ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 2.

³⁸ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 8.

³⁹ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 8.

⁴⁰ The editorial page of the 1966 promotional publication *Manawatu Expands*, for example, included two photographs of Palmerston North stores, each captioned with a reference to modernity. One photograph of the inside of a shop was captioned ‘One of the modern well laid out stores’ and another photo of a shopfront was captioned ‘modern shopping facilities in the city.’ Robert E. Young (ed.), *Manawatu*, September 1966 (Brockell and Nicholls: Auckland, 1966), 5.

⁴¹ Margaret Tennant, “Performing the Local: City Commemoration and Modernity in the Provinces,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 56, 22 (2022), 8. The title page of a 1939 promotional publication for Palmerston North included the phrase “Palmerston North: A Model Modern City”. Palmerston North City Council, *You Must Come and see us Too!* Palmerston North. A Model Modern City, Palmerston North City Council, 1939.

⁴² Brickell, “The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture,” 133.

viewed consumerism and the differing values pushed by the Labour and National Government when each were in power during the post-war years.⁴³ He explains that the effects of the Second World War caused shortages in food, material goods, and more, which bled into the early years of the post-war period.⁴⁴ He explains that the Labour Government pushed for security and comfort, encouraging the population to enjoy a more leisurely life as the economy recovered.⁴⁵ This included stabilising jobs and social welfare benefits, allowing many to have more freedom with their income.⁴⁶ The National party on the other hand, labelled Labour's views as "socialism", and was determined to steer the nation away from such a philosophy.⁴⁷ Despite National's arguments against Labour's policies, the National Party, who were in government for the majority of the period covered by this thesis (1949-57; 1960-72 and 1975-84), continued many of their fundamental measures, including the family benefit.⁴⁸ These government values profoundly shaped life throughout the period under review.

Scholarly Literature on Consumerism and Gender in New Zealand

There is a considerable amount of literature on gender roles in New Zealand's post-war period which highlights the experiences of women, men, and children and their roles in and out of the home. The post-war period showed arguably the most significant changes in these areas as society saw a strong trend towards a more progressive, liberal state.

Helen May's *Minding Children, Managing Men: Conflict and Compromise in the Lives of Postwar Pakeha Women* is a case study of 25 women and their lives as mothers, wives, and workers.⁴⁹ May looks at the expectations presented for women during that period and the shared views on motherhood and gender equality. The author investigates the typical roles for women, either as a homemaker or in traditional feminine roles such as teaching, hairdressers, and

⁴³ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 133.

⁴⁴ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 135.

⁴⁵ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 136.

⁴⁶ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 136.

⁴⁷ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 138.

⁴⁸ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 138.

⁴⁹ Helen May, *Minding Children, Managing Men: Conflict and Compromise in the Lives of Postwar Pakeha Women* (Bridget Williams Books: Wellington, 1992).

seamstresses.⁵⁰ May pointed out that her text was intended to show the female dimension of the postwar years, as female prosperity tends to be overlooked in historical literature.⁵¹

Barbara Brookes' *A History of New Zealand Women* looks at women's experiences throughout New Zealand's history, not solely the postwar period. This text in particular is crucial to understanding women's issues and rights right through to today, showcasing how modernity in the second half of the twentieth century transformed women's roles and expectations. With reference to consumer culture in the postwar period, Brookes describes how a woman's role at home was altered due to the new appliances introduced into New Zealand.⁵² The balance of the domestic load shifted, meaning women gained more time to explore other opportunities, whether that be leisure or work.⁵³ There was, however, ongoing inequality between men and women. Brookes' pinpoints social polls showed rising statistics of middle-class women describing their lives as 'unhappy' or 'unfulfilled', in which she points to unequal pay as a causal factor.⁵⁴

Male gender roles, although less discussed in terms of consumerism, are an important aspect to consider regarding stereotypes and attitudes towards their role within society. Jock Phillip's *A Man's Country* (1987) is an important text which discusses the stereotypes of the New Zealand male and the obstacles faced by the gender in a post-war world of shifting values.⁵⁵ Certain behaviours then expected of men are relevant to consumer culture. These include the do-it-yourself attitude, which influenced home and outdoor project shopping, and the notion of hard-working males as the primary, often sole, income earner for the family, resulting in more money to spend for the household.⁵⁶ Although this text is not focused on consumerism, it allows the reader to view how stereotypes for the male gender contributed towards their place and experiences in New Zealand society. Frazer Andrewes chapter "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit" in *The Gendered Kiwi* is a particularly relevant source when discussing male culture in

⁵⁰ May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*.

⁵¹ May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*, 1.

⁵² Barbara Brookes, *A History of New Zealand Women* (Bridget Williams Books: Wellington, 2016), 318.

⁵³ Brookes, *A History of New Zealand Women*, 318.

⁵⁴ Brookes, *A History of New Zealand Women*, 319.

⁵⁵ Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History* (Penguin: Auckland, 1987), 217-289. Deborah Montgomerie, "A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male, A History by Jock Phillips (Review)," *New Zealand Journal of History* 22, no. 2 (1988), 188.

⁵⁶ Montgomerie, "A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male, A History by Jock Phillips (Review)," 189.

New Zealand's post-war society.⁵⁷ The chapter largely focuses on the male role of working and providing for the home, which typically carries an expectation of financial control and emotional stability among men.⁵⁸ Andrewes touches on the development of consumerism in this period, which affected the way household income was spent. This, in turn, affected the ways in which men approached the expectation of being the breadwinner in the family.⁵⁹

Literature on Shopping and Consumerism in Palmerston North

Texts written on Palmerston North's history outline indicate how it developed from initial settlement by Rangitane, to a new European settlement in the late nineteenth century, into the city it is known as today. These texts, however, do not investigate and provide a detailed discussion of shopping and consumer culture in the period under review. Existing works do, however, provide contextual insights into Palmerston North's history in the post-war period, which inform our understanding of shopping and consumer culture. Regarding shopping, there have been a number of store specific histories and some examinations of aspects of shopping, but an overall examination of shopping and consumer culture in Palmerston North in the four decades following the end of the Second World War has yet to be conducted.

An important text that covers the earlier and much of the post-war period's history of Palmerston North is George Conrad Petersen's *Palmerston North: A Centennial History*, published in 1973.⁶⁰ The book details the history of Palmerston North's beginnings and how it evolved into the city it was by its centennial milestone in 1971.⁶¹ His work includes valuable information about the settlement of Palmerston North, how it evolved from a borough, to a town, and finally to a city, and how amenities and businesses were set up to serve the growing population.⁶² Petersen discusses the establishment of Massey Agricultural College (later Massey University), as well as other prominent local businesses that played a large role in consumer culture in

⁵⁷ Frazer Andrewes, "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit: White-Collar Masculinity in Post-War New Zealand," *The Gendered Kiwi*, 191.

⁵⁸ Andrewes, "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit," 191.

⁵⁹ Andrewes, "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit," 191.

⁶⁰ George Conrad Petersen, *Palmerston North: A Centennial History* (A.H & A.W Reed: Wellington Ltd, 1973).

⁶¹ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 1.

⁶² Petersen, *Palmerston North*, v.

Palmerston North.⁶³ The timing of its publication in 1973 means it serves as both a primary and secondary source. It was also published at the beginning of the Elwood mayoralty which significantly transformed Palmerston North through his focus on the redevelopment of the central city and a greater reliance on specialist urban planning.⁶⁴

On the topic of Massey University's history in Palmerston North, Michael Belgrave's *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen - A History of Massey University* is a valuable text to understand the institution's effect on Palmerston North's growth as a city.⁶⁵ His book discusses the early establishment of Massey Agricultural College, its subsequent transformation into Massey University and the impact its growing student population had on Palmerston North.⁶⁶

Fiona McKergow's chapter "'Just the Thing': Shopping for Clothes in Palmerston North," in *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* offers useful insight into the purchasing and selling of clothes in Palmerston North between the 1870s and the 1920s.⁶⁷ Despite not relating to the time period under review in this study, it allows for an understanding of how consumption of clothing was approached in the selected location in its formative years. McKergow investigates the popular clothing stores of that era, as well as the factories and draperies that created the fashionable clothing styles of the time.⁶⁸ McKergow acknowledges various topics throughout her chapter, including how the people of Palmerston North typically wore clothes that were of British influence at this time, largely due to Britain being the primary source of clothing materials to New Zealand.⁶⁹ She also recognises that The Square hosted much of the area's clothing stores, creating a shopping hub for consumers.⁷⁰

⁶³ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 230.

⁶⁴ Margaret Tennant, "The Elwood Mayorality 1971-1985: Reflections from Oral Histories," *Manawatu Journal of History*, issue 14, 2018, 55.

⁶⁵ Michael Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen - A History of Massey University* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2016).

⁶⁶ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 14.

⁶⁷ Fiona McKergow, "'Just the Thing': Shopping for Clothes in Palmerston North," in Bronwyn Labrum, Fiona McKergow and Stephanie Gibson (eds.), *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2007), 132.

⁶⁸ McKergow, "'Just the Thing', 133.

⁶⁹ McKergow, "'Just the Thing', 134.

⁷⁰ McKergow, "'Just the Thing', 139.

City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North is another important source covering the history of Palmerston North, from its early settlement days to the near present in 2020.⁷¹ Similar to Petersen's book, this source focuses on Palmerston North and the many elements that made it into the city it is known as today. Topics such as early settlement, environmental histories, education within the city, and sport and leisure are discussed at length, which provide useful context when discussing the nature and activities of citizens within the post-war period.⁷² The strength of this source is that it includes relevant information from all areas of the city's history, with a wide range of areas of interest that include some relevance to shopping and consumer culture. Whilst useful for understanding the location of this thesis, it does not specifically focus on shopping and consumer habits, although there is some discussion of Collinson and Cunninghame department store in the chapter on work.⁷³

Although general histories of Palmerston North do not focus on shopping and consumer culture, various articles in the *Manawatu Journal of History* offer valuable insights into gender roles and the progression of shopping and consumerism throughout the period under review. Several issues contain articles relevant to this topic, including personal accounts from women who experienced consumer culture in the post-war period and accounts from retail workers. The 2019 edition where Simon Johnson contributed an article on employees of the Premier Drapery Company (PDC) store is particularly useful.⁷⁴

Insights into shopping in Palmerston North can also be obtained by consulting store-specific histories. Lesley Courtney's *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story* is a detailed account of one of Palmerston North's more popular stores in the post-war period, C.M. Ross and Co.⁷⁵ The book gives a full history of the building occupied by the store, from its establishment in 1883 as a draper and clothing store to its closing in 1959, and the

⁷¹ Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson, and Kerry Taylor, *City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2020).

⁷² Tennant, Watson, and Taylor, 'Stories of a City', in *City at the Centre*, 5.

⁷³ Margaret Tennant and Simon Johnson, "A City at Work," in *City at the Centre*, 151.

⁷⁴ Simon Johnson, "'Serving the People: Life and Work at Palmerston North's Premier Department Store.'" *Manawatu Journal of History*, no. 15 (2019), 5-16, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/8b9990d4-c401-4f4f-8444-cf8760e3e605/pdf>.

⁷⁵ Lesley Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story* (Palmerston North City Library: Palmerston North, 2008).

following businesses who replaced it, including Milne & Choyce, D.I.C and, finally, the Palmerston North City Library.⁷⁶ Courtney offers an extensive view into the makings of the store, the staff, and the amenities included in the building, such as the popular tearooms.⁷⁷

Primary Sources

As previously stated, there are limited works written on the specific topic of shopping and its impacts on gender roles and social classes in Palmerston North's post-war period. However, local historical sites and institutions hold many valuable sources that can aid in investigating the research questions mentioned earlier.

Firstly, Palmerston North's Te Manawa: Museum of Art, Science & Heritage holds copious amounts of resources included in various collections that cover the post-war period. Contained in these collections are physical items, records, photographs, diaries, and other sources relevant to this research area, including scrapbooks containing ephemera on the department store Collinson and Cunninghame's. Meeting with employees, including the local historians and archivists that work with the institution, allowed myself as the researcher to gain access to valuable sources as well as their personal expertise in this topic.⁷⁸

The Palmerston North City Library hosts the 'Manawatu Heritage' website which holds thousands of images, letters, and other primary sources relating to the history of Palmerston North and its surrounding areas.⁷⁹ The various collections available on the website include valuable primary sources that aid in understanding the topic at hand, through visualising the subject matter through photos and maps and the ability to listen to interviews with former employees of shops and examine promotional material for Palmerston North. The site allows people to upload their own historical texts, which enables access to a wide array of material from all corners of Manawatu.

⁷⁶ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built*, 32.

⁷⁷ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built*, 40.

⁷⁸ Te Manawa: Museum of Art, Science & Heritage, 326 Main Street, Palmerston North, <https://www.temanawa.co.nz/>

⁷⁹ "Manawatu Heritage," Palmerston North City Library, accessed September 3rd, 2024, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/>

The Palmerston North Community Archives, located in the Palmerston North City Library in The Square, are another significant repository that contain a multitude of primary sources relating to Palmerston North's history. The online database holds records and documents from the Palmerston North City Council and the Palmerston North City Library, where one can search and request documents or records for research purposes. Within these archives, records relating to local businesses, organisations and individuals are available upon request. The Community Archives are a significant asset, particularly for finding primary sources, as researchers are able to access documents such as building plans, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other material that allow a behind-the-scenes look into particular shops and organisations. These proved to be useful for this thesis when finding sources on local businesses and the Manawatu Co-Operative Society, discussed in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

The Massey University Archives were another valuable source, particularly in relation to shopping and consumer culture among its students. The archives, located on the Palmerston North Massey University campus, hold a large range of images, magazines, newspapers, and more regarding students and their place in Palmerston North's society. The Massey University Archives proved particularly useful in researching Chapter Four, which discusses advertisements targeting students.

A further relevant primary source that will act as important evidence is newspapers from the post-war period. Online sites including 'Manawatu Heritage' and 'Papers Past' hold thousands of copies of full edition newspaper copies and more importantly, specific columns, that are easily sourced by simply using the relevant keywords to locate the right editions. Newspapers were an integral part of everyday life in the post-war era. The *Manawatu Standard* and the *Manawatu Times* were the principal local newspapers in the period under review. By 1968 the *Manawatu Standard* had a circulation of 22,500. Newspapers of this era included extensive amounts of advertising, advertisements being both an important source of revenue and information about where commodities could be obtained.⁸⁰ Advertising typically appeared on the entire front page

⁸⁰ Ian F. Grant, *Pressing On: The Story of New Zealand's Newspapers, 1921-2000* (Fraser Books: Masterton, 2024), 248.

of newspapers until at least the 1960s, with most pages including at least some advertisements. During the period under review the *Manawatu Times* was a morning newspaper and the *Manawatu Standard* an evening newspaper. Indeed, it was then entitled the *Manawatu Evening Standard*, but for the purposes of consistency is referred to here as the *Manawatu Standard*. Local libraries and museums also hold copious amounts of microfilmed newspapers, including a complete set of the suburban newspapers the *Tribune* and the *Guardian*, held at the Palmerston North City library.

In addition to the sources listed above, there were several published reports on consumer behaviour in Palmerston North. Peter Crawford's work in particular holds significant relevance to this topic as he produced several reports on shopping, economic-related issues, and consumer behaviour according to age and gender that directly relate to Palmerston North.⁸¹

Previous theses have also touched on elements of shopping and consumer culture. One Massey University thesis that is particularly relevant to this research is Christine Worthington's 'Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services', published in 1969.⁸² Worthington discussed the history and evolution of suburban shops and shopping centres situated in Palmerston North's suburbs, including the types of people who frequented these shops and how they serviced different communities.⁸³ This thesis was particularly useful as a source for Chapter Three, which discusses suburban shopping and its impact on consumer culture in Palmerston North.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of four chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter One sets the scene for the research with an overview of the chosen location for this study, Palmerston North. Chapter Two focuses on appliance shopping and three central city department stores, with a particular focus on how they presented themselves to the public. Chapter Three looks at the

⁸¹ Peter Crawford, "Shopping Patterns," Palmerston North City Council Town Planning Office, Report no. 22, June 1970.

⁸² Christine Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services" (Master's Thesis, Massey University, 1969), 1. <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/items/c2a06d33-a9e3-4367-b084-611ee427b0fb>

⁸³ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," i.

expansion of suburban shopping and the role of the Manawatu Co-Operative Society in shaping community shopping. The final chapter discusses the impact of Massey University on shopping and consumer culture. Finally, the conclusion brings together the main arguments in each chapter and discusses their overall significance.

Chapter 1 - Overview of Palmerston North

This chapter will investigate the history of Palmerston North and how it was shaped to become the significant provincial city it is today. It identifies the crucial developments in the region, including the establishment of the railway system, the establishment of Palmerston North as a town and then a city, and the development of the central city shopping area. By focusing on the Palmerston North area, it is imperative to investigate the histories of the city including the settlement of Pakeha and their initial relations with local Māori iwi, the development of suburbs, and the evolution of urbanisation leading up to the Second World War. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three parts. The first examines the period from initial Māori settlement in the sixteenth century until 1914. The second section evaluates the period between 1914 and 1945, during which Palmerston North attained city status. The final section provides an overview of Palmerston North from 1945 to the mid 1980s, with a particular focus on the factors that shaped its shopping and consumer culture.

Part I: Development to 1914

As will be discussed later in the thesis, the advertisements for consumer products in Palmerston North during the period under review almost exclusively featured people of European appearance. Prior to the 1860's, however, the land on which Palmerston North was sited was owned by tangata whenua. To understand the emergence of a consumer economy in Palmerston North, it is important to recognise how the lands of the indigenous people were acquired. What is now known as Palmerston North was first inhabited by the region's mana whenua, Rangitāne, approximately 400 years ago.⁸⁴ Before the Scandinavian settlers arrived in the area in 1871, the Crown had an interest in purchasing land surrounding Papaioea, the Māori name given to the clearing located in the centre of present-day Palmerston North. Negotiations for Crown purchases of land in the regions began in 1858 as Rangitāne offered to sell small blocks of land; however, the Crown wished to purchase larger sections, which Rangitāne refused.⁸⁵ To transition

⁸⁴ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', in *City at the Centre*, 9.

⁸⁵ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*, November 14 2015, <https://www.govt.nz/assets/Documents/OTS/Rangitane-o-Manawatu/Rangitane-o-Manawatu-Deed-of-Settlement-14-Nov-2015.pdf>

out of this deadlock, in 1862 the Crown established the Native Land Court which identified the owners of Māori land and assigned titles to them, also allowing landowners to sell land at their own discretion.⁸⁶ However, The Crown eventually removed some land sections in the Manawatu from the 1862 Native Lands Act, creating the opportunity for the Crown to purchase the Te Ahu a Turanga block.⁸⁷ Within the purchasing agreements, the Crown assured Rangitāne that reserves would be allocated and how that land would be used would be a joint decision between Rangitāne and the Crown.⁸⁸ The purchase was finalised on July 23rd, 1864, where approximately 250,000 acres was sold to the Crown and in return, Rangitāne received £12,000.⁸⁹ After the purchase, the Crown reduced the amount of reserves previously promised to Rangitāne, leaving them with little land in the area to have ownership or partnership over.⁹⁰ After fighting to purchase some reserves back, Rangitāne acquired 100 acres at Hokowhitu near the Manawatu River, 168 acres in Karere, 105 acres in Awapuni, and small land plots located in central Palmerston North.⁹¹ Despite the land in Papaioea holding great significance to Rangitāne, the Crown believed the land held potential for building a township, which eventually became Palmerston North.⁹² The formation of Palmerston North, and the nearby settlement of Feilding during the 1870s, was part of a contemporaneous wider development of the central North Island during the 1860s and 1870s.⁹³

The 1870s saw Palmerston North emerge as a commercial centre for the surrounding region. The year of 1871 saw Palmerston North receive its name, with the first set of Scandinavian settlers arriving in the area, where they were to work in industrial and agricultural roles.⁹⁴ This year came to be memorialised as Palmerston North's initial year of urban development, being cited as the city's foundation year commemorated in jubilee celebrations. Remembered as the 'Father and Mother of Palmerston North', George and Louisa Snelson settled in Palmerston North in

⁸⁶ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*.

⁸⁷ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*.

⁸⁸ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*.

⁸⁹ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*.

⁹⁰ New Zealand Government, *Rangitāne O Manawatu Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*.

⁹¹ New Zealand Transport Agency - New Zealand Government, *Te Ahu a Turanga; Manawatu Tararua Highway: Notices of Requirement for Designations Volume Three: Technical Assessments*, <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh3-manawatu/NZTA-NOR-Volume-3.7-Tangata-Whenua.pdf>

⁹² New Zealand Government, *Te Ahu a Turanga; Manawatu Tararua Highway*.

⁹³ Petersen, *Palmerston North: A Centennial History*, 67.

⁹⁴ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

1870 and 1871 respectively, where they founded and initiated several commercial projects throughout the next two decades.⁹⁵ George Snelson opened Palmerston North's first store, a general store, on The Square in 1871, and Snelson soon became the town's first registrar of deaths, births, and marriages.⁹⁶ This year also saw the first established factory - a sawmill, alongside the first boarding house.⁹⁷ Next came the first butcher, brewer, and blacksmith, followed by the first doctor, tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, and more.⁹⁸ With these urban developments, a school was established, a local newspaper was introduced, more roads and railways were created, establishing Palmerston North as a fast developing urban area, increasing the town's population from 200 in 1871 to 800 by 1877.⁹⁹

From the town improving rapidly as an urbanised setting, families migrated in large numbers to Palmerston North over the coming decades. With the *Wellington Independent* newspaper describing the town as "Go-ahead Palmerston", reflecting its reputation (and subsequently its self-image) as a progressive settlement.¹⁰⁰ The Square quickly became the town's commercial centre, with Terrace End being introduced as both the suburban location for homes and a business centre in its own right.¹⁰¹ A taxi cab was even introduced in 1878 that transported citizens from Terrace End to The Square.¹⁰² Hokowhitu, initially reserved for Rangitāne but sold to European settlers in 1893, was quickly developed in these early years also, hosting the sawmill workers' homes alongside the establishment of local shops in the coming years.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Roger Wigglesworth, 'Snelson, George Mathew,' *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand (1993), accessed September 2nd, 2024, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s34/snelson-george-mathew/print>

⁹⁶ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

⁹⁷ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

⁹⁸ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

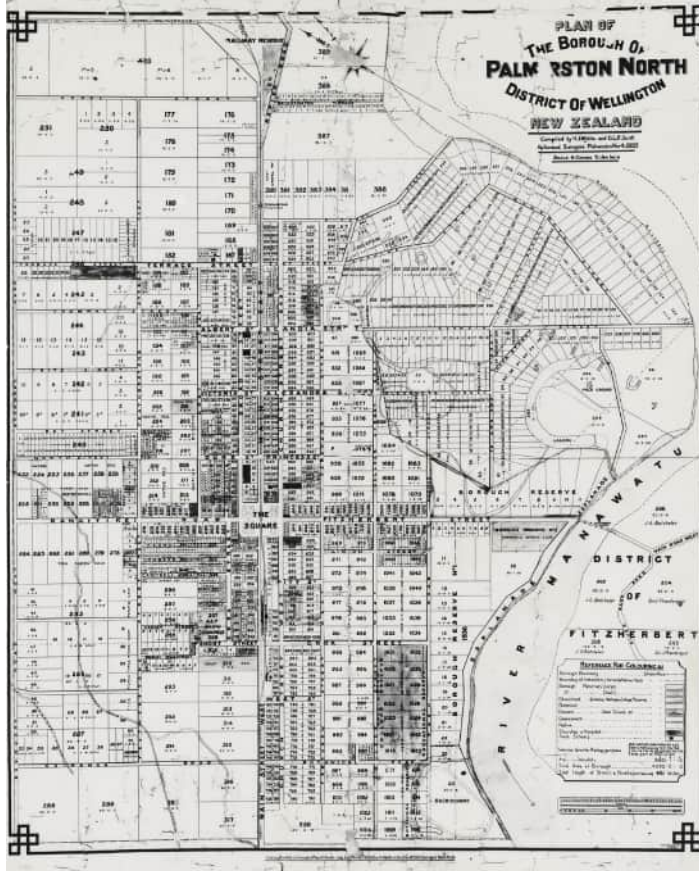
⁹⁹ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

¹⁰⁰ Tennant and Watson, 'Stories of a City', 9.

¹⁰¹ Petersen, *Palmerston North: A Centennial History*, 153.

¹⁰² Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 154.

¹⁰³ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 153. Ian Matheson, *Council and Community: 125 Years of Local Government in Palmerston North 1877-2002* (Palmerston North City Council: Palmerston North, 2002), 12.



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Map of Palmerston North as it appeared in 1895. Note the prominence of The Square in the approximate centre. The area in the top right from Fitzherbert Street to Main Street became the suburb of Hokowhitu, the top left above Rangitikei Road and to the left of Main Street became the suburbs of Milson, Terrace End and Kelvin Grove. The bottom right bounded by Main Street and Fitzherbert Street became West End and later Awapuni, and the bottom left from Main Street and Rangitikei Road became the suburbs of Takaro and Highbury.

Given the nature of Palmerston North as an isolated inland settlement with its river difficult to navigate, an important feature for the town's development was the construction of the railway between Wellington and Manawatu. The need for efficient transport between Palmerston North and the country's capital city was becoming urgent during the 1880s, as settlement in Manawatu continued to progress.¹⁰⁵ Railway lines connecting Wellington to New Plymouth were initially planned to run through smaller towns such as Foxton, Sanson, and Bulls, with Palmerston North

¹⁰⁴ "Plan of the Borough of Palmerston North District of Wellington, 1895," Manawatu Heritage, map, 1895, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/b4bbc5b7-a555-49a6-992c-1c2a6c40710b>

¹⁰⁵ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 161.

being left out.¹⁰⁶ After meetings and protests calling for the railway line to run through Palmerston North, the decision to incorporate the town was approved and the Wellington Manawatu Railway Company formed. With the road between Foxton and Palmerston North becoming available for use, construction on the railway that reached the centre of Palmerston North was commenced.¹⁰⁷ Palmerston North also served as an overnight stop as the railway carried on up to Wanganui.¹⁰⁸ The Wellington Manawatu Railway was completed in 1886. In 1891, Palmerston North was also a conduit point for the railway that travelled through the Manawatu Gorge through to the Hawkes Bay region.¹⁰⁹ These railway lines allowed Palmerston North to have more efficient connections with other regions, the link to the capital being a significant one. This aided the development of commerce and shopping in the town, with Palmerston North becoming a destination for shopping.



A photograph taken in between 1915 and 1920 of the Palmerston North railway station located on Main Street, its second location after relocating from The Square in 1890.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 162.

¹⁰⁷ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 161.

¹⁰⁸ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 161.

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm McKinnon, "Unsettled Times: 1880-1910," *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, July 24, 2006, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/manawatu-and-horowhenua-region/page-7>

¹¹⁰ "Palmerston North Railway Station," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, 1915-1920, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/0a99763c-3bcf-4793-9236-ba37e3d35b18>

¹¹¹ "Palmerston North Railway Station," *Manawatu Heritage*.

Palmerston North grew to serve as the business centre for its neighbouring rural settlements. One significant way that Palmerston North was able to advertise its increasing prominence was through the annual A & P shows, administered by the Manawatu and West Coast Agricultural and Pastoral Association.¹¹² The first show was held on November 19th, 1886, at the Palmerston North showgrounds, where over 2000 people attended from all areas of the Manawatu.¹¹³ The shows featured a mixture of agriculture and entertainment, allowing relations to be built with fellow farmers and local businesses were given the opportunity to advertise, making it an occasion of regional significance. The A and P show remained an important part of the social calendar, including the experience of shopping in Palmerston North, throughout the period under review.

With suburbs expanding and evolving and The Square increasing in commercial density, Palmerston North steadily became the place for shopping and business-related activity in the Manawatu region. Those who lived in the surrounding rural areas frequented the town as their one stop place for their shopping needs. From the initial stages of settlement, surveyors proposed to clear the land in the central area, which would become known as The Square, with the intention of creating a business centre for the future township.¹¹⁴ Palmerston North's first post-office building was established in The Square in 1875, with a larger office built and opened also in The Square in 1905.¹¹⁵ Additional businesses established in The Square within this time period included banks, a draper and clothier store, a pharmacy, and a land office.¹¹⁶ These initial settlement years saw The Square rapidly become the hub for shopping and business-related activity, which indicated that transport from suburbs and The Square were necessary. In 1878, the town's first transportation service was established that ran cabs from Terrace End to The Square and back, as the majority of the town's population lived in Terrace End at the time.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Geoff Watson, "Sport and Leisure," in Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson, and Kerry Taylor, *City at the Centre*, 237.

¹¹³ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," *City at the Centre*, 237-238.

¹¹⁴ Petersen, *Palmerston North* 153.

¹¹⁵ Elise Meyrick, "Chief Post Office (Former)," *Heritage New Zealand*, July 31, 2012, [https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1255/Chief%20Post%20Office%20\(Former\)](https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1255/Chief%20Post%20Office%20(Former))

¹¹⁶ Anon., "Montage of Four Early Businesses in Palmerston North," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, circa. 1882, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/96984e11-cafa-488f-bbd2-26fbf03a2933>

¹¹⁷ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 154.



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A postcard from 1882 showing four early businesses operating within The Square, including S. Fagan's in the top left, T. Manson, draper and clothier in the top right, Chemist and Druggist in the bottom left, and J. Linton's Land Office in the bottom right.¹¹⁹

The period between 1870 and 1914 served as a developmental phase, establishing the township that grew to be the present-day Palmerston North. By 1911 its population had increased from approximately 800 in 1877 to 10,911 at the 1911 census. Being the largest town in the Manawatu, in terms of population and area, the town had the potential to grow into city status. The already established centralised shopping area was set up to expand greatly, and the foundations of the developing suburbs promised greater extensions.

Part II: 1914-1945; From Town to City

The period of 1914 to 1945 saw Palmerston North transition from a borough to a city. The population increased steadily, education, including tertiary education became more established, and opportunities for shopping continued to develop. With the First and Second World Wars occurring in the first half of the twentieth century, Palmerston North aided in war efforts, with the Awapuni Racecourse being utilised as a temporary army base camp for New Zealand soldiers

¹¹⁸ Anon., "Montage of Four Early Businesses in Palmerston North," *Manawatu Heritage*.

¹¹⁹ Anon., "Montage of Four Early Businesses in Palmerston North," *Manawatu Heritage*.

during the wars.¹²⁰ Despite the monumental impacts of the wars and the Great Depression, Palmerston North was still able to develop at a fast pace during this period. With the population reaching 20,150 by April 1st, 1930, Palmerston North was granted city status.¹²¹ Palmerston North became the eighth city in New Zealand at this time.¹²² A 1930 *Manawatu Standard* article discussing Palmerston North's progress toward becoming a city cited its shopping facilities as an asset to not just the city but New Zealand as a whole stating, "It is a national centre for the Dominion."¹²³

Along with the significant increase in population, job opportunities, and educational options were also aided by the establishment of Massey Agricultural College in 1928 and numerous schools developed to cater for the growing number of families. With the expansion of multiple suburbs in this next period, additional primary schools were opened including Hokowhitu School in 1924, Milson School in 1928, and Russell Street School in 1929.¹²⁴ This alleviated overcrowding in the pre-existing schools and the facilities in the new schools acted as core amenities in the new developing suburbs.¹²⁵ The first intermediate school, Palmerston North Intermediate Normal, was opened in 1941, which further relieved pressure on the primary schools and allowed a new experience of education for pre-teens.¹²⁶ The first secondary school, known as Palmerston North High School, was established at the present day location of Palmerston North Boys High School on Featherston Street in 1902, before being split to two different gendered high schools in 1920, with Palmerston North Girls High School being established on a new site on Fitzherbert Avenue.¹²⁷ The establishment of the secondary school, especially the establishment of separate gender schools, empowered the local educational system to provide different curriculums based on the gendered skills and needs of the time period. Palmerston North Boys' High School offered courses and skill-based learning that

¹²⁰ Manawatu Heritage, "Soldiers at Awapuni Racecourse - 2nd Field Ambulance," Image, September 1, 1942, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/130ff042-6fa4-4925-986b-619839ee5642>

¹²¹ "Borough to City," *Manawatu Herald*, June 14, 1930, 3.

¹²² "Population Growth," *Manawatu Standard*, June 17, 1930, 8.

¹²³ "Dominion's Newest City," *Manawatu Standard*, August 1, 1930, 4.

¹²⁴ Margaret Tennant, "Educating the City," in Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson and Kerry Taylor (eds.) *City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2020), 202.

¹²⁵ Tennant, "Educating the City," 202.

¹²⁶ Tennant, "Educating the City," 203.

¹²⁷ Tennant, "Educating the City," 212.

complemented the manlier work, such as woodworking, carpentry, and other trade-related subjects.¹²⁸ Palmerston North Girls' High School began to offer more domestic-style subjects, such as sewing, cooking, and home nursing classes that would provide the required tools for future homemakers.¹²⁹ By the end of the 1930s, *Pinnacle*, the magazine of Palmerston North's Girls' School, was reporting that many former pupils of the Girls' High went into successful careers, including employment at banks, offices, and teaching.¹³⁰ This in turn, saw parents wanting their children to gain skills beyond domestic related knowledge, creating opportunities for girls to gain the required qualifications to advance into respected careers.¹³¹ Many of the students from these schools would go on to be consumers in the post-war era, some having already experienced working life in after school jobs.

The Inter-War period also saw significant progress in tertiary education in Palmerston North. The tertiary sector would subsequently become an important consumer market in the city. In this regard, the formation of Massey Agricultural College, which first admitted students in 1928, was particularly important.¹³² The Palmerston North Borough Council actively promoted Palmerston North as the ideal location for an agricultural college on the basis of its accessibility via rail and the capacity of the town to support the institution.¹³³ The college initially had 20 employed staff members, and 85 students were enrolled in Massey's first year.¹³⁴ Enrolments were open to women however, women did not begin to enrol until four years after the college was established.¹³⁵ It was not until decades later, in the 1960s, that Massey shifted from a solely agricultural focus to offering additional degrees, including veterinary science and teaching.¹³⁶ The presence of Massey Agricultural College and then Massey University elevated Palmerston North to a distinct position among New Zealand's other provincial towns, with Hamilton the only other provincial town outside the main centres to have a University. Having a growing

¹²⁸ Tennant, "Educating the City," 213.

¹²⁹ Tennant, "Educating the City," 214.

¹³⁰ Tennant, "Educating the City," 214.

¹³¹ Tennant, "Educating the City," 214.

¹³² Tennant, "Educating the City," 220.

¹³³ Tennant, "Educating the City," 220.

¹³⁴ "Massey's Foundation Years - 1927-1945," Massey University, accessed on October 11, 2024, <https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/history-of-massey-university/masseys-foundation-years-19271945/>

¹³⁵ "Massey's Foundation Years - 1927-1945," Massey University.

¹³⁶ "Massey's consolidating years - 1946-1963," Massey University, accessed on October 11, 2024, <https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/history-of-massey-university/masseys-consolidating-years-19461963/>

student and staff population brought new business opportunities to Palmerston North, which are discussed in Chapter Four. Developing businesses in the centre of Palmerston North further progressed the city as a vibrant shopping hub, with the popular department stores Collinson & Cunninghame and C.M. Ross & Co. having provided long-standing sale services for the city prior to and during much of the post-war period.¹³⁷

The first half of the twentieth century saw significant developments in consumer culture as the establishment of new businesses allowed Palmerston North to emerge into a shopping city. Pauline Knuckey's thesis, "A Global Province? The Development of a Movie Culture in a Small Provincial City 1919-1945", investigated the evolution of cinema-going in Palmerston North in the discussed time period, and what trends Palmerstonians enjoyed compared to the United States and United Kingdom.¹³⁸ Knuckey reports that Palmerston North had three theatres operating by 1919; the Palace, the Kosy, and Everybody's, which advanced to five operating theatres by the end of 1945, with the Regent, Mayfair, State, Meteor, and the Vogue replacing the previously mentioned.¹³⁹ Knuckey draws on Caroline Daley's point that "New Zealand was born modern", influenced by major international cities such as New York City and Paris and their movie-going trends.¹⁴⁰ Palmerston North was no different, with the citizens being active participants in joining the leisure activity that became a staple in the city.¹⁴¹ Cinema advertising also became an important forum for promoting the latest fashions.

Palmerston North also saw a rise in retail shopping during the interwar period. *From Swamp to City*, a commemorative publication for Palmerston North's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1937, provides a useful overview of business activity. The majority of consumer activity occurred in central Palmerston North, based around or near The Square. Broad Street, renamed Broadway Avenue in 1926, offered a street filled with businesses and retail stores, including

¹³⁷ "Palmerston North - NZ's Ideal Centre in a World Wide Service," *Manawatu Heritage*, booklet, 1944, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/437efc09-c4dc-401d-b79c-a64a96068a42?child=437efc09-c4dc-401d-b79c-a64a96068a42>

¹³⁸ Pauline Knuckey, "A Global Province? The Development of a Movie Culture in a Small Provincial City 1919-1945" (Master's Thesis, Massey University, 2012), 5, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/6aafa904-6b6d-4aa9-b2f9-551a97cab9b3/content>

¹³⁹ Knuckey, "A Global Province?," 6.

¹⁴⁰ Knuckey, "A Global Province?," 6.

¹⁴¹ Knuckey, "A Global Province?," 6.

department stores, bookstores, butchers and food stores, banks, and theatres.¹⁴² Broadway Avenue became a hub for shopping, with an abundance of car parks available, and with its direct route to The Square, its centralised location meant the centre of town was largely populated with shoppers.¹⁴³ The bookstore, G. H. Bennett and Co., opened in Palmerston North in 1891 in the Square, before relocating due to expansion to Broadway Avenue in 1918, joining the fellow store fronts that were so frequented by consumers.¹⁴⁴



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An aerial image of The Square in central Palmerston North, showing the inner Square, the road and parking surrounding it, and the businesses located along The Square.

Numerous popular retail stores were situated on the streets surrounding The Square, including Smith and Smith Ltd, which opened its first store in The Square in 1929, before relocating to a much larger premises on Rangitikei Street in 1934, due to the increasing demand the paint and wallpaper store received from customers.¹⁴⁶ Department stores were also prominent. The P.D.C Department store became one of Palmerston North's most popular stores, offering a range of retail goods. Originally an Auction Mart run by G. M. Snelson, before becoming The Premier

¹⁴² Manawatu Heritage, "Broadway Avenue looking towards The Square," Image, 1940, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/0687fcbaf6e3-4325-878f-8d4a6fb8c46c>

¹⁴³ National Library of New Zealand, "Broadway Avenue, Palmerston North," New Zealand Government, Image, 1937, <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/23255673>

¹⁴⁴ Billens and Verry, *From Swamp to City*, 86.

¹⁴⁵ Manawatu Heritage, "Aerial View of The Square," *Manawatu Evening Standard*, image, February 26, 1973, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/f7ee79ed-b5af-4817-aa2a-0f92509abcd1>

¹⁴⁶ Billens and Verry, *From Swamp to City*, 63.

Drapery Company in 1915, it was located on the south-eastern corner of The Square.¹⁴⁷ The P.D.C. store became a landmark store in the central business district. It was briefly reconfigured as P.D.C Plaza in 1986 and was sold and demolished in 1988. A second popular department store located on the corner of Broadway Avenue and The Square was Collinson & Cunninghame, established in 1904. Collinson and Cunninghame developed a reputation as a business which offered high quality products and its Christmas Cave became a feature of Palmerston North social life.¹⁴⁸ Collinson and Cunninghame was later sold to the Farmers Trading Company in 1983, a national chain store.¹⁴⁹



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A 1960's photograph of the department store Collinson & Cunninghame, located on the corner of Broadway Avenue and The Square.¹⁵¹

The development of consumer culture was facilitated by improvements in public transport. Then mayor, James Nash, began to undertake significant public work in local public transport in the 1910s. A municipal bus service was established and began its routes in September 1921, its first fleet consisting of four commercial buses that could hold up to 27 passengers.¹⁵² The buses

¹⁴⁷ Billens and Verry, *From Swamp to City*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ Billens and Verry, *From Swamp to City*. 82. Manawatu Heritage, "Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd, Broadway," Image, 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/f30579c9-0414-419a-abe5-b4d4faa169605>

¹⁴⁹ Manawatu Heritage, "Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd, Broadway."

¹⁵⁰ "Collinson and Cunninghame, Broadway Avenue", *Manawatu Heritage*, image, 1960s, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/6e5d6f80-4f8a-4284-8c48-f05a325aafa5>

¹⁵¹ "Collinson and Cunninghame, Broadway Avenue", *Manawatu Heritage*.

¹⁵² Manawatu Heritage, "Early Palmerston North Bus," Image, 1921, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/fac119a9-8d56-408d-94f1-d0afbb219974>

would leave from The Square at scheduled times and would travel around the town's suburbs, providing transport that many took to and from work or to and from town for their shopping needs.¹⁵³ The staff included a manager, inspector and a total of nine drivers.¹⁵⁴ During its first year of operation, 312,965 passengers in total were transported and bus drivers were paid £4.25 per week.¹⁵⁵ The Palmerston North Council advocated bus transportation usage by citizens to encourage regular outings and shopping in the central town area.¹⁵⁶ This bus service allowed easy access from the suburbs to The Square, a positive for the town's businesses and consumer economy.



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A photograph taken in approximately 1940 showing the bus station located in The Square. The bus station transported high volumes of potential consumers and centrally located workers to and from various suburbs around Palmerston North.¹⁵⁸

Alongside the public transportation hubs, The Square also contained facilities for shoppers to accommodate their needs and create a more positive, inclusive shopping and day out experience. One example of this is the ladies restrooms that were built in The Square in 1936, replacing the

For an overview of the development of the bus service in Palmerston North see James Watson, "How Palmerston North Missed the Tram," *Manawatu Journal of History*, 10, 2014, 22-31.

¹⁵³ "The Bus Service," *Manawatu Standard*, September 12, 1921, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Manawatu Heritage, "Early Palmerston North Bus."

¹⁵⁵ Manawatu Heritage, "Early Palmerston North Bus."

¹⁵⁶ Billens and Verry, *From Swamp to City*, 24.

¹⁵⁷ "Bus Station in The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, circa. 1940,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/39264ac6-701d-42ef-a25d-e6c489f234fb>

¹⁵⁸ "Bus Station in The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*.

existing women's toilets that were built in 1918.¹⁵⁹ These rest rooms were designed in the style of art deco, a popular architectural design at the time, and included amenities such as toilets, feeding rooms, and changing rooms, providing mothers a space to attend to their children's and their own needs.¹⁶⁰ Female attendants served restroom goers and for many years, a fee of one penny was required to use the facilities, until this was removed in 1967 when decimalisation was introduced.¹⁶¹ This rest room facility remains situated in The Square to this day, proving to be a necessary accommodation for shoppers and users of the central city district.



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The photograph shows the ladies rest rooms located in The Square, a useful facility particularly for females and mothers when completing their shopping or other tasks in the central area of Palmerston North. The image shows a group of women and a baby stroller sitting outside the rest rooms, indicating the targets of this facility.

Housing also played a role in family stability and the capacity of households to be participating consumers. The Government made housing a priority following the conclusion of the Second World War, as New Zealand initially faced a housing shortage. In this post-war period, 10,000 homes were built each year by the Government, with suburbs advancing into areas that were ideal for raising families.¹⁶³ State housing, however, had been a dedicated initiative for the First

¹⁵⁹ "Ladies' Rest Room," *Manawatu Standard*, 31 July, 1936, 9. "Ladies Rest Rooms, The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, circa 1939, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/f3ddd465-95f9-4d79-8529-d476ab4eac37>

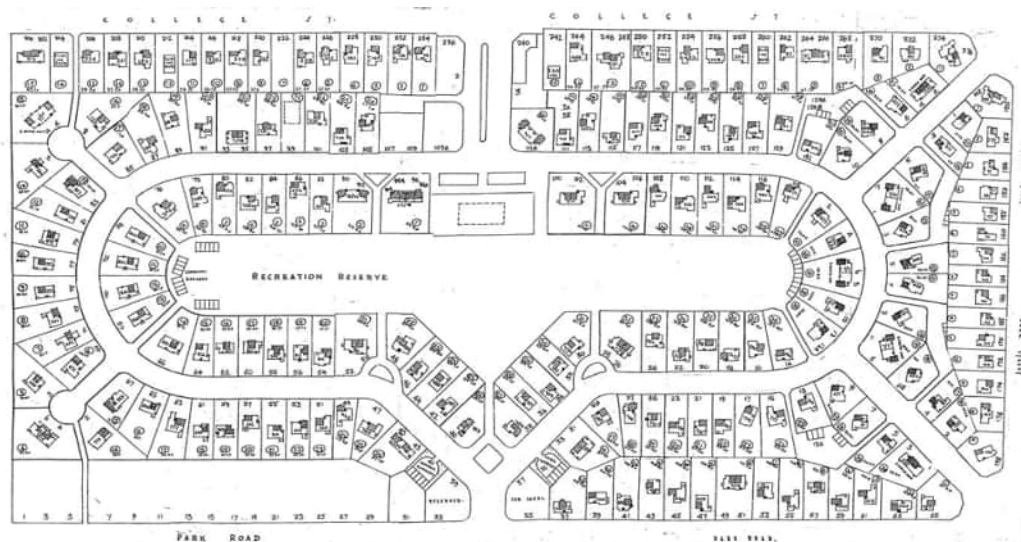
¹⁶⁰ "Ladies Rest, The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, October 19, 2018, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/5148362c-d791-4242-b813-db24c5c17bfa>

¹⁶¹ "Ladies Rest, The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*.

¹⁶² "Ladies Rest Rooms, The Square," *Manawatu Heritage*.

¹⁶³ "History of State Housing," Kāinga Ora, last revised November 13, 2019, <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/en/NZ/about-us/history-of-state-housing/>

Labour Government from the time they were elected in 1935. Palmerston North was a prime example of the success of this initiative. The Savage Crescent housing development is a distinctive area of Palmerston North's history, as it was advertised by the Labour Government as an example of their success in providing state housing. Located in the West End suburb, Savage Crescent, prior to its housing development was a block of land reserved for educational purposes.¹⁶⁴ The Government purchased fifty acres of land and development began in 1938, with 245 state houses being built by 1945.¹⁶⁵ Named after then Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage, Savage Crescent state houses were designed to be modern, in a 'garden suburb', with a central reserve in the middle of the development to promote leisure and a safe community for families.¹⁶⁶



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A copy of R H Hammond's (housing consultant for the Department of Housing) original plan for the Savage Crescent state housing development.¹⁶⁸ The plan shows the housing layout and the recreation reserve in the middle.

The Savage Crescent housing development was a government effort to encourage multiple elements of the new ideal life for New Zealand families progressing into the post-war period.

¹⁶⁴ Alaric Bragg, "The Model Suburb: The Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct, Palmerston North," (Bachelor degree report, Massey University, 2004), 32-41, 43. <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/b6c6807b-a1f7-492f-83fd-0b3d0c95361a/content>

"Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct," Manawatu Heritage, image and description, circa. 1937, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/3546bb62-48cb-43de-9886-0773e8ec3a17>

¹⁶⁵ "Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct," Manawatu Heritage.

¹⁶⁶ Bragg, "The Model Suburb," 41. "Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct," Manawatu Heritage.

¹⁶⁷ "Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct," Manawatu Heritage.

¹⁶⁸ "Savage Crescent State Housing Precinct," Manawatu Heritage.

These driving ideals from the government included a look into the ideal family scenario, termed as the ‘nuclear family’, which involved a typical New Zealand family where the husband was the breadwinner, the wife remained the home keeper, and who had at least two or three children. These ideal families would typically reside in a suburban neighbourhood, with space for leisure and a healthy, functioning home with funds to spend on the advancing technology of home appliances. Savage Crescent was established with this idea in mind, advertising the new state housing development to the rest of the nation as an ideal place for young families to raise their children. State housing prior to and after the Second World War was an important investment for the government, as one of the concerns behind the initiatives was healthy housing for children to be raised in, who represented New Zealand’s future.¹⁶⁹ Another element of Savage Crescent that would subsequently be important was its use in campaigns encouraging British immigration to New Zealand. Living in idyllic suburban areas such as Savage Crescent offered a positive change from the compacted housing typically seen in Britain at the time.¹⁷⁰

Despite the advancements in shopping, recreational facilities, and education, the Great Depression still impacted Palmerston North just as it did the rest of the country. The city suffered significant economic hardship and social disturbances.¹⁷¹ Approximately 10% of the city’s working population lost their jobs between 1931 and 1935, with the worst affected being unskilled labourers and tradesmen, whilst many retail and factory workers received reduced wages and hours.¹⁷² Local historian and former city archivist Ian Matheson described the Government’s response to unemployment rates in his book *Council and Community: 125 Years of Local Government in Palmerston North 1877-2002* as “inadequate”.¹⁷³ Little funding was provided for relief work and the unemployment benefit was not established until 1934.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, it was up to local communities to provide further help for their people, with the

¹⁶⁹ Bragg, “The Model Suburb,” 5, 12, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Bragg, “The Model Suburb,” 12, 16.

¹⁷¹ Matheson, *Council and Community*, 32.

¹⁷² Matheson, *Council and Community*, 32.

¹⁷³ Matheson, *Council and Community*, 32.

¹⁷⁴ Matheson, *Council and Community*, 32.

popular Palmerston North mayor, Gus Mansford, establishing a relief fund dependent on donations and a depot for clothing and food for those in need.¹⁷⁵

Part III: 1945-85; An Expanding City

Palmerston North underwent a marked transformation in the four decades following the end of the Second World War. With the post-war period came the baby boom, seen across the world but particularly evident in New Zealand, with the population rising from 1.7 million in 1945 to approximately 3 million in 1975.¹⁷⁶ The nation's average family increased from two children to four, with both Pakeha and Māori families increasing their population over the coming decades.¹⁷⁷ This meant that more families were receiving family benefit payments which in turn, allowed more comfortable lifestyles. Palmerston North grew rapidly in this period, exceeding national growth rates. Palmerston North's population in 1945 was 27,294, and it steadily increased over the next four decades.¹⁷⁸ By 1956 the population had increased to 37,775, by 1966 it numbered 49,140, by 1976 it had grown to 63,873, and by 1986, Palmerston North's total population was 67,405.¹⁷⁹ The causes for the population boost can be attributed to multiple factors. Firstly, Massey University, which, from the 1960s became one of New Zealand's most successful tertiary institutions, brought an increasing number of students to the city, boosting both the population and the economy. With Palmerston North Teachers College established in 1956 and Massey becoming established as an autonomous university with additional degrees offered from 1964, students and staff numbers rapidly increased over the coming years.¹⁸⁰ In 1964, Massey University had 1,877 students enrolled, which required its buildings and facilities to greatly increase in the coming years.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Matheson, *Council and Community*, 32. Liz Ward and Geoff Watson, "Towards a Political Biography," in Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson and Kerry Taylor (eds.), *City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North*, (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2020), 166-167.

¹⁷⁶ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 19.

¹⁷⁷ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 19.

¹⁷⁸ Malcolm McKinnon, "Manawatū and Horowhenua region - Population," Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed October 14, 2024, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/interactive/9500/manawatu-and-horowhenua-town-populations-1881-2013>

¹⁷⁹ McKinnon, "Manawatū and Horowhenua region - Population."

¹⁸⁰ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 230.

¹⁸¹ "Massey becomes a university and expands - 1964-1992," Massey University, accessed on October 14, 2024, <https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/history-of-massey-university/massey-becomes-a-university-and-expands-1964-1992>



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Aerial view of Massey University in 1973, which shows the ring road surrounding the campus, the dormitories at the bottom, and the large building to the top right was the new Agricultural Science block being constructed.¹⁸³

Trading hours in Palmerston North impacted the levels of consumerism, which included the consequences of trading days and late-night shopping hours. Before 1945, shopkeepers had greater flexibility on trading hours, sometimes having the liberty to be open until as late as 11pm, with grocers in the 1930s having typical trading hours of 48 hours per week.¹⁸⁴ From 1945, lasting until 1980, the Shop Trading Hours Amendment Act was introduced, limiting these previously flexible hours and restricting trading on Saturdays.¹⁸⁵ There was one ‘late night’ allowed per week, Friday, which allowed stores to be open until 9pm.¹⁸⁶ The new Act allowed retailers to have more leisure time, particularly on Saturdays, but meant that consumers had to factor in these restricted hours when planning their shopping needs. The late nights on Fridays offered a sense of night-life in Palmerston North, offering leisure activities such as going to the cinema or shopping, which became particularly popular in the leadup to Christmas.

¹⁸² “Massey University,” Manawatu Heritage, Palmerston North City Council, image, February 26, 1973, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/b2e088e2-45d3-4fdf-93b2-3f9f926e5d16>

¹⁸³ “Massey University,” Manawatu Heritage.

¹⁸⁴ Carl Walrond, “Food Shops - Shopping Hours,” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, September 1, 2016, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/food-shops/page-7>

¹⁸⁵ Pilkington, “Remember what we used to do on a Friday night.”

¹⁸⁶ Pilkington, “Remember what we used to do on a Friday night.”

The post-war period also saw a considerable expansion of leisure facilities, reflecting the greater amount of free-time available to citizens. Swimming was a popular activity for both children and adults. The Municipal Baths, originally founded in 1896 before relocating to Ashley Street in central Palmerston North in 1917, offered heated pools and hosted carnivals and swimming clubs.¹⁸⁷ In 1959 the City Council deemed that the Municipal Baths could no longer meet the demands of the public, plans were initiated to build a much larger swimming complex that could offer safe swimming for families.¹⁸⁸ In October 1966, the Lido Aquatic Centre opened on Park Road in the West End suburb that hosted five pools, two of which were of international standards for swim training.¹⁸⁹ Then Mayor, Gilbert Rennie, claimed that The Lido's pools as "the largest of its type in New Zealand", signifying Palmerston North as more than a significant regional city, but a national one.¹⁹⁰ Costing half a million dollars to complete, The Lido became a staple in Palmerston North's recreational facilities. The development of recreational facilities had implications for consumer culture, with products such as bicycles being promoted as means of transport to and from these amenities.



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An aerial view of the Lido Aquatic Centre circa 1970 to circa 1989.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 209.

¹⁸⁸ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 209.

¹⁸⁹ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 209.

¹⁹⁰ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," *City at the Centre*, 250. Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, *Palmerston North's Lido* (Public Relations Organisation: Palmerston North, c. 1966).

¹⁹¹ "Lido Aquatic Centre," Manawatu Heritage, Palmerston North City Council, image, circa 1970 to circa 1989, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/2ac31c27-81ea-4ed8-ba41-4754e2d0da4a>

¹⁹² "Lido Aquatic Centre," Manawatu Heritage.

The additional facilities that were introduced during this period indicate how the city was advancing as a leisurely, educational, cultural city.¹⁹³ A museum was first established in 1906 by the Manawatu Philosophical Society, located in the old library building on Main Street East.¹⁹⁴ By the 1920s, the society was unable to hold the required memberships so the council took over ownership of the museum's collections.¹⁹⁵ In 1967, the newly established Manawatu Museum Society called for the re-establishment of a museum, which eventually opened on Amesbury Street, close to The Square, in 1971.¹⁹⁶ The museum featured displays of Māori culture, maps of the city, and historical objects relating to the natural landscape and dairy industry.¹⁹⁷

With the increased population and interest in central shopping activity, cars and car parking in the city centre became a topic of discussion. Traffic congestion needed to be reduced, particularly in the central locations. Accordingly *The Proposed Transportation Plan for Palmerston North* was put forward to solve traffic issues.¹⁹⁸ This plan, which proposed modifications to existing streets, was rejected by the Ministry of Works, which instead proposed ideas such as overpasses at major intersections and the construction of a new bridge over the river, all of which ratepayers were heavily against.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the road around The Square was made to be one-way in 1966, however that system was abolished in 1970.²⁰⁰ This means that no lasting progress was made in fixing the issue of traffic congestion in the city centre, with heavy vehicles and traffic build-up only increasing over the years.²⁰¹

Car parking in the city remained a debated subject during the 1960s and 1970s. Business owners in the central city advocated for parking and vehicle access around the Square as to promote accessibility to their business, while the City Council expressed some concerns over the

¹⁹³ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," 252.

¹⁹⁴ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," 252.

¹⁹⁵ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," 252.

¹⁹⁶ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," 252.

¹⁹⁷ Watson, "Sport and Leisure," 252.

¹⁹⁸ Poole, "Building the City," 111.

¹⁹⁹ Poole, "Building the City," 111.

²⁰⁰ Poole, "Building the City," 111.

²⁰¹ Poole, "Building the City," 111.

continued use of car parking in this area.²⁰² Two associations that advocated for parking meters and the continued allowance of vehicle access and car parking in town were the Manawatu Retailers' Association and the Manawatu Automobile Association.²⁰³ Eventually, parking meters were introduced to Palmerston North central streets in 1961, creating a steady flow of income for the council while also providing further job opportunities in the form of parking meter officers and those who collected the coins from the parking meters.²⁰⁴ Firstly established in the square, parking meters were further installed in surrounding streets, including the nearby Cuba Street in 1962.²⁰⁵ Isaac Heaphy's Thesis on Coleman Place (a street which connects George Street to The Square) also notes that it was closed off to vehicle traffic for a period during the 1970s in an attempt to create an inner city shopping mall for consumers, similar to others then being created in New Zealand.²⁰⁶



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²⁰² Manawatu Heritage, "Deputation and Parking Meters," Palmerston North City Council, image description, September 20, 1960, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/0618f516-78ba-4b22-bb2d-fe71cdbdeb1a>

²⁰³ Manawatu Heritage, "Deputation and Parking Meters."

²⁰⁴ Manawatu Heritage, "To Become a Regular Job: Parking Metre Wardens," Palmerston North City Council, image, May 22, 1961, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/4f2d952b-28eb-41f8-84aa-f32d52833325>

²⁰⁵ Manawatu Heritage, "More Parking Meters in Cuba Street," Palmerston North City Council, image, December 1962, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/d6a0eb80-aa03-49ff-9a7b-a033bb82a272>

²⁰⁶ Isaac Heaphy, "Forgotten Cornerstone: A History of Coleman Place in Palmerston North from the Late Nineteenth-Century to the Early Twenty-First-Century," (MA Thesis, Massey University, 2023), 71, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/ad69f992-32ed-4d71-9f98-f6d66d49ece2/content>

²⁰⁷ "The Shops in The Square in the 1960s," *Manawatu Heritage*, image, 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/1835333d-125d-4556-bc7c-e785efc0f322>

A photograph taken in 1966 of one side of The Square, showing some of the central shops and businesses, as well as the abundance of car parking spaces made available for consumer activities.²⁰⁸

Suburbs within Palmerston North also evolved greatly during this period, a development with significant implications for shopping culture. Suburban shopping, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, allowed citizens to act as consumers while remaining in their neighbourhoods.²⁰⁹ Terrace End, Palmerston North's first established suburb, was, and remains, an important suburban shopping centre, boasting a variety of stores including food and merchandise stores. Awapuni became much more densely populated, with a suburban shopping centre that developed significantly in the 1960s.²¹⁰ The shopping centre located on the corners of Pitama and College Street which hosted only a single dairy in 1955, developed significantly during the 1960s with the addition of a chemist, barber shop, service station, and other stores during the 1960s.²¹¹ The suburbs of Highbury and Takaro also saw significant developments in their shopping centres as their population increased to become the most populated suburbs in Palmerston North during the 1960s.²¹² With a combined population of 9763 in 1969, the suburbs hosted 24 suburban shops within shopping centres.²¹³ These examples give a glimpse into how suburban shopping expanded considerably in scope during the post-war period, allowing citizens to participate in consumer activities without the need to travel into the central town to complete their necessary shopping. Chapter Three goes into greater detail about how suburban shopping impacted local citizens and the trends and patterns seen in suburban shopping behaviours.

²⁰⁸ "The Shops in The Square in the 1960s," *Manawatu Heritage*.

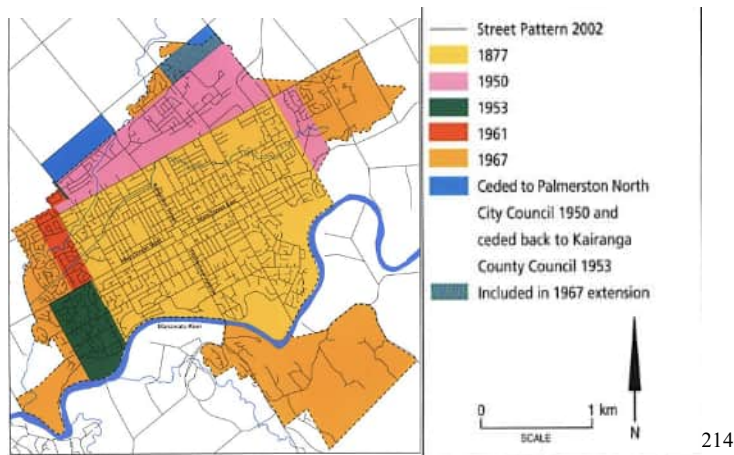
²⁰⁹ Christine Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," MA Thesis, Massey University, 1969, 23.

²¹⁰ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 20.

²¹¹ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 20.

²¹² Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 36.

²¹³ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 36.



Map showing the development of Palmerston North over the decades. Missing is Massey University, which is located in the bottom left of the map, beside the orange section and past the Manawatu River.

The evolution of Palmerston North in the post-war era contributed to its self-image as a progressive, nationally significant city that offered generous amenities to its citizens and visitors. In 1956, a group of civic-minded Palmerstonians, formed the Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, to promote the city. Among their many initiatives, they published visitors guides to Palmerston North and other promotional publications, many of which included advertisements for local shops.²¹⁵ A 1966 promotional publication for Manawatu asserted “recognising Palmerston North’s importance as a regional city, several large Auckland stores have established themselves here in recent years”, which may have been a reference to Milne and Choyce.²¹⁶ The publication also noted “The regional functions of this area are particularly evident on Thursday and Fridays, when, with the inward migration of farmers, the parking lots are full and the shops crowded.”²¹⁷ The Palmerston North centennial celebrations, held in 1971, were particularly significant in projecting an image of Palmerston North as a ‘modern’ city.²¹⁸ The main parade attracted approximately 10,000 attendees and over 90 floats, and social events were held to

²¹⁴ “Council and Community: 125 Years of Local Government in Palmerston North 1877-2002,” Manawatu Heritage, map, 2003, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/cb780580-c861-41eb-9fc0-482eaebbf10b?child=cb780580-c861-41eb-9fc0-482eaebbf10b>

²¹⁵ Andrew N. Watson, “The Community Catalyst: Five Projects of the Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation,” *Manawatu Journal of History*, no. 4 (2008): 69-75.

²¹⁶ Grant, *Pressing On*, 19.

²¹⁷ Grant, *Pressing On*, 19.

²¹⁸ Petersen, *Palmerston North*, 1. For a more detailed discussion of the centennial celebrations see Margaret Tennant, “Performing the Local: City, Commemoration and Modernity in the Provinces,” *New Zealand Journal of History*, 56, 2, 2022, 2-26.

commemorate the achievement, as well as the construction of various buildings that were named in relation to the centennial event.²¹⁹ The centennial events highlighted and showcased the progression of Palmerston North over the previous 100 years, and promised a bright future to come. As seen in these last three sections detailing the evolution of Palmerston North and its history, the city presented itself as a nationally known location for not only shopping, but as a place of family-based values which was a good place to bring up children. Promotional material for Palmerston North in this era emphasised its pattern of steady, incremental, planned progress which had avoided ‘boom and bust’ cycles.²²⁰

Between 1870 and 1914 Palmerston North established itself as an important commercial centre of regional significance. It became an important service centre to its rural hinterland and, courtesy of its position in the rail network, a transportation hub of national significance. During its formative period The Square became the primary location for major department stores, a status it retained throughout the period under review. The interwar period saw a consolidation of shopping in the Square, complemented by some developments in suburban shops. The development of the bus network connected the suburbs to The Square, allowing shoppers in newly formed suburbs such as Savage Crescent easier access to shops. The city expanded significantly in both population and area in the four decades following the Second World War. Massey Agricultural College attaining full university status in 1964 played a particularly significant role in the growth of Palmerston North in both cultural and economic terms. This expansion would have implications for the further development of suburban shopping. The next chapter focuses on shopping and consumer activity in the centre of the city in the post-war period.

²¹⁹ Manawatu Heritage, “Centennial Parade - brewery float,” Palmerston North City Council, image, March 1971, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/44f1ac04-8a74-470e-abf6-e2022fa695c6>

²²⁰ Margaret Tennant and Geoff Watson, “Conclusion,” in Margaret Tennant, Geoff Watson and Kerry Taylor (eds.) *City at the Centre: A History of Palmerston North* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2020), 306-13.

Chapter 2 - Consumer Trends and Central City Department Stores

This chapter focuses primarily on shopping activity within the city's centre and The Square. The Square remained the focal point for shopping among Palmerstonians between 1945 and 1985. The chapter begins with a discussion of gender and shopping in a national context, investigating how and why women shopped more than men and the types of products that were directed to women as potential customers. Household appliances, which became something of a status symbol in the postwar period are then evaluated as a prominent expression of consumer culture in the period under review. Following this discussion, a case study will be presented which looks at the Evans Family, a government-selected family from Palmerston North, used to promote migration to New Zealand in the early post-war period. Elements of consumer culture can be discerned in the publicised images of the Evan's Family.

The second half of the chapter focuses on the main department stores present in Palmerston North's city centre during the post-war period: C. M Ross & Co.; Milnes & Choyce; D.I.C. (These three stores operated out of the same building); Collinson and Cunninghame and the Premier Drapery Company (PDC). It focuses on the experiences they provided shoppers and how they presented themselves to the public. This investigation is conducted in part through analysing advertisements from the department stores mentioned above.

Gender and Shopping in Postwar New Zealand

As the nature of shopping varied among different types of consumers, it is important to investigate one of the primary groups that made a significant impact on consumerism in the post-war period: women. In the period under review, women did the majority of shopping for households.²²¹ With the post-war period seeing large amounts of women not working, shopping was generally more accessible for women than it was for men. Shopping for the family was often a women's role and was also seen as a leisure activity, with shopping becoming a popular hobby,

²²¹ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 351-52. Michael Belgrave, *Becoming Aotearoa: A History of New Zealand* (Massey University Press: Auckland, 2024), 398-99.

a time where women could also socialise with other homemakers.²²² Even shopping for men's clothing was a predominantly female activity for much of this period. Belgrave records that 'until the mid-1960s, when men's fashion became more individualised and exuberant, married men often delegated the purchase of their entire wardrobes to their wives, and single men to their mothers.'²²³ With the post-war period came rising employment rates and a feeling of prosperity in family dynamics. The possession of goods in this period indicated divisions of class, as author Peter Gibbons points out that the ownership of quality goods affected individual and social relationships.²²⁴ The earlier decades of the post-war period saw traditional values intact, with these values being challenged as the period progressed.²²⁵ Accepting their primary role as homemakers was sometimes accompanied by a desire for independence, especially as the Second World War brought up the debate of whether men and women should become equal counterparts.²²⁶ For the most part, men and women had different spheres of life in this time, with men usually acting as the breadwinner whilst the women minded the home and the children.²²⁷ With taking care of the home came the responsibility of shopping, both for home goods and for the clothing of the family. Necessary shopping had always been completed primarily by women, but as prosperous times arrived for many families, leisurely shopping also became a popular aspect of the female's world. Also, as the days of purchasing fabric and making your own clothes were becoming less common, clothes shopping was a particularly significant area of consumerism in the post-war period.²²⁸ As discussed earlier, women sought greater independence following the conclusion of the war, which typically meant many women wished to enter the workforce. Those that did work often went into feminine roles, which varied but included working in factories manufacturing clothes and seamstress roles.²²⁹ This enhanced a woman's knowledge and interest in clothing, further including fashion into the women's

²²² Jock Phillips, "Men, Women and Leisure Since the Second World War," *The Gendered Kiwi*, 215.

²²³ Belgrave, *Becoming Aotearoa*, 399.

²²⁴ Peter Gibbons, 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History,' *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37, 1 (2003), p. 43 cited in Chris Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," *New Zealand Journal of History* 40, no. 2 (2006): 133,

²²⁵ May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*, 75.

²²⁶ May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*, 75.

²²⁷ May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*, 75.

²²⁸ Fiona McKergow, "'Just the Thing': Shopping for Clothes in Palmerston North," in *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand*, eds. Bronwyn Labrum, Fiona McKergow, and Stephanie Gibson (Auckland: Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2007), 132.

²²⁹ McKergow, "'Just the Thing': Shopping for Clothes in Palmerston North," 138.

sphere.²³⁰ As far as leisure goes, gender played a role in segregating what activities were typically enjoyed by men and women.²³¹ Despite popular activities such as sport being enjoyed by both genders, leisure was typically influenced by magazines and newspapers, which separated men and women based on the appropriate interests.²³² Pages and articles dedicated to women included recipe ideas, knitting and sewing tips, shopping information, and gossip about celebrities and alike.²³³ Pages dedicated to men included sports and masculine entertainment, clearly driving a line between gender and what leisure should look like for the two groups.²³⁴

To understand how and why women acted as important consumers in Palmerston North's post-war period, it is important to understand how they gained the means to complete their shopping, especially purchasing items beyond household necessities. Of course, socio-economic variations meant that some households had larger quantities of income than others, meaning funds for shopping were more available compared to others. For those that had two or more wage earners in the home, spending money may have also been a more liberal aspect. For households where the husband was the sole breadwinner, many took the approach of providing a domestic allowance to the wife, which may have included funds for the family shopping.²³⁵ Women who were employed often gave their paychecks to their husband who would manage the finances, delegating money for shopping purposes.²³⁶ Of course, this was not the case in all households, and this differs for single women who would likely manage their own finances; however, in a typical post-war family household, it was usually the husband who would manage and delegate financial budgets.

An important aspect when discussing family finances in the post-war period is the introduction of family welfare benefits, intended to aid New Zealand families financially. The Labour Government first came into power in 1935, led by Michael Joseph Savage, and promised to end

²³⁰ McKergow, "'Just the Thing': Shopping for Clothes in Palmerston North," 138.

²³¹ Phillips, "Men, Women and Leisure Since the Second World War," *The Gendered Kiwi*, 215.

²³² Phillips, "Men, Women and Leisure Since the Second World War," 215.

²³³ Phillips, "Men, Women and Leisure Since the Second World War," 215.

²³⁴ Phillips, "Men, Women and Leisure Since the Second World War," 215.

²³⁵ Patrick Barrett, *Families, Work and the Welfare State*, (Massey University: Palmerston North, 2000), 76.

²³⁶ Barrett, *Families, Work and the Welfare State*, 78.

the Depression disparity and guide the nation into a more prosperous era.²³⁷ As the Second World War concluded, New Zealand initially experienced an inflation of consumer prices as the economy attempted to stabilise.²³⁸ With the next national election occurring in 1949, the National Party promised to lift important restrictions and increase a general freedom of choice, which ultimately won over the voters.²³⁹ With encouragement from the government to retain the nuclear family idea of a home-maker mother and a breadwinner father, there was a need to aid families to ensure living standards were met.²⁴⁰

Prior to National's election win, the Labour Government established the universal family benefit in 1946, which was paid directly to mothers who had children from the age of newborns to sixteen years.²⁴¹ The benefit aided 485,000 children in the year it was first established with the nation's total population at the time being less than 2 million.²⁴² With a bonus of 10 shillings per child per week, the benefit increased the average three-child family's net income by one third, which enabled many families to keep the wife at home, as per the government's ideal scenario.²⁴³ This was also a significant boost in the amount each family had spare to spend beyond household bills, including funds for shopping. This enabled a form of independence for many women also, allowing wives and mothers to have additional income that could be spent on herself and the children.²⁴⁴ In addition to the family benefit, many families enjoyed subsidised medical care and household staples such as milk, bread and butter were also subsidised. Belgrave suggests these policies were implemented with the intention of encouraging women to be stay-at-home mothers.²⁴⁵

²³⁷ Brickell, "The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture," 133.

²³⁸ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 12.

²³⁹ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 13.

²⁴⁰ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 12.

²⁴¹ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 18.

²⁴² Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 18.

²⁴³ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 18. Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 492.

²⁴⁴ Carlyon, and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 18.

²⁴⁵ Belgrave, *Becoming Aotearoa*, 398-99.

Shopping for Appliances

Moving past the Second World War into the 1950s, historians have agreed that this decade in particular was the beginning of the ‘consumer society’ as Terry Moyle described it in his book *Every Home Should Have One: The Appliance Age in New Zealand*.²⁴⁶ Moyle argues that the influence of American culture alongside the increasing prosperity of New Zealand’s economy were factors promoting the rise of consumerism in this particular generation.²⁴⁷ The significantly increasing birth rates, known as the ‘baby-boom’, resulted in the need for greater housing, resulting in a great demand for home appliances.²⁴⁸ Home appliances meant convenience, and as Moyle stated, a popular gift to purchase for others due to the popularity of home appliances rising.²⁴⁹ As Moyle recalls, home appliances were common prizes for raffles and radio and game competitions, creating great advertising for their place in the common New Zealand home.²⁵⁰ With imports from overseas having great success rates, the increasing rates of New Zealand made products and appliances began to boom in this period also.²⁵¹ Belich suggests that in the post-war period home appliances became more affordable to a greater number of women, noting that by 1966 New Zealand households were said to be the ‘most electrified in the World.’²⁵² With the Labour Government establishing the Industrial Efficiency Bill in 1936, the government obtained greater power to regulate manufacturing industries.²⁵³ Advertising for New Zealand made products created a sense of identity within New Zealanders and the industries, with people more likely to purchase goods that were locally made.²⁵⁴ This had an additional benefit of providing further job opportunities for New Zealanders.²⁵⁵ Belgrave suggests that appliances became markers of class status, in that they allowed middle-class women to dispense with domestic servants while they also became increasingly accessible to working-class families.

²⁴⁶ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 99.

²⁴⁷ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 99.

²⁴⁸ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 99. See also Graeme Dunstall, “The Social Pattern,” in The G.W. Rice (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (Oxford University Press: Auckland, 1992 edn.), 459.

²⁴⁹ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 8.

²⁵⁰ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 8.

²⁵¹ Moyle, “*Every Home Should Have One*,” 60.

²⁵² Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 494.

²⁵³ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 60.

²⁵⁴ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 60.

²⁵⁵ Moyle, *Every Home Should Have One*, 60.

Although electrical appliances were marketed on the basis of making household chores easier and less time consuming for housewives, Jean-Marie O'Donnell argues that they did not serve this purpose to the degree that is commonly believed.²⁵⁶ O'Donnell believes that despite housework being revolutionised by these newer appliances, women were in no way liberated by their household chores, with appliances simply acting as an aid to the housework.²⁵⁷ Her study involved interviewing women whose roles were housewives in the period from 1935-1956, who generally all agreed that appliances may have made the chores easier, but not less time-consuming.²⁵⁸ The washing machine, for example, was less strenuous than hand-washing clothes was not required, and the refrigerator meant that women did not have to grocery shop as often, but these benefits did not mean the overall work of the house was significantly eased.²⁵⁹

O'Donnell also investigated how these new appliances were advertised to consumers.²⁶⁰ Household appliances were typically advertised to and for women, with ploys used that aligned with the typical stereotypes of the era.²⁶¹ One characteristic of advertising was the suggestion that the purchase of housework appliances would lead to a happier husband, a way for women to save time and energy, supposedly, on household chores in order to make more time for their husband and family, all while having a cleaner home for the husband to retreat to after work.²⁶² Other advertisements were centred towards men, however this was in regard to men purchasing electric appliances for their wives as a gift.²⁶³

O'Donnell's argument questioning how beneficial electric appliances actually were for women in the home also factored in the extra housework women were expected to do, because the post-war period put a greater emphasis on higher standards of domesticity for women.²⁶⁴ Despite

²⁵⁶ Jean-Marie O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework: Changing Patterns of Domestic Work, 1935-1956," in *Women in History 2*, ed. Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant (Bridget Williams Books: Wellington, 1992), 169.

²⁵⁷ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 182.

²⁵⁸ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 182.

²⁵⁹ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 181.

²⁶⁰ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 175.

²⁶¹ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 175.

²⁶² O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 175.

²⁶³ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework,' 176.

²⁶⁴ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework.' 183.

these limitations, new appliances indeed made life somewhat easier, and women grew to depend on these appliances as society shifted into a more technological modern world.²⁶⁵

Evans Family as a Case Study of Postwar Shopping and Consumerism

The common usage and availability of appliances, discussed in the previous section, is evident in the promotional material used in relation to the Evans family in Palmerston North. The Evans family, as documented on *Manawatu Heritage*, were selected by the government in 1947 as models of ideal living conditions in a typical New Zealand household, where a photographic series was produced that followed their lives as part of a wider campaign to attract British immigrants to New Zealand.²⁶⁶ The photographs were intended to display the high living standards New Zealanders were experiencing in the post-war society, endeavouring to present New Zealand as an ideal nation to reside in.²⁶⁷ Residing in one of the new state houses in Mansford Place, a small street connected to Savage Crescent in Palmerston North, the family of six posed in and around their home to show the lifestyle of the typical nuclear family.²⁶⁸ Elements of this newly presented nuclear family lifestyle include the evolving incentives introduced by the Government during this period, such as the family benefit, which is included in the photograph collection of the Evans family.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ O'Donnell, "'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework," 183.

²⁶⁶ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage, image and description, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/234ffcdb-c9b7-4a3e-9786-fd792ceb0f6a>

²⁶⁷ "Typical N.Z. Family," *Central Hawkes Bay Press*, volume 43, issue 44, February 22, 1947, 2, https://paperspast-natlib-govt-nz.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/newspapers/CHBP19470222.2.28.9?end_date=31-12-1950&items_per_page=10&query=evans+family+palmerston+north&snippet=true&start_date=01-01-1945

²⁶⁸ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁶⁹ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs Evans collecting the Family Benefit," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/ccadf722-527b-4714-a791-fb84878bba73>



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A photograph of Mrs. Evans collecting the Family Benefit payment. It is likely that this photograph was intended to portray the incentives for New Zealand families offered by the Government in the post-war period to aid with living costs.²⁷¹

Many of these photographs taken also show the mother completing housework with the popular home appliances of the time, suggesting that these items were commonly used by New Zealand families. The following image shows the wife and mother, Betty Evans, in the kitchen of her state home, appearing next to the Atlas electrical stove.²⁷² State homes were designed with modern kitchens, including electric stoves, an increasingly popular stove for New Zealand homes. State houses in the pre- and post-war period were a significant stimulus for New Zealand home manufacturers, with the Scott Brothers firm producing 200,000 Atlas electrical stoves from 1931 to 1957.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans collecting the Family Benefit,” Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷¹ “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans collecting the Family Benefit,” Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷² “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the kitchen, 5 Mansford Place,” Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/948c637c-7ebe-4ed4-80af-528e528d9a30>

²⁷³ “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the kitchen, 5 Mansford Place,” Manawatu Heritage.



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Betty Evans in her 5 Mansford Place home's kitchen, where the modernised kitchen of the post-war period is seen. Included in new state house kitchens included floor to ceiling cupboards, modern countertops, and electrical stoves, advertised for convenience and efficiency.²⁷⁵

Another image that represents the typical work of women in this era sees Betty Evans completing household chores, vacuuming the living room with an Electrolux vacuum cleaner.²⁷⁶ Mrs. Evans is pictured with a modern vacuum cleaner for the time, within the surroundings of a living room that hosted the popular styles of the 1940s and 1950s.²⁷⁷ The design of Savage Crescent homes and other state houses around the country utilised the popular decor trends of the era, acting as advertisements that the new state houses were suitable for those wishing for modern living.²⁷⁸ Mrs. Evans posing with the modern vacuum cleaner indicated New Zealand women had access to the many 'labour saving' devices that made life easier for housewives, thereby enhancing the living conditions for the nuclear family.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the kitchen, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷⁵ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the kitchen, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷⁶ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/d2875376-1d37-498d-8d9d-3a4aca30a395>

²⁷⁷ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷⁸ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁷⁹ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage. May, *Minding Children, Managing Men*, 111.



One of the photographs from the 'Evans Family Collection', showing Betty Evans vacuuming the living room with a modern vacuum cleaner. The living room has elements of the popular styles of the era, including the couch and the carpet, with family photographs hung on the wall to represent the important idea of family.²⁸¹

As stated previously, the Savage Crescent area of state housing was chosen by the New Zealand Government to display how the environment was an ideal location to raise a family, with the surrounding suburb presented as a relaxed, leisurely setting for children to thrive. The Evans Family Collection deliberately included images of everyday life to present the core value of family to its audience, through ordinary family routines and leisure activities. One such image shows the Evans family eating dinner in the dining room, suggesting that living in New Zealand enabled families to spend quality time together at the end of the working day.²⁸² Of particular interest here is the framed photograph of Michael Joseph Savage, Prime Minister of the First Labour Government between 1935 and 1940, hung on the wall behind the family.²⁸³ The placement of this photograph on the wall indicates a nod to Savage's state housing initiatives and the Labour Party's focus on working families. Photographs of Savage were common in many New Zealand households in this period due to his efforts in social security impacts on New Zealand.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸¹ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans vacuuming the living room, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸² "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/90d33f4e-bbf2-47cb-9b7b-759657d23a55>

²⁸³ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸⁴ Barry Gustafson, "Savage, Michael Joseph," Te Ara: the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, published in 1998, accessed January 28, 2026, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4s9/savage-michael-joseph>



A photograph included in the Evans Family Collection, showing the family eating dinner in their 5 Mansford Place state house.

Another object behind the family represents the types of appliances commonly used by typical New Zealand families in the post-war period, such as the sewing machine seen to the left of the photograph.²⁸⁶ Sewing machines, such as the popular Singer machine seen in the Evans family dining room, were a common appliance for Palmerston North families to own.²⁸⁷ Making clothes for the family was still a typical role for many homemakers in the early post-war period, with purchasing fabric for one's own creation generally less expensive than purchasing new clothes. Sewing was also a popular hobby among women, with *Manawatu Heritage* stating that Mrs. Evans was a trained tailoress, a common occupation for working women.²⁸⁸ *Manawatu Heritage* also included remarks about the use of the family dining room in their image description, stating that family card games and listening to the radio were forms of entertainment enjoyed by the Evans family here.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸⁶ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸⁷ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸⁸ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁸⁹ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

NOT 75 YEARS
BUT
100 YEARS AGO
"SINGER"
Made
The First Machine
TODAY
It Is Still The
BEST!

The Singer De Luxe Model as supplied
to the Queen.

MANY MODELS
are
Available To Suit
ALL
SEWING
REQUIREMENTS
in
THE HOME

★ CLASS 221K1 MACHINE
A modern SINGER portable electric is ideal. Trim and compact. It is handy to set up for use and easy to store away. Yet, despite compactness, it possesses practically all sewing features of full-sized model. The SINGER Featherweight Portable weighs but 11 lbs. 1 oz! It has full rotary motion forming a perfect lockstitch in forward or backward direction. A folding extension leaf supports sewing material. A tray in the smart luggage-type carrying case holds the foot-operated speed control and accessories.

SINGER SEWING MACHINE Co. Ltd.
PHONE 6549. BROADWAY, PALMERSTON NORTH.

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This Singer sewing machine advertisement featured in *The Times* in 1952 reiterates that the appliance was a common product in the home for women, as seen in the Evans family dining room. Jean-Marie O'Donnell in *The Gendered Kiwi* reaffirms this argument, asserting that despite the post-war period seeing a challenge to traditional roles, there was a resurgence of domestic jobs, proving the sewing machine was still a common appliance for women in the home.²⁹¹

Another aspect to consider is the clothing worn by the family, representing gender roles and popular styles of the late 1940s. Jack Evans, the husband and father of the family, is wearing a collared shirt with his sleeves rolled up, with the shirt fitting loosely rather than a clean, collared shirt a white-collar worker may wear.²⁹² This indicates that Jack is a working man, possibly a blue-collar worker, a common role of men in the post-war period. The children beside him are dressed in clean, neat, collared shirts, with modest clothing for children a common sight in the post-war period too.²⁹³ The idea of children developing their own unique sense of style was not commonly adopted until the later decades of the post-war period, therefore the Evans children's clothing in this photograph fit the style typically worn in middle-class New Zealand families.

²⁹⁰ *The Times*, "Souvenir Supplement Commemorating the 75th Jubilee of Palmerston North," 1952.

²⁹¹ O'Donnell, "Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework," 182.

²⁹² "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁹³ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

Finally, Betty Evans and Jack's mother Mrs. Catherine Evans are dressed in clean, modest dresses that also reflect the clothing style for women at this time.²⁹⁴

The greater affluence of the post-war period made higher end shopping in department stores more accessible to people. Images of the Evans Family provide some insight into this. One of the photographs shows Betty Evans shoe-shopping at CM Ross Co., a large department store located in The Square.²⁹⁵ Betty Evans is seen with an employee from the shoe department section of the store, trying on and examining a pair of high heels as a potential purchase.²⁹⁶ It is noteworthy that every individual who appears within the image is female, including Mrs. Evans, the employee assisting her, and the other shoppers featured in the background.²⁹⁷ This reflects the commonality of women as shoppers, with a larger presence in department stores than men. With this photograph showing a shoe department, shopping for clothing and accessories became a greater hobby for women in the post-war period, especially after, as *Manawatu Heritage* states, the clothes rationing imposed during the Second World War was lifted in New Zealand in 1947.²⁹⁸ Mrs. Evans' attire, being dressed in a modest dress topped with a blazer and a hat, reflects the then nature of shopping in town as a type of event, to socialise and explore the shops as a hobby.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ "Evans Family Collection: Evans family eating dinner, 5 Mansford Place," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁹⁵ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/fb826ca4-fbb3-40e8-9f70-5de078f12f54>

²⁹⁶ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁹⁷ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁹⁸ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

²⁹⁹ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.



A photograph included in the Evans Family Collection showing Betty Evans shopping for shoes in the shoe department of CM Ross Co.

Many women who worked in this time period had feminine roles, including in the retail and fashion industry. The female employee assisting Betty Evans is an example of this, as women tended to have greater interest in fashion which made the role of retail assistants a popular job. Arguably, the intention to include this photograph in the publicity material was to show that typical living conditions of New Zealand families often meant having extra money for leisure purchases. It encouraged spending at a time when many were cautious due to the previously restricted nature of the war economy and allowed a local business to advertise their trade also. The image further presents common gender roles, with women enjoying shopping as a leisure activity.

Palmerston North's Department Stores

Department stores occupied an important place in New Zealanders' lives in this period. Helen Laurenson indicates in her book *Going Up Going Down: The Rise and Fall of the Department Store* that the "golden age" of department stores was in the first half of the twentieth century, followed by a sharp decline around the country.³⁰¹ Palmerston North, however, hosted multiple

³⁰⁰ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans in the Shoe Department at CM Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

³⁰¹ Laurenson, "Introduction," *Going Up Going Down: The Rise and Fall of the Department Store*, 6.

department stores that remained popular throughout much of the post-war period. The main department stores discussed in this chapter are the P.D.C (Premier Drapery Company), Collinson & Cunninghame, and C.M Ross & Co., which was later taken over by Milne & Choyce, which was in turn succeeded by D.I.C. These stores were all a significant part of the shopping experience for many in Palmerston North, with a great range of products and departments that served a wide variety of consumers. Studies of department stores in New Zealand have suggested that a ‘social hierarchy’ of stores emerged over time, with some being perceived as primarily catering to the upper-classes and others as primarily targeting middle and working-class customers.³⁰² This will be discussed in relation to Palmerston North.

C. M. Ross & Co.

C. M. Ross & Co. was a department store that provided extensive consumer and shopping opportunities for Palmerston North throughout much of the post-war period. Charles Ross founded the drapery and clothing store in 1883, with directly imported goods, generally using London buyers, which factored into the store promoting British products.³⁰³ In 1905, the store expanded their premises by purchasing the building next-door, allowing C. M. Ross & Co. the space to venture into selling home furnishings.³⁰⁴ Leading up to the beginning of the post-war period, the store established various departments, including sections for fancy clothing, fabrics, bridal wear, cosmetics and more.³⁰⁵ The store was renowned for its grand window displays, an advertising tool constructed by the store to entice pedestrians to come into the store.³⁰⁶ C. M. Ross & Co. even won a national window dressing competition in 1930, where the display team won £50, a win not only for the store but for Palmerston North’s consumer and shopping reputation.³⁰⁷ As Fiona McKergow argues, window displays transformed shopping, as pedestrians were able to browse from the street and be part of an experience designed to lure

³⁰² Labrum, *Real Modern*, 251.

³⁰³ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 3.

³⁰⁴ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 4.

³⁰⁵ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 15.

³⁰⁶ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 16.

³⁰⁷ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 18.

customers inside.³⁰⁸ Another important feature of the department store was the popular tearooms, located on the top floor.³⁰⁹ With large windows overlooking The Square and elegant furnishings, the tearooms were offered a fine break or conclusion to a day of shopping.³¹⁰ In Lesley Courtney's book on the history of the store, people described it as a taste of British culture, where one would dress up to attend lunches or afternoon teas with friends and family.³¹¹ In the Evans Family Collection, Betty Evans is shown in the tearooms with two staff members, an image intended to suggest that quality dining was affordable to average New Zealanders.³¹²



Mrs. Evans photographed dining at the tearooms in the department store C.M. Ross & Co., an experience shared with many fellow shoppers and a popular activity for particularly women to socialise.³¹⁴

This suggests that many Palmerstonians, like New Zealanders more broadly at this time, retained an affiliation towards British culture. C. M. Ross & Co. was, along with Collinson and Cunninghame, one of two high-end department stores in Palmerston North at the time. Both Collinson and Cunninghame and C.M. Ross saw themselves as the top of the hierarchy of the department stores, while P.D.C was generally perceived as targeting the middle and working

³⁰⁸ Fiona McKergow, "Through the Shop Window: Claude Dixon's Original and Artistic Retail Displays," *Manawatu Journal of History*, issue 3, 2007, 10.

³⁰⁹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 24.

³¹⁰ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 24.

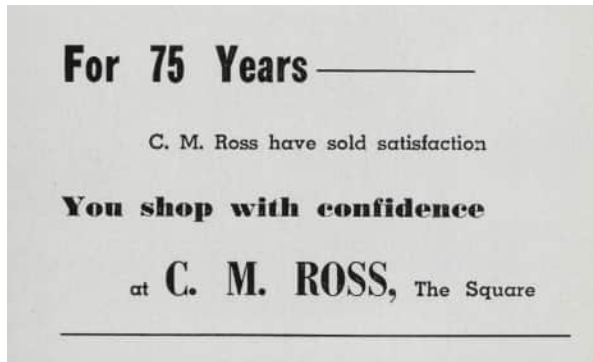
³¹¹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 24.

³¹² "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at CM Ross Co. Ltd Tearooms," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/16677451-5669-4160-a6d3-c6d3ea4eca38>

³¹³ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at CM Ross Co. Ltd Tearooms," Manawatu Heritage.

³¹⁴ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at CM Ross Co. Ltd Tearooms," Manawatu Heritage.

classes.³¹⁵ Store advertisements appealed to their long history of providing satisfaction to customers.³¹⁶



This C. M. Ross & Co. advertisement refers to their long-standing service in Palmerston North, re-asserting the method of historical roots in the community.³¹⁸

Entering into the 1950s, the store modernised to adapt to the changing trends brought about by the post-war period.³¹⁹ This included adding new departments, a change in display models, the installation of public phone booths, and neon lighting.³²⁰ The store also began offering bonus incentives to staff based on the level of product they sold to boost income revenue.³²¹ 1956 reports revealed that the store measured up competitively with other leading department stores on national levels, proving that C.M. Ross & Co. was a leading store popularity wise in Palmerston North.³²² Despite these reports, problems with the costs of running the store, profits, and increasing turnover were present which led to the business being sold to Milne & Choyce, a national department store chain, in 1959.³²³

³¹⁵ Tennant and Johnson, "A City at Work," in *City at the Centre*, 151.

³¹⁶ Manawatu Heritage, "Palmerston North Visitors Guide: August 1959," Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, information booklet, August, 1959, [https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/a5e6f48b-cf95-48ac-b7e5-8afa6888066a](https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/a5e6f48b-cf95-48ac-b7e5-8afa6888066a?child=a5e6f48b-cf95-48ac-b7e5-8afa6888066a)

³¹⁷ Manawatu Heritage, "Palmerston North Visitors Guide: August 1959."

³¹⁸ Manawatu Heritage, "Palmerston North Visitors Guide: August 1959."

³¹⁹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 21.

³²⁰ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 21.

³²¹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 21.

³²² Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 21.

³²³ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 21.



A photograph taken of the C.M. Ross & Co. building from the angle of the Square in 1950.³²⁵

C.M Ross & Co. Advertisements

Like many stores in the post-war period, C.M. Ross looked to cater to the emerging market for children and adolescents. In the mid-1950s advertisements began to shift to suit the needs of consumers instead of focusing on the theme of security brought by the war's conclusion. As New Zealand progressed into the post-war period, the nation saw a dramatic increase in birth rates, introducing the 'baby boomer' generation. As the early individuals of this generation grew to be children in the mid-1950s, toys were a popular sale item. Department stores in Palmerston North began to offer a wider range of toys for children, such as in Collinson & Cunninghame and C. M. Ross Co.

Illustrative of this trend is a 1955 advertisement for Christmas Shopping below from C.M. Ross.³²⁶ The advertisement promotes its new toy department, a valuable addition to the already sizable store.³²⁷ The upgrading of the toy department reflects the growing emphasis on children as consumers in a prosperous post-war society, and reinforced the ideals of family then promoted

³²⁴ "C M Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1950, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/04244d72-a189-425e-b42b-f471a4f3b320>

³²⁵ "C M Ross Co. Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

³²⁶ "C M Ross Co. Ltd advertisement for toys," Digital New Zealand, image, 1955, <https://digitalnz.org/records/1813520>

³²⁷ "C M Ross Co. Ltd advertisement for toys," Digital New Zealand.

by the New Zealand Government. The advertisement features a tricycle, wooden block trains, and a walking and talking doll.³²⁸

TOYS
for Christmas
from

C. M. ROSS
COMPANY LIMITED

WOODEN BLOCK ENGINES
Kiddies will love to make and re-make them.
19/9

TOY DEPARTMENT
Rear Ground Floor

Something new has been added to C. M. ROSS this Christmas. Our new TOY DEPARTMENT has the things that kiddies dream about. For boys and girls there are toys large and small, games, modelling toys, mechanical toys. Yes, at C. M. ROSS your toy search is ended.

TRI-LAND TRICYCLE
£8/17/6

PEDIGREE WALKIE TALKIE DOLL
£5/12/6

USE THE C. M. ROSS LAY-BY FOR XMAS GIFTS

THE SQUARE, PALMERSTON NORTH — PHONE 8080

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At the bottom of the advertisement, the text states that Lay-by is accepted at C. M Ross Co.³³⁰ Purchase by Lay-by meant customers would pay off the cost of the item purchased in a series of installments. Once the full sum had been paid, the customer would receive their goods. Many store advertisements of this period specifically indicated purchase by lay-by was an option, seen generally at the bottom of advertisements as an additional incentive to shop.³³¹ Lay-by made prestige consumer items more widely accessible. This was especially important for Christmas shopping, as many families may have struggled to purchase presents for their children at this time of year. Advertisements promoting Lay-by advertisements were prominent in appeals for Christmas purchases. Indeed a Collinson & Cunninghame advertisement in the *Manawatu Standard* on 31 December 1945, stated “we can hardly let this Christmas Pass without

³²⁸ “C M Ross Co. Ltd advertisement for toys,” Digital New Zealand.

³²⁹ “C M Ross Co. Ltd advertisement for toys,” Digital New Zealand.

³³⁰ “C M Ross Co. Ltd advertisement for toys,” Digital New Zealand.

³³¹ See, for example, “Rosco Youth Centre for Junior Fashions,” *Manawatu Standard* November 17, 1945, 7,

commenting on the large number of people who have taken advantage of the lay-by to help with their Christmas gift shopping” and concluded “No interest, no worry with Collinson and Cunninghame’s Lay-by system - and you can lighten the financial burden by paying instalments if desired.”³³² These appeals to Palmerston North consumers to purchase by lay-by reflected a broader national trend. Frazer Andrewes argued that the pressure to keep up with the latest trends saw many families turn to these seemingly more accessible payment options, only to encounter debt problems.³³³ Meeting the costs of keeping up with consumer trends sometimes posed a challenge to male masculinity, with the result that sometimes wives took on paid employment to ease these financial restraints.³³⁴

Women’s clothing was a central feature of department stores. The post-war period saw some women continuing to make their own clothes, while others preferred to purchase pre-made items. Palmerston North’s department stores actively promoted themselves as places where the latest fabrics could be obtained, along with expert advice. The following advertisement from C. M. Ross in 1955, promoted their line of spring fabrics.³³⁵ The advertisement was entitled, “First breath of Spring,” encouraging consumers to purchase fabric in time to make clothes for the new season.³³⁶ In keeping with prevailing themes of modernity, the advertisement promoted C. M. Ross Co. as having the latest nylon, terylene, and silk surah fabrics.³³⁷ Nylon is described as among “the wonder fabrics of the age”.³³⁸ Nylon fabric had first entered the public fashion sphere in 1938 and was recognised as an innovative fabric based on its success as a synthetic fibre that offered comfort, disposability, and ease.³³⁹ It is even argued that nylon aided the Allies in winning of the Second World War, due to the strength, elasticity, resistance to mildew, and light-weightedness.³⁴⁰ Terylene was promoted as an exemplar of modern fashion, being described as the “newest of new fabrics” which would bring “life and lustre to your dream

³³² *Manawatu Standard*, December 31, 1945, 5,

³³³ Andrewes, “The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit,” 193.

³³⁴ Andrewes, “The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit,” 193.

³³⁵ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics,” August 4, 1955.

³³⁶ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³³⁷ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³³⁸ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³³⁹ Audra J. Wolfe, “Nylon 6,6,” in *Molecules that Matter*, ed. Raymon J. Giguere (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Chemical Heritage Foundation, 2008), 81,

<https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=0fM1IL5v8pMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

³⁴⁰ Audra J. Wolfe, “Nylon 6,6,” 81.

dress”³⁴¹ Terylene was a new fabric in 1955, having initially been invented as a type of polyester fabric in 1941 by British scientists, W. K. Birtwhistle and C. G. Ritchie.³⁴² C. M. Ross Co.’s advertisement implied that by offering terylene fabrics they were bringing the latest trends directly to consumers.³⁴³ Silk surah fabric appealed to customers who wanted a classic fabric.³⁴⁴ Described as “soft as silk”, it was stated that this fabric had great quality and looked luxurious.³⁴⁵ The promotion of these fabrics suggests C.M. Ross believed there was a significant potential customer base of women with the time and means to buy the latest fabrics and make their own clothes.

³⁴¹ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁴² Lawrence Hunt Fashion, “History of Polyester Fabrics,” December 22, 2016, <https://www.lawrencehuntfashion.com/blogs/news/history-of-polyester-fabrics>

³⁴³ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁴⁴ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁴⁵ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”



first breath of Spring

NYLONS the wonder fabric of the age. You step into spring in these organs, opaque — lovely crease and crinkle folds nylon. Reflecting the shades and pastels of the year's prettiest season — dainty floral, bold coffee leaf.

17/11 yd. to 21/1 yd.

TERYLENES Newest of new fabrics to bring life and lustre to your dress dress. Softly scaled floral on back grounds of spring's first blush of colour; tropical pattern just bursting with life.

22/1 yd.

SILK SURVIVS All the world knows the colour, beauty and sheen of this soft-as-silk fabric that has the quality and feel of the finest silk. Wonderful patterns on this season's newest backgrounds — key patterns, paddy, fete-like, classic Greek style.

11 9 yd. to 15 6 yd.

FOR ALL THIS NEW SPRING LOVELINESS
A BUTTERICK PATTERN WILL QUICKLY
AND EASILY DISPLAY YOU IN YOUR MOST
CHARMING SELF.

TAKE A PEEP AT SPRING IN OUR DISPLAY WINDOW!



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At the bottom of the advertisement, it is stated that “for all this new spring loveliness a Butterick Pattern will quickly and easily display you in your most charming self”.³⁴⁷ Butterick Patterns were pre-made paper patterns which aided clothing-makers by providing design patterns for each component of a garment, meaning the maker simply needed to cut out the fabric according to the pattern and sew it together in the required sequence in order to make the garment.³⁴⁸ Arguably, by offering Butterick Patterns to customers, C.M. Ross was appealing to first-time buyers who had not previously bought these fabrics for garment-making before and were seeking to allay any

³⁴⁶ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁴⁷ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁴⁸ “Butterick Paper Patterns,” *Southland Times*, January 25, 1923, 4, https://paperspast-natlib-govt-nz.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/newspapers/ST19230125.2.22.5?items_per_page=10&query=butterick+pattern&snippet=true

potential hesitancy by providing a ready-made solution. The lowermost text on the advertisement issued an invitation to the reader to “take a peep at spring in our display window” alluding to the ongoing importance of shop window displays to attract customers.³⁴⁹

This advertisement reflects a broader dynamic in gender roles of the period. Long before the 1950s, but still very relevant at that time, women commonly made their own clothes and the clothes of their family. Purchasing fabric was not a new concept, as women had always obtained fabric and sewed it at home to create clothing. This advertisement which was promoting fabric for the purpose of making it into clothes highlights this concept, as it was a traditional practice for women. Going into the 1950s, it became more popular and most likely easier for women to simply purchase already made clothing, to save time and effort. However, many women still preferred to sew their own clothing, making advertisements of this type appealing to many.

Milne & Choyce

Milne & Choyce, a chain store with both American and British cultural influences, which took over the premises of C. M. Ross & Co. between 1959 and 1966, provides some insights into Palmerston North’s evolving consumer culture.³⁵⁰ The first measure taken by the new owners was to re-modernise the store.³⁵¹ Whereas C.M. Ross and Co., had been avowedly British, Milne and Choyce showcased American culture in some of their advertisements and window displays. Milne and Choyce added some new departments aimed at the children and young adults of the ‘Baby Boom’ generation. The ‘Miss Manawatu’ shop on the first-floor targeted teenagers and young women from the ‘baby boom generation.’ Another initiative was the Coffee Lounge, aimed at fashion conscious younger shoppers, as coffee lounges began to supersede tearooms during the 1960s.³⁵² Window displays remained important elements of store design, but began to reflect the influence of American culture as well as British culture. Allan Smith, who joined C.M. Ross in 1959 and was display manager for Milne and Choyce had a national reputation as

³⁴⁹ Manawatu Heritage, “C M Ross Co. Ltd newspaper advertisement for Spring fabrics.”

³⁵⁰ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce department store,” image and description, circa. 1965, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/7cb14599-da32-4dec-994f-bee368419f31>

³⁵¹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 33.

³⁵² Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the ‘Coffee Garden’, image and description, 1960 to 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/5f6826ae-4c7d-4890-b389-462cb843b5a9>

a designer, on one occasion winning second place in the national Crown Lynn window dressing competition.³⁵³ Heather Glasgow notes that shop windows were often updated to reflect contemporary events, such as centennials, thereby maintaining the relevance of the business by providing viewers a tangible connection between current events and the store.³⁵⁴



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A photograph taken of the Milne and Choyce department store in approximately 1965, from the viewpoint of the Square.³⁵⁶ The image shows the accessible parking spaces outside the store

Milne and Choyce Advertisements

Milne and Choyce’s advertising reflected their self-image as a modern, progressive store. A good example of this is an advertising poster created by Allan Smith for the newly established ‘Miss Manawatu Shop’ located on the first floor of the store.³⁵⁷ The poster’s bold statement “New ways to live” appealed to young women in Palmerston North who wanted to be part of the new era the world was entering.³⁵⁸ The 1960s brought various new trends in pop culture, fashion, and progressiveness, marking a new turn of modernity for New Zealand and the rest of the world.

³⁵³ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built: The C.M. Ross Co. Ltd Story*, 33.

³⁵⁴ Heather Glasgow, “Clear Artistry: A Brief Look at the History and Uses of Shop Windows in Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Journal of History*, 13, 2017, 40-43. <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/09645153-9fb4-4714-99b0-554b028ef6a7?file=302381f2-36f1-4144-b747-82a87cc582c4>

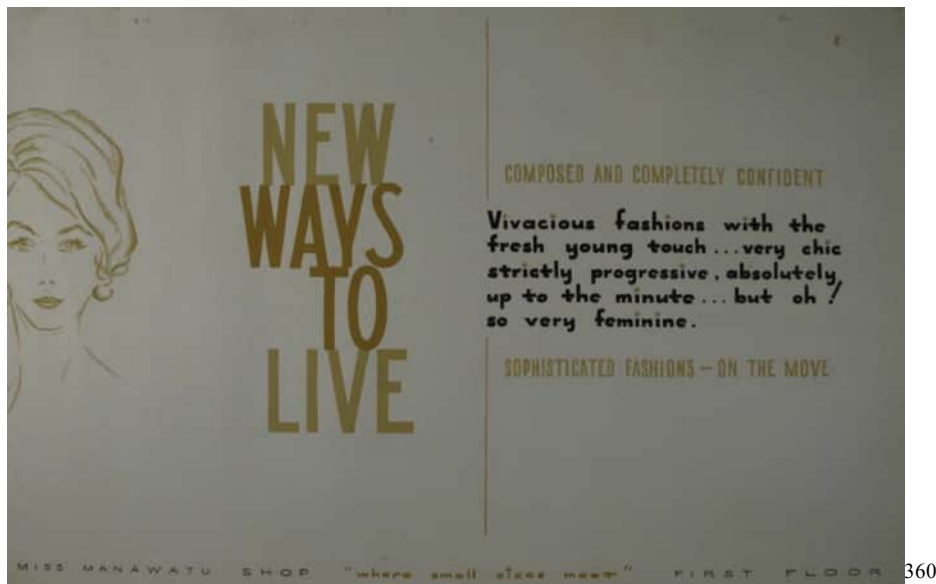
³⁵⁵ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce department store,” image, circa. 1965, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/7cb14599-da32-4dec-994f-bee368419f31>

³⁵⁶ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce department store.”

³⁵⁷ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop,” Palmerston North City Council, image, circa. 1960, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/d677a0d5-5866-42a2-bd5c-107b3fd3090a>

³⁵⁸ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop.”

With New Zealand's first regular television broadcasting occurring in 1960, television began to have a significant impact on both adults and youth as it created an accessible way of seeing what was occurring overseas.³⁵⁹ The influence of predominantly American and British youth trends came to the fore, guiding young people in their music and fashion tastes. The decade also brought a never-before-seen level of progressiveness, where fashion trends evolved to fit a more modern, casual sense of style. Therefore, Milne and Choyce's 'Miss Manawatu Shop', intended for adolescent females, allowed young women customers to access modernity, catering to an age group whose tastes were rapidly evolving.



The poster featured an identifiably young woman with a short 'bob' haircut. Next to the main text 'new ways to live' the phrase, "composed and completely confident" appeared on the upper right-hand side of the poster. The text conveyed the message that although progressive fashion was becoming popular, Milne and Choyce still offered age-appropriate fashion for young women whilst allowing girls to be confident their style matched the latest trends.³⁶¹ The use of the words "vivacious" and a "fresh young touch" implied that the stocked fashion was bringing new styles to the consumers.³⁶² This appeal to modernity was further reinforced by phrases such as "very chic", "strictly progressive", and "up to the minute",³⁶³ G.E. Wood commented on the

³⁵⁹ NZ History, "The 1960s", Ministry for Culture and Heritage, May 9, 2018, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/the-1960s/overview>

³⁶⁰ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop."

³⁶¹ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop."

³⁶² Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop."

³⁶³ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster for the Miss Manawatu Shop."

use of these types of adjectives in a contemporary book *The Wordsmiths: A Study of Advertising Practices in New Zealand*.³⁶⁴ Regarding fashion in particular, Wood argued that advertising appealed to customers' hope that buying the advertised garments would enhance their appearance and acceptance by their peer group. In this case words like “vivacious” and “chic”, were likely chosen to evoke modernity among consumers.³⁶⁵ The fashion trend for teenagers in New Zealand's 1960 decade included tighter clothing, with more vibrant colours, inspired by American and British trends.³⁶⁶ This new sense of style separated adolescents from children and adults, distinguishing them as their own identities.³⁶⁷ These changing fashions were reflected in Milne and Choyce's window displays which began to feature clothing aimed at young men and women.³⁶⁸



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A photograph taken between 1960 and 1966 of a window display in the Milne and Choyce department store, displaying women's nightwear and petticoats in the popular styles of the time.³⁷⁰

In addition to catering for younger women's fashion, Milne and Choyce also appealed to younger male buyers. This can be seen in their promotion of Chesterton suits, the parent

³⁶⁴ G. E. Wood, *The Wordsmiths: A Study of Advertising Practices in New Zealand* (Wright & Carman Limited: Wellington, 1964), 40.

³⁶⁵ Wood, *The Wordsmiths*, 40.

³⁶⁶ Carl Walrond, “Teenagers and Youth: Control and Rebellion,” *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, May 5, 2011, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/27034/young-women-1964>

³⁶⁷ Carl Walrond, “Teenagers and Youth: Control and Rebellion.”

³⁶⁸ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce window display of women's Bri Nylon petticoats and nightwear,” image, 1960 to 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/d5ea3b5f-bc1d-4a32-976a-3350c71114c9>

³⁶⁹ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce window display of women's Bri Nylon petticoats and nightwear.”

³⁷⁰ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce window display of women's Bri Nylon petticoats and nightwear.”

company of which was located in Yorkshire and targeted young men in executive positions in their advertising.³⁷¹ A 1965 advertisement for Chesterton suits in the *Press*, for example, was headlined “for the man on the way up”.³⁷² This form of advertising, G. E. Wood argued was especially evident in men’s clothing advertisements, in which themes of success were commonly featured.³⁷³

In contrast to other advertisements for Chesterton Suits, which typically featured images of the product and were impersonal in tone, the Milne and Choyce advertisement was more personalised, being presented as coming from the store buyer rather than the store as an abstract entity.³⁷⁴ Constructed as a letter from the store buyer to the addressed “Sir.” (the use of the term sir implicitly positioning the store buyer and customer on an even footing), the ‘letter’ enthusiastically recommended Milne and Choyce’s line of Chesterton suits and accompanying accessories.³⁷⁵ The use of personalised language evoked a human connection between seller and buyer rather than using impersonal imperatives to command a customer to buy a certain product.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits,” Palmerston North City Council, image, circa. 1960, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/f937e48b-d2c9-448b-95b6-c84fc191a00a>

³⁷² Papers Past, *The Press*, newspaper, April 6th, 1965, page 14, advertisements column 1, https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19650406.2.119.1?end_date=31-12-2001&query=chesterton+suits&snippet=true&start_date=01-01-1960

³⁷³ Wood, *The Wordsmiths*, 13.

³⁷⁴ Papers Past, *The Press*, newspaper, March 15th, 1960, page 6, advertisements column 1, https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19600315.2.30.1?end_date=31-12-2001&query=chesterton+suits&snippet=true&start_date=01-01-1960

³⁷⁵ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”

³⁷⁶ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”



The poster begins with an appeal to, “sartorial elegance”, a term usually applied to men's clothing, in reference to clothing which is well-made in an elegant, classical style.³⁷⁸ The text then has the buyer describing their “wide experience” in the field of male suits, in which they highly recommend the Chesterton suit line for their “impeccable good taste and easy relaxed manner”.³⁷⁹ This may have been an allusion to 1960s fashion trends, in which fashion became more relaxed, although the appearance of tastefulness and class was still valued, particularly in suits. An appeal to modernity was further underscored with reference to the suits being “precisely tailored in the latest continental styling“ and in the “newest colours and textures”, providing trendy and modern suits for men to be in line with the changing trends.³⁸⁰ Attention was then drawn to the subsequent suit accessories carried by the brand, although the details of these accessories are not listed.³⁸¹ This personalised style of advertising Chesterton suits differed from newspaper advertisements for them in stores, such as Beaths in Christchurch, which were more conventional in format with impersonal text commending the benefits of the product in a

³⁷⁷ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”

³⁷⁸ Collins Dictionary, “Sartorial Elegance” accessed December 2, 2024, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/sartorial-elegance>

³⁷⁹ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”

³⁸⁰ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”

³⁸¹ Manawatu Heritage, “Milne and Choyce advertising poster for Chesterton suits.”

generic sense. The connection between Chesterton suits and up-to-date fashion promoted on the advertising poster was augmented by a window display of Chesterton suits in which they were showcased with modern products.³⁸²



A photograph taken of a window display at Milne and Choyce in 1960, where men's suits and fragrances are on display to advertise modernity for men's fashion.³⁸⁴

As previously noted, one theme evident in Milne and Choyce's advertising more broadly was a trend towards presenting America as a key fashion influence on popular culture whereas C.M. Ross had previously promoted their connection to Britishness. The following design by Allan Smith illustrates this trend. The poster advertised "America comes to Milne and Choyce".³⁸⁵ It featured a bright background with a sketch-like image of the New York City skyline, including a lamppost street sign mentioning 5th Avenue, a New York City street famous for the abundance of shopping stores, many luxurious and high-end.³⁸⁶

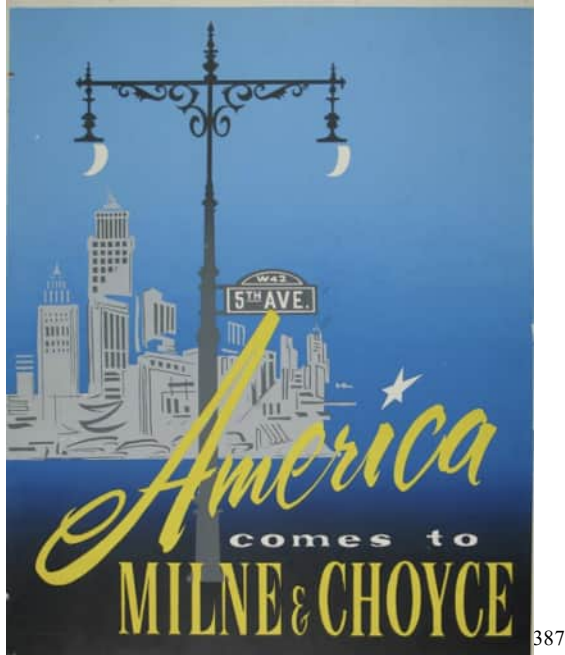
³⁸² Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce window display of men's suits," image, 1960 to 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/9d8e7138-6e91-42a0-9a03-d40e788dfb0f>

³⁸³ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce window display of men's suits."

³⁸⁴ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce window display of men's suits."

³⁸⁵ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster," Palmerston North City Council, image, circa. 1960, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/78e841b2-71e2-4907-8e99-ed8cdb761755>

³⁸⁶ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster."



This poster is noteworthy in the fact it explicitly associates Milne and Choyce with the latest American styles.³⁸⁸ As television became popular in New Zealand in the 1960s, citizens had wider accessibility to viewing American culture right from their homes. As American music took hold of New Zealanders' attention and other pop-culture trends rose, American culture became embedded in the trends New Zealanders followed. For Milne and Choyce to create this advertisement, suggests its management believed it was commercially advantageous to them to link their store to America and thereby show the people of Palmerston North that their store was keeping up to date with their interests as consumers.

D.I.C

Milne & Choyce ultimately sold their business to the D.I.C Group in 1966 so they could focus on their business in Auckland.³⁸⁹ Established in 1884, the D.I.C., originally known as the Dunedin Drapery Import Company, employed over 1,000 employees across the nation.³⁹⁰ They commenced trading in Palmerston North on October 3rd, 1966, with the majority of the 100 staff

³⁸⁷ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster."

³⁸⁸ Manawatu Heritage, "Milne and Choyce advertising poster."

³⁸⁹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built*, 33.

³⁹⁰ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built*, 33.

from Milne & Choyce remaining employed under this new business.³⁹¹ A *Manawatu Standard* article published on September 15 1966, discussed the sale of the store, stating “In all cases staff positions will continue to be safeguarded,” adding that customers would notice little changes aside from the store’s new name.³⁹² This department store operated for over twenty years until it was sold to the Dunedin firm Arthur Barnett in 1989, as the 1980s experienced the sharp decline in the popularity of department stores.³⁹³

D.I.C Advertisements

Although a recent arrival in Palmerston North, compared to Collinson and Cunninghame’s and P.D.C., the D.I.C. drew on its own trading heritage to assure customers it would uphold the levels of service associated with previous occupants of its building C.M. Ross and Milne and Choyce. A good example of the way the D.I.C. positioned itself can be seen in their advertisement in the Palmerston North Centenary celebration publication entitled ‘The Birth of Palmerston North’, which was published by the *Manawatu Standard* on March 13th, 1971.³⁹⁴ This publication included a detailed discussion on the history of Palmerston North, much of which was contributed by city archivist Ian Matheson. In addition to historical material, it included many advertisements from local businesses publicising how their services had aided the city’s development into a thriving community.³⁹⁵ The D.I.C included a full-page advertisement in this publication which acted both as a congratulatory message to Palmerston North as well as an advertisement for their store.³⁹⁶

³⁹¹ Courtney, *The House that Quality and Value Built*, 34.

³⁹² “Newspaper article of sale of Milne and Choyce department store to the D.I.C.,” Manawatu Heritage, image of a newspaper article, *Manawatu Standard*, September 15th, 1966,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/7ad9a86c-df08-44d1-9548-540edaa58444>

³⁹³ Helen Laurenson, “Department Stores and Shopping Malls - Decline and Survival,” Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, February 4, 2010, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/22210/department-store-closure>

³⁹⁴ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971. <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/232d0a13-aeb0-4c0b-abf2-4df19536b1da?child=232d0a13-aeb0-4c0b-abf2-4df19536b1da>

³⁹⁵ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 3.

³⁹⁶ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

D.I.C. 1871 Palmerston North 1971
CENTENNIAL YEAR

**D.I.C.'s 8 STORES
THROUGHOUT
NEW ZEALAND
CONGRATULATE
THE PEOPLE OF
PALMERSTON NTH.
ON 100 YEARS
OF PROGRESS**



The Management and Staff of the D.I.C. Ltd. are proud to be associated with Palmerston North's centennial year celebrations and thank the people for their support over the years. The Management assure you that D.I.C., as it has in the past, will continue to give the highest quality, the best values, and complete satisfaction to every customer. The D.I.C. looks forward along with Palmerston North and districts to a second century of progress and for reaching service to the whole community.

D.I.C. is one of the largest retailing organisations in New Zealand with

- ★ AN ANNUAL TURNOVER IN EXCESS OF \$13,000,000
- ★ SHAREHOLDERS TOTALLING 5000
- ★ A TOTAL STAFF OF 1300 EMPLOYEES
- ★ AND 8 DEPARTMENT STORES

● DUNEDIN
● WELLINGTON
● HAMILTON
● INVERCARGILL
● LOWER HUTT
● PALMERSTON NORTH
● CHRISTCHURCH
● WANGANUI

D.I.C. Customer Services allow you to shop in the easiest, most convenient and trouble-free way. We at D.I.C. watch your money as if it were our own. We always give the best value and service in

- ★ 44 UP-TO-DATE DEPARTMENTS
- ★ A NEW ATTRACTIVE FRONTAGE AND GROUND FLOOR
- ★ SOFT FURNISHING WORK-ROOM
- ★ SERVICE AND INFORMATION CENTRE
- ★ MAIL ORDER DEPARTMENT
- ★ DELIVERY SERVICE
- ★ COFFEE GARDEN
- ★ PLUS 5 WAYS TO BUY

**LAY-BY
BUDGET ACCOUNT
MONTHLY ACCOUNT
HIRE PURCHASE
TERMS
CASH**

Remember D.I.C.'s famous guarantee, which means exactly as it says.

Complete satisfaction or your money cheerfully refunded in full.

D.I.C.'s plans for the immediate future include continuing the extensive alterations and modernisation already carried out on the ground floor heritage and furnishing gallery to present Palmerston North with one of New Zealand's most modern departmental stores. The new image presented on the ground floor has been highly praised by overseas visitors — voted second to none in New Zealand and equal to any seen overseas.

D.I.C. GUARANTEE SATISFACTION OR YOUR MONEY REFUNDED IN FULL.

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The image in the top half of the advertisement featured the well-known frontage Palmerston North's D.I.C. store, showcasing its large size and by implication its continuity with previous iterations of popular department stores in that location. As a complement to this appeal to the heritage of the site, the image also showcased the availability of car parking in front of the store, emphasising its accessibility to shoppers who preferred to travel to town by car, thereby juxtaposing heritage with modernity.³⁹⁸ The large text next to the image congratulated the city on having achieved its centenary, while reminding the reader that the D.I.C. owned eight stores throughout New Zealand at this time, so the Palmerston North store was one part of a wider network.³⁹⁹ Following this, came a message of assurance from the D.I.C. management, that the store would continue to offer the “highest quality, the best values, and complete satisfaction to

397 “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

398 “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

399 “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

every customer.”⁴⁰⁰ At the conclusion of this section, D.I.C. promised a positive vision of further progress, committing to serving the community for a “second century”, suggesting that its owner was optimistic about their future in Palmerston North.⁴⁰¹

The advertisement went on to boast about the company’s success nationwide, before reflecting on the Palmerston North store specifically and the amenities it offered.⁴⁰² This list mentioned the 44 different departments, with the adjective “up-to-date”, implying modernity within the store. Also noted were refurbishments to the exterior and the ground floor, a dedicated information centre, a mail order and delivery service, and a coffee garden.⁴⁰³ Underneath this list came a mention of the different payment methods the D.I.C accepts, including Lay-By, budget and monthly accounts, hire purchase, terms, and cash, which advertised their accessibility to different types of consumers based on their financial needs.⁴⁰⁴ As seen in other advertisements included in this chapter, advertising the different payment methods was a common strategy to make purchasing more accessible for potential consumers. The text in prominent blue on the bottom right corner further reassured customers by referring to D.I.C’s “famous guarantee”, which promised complete satisfaction in a customer’s purchase or a complete refund.⁴⁰⁵

The text on the bottom right paragraph of the advertisement ends looking towards the future, detailing the renovation plans the store planned to undertake, which included the continuation of extensive changes to the ground floor frontage and furnishing gallery, with the term “modernisation” used here.⁴⁰⁶ These changes would purportedly “present Palmerston North with one of New Zealand’s most modern departmental stores.”⁴⁰⁷ The repeated mention of ‘modern’ and ‘modernisation’ was a common theme in advertisements of the post-war period, and its inclusion in advertisements relating to Palmerston North suggest a desire to present Palmerston North as a modern business and shopping hub.

⁴⁰⁰ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰¹ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰² “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰³ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰⁴ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰⁵ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰⁶ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

⁴⁰⁷ “The Birth of Palmerston North,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13, 1971, 29.

Although D.I.C. took care to present itself as a store offering quality goods, it also sought to appeal to a broad cross-section of Palmerston North's community. Their advertisement in the *Guardian* newspaper in late 1972, promoting their Christmas shopping offerings is a useful example.⁴⁰⁸ It targeted a wide range of consumers rather than the wealthy section of society. The advertisement promoted D.I.C. as the "store of the Christmas spirit", indicating that it was the place to shop for all Christmas related goods.⁴⁰⁹ The text positioned the store as a one-stop-shop for all Christmas shopping, noting it offered, "everything you need for gifts" within its 44 different departments plus amenities which apparently made the customer's shopping experience "easy and pleasant."⁴¹⁰ These included three large shopping floors, a coffee garden which offered a space for leisure and social activities amidst shopping and a gift lane dedicated to making the choice of purchasing gifts easier, with "a present for everyone at your price".⁴¹¹ A Christmas budget account was also mentioned, allowing potential consumers the opportunity to purchase gifts with less financial stress at an already expensive time of year.⁴¹² Furthermore, the reference to the presence of Santa may have been intended to compete with Collinson and Cunninghame's well known Santa Cave and potentially drive sales further.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁸ "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴⁰⁹ "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹⁰ "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹¹ "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹² "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹³ "The D.I.C", *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

The D.I.C.
STORE OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

AT D.I.C. YOU'LL FIND THE BRIGHTEST ATMOSPHERE... EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR GIFTS — HOLIDAYWEAR — DECORATIONS ARE RIGHT HERE IN 44 WELL STOCKED DEPARTMENTS... PLUS MANY STORE SERVICES TO MAKE YOUR SHOPPING EASY AND PLEASANT.

- **HUGE SHOPPING FLOORS**
Designed for your shopping convenience from lockers to facilities to facilitate the selection in one of the finest in the Maroubra.
- **COFFEE GARDEN**
A place to relax a while in pleasant garden surroundings with your choice of coffee, tea or refreshing fruit drinks, plus an enticing selection of snacks, confectionery and cakes.
- **GIFT LANE**
A present for everyone at your price... selected from all over the store and presented in price groups from under \$1.00.
LOCATION: GROUND FLOOR
- **SANTA**
You'll be here 'Tis the 26th December, see him daily from 10.00 till 5.00 on the first floor. Watch your newspapers for his arrival.
- **GIFT VOUCHERS**
An answer to gift problems... and they're available for any amount and redeemable at any D.I.C. throughout New Zealand.
- **CHRISTMAS BUDGET ACCOUNT**
The easiest possible way to do your Christmas shopping. No Deposit to pay. You choose the amount to suit your requirements... take 25 weeks to pay. See our Credit Manager.
LOCATION: OFFICE, 1st FLOOR

WITH CHRISTMAS SHOPPING IN MIND
D.I.C. has all that is necessary to make Christmas a happy time for all

COSMETICS
A sparkling range of gifts and toiletries from all the most famous cosmetic houses: HILINA RUBINSTEIN, ELIZABETH ARDEN, CYCLAX, DOROTHY GRAY, REVLON, GALA, COTY, SHISEIDO, 'SOTY', BRONNLEY, AND MANY OTHERS INCLUDING A WIDE RANGE OF MEN'S TOILETRIES.

CANDLES, WRAPS AND CARDS
One of the best ranges you'll see with a glittering selection of novelty candles, floral giftwraps, cards and Christmas balloons.

CHRISTMAS GOODIES
Sweetest breads, nuts, crystallized fruits, preserves, marmals and biscuits for gifts or the Christmas table.

DECORATIONS
Christmas tree lights, bangles, balls, tinsel, comes to bring the excitement and colour of Christmas to your home.

TRAVEL
From overnight travel kits to luggage your holiday needs are here in one store including an unbeatable range of summer fashions at sensible value prices.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR YOUR MONEY REFUNDED IN FULL AT D.I.C.

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On the right hand side of the advertisement, the text listed what may have been popular Christmas gifts at the time such as cosmetics and related products, as well as other products that served the Christmas season such as decorations, travel necessities, and gift wrappings and cards.⁴¹⁵ Finally, the advertisement ends with the store slogan, “Satisfaction guaranteed or your money refunded in full at D.I.C”, to reassure consumers that their services and products could be trusted.⁴¹⁶ The decision to place the advertisement in the *Guardian*, a free suburban newspaper which relied on advertising to cover its production and staffing costs and was delivered free across Palmerston North suggests a desire to reach the widest possible audience.

The more democratic nature of the D.I.C.’s marketing, compared with C.M. Ross, which as previously noted saw itself as a high-end store, can also be seen in its advertising for school uniforms in the *Tribune*, another free Palmerston North community newspaper.⁴¹⁷ Mindful of the strain purchasing school uniforms could put on household budgets, D.I.C. promised in the headline of the advertisement to “take the worry out of school outfitting...buy now...pay

⁴¹⁴ “The D.I.C”, *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹⁵ “The D.I.C”, *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹⁶ “The D.I.C”, *Guardian*, October 25, 1972.

⁴¹⁷ “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

later..”⁴¹⁸ In large print, the text at the centre of the advertisement explained that D.I.C offered a “special children’s outfitting budgeting account”, which allowed customers to open accounts to finance their purchases instead of paying the full amount of the purchase upfront.⁴¹⁹ Elaborating on payment options, it was noted that no deposit was required and payments could be made either weekly or monthly, to suit different types of consumers and their varying financial means.⁴²⁰ In addition, a “free insurance protection policy” was mentioned, whereby if the budget account holder became unwell or was impaired from an accident, the D.I.C would cover any remaining payments., These provisions offered potential customers a sense of security around purchasing essential items.⁴²¹

D.I.C. take the worry out of school outfitting... buy now..pay later..

OPEN A D.I.C. SPECIAL Children's Outfitting BUDGET ACCOUNT FOR THE FULL AMOUNT YOU NEED

NO DEPOSIT REQUIRED
AND EASY WEEKLY OR MONTHLY PAYMENT

Sickness or accident need not worry you because at D.I.C. you get a **FREE INSURANCE PROTECTION POLICY** which takes care of your payments if need be.

Open a D.I.C. budget account for any amount to suit you. If you already have a budget account and require an increased amount—please see our friendly Credit Manager.

D.I.C. GUARANTEES SATISFACTION OR YOUR MONEY REFUNDED IN FULL

⁴¹⁸ “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

⁴¹⁹ “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

⁴²⁰ “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

⁴²¹ “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

⁴²² “D.I.C Advertisement,” *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

The text at the bottom of the advertisement reiterated that budget accounts could be opened to any amount that suited the consumer, and existing account holders could simply increase their amount.⁴²³

As seen in other advertisements included in this chapter, payment plan methods and options were often included in department store advertisements, as it enticed potential consumers with the feelings of security, accessibility, and less financial stress, particularly for products or items that are deemed important such as children's school clothing. It was a common business strategy as we have seen, which rather than selling products, focused on selling the store and their services.

Collinson & Cunninghame

Whereas the building in which C.M. Ross was located underwent several iterations in the period under review, Collinson and Cunninghame's was a constant presence for Palmerstonian shoppers for almost all the timeframe covered by this thesis. Established in 1904 by Leo Collinson and John Cunninghame on Broadway Avenue right near The Square, the original drapery store concept grew over time to expand into various areas of retail.⁴²⁴ By 1910, the store had 51 employees and in the coming years expanded to sell products such as jewellery, cosmetics, clothing, home furnishings, and more.⁴²⁵ Collinson & Cunninghame was known for its more affordable prices compared to C.M. Ross & Co., whilst remaining a business that sold some high end products also.⁴²⁶ Collinson and Cunninghame's was affectionately known as the 'Grand Old Lady' by its staff and many customers, a reference to its seemingly timeless nature.⁴²⁷

Collinson & Cunninghame had a number of distinctive elements which distinguished it from other department stores in Palmerston North. Whilst all stores had Christmas promotions, Collinson and Cunninghame's Christmas Cave which first opened in 1919 became an integral part of popular culture in Palmerston North and was a favoured destination over the holiday

⁴²³ "D.I.C Advertisement," *Tribune*, January 24, 1971, 4.

⁴²⁴ Tina White, "Glory Days of C&C," *Manawatu Standard*, edition 1, August 11, 2007, 2, <https://research.ebsco.com/c/4egzpd/viewer/html/ecr5wlndgv>

⁴²⁵ White, "Glory Days of C&C," *Manawatu Standard*, 2.

⁴²⁶ White, "Glory Days of C&C," *Manawatu Standard*, 2.

⁴²⁷ Tennant and Johnson, "A City at Work," *City at the Centre*, 151.

period.⁴²⁸ The Santa Cave was located in the store's basement during the Christmas season and attracted thousands of families, with various attractions including a carousel.⁴²⁹ The Santa Cave remained a core aspect of the store until its closure, when Farmers took over the business in 1983.⁴³⁰ In a testament to its place as a cultural icon of Palmerston North, items from Santa's Cave remain on display as a special exhibition at Te Manawa Museum.⁴³¹

Another distinguishing feature of Collinson and Cunninghame's was its reputation as a family store. This was evident in a number of ways. Staff regarded themselves as part of a 'family' and the store had many long-serving staff. Rituals such as presenting staff members with a watch after 21 years of service and activities such as staff picnics reinforced the sense that Collinson and Cunninghame's was a community in its own right rather than simply a workplace.⁴³² At a practical level, this sense of loyalty was evident during the great depression when all staff were retained.⁴³³ The sense of family promoted among staff was also evident in promotions for the store, with Collinson and Cunninghame advertising itself as a 'family store'.⁴³⁴ As will be discussed later, the family aspect of the store was also evident in its advertising, which promoted shopping at Collinson and Cunninghame's as an intergenerational experience.

Collinson & Cunninghame Advertisements

Collinson and Cunninghame presented itself as a dependable shopping destination for Palmerstonians in times of both peace and war. The following advertisement from 1945 illustrates how the store presented itself to customers in the wider context of the global uncertainty following the end of the Second World War. Advertisements in 1945 differed from

⁴²⁸ White, "Glory Days of C&C," *Manawatu Standard*, 2.

⁴²⁹ Richard Mays, "Santa Cave still attracts crowds," *Manawatu Standard*, edition 1, December 23, 2016, 3, <https://research.ebsco.com/c/4egzpd/viewer/html/iausats46n>

⁴³⁰ Mays, "Santa Cave still attracts crowds," *Manawatu Standard*, December 23, 2016, 3.

⁴³¹ "Procurement keeps Christmas running in Palmerston North," New Zealand Government Procurement, December 3, 2025, <https://www.procurement.govt.nz/about-us/news/procurement-keeps-christmas-running-in-palmerston-north/>

⁴³² Tennant and Johnson, "A City at Work," in *City at the Centre*, 151.

⁴³³ White, "Glory Days of C&C," *Manawatu Standard*, 2.

⁴³⁴ "Visitors Guide Palmerston North: July-September 1966," Manawatu Heritage, booklet, July-September 1966, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/da90e9b9-fb91-4afb-8e4a-d06a4f57fe10?child=da90e9b9-fb91-4afb-8e4a-d06a4f57fe10>

those of the 1950s and 1960s because they pre-dated the economic prosperity of that era and society was still transitioning towards peace. Despite the war having ended, rationing of consumer goods continued until 1950. Nancy Taylor notes that rationing of clothes finished at the end of 1947; tea, sugar and meat rationing ended in May, August and September of 1948 respectively and cream, butter and fuel rationing ended in 1950.⁴³⁵

The advertisement below for Christmas shopping at Collinson and Cunninghame which appeared in the *Manawatu Times* on December 15th, 1945 reflected contemporary emotions of joy that the war was over but frustration with ongoing shortages.⁴³⁶ The large image of Santa Claus at the centre of the advertisement placed the focus on the end of war time with the statement ‘Now Santa Smiles Again’ giving the reader permission to feel celebratory.⁴³⁷ The advertisement focused on rewarding ex-servicemen, with the statement, “... Santa has been waiting for when he can give men who have been wearing service caps one of these popular brands of fashion hats...”.⁴³⁸ Non-servicemen were also included in the text, which noted “civilians who have been unable to buy shirts and pullovers for months will be pleased to see these two items just as much as servicemen who are hurrying into ‘civvies’”.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁵ Nancy Taylor, “The Home Front: Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45” (Government Printer: Wellington, 1985), 796.

⁴³⁶ *Manawatu Times*, “Now Santa Smiles Again,” December 15, 1945, 9.

⁴³⁷ *Manawatu Times*, “Now Santa Smiles Again,” December 15, 1945, 9.

⁴³⁸ *Manawatu Times*, “Now Santa Smiles Again,” December 15, 1945, 9.

⁴³⁹ *Manawatu Times*, “Now Santa Smiles Again,” December 15, 1945, 9.

SHOP EARLY—
Morning Hours
Are Best!

CHRISTMAS CAVE:

Daily — 10.30 to 12.
— 2 to 4.30
Friday — 7 to 9.



Article image

Now SANTA Smiles Again.

The day has come at last — the day Santa has been waiting for when he can give men who have been wearing service caps one of these popular brands of FASHION HATS — Sun for Gals, in latest shapes and colours, such as Woodrow, Green, Westminster, Lord Tony, Cavalier, Battersby, etc. Call early and select a brand new Fashion Hat for Victory Christmas and for Holiday Haze wear. All reasonably priced.

Other stocks please Santa too. For instance, civilians who have been unable to buy shirts and pullovers for months will be pleased to see these two items just as much as servicemen who are hurrying into "civvies."

WOVEN STRIPE POPLIN SHIRTS with two separate collars to match. Previously unobtainable, now limited stocks available. Super quality fast woven poplin, good range of colours, in collar sizes 14 to 17½. (Shirts collars post free—2 coupons.)

24/9

GOOD VALUE

A splendid "all purpose" line of FINE WOOL SLEEVELESS PULLOVERS. Ideal for a slip-on after active sports. Light enough to wear under suit coat on cooler autumn days. Attractive ribbed knit, in navy only.

18/6

GOOD VALUE

Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd.

FALMERSTON'S POPULAR GIFT STORE.

440

The advertisement also displayed hours for the popular family activity, the annual Christmas Cave, reassuring readers that one of Palmerston North's iconic attractions was open to celebrating "Victory Christmas".⁴⁴¹ With regard to advertising aimed at men in post-war New Zealand, Frazer Andrewes argued that "advertisements are useful in a gender analysis since they depict an idealised version of the gendered self and the way cultural expectations of gender operate."⁴⁴² Andrewes' observation is very relevant to the above advertisement which acknowledges the transition many men experienced from the army to civilian life and with the differing expressions of masculinity in the context of enlistment in armed forces versus the expectations of domestic life.

⁴⁴⁰ *Manawatu Times*, "Now Santa Smiles Again," December 15, 1945, 9.

⁴⁴¹ *Manawatu Times*, "Now Santa Smiles Again," December 15, 1945, 9.

⁴⁴² Andrewes, "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit," 196.

The linkages Collinson and Cunninghame promoted between their heritage and connection with consumers are especially evident in advertisements published for Palmerston North's 75th Jubilee in 1952. Their advertisement in the *Manawatu Evening Standard's* Special 75th Jubilee Issue celebrated both their past as a leading provider of fashion as well as their contemporary appeal. The department store created window displays of the store's and the city's history with specially curated clothing items, whilst incorporating modern fashion that allowed customers to see the shift in which fashion has evolved over the city's 75 years.⁴⁴³ The advertisement was headlined "Windows Mirror our Splendid Stocks", a reference to their well-known window displays by George Dixon, images of two of which featured in the advertisement. The text below noted that "for nearly 50 years this store has offered up-to-date stocks carefully selected by a group of experienced Departmental Buyers whose judgment is your assurance of Style, Quality and Good value" celebrating the proven expertise and discernment of their staff.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, "75 Special Jubilee Issue," 1952.

⁴⁴⁴ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, "75 Special Jubilee Issue," 1952.

For this "Spring Opening" display of 1913 Mr Dixon used real flowers in a trough at the back and military flowers in the foreground as a setting for the Latest Fashions, in a window illuminated by gaslight.



Windows Mirror Our Splendid Stocks

For nearly 50 years this Store has offered up-to-date stocks carefully chosen by a group of experienced Departmental Buyers whose judgment is your assurance of Style, Quality and Good Value.

During Jubilee Week the windows will feature many interesting items linked with the history of this district and of this Store.

Interwoven in these displays are Modern Fashions that are full of interest. Enjoy recalling the past — but look ahead too. Spare time to see how this Store has extended the extensive collection of Autumn Fashions, the fine Modern Carpets to enrich any home, and the splendid stocks in 25 departments — with a friendly Staff to serve you.

Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd.

Established in Broadway, No. 3, 4th, 1904.



Fashions for "Autumn 1932" are highlighted in a modern setting by Mr Dixon — Fashions typical of our new season's Collection which we would like you to call and see.

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In addition to celebrating the past, the advertisement also looked towards the future, boasting about the store's extensions with new seasonal fashion, modern carpet, and the generous 25 departments Collinson & Cunninghame had to offer.⁴⁴⁶ With reference to the mixture of older

⁴⁴⁵ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, "75 Special Jubilee Issue," 1952. Windows mirror our splendid stocks

⁴⁴⁶ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, "75 Special Jubilee Issue," 1952.

and more recent clothing on display, customers were invited to “enjoy recalling the past - but look ahead too.”⁴⁴⁷

Bridal attire was a feature of many department stores such as Collinson & Cunninghame. This can be seen in the following advertisement published in the *Manawatu Times* on October 15th, 1956.⁴⁴⁸ The advertisement indicated that a selection of bridal headdresses were available at the store, having arrived just from Britain. This reiterates the enduring popularity of British culture and fashion in Palmerston North and wider New Zealand at the time. The advertisement went on to mention that the styles are “up to the minute”, signifying that trends in clothing, including bridal accessories, were evolving in this postwar period.⁴⁴⁹ The advertisement promoted glory boxes and self-brocaded satins in keeping with the wedding theme of the promotion.⁴⁵⁰ Glory boxes were a common possession in the post-war period, in which an unmarried woman would store items which may be required in married life in a chest.⁴⁵¹ The focus on weddings and bridal accessories in this advertisement ties in with the societal focus of marriage and family at this time. Carlyon and Morrow discuss how marriage evolved in post-war New Zealand in *Changing Times*.⁴⁵² They state that with the economy and employment growth, a sense of security allowed more young people to marry earlier, with the average age of marriage dropping from 25 to 21 years old between 1945 and 1971.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁷ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, “75 Special Jubilee Issue,” 1952.

⁴⁴⁸ *Manawatu Times*, October 15, 1956. Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁴⁹ *Manawatu Times*, October 15, 1956. Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁵⁰ *Manawatu Times*, October 15, 1956. Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁵¹ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 47.

⁴⁵² Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 19.

⁴⁵³ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 19.



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In addition to promoting traditional marriage items for women, Collinson and Cunninghame also catered for the growing number of career women. Despite the core values of women remaining domestic and retaining their role in the home being heavily promoted by successive governments, the number of women participating in paid employment began to rise as the period progressed. In 1956, 194,094 women were employed in the labour force in New Zealand, compared to the number of 622, 758 employed men.⁴⁵⁵ This number of employed women almost doubled by 1971.⁴⁵⁶ An advertisement, in the *Manawatu Times* on October 16th, 1957, promoted the “Career Girl” brand of fashion hosiery.⁴⁵⁷ Career Girl hosiery offered “luxury Nylons” to working women, with two styles promoted, one for day time working environments and another for night-time occasions.⁴⁵⁸ The advertisement stated that the hosiery was suited for women working busy schedules between 8:00am to 5:30pm, indicating the shift of some women towards

⁴⁵⁴ *Manawatu Times*, October 10, 1956, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁵⁵ Gordon A. Carmichael, “Post-War Trends in Female Labour Force Participation in New Zealand,” *Pacific Viewpoint* 16, no. 1 (May 1975): 80, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/apv.161004>

⁴⁵⁶ Carmichael, “Post-War Trends in Female Labour Force Participation in New Zealand,” 80.

⁴⁵⁷ *Manawatu Times*, October 16, 1957, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁵⁸ *Manawatu Times*, October 16, 1957, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

working full time jobs.⁴⁵⁹ Mindful of the low pay many working women then received, the advertisement also noted that the hosiery were priced to “fit a career girls' budget”, an allusion to the low rates of payment for working women in the early post-war period.⁴⁶⁰ Frazer Andrewes observes in *The Gendered Kiwi* that women pushed for equal pay in this period, with a number of women’s groups protesting to the New Zealand Government in 1956 for equal pay to be enacted in the work force.⁴⁶¹



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Collinson and Cunninghame’s advertisement in the ‘Birth of Palmerston North’ exemplifies how they promoted themselves as a dependable, long-serving supplier of quality products to Palmerstonians.⁴⁶³ Whereas the advertisements for D.I.C, and, as will be discussed, P.D.C. in this publication focused on their present offerings and emphasised their modernity, Collinson and Cunninghame appealed to their heritage.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, whereas the advertisements for D.I.C and P.D.C. featured their buildings, Collinson and Cunninghame’s advertisement, which was entirely in black type, featured photographs of their founders and an extensive discussion of the history

⁴⁵⁹ *Manawatu Times*, October 16, 1957, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁶⁰ *Manawatu Times*, October 16, 1957, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁶¹ Andrewes, “The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit,” 194.

⁴⁶² *Manawatu Times*, October 16, 1957, Te Manawa Museum, Collinson and Cunninghame Scrapbook.

⁴⁶³ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, Manawatu Heritage, newspaper supplement, March 13th, 1971, 25, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/43175965-3468-4245-a28a-d8804a9c15fd?child=43175965-3468-4245-a28a-d8804a9c15fd>

⁴⁶⁴ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1971, 25.

of the store.⁴⁶⁵ The introductory paragraph made some reference to modernity, proclaiming the store as “new and modern in lay-out and merchandise” before taking a veiled swipe at D.I.C stating “this store operates as an independent unit without outside control and without any branches.”⁴⁶⁶ The majority of the close-written text following the introduction, however, was focused on the store’s past achievements rather than its present offerings.⁴⁶⁷

**Quality & Value
Cornerstone Of
Collinson & Cunninghame's
Success!**

JOINT FOUNDER
Mr. L. H. Collinson

JOINT FOUNDER
Mr. J. Cunningham

1904 — 1971

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P.D.C

The P.D.C marked the Manawatu Co-operative Society’s shift into clothing and retail from the pre-existing food stores in Palmerston North. Simon Johnson in the *Manawatu Journal of History* described the P.D.C as the “jewel in the Manawatu Co-operative Society’s crown”, implying that the P.D.C was the store that was deemed most successful in the long list of the society’s business ventures.⁴⁶⁹ After focusing on operating food-related stores such as grocers

⁴⁶⁵ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1971, 25.

⁴⁶⁶ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1971, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1971, 25.

⁴⁶⁸ “The Birth of Palmerston North” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1971, 25.

⁴⁶⁹ Simon Johnson, “Serving the People: Work and Life at Palmerston North’s Premier Department Store,” *Manawatu Journal of History*, 15 (2019): 5, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/8b9990d4-c401-4f4f-8444-ef8760e3e605/pdf>

and butcheries, Co-op General Manager Gordon Brown saw the opportunity of extending its trade to department stores, during a time where retail shifted into a materialistic trend and consumer rates of retail stores boomed.⁴⁷⁰ The co-op's ownership of the P.D.C was not the first venture outside food retail as the society had bought Manly Outfitters in 1951, but multiple Co-Op members, such as board member Muriel McDonagh, were disappointed that the store remained a menswear store rather than incorporating women and children's clothes.⁴⁷¹ This meant that the P.D.C was the Co-Op's first venture into a large store that incorporated multiple different types of retail stock. As previously noted, the P.D.C was established in 1915 as the Premier Drapery Company, with the new location established in 1929-1930, where it remained as such until the Co-Op purchased the store in 1956.⁴⁷² The Co-op retained the name abbreviation but changed the official name, allowing consumers to continue viewing the store as the "The PDC".⁴⁷³ It is widely agreed that the Premier Drapery Company was a steady, albeit unexceptional business, when the Co-Op took ownership. It soon became, however, very popular among customers.⁴⁷⁴ Through the success of the P.D.C, over the next three years, thousands more became shareholders, encouraged by the successful expansion and valuable rebates the society could now offer members.⁴⁷⁵ With the P.D.C's newfound success, large expansions took place, including renovations to accommodate the growing departments of the store and the inclusion of multiple car parks.⁴⁷⁶

The location of the P.D.C was instrumental to the success of its business. Indeed the P.D.C; C.M. Ross and Co. and Collinson and Cunninghame's were each located close to a corner of the Square; with P.D.C. being located at the south-eastern corner of The Square and Church Street; Collinson and Cunninghame adjacent to the north-west corner of the Square and Broadway Avenue whilst C.M. Ross and its successors were located at the north-western corner of the Square next to Coleman Place. Despite the growing number of motor vehicles, many Palmerstonians still travelled by bus from their suburban neighbourhoods into the city centre to

⁴⁷⁰ Johnson, "Serving the People," 7.

⁴⁷¹ Johnson, "Serving the People," 7.

⁴⁷² Johnson, "Serving the People" 7.

⁴⁷³ Johnson, "Serving the People" 7.

⁴⁷⁴ Gordon Brown, "History of Consumers Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Limited," 1975, 9.

⁴⁷⁵ Brown, "History of Consumers Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Limited," 9.

⁴⁷⁶ Brown, "History of Consumers Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Limited," 10.

get to work or to complete their shopping.⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, the P.D.C.'s location made for an easy shopping experience where consumers could visit when out for their other shopping needs. In September 1970, the P.D.C. acquired what became an iconic image of the store and indeed Palmerston North, when a revolving Kiwi, promoting the Kiwi Bacon Company was installed on its rooftop. This became a distinguishing feature of the Palmerston North cityscape, as seen in its inclusion on postcards such as the one below.



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A 1970s postcard that featured the locally known revolving Kiwi advertising Kiwi Bacon, a once popular landmark in Palmerston North, that was situated on top of the P.D.C building and placed there in September 1970.⁴⁷⁹

By 1960, the Co-Op had grown to be a large business by national standards, proving that consumer co-operatives were a profitable and practical solution to economic issues.⁴⁸⁰ There was some opposition to Co-Op by local business owners by this stage, due to the competitiveness of prices and the fact that, by virtue of its ownership by members, some perceived-Op promoted socialism rather than private business.⁴⁸¹ That is partly the reason why the Co-Op decided to retain the P.D.C name, to avoid any consumer reluctance at the Co-op.⁴⁸² The 1980s saw the 50th Jubilee of the Manawatu Co-Operative Society and at the same time, brought new challenges and successes for the Co-Op. The 1980s saw trading conditions, particularly in the

⁴⁷⁷ "Bus Station in The Square," Manawatu Heritage, image, circa 1940,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/39264ac6-701d-42ef-a25d-e6c489f234fb>

⁴⁷⁸ "Te Peeti Te Awe Awe and the Rose Garden," Manawatu Heritage, postcard, 1970s,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/4b2b0437-e6c3-49e0-a63a-677e22dcb6f2>

⁴⁷⁹ "Kiwi Sign hoisted to the top of PDC," *Manawatu Standard*, September 26, 1970, Manawatu Heritage,

<https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/cd963092-1585-4bd4-8f90-0cb46c5738e2>

⁴⁸⁰ Brown, "History of Consumers Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Limited," 10.

⁴⁸¹ Brown, "History of Consumers Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Limited," 10.

⁴⁸² "A Small Idea 50 Years Ago - Today, a Multi-Million Dollar Business," *Co-Op Consumer Times - 50th Jubilee*, circa 1986, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/c1f81d01-72e8-493a-880c-39a079338680/pdf>

grocery sector, become difficult with the domination of national chain supermarkets and stores.⁴⁸³ The Co-Op responded to the issue by abandoning their ventures in the grocery sector and instead moving onto a new project that would benefit Palmerston North customers by concentrating their activities in the city centre.⁴⁸⁴ In 1986, the Co-Op refurbished the P.D.C department store, purchasing extra land and buildings to establish the P.D.C Plaza, which included many retail stores and a Foodtown supermarket.⁴⁸⁵ In so doing they effectively bought the modern shopping mall, then one of the largest of its kind in New Zealand, to Palmerston North.⁴⁸⁶ However, this initially successful business venture was short-lived, largely due to the economic state New Zealand was in during the early to mid-1980s due to increased inflation.⁴⁸⁷ Trading profits were steady during the early 1980s however, after exiting the grocery trade, the Co-Op experienced a sharp decline in annual profits, from almost \$40 million per year in turnovers in 1982-1984 to \$17 million per year in 1986-1987.⁴⁸⁸ Interest charges also jumped from approximately \$2 million annually from 1983 to 1986 to \$4 million in 1987.⁴⁸⁹ Some speculated at the time that the Co-Op's ultimate failure was the opening of the P.D.C Plaza; however, experts have found that from 1983, each year saw profit turnovers declining.⁴⁹⁰ The Co-Op was able to recover from these losses previously by selling off properties, which was not a sustainable solution for the long-term.⁴⁹¹ Ultimately, the Manawatu Co-Operative Society went into receivership in 1988, with assets liquidated in the same year.⁴⁹² It was an abrupt end for an institution which had been a feature of many Palmerstonians' lives for fifty years, but its demise reflected changing patterns of consumer behaviour in Palmerston North and, more broadly, New Zealand.

⁴⁸³ D. V. Coy and L. W. Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," (Massey University Discussion Paper, Palmerston North, 1989), 2.

⁴⁸⁴ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 2.

⁴⁸⁵ "Evening Standard Editorial," *Co-Op Consumer Times - 50th Jubilee*, circa 1986, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/c1f81d01-72e8-493a-880c-39a079338680/pdf>

⁴⁸⁶ "Evening Standard Editorial," *Co-Op Consumer Times - 50th Jubilee*.

⁴⁸⁷ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 2.

⁴⁸⁸ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 5.

⁴⁸⁹ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 5.

⁴⁹⁰ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 6.

⁴⁹¹ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 6.

⁴⁹² Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 2.

Staff who worked in P.D.C. prided themselves on the experience they provided for customers. Several oral interviews were conducted by Lee Matthews, a reporter for the *Manawatu Evening Standard*, at the time of the Co-op's 50th jubilee, where past and present board members and staff were questioned on their roles and experiences.⁴⁹³ One interview with previous P.D.C staff member Edna Hoseason explores her role and experience at the department store from 1966 to 1988.⁴⁹⁴ Edna was first employed in a part time role completing clothing alterations, with this role lasting four years before being promoted to a buyer in the wool department and then in the haberdashery department.⁴⁹⁵ She noted how the store expanded to accommodate growing customer demand: "at first it was a long narrow store that went from the square to the back carpark" until eventually the PDC "acquired Pegdens and then extended towards Fitzherbert Avenue" and "the final extension was when they built the Plaza".⁴⁹⁶ Edna remembers regular customers in the store, saying "You would get to know them by name as you had the same ones coming back again and again", which shows that despite its size the PDC generated personal relationships with Palmerston North customers and enticed repeat consumers.⁴⁹⁷ Edna described this as "a personal thing as you were able to get to know so many people over time".⁴⁹⁸ This reflected the idea of the Co-Op as a business model that connected staff and customers into a mutually supporting community.. As discussed further in the next chapter, the Co-Op was not simply a consumer driven business. Rather, it was seen as a collective system that valued community, with benefits that were designed to aid the community rather than simply profit off the people. Equity and fair prices were not just used as tactics for higher sales, but rather a system that allowed all types of customers to enjoy the products that the Co-op traded. With the PDC, there were departments and products that were sold at high prices due to their brands. There were, however, selections of differing types of products that allowed fair pricing.

⁴⁹³ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage, oral interview, September 12, 1992, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/b4d8ff00-9655-4f15-96f2-96f94e1da15a>

⁴⁹⁴ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁴⁹⁵ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁴⁹⁶ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁴⁹⁷ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁴⁹⁸ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

P.D.C Advertisements

The P.D.C promoted itself as a modern department store offering an all-round shopping experience. The P.D.C advertisement below was featured in the booklet *Presenting Manawatu*, published by the Public Relations Office in 1966 with the intention of promoting Manawatu’s attractions to visitors.⁴⁹⁹ It focuses on the size of the store, promoting its 29 different departments, ranging from clothing, homeware, beauty, toys, and more.⁵⁰⁰ The advertisement describes the store as “the progressive store in the Manawatu”, implying that the products on offer resemble the progressive trends that were slowly making their way into the shopping world in the 1960s.⁵⁰¹ In positioning itself as the “Progressive Store”, it was arguably also differentiating itself from Collinson and Cunninghame’s.



The advertisement offers a positive shopping experience, promoting P.D.C staff as “friendly and courteous”, enticing consumers into a supposedly welcoming shopping experience.⁵⁰³ Another incentive for consumers was the free parking spaces available to consumers, something

⁴⁹⁹ *Presenting Manawatu*, Public Relations Organisation, Palmerston North City Council, 1966, 6.

⁵⁰⁰ *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

⁵⁰¹ *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

⁵⁰² *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

⁵⁰³ *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

particularly convenient for customers from out of town.⁵⁰⁴ The text at the bottom of the advertisement mentioned the view of The Square from the P.D.C building alongside the P.D.C's Winter Gardens.⁵⁰⁵ This offers an additional leisurely experience beyond the act of shopping, which suggests that many customers, particularly women, viewed shopping not just as a time to purchase items, but as a social experience enabling them to venture outside the home.

P.D.C's advertisements in centennial publications also focused on its size and modernity. The *Tribune's* 'Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71' special edition, included a full-page colour advertisement.⁵⁰⁶ Its advertisement described the P.D.C as "the one stop store", boasting of its 40 large departments, indicating that the store had expanded since 1966 when they had 29 departments.⁵⁰⁷ It also promoted its four free car parks, allowing accessibility to customers to shop without the stress of finding and paying for parking.⁵⁰⁸ The advertisement portrayed the P.D.C as "one of the most modern department stores in New Zealand", with furniture, home appliances, china and kitchenware, bedwear and more stocked in their various departments.⁵⁰⁹ The advertisement goes on to provide the audience with a brief outline of the store's setting, with the first floor hosting ladies' fashions whilst the second floor, accessible by an elevator, hosted "bright, modern, tearooms", a place for customers to relax.⁵¹⁰ It also mentioned the "Co-Op Specials" available in the store's grocery department, which reinforced to customers that Manawatu Co-Op Society discounts applied in the store.⁵¹¹ Finally, the advertisement's final sentence reads, "Do All Your Shopping Under One Roof - Why Go Further Than P.D.C.?", underscored the convenience the store offered consumers..⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁴ *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

⁵⁰⁵ *Presenting Manawatu*, 6.

⁵⁰⁶ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵⁰⁷ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵⁰⁸ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵⁰⁹ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵¹⁰ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵¹¹ "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵¹² "Palmerston North Centennial 1970-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.



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The use of colour in the advertisement was unusual for its time. Despite coloured cameras being invented and used in New Zealand from the early twentieth century, it was much cheaper for black and white images to be printed, therefore advertisements only started to feature a greater amount of coloured images entering the 1960s and 1970s.⁵¹⁴

The P.D.C. advertisement in the 'Birth of Palmerston North' centennial celebrations edition published by the *Evening Standard* newspaper, was similar in tone to the one which appeared in the *Tribune*, albeit with an even more marked focus on the modernity P.D.C offered its consumers.⁵¹⁵ It comprised a double page colour spread, so was markedly different in both size and appearance to the advertisements in this publication for the Collinson and Cunninghame and D.I.C., which utilised black and white and blue and black tones respectively.⁵¹⁶ As with the advertisement for P.D.C. in the *Tribune*, the use of colour in this P.D.C advertisement hints at a

⁵¹³ "Palmerston North Centennial 19701-71", *The Tribune*, 1971.

⁵¹⁴ Sarah Daniell, "NZ photography collection captures more than 100 years of Kiwi people and places, "Stuff," *Manawatu Herald*, December 19, 2015, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/arts/75009764/nz-photography-collection-captures-more-than-100-years-of-kiwi-people-and-places>

⁵¹⁵ "The Birth of Palmerston North," *Manawatu Heritage*, 1971, 50-51.

⁵¹⁶ "The Birth of Palmerston North" *Manawatu Heritage*, 1971, 50-51.

turn of modernity in technological advances in printing.⁵¹⁷ The title “shop today in the store of tomorrow!” embodies notions of modernity, as the store was promoting itself as an innovative business that was looking to the future for its consumers.⁵¹⁸ The following statement, “the store that’s a step ahead - always!” reaffirmed this idea, indicating that the store offered the newest products and provided a modern environment for shoppers.⁵¹⁹ The concluding phrase of the text stated, “... there is this one last service for the busy housewife... the self-opening magic doors.”⁵²⁰ The reference to ‘housewife’ suggests women still made up the majority of consumers, particularly in department stores.



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Like other advertisements for the store, this one also mentioned the four car parks available for P.D.C customers, but did so in the context of a claim to national supremacy, “P.D.C can boast that it has more ground level parking space than any other department store in New Zealand.”⁵²² This was a strong marketing ploy as it presented the P.D.C as being a national leader in terms of accessibility for consumers, reassuring locals that they were being provided a shopping experience on a par with any other part of New Zealand.

⁵¹⁷ “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

⁵¹⁸ “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

⁵¹⁹ “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

⁵²⁰ “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

⁵²¹ “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

⁵²² “The Birth of Palmerston North” Manawatu Heritage, 1971, 50-51.

Summary

This chapter has discussed consumer culture in Palmerston North between 1945 and 1985 with a particular focus on three central city department stores. As discussed in the beginning of the chapter, women played a significant role shopping and consumer culture in this period. The family benefit significantly increased their purchasing power, especially in the two decades following the end of the Second World War. The division of household labour in this period remained typically divided on gender lines with women having primary responsibility for shopping. Whether it was with the objective of purchasing necessities or fulfilling leisurely purposes, shopping for women became a crucial part of regular life. It provided opportunities for socialising as well as obtaining household necessities. The photographs of the Evans Family provide insights into how a typical Palmerston North, and by extension New Zealand family was depicted by the Government, including how families spent their time and money for leisurely purposes. The image showing Mrs. Evans shopping for shoes in particular highlighted how shopping was a significant area of every-day New Zealand life, as it suggested New Zealand families had the luxury of spending on non-essential items. Appliances such as vacuum cleaners and radios were also prominently displayed in the Evans Family Collection, signalling that a family located in a working-class suburb in a provincial city could afford modern appliances.

Department Stores promoted themselves as the places where consumers could buy the most up to date appliances, clothing, toys and luxury items. Palmerston North reflected the wider trends associated with department stores in New Zealand. There was a hierarchy of stores, with Collinson and Cunninghame and C.M. Ross both catered towards higher-end consumers, whilst also offering products for a cross-section of society. The P.D.C., particularly after its acquisition by the Co-Op was aimed more at the middle and working classes, in keeping with the Co-Op philosophy of consumers being members of the store and receiving rewards via rebates. When Milne and Choyce, and in particular, the D.I.C. took over the C.M. Ross building they catered more towards the middle-classes leaving Collinson and Cunninghame, the 'Grand Old Lady' as the high-end department store. Although essentially similar in terms of the products and services offered, each of the Department Stores had iconic elements which gave them a distinct space in Palmerston North culture. C.M. Ross was renowned for its tearooms; Collinson and

Cunninghame for its Christmas Cave and the P.D.C. was renowned for the revolving Kiwi above its shop frontage.

Modernity and progress were recurring themes in advertisements for central city department stores. Each store promoted these in different ways. Collinson and Cunninghame appealed to its longevity in Palmerston North, suggesting that its tradition of offering quality services and products positioned it to anticipate trends for the future. C.M. Ross also promoted its length of occupancy in the Square as evidence of its ability to stay up to date with market trends. Milne and Choyce and D.I.C. promoted themselves as part of long-established national store networks, who were continually updating themselves. Window displays were particularly important means of promotion for Collinson and Cunninghame, C.M. Ross and Milne and Choyce. They were an artform in their own right and became destination viewing for many Palmerston North shoppers. The P.D.C. promoted its ease of access, in particular its four carparks which meant customers would not need to concern themselves with the additional inconvenience of finding and paying for parking while shopping. The appeals to modernity and progress in the advertising for these department stores had a particular resonance in Palmerston North during this period because the city itself was expanding significantly in this period with new suburbs and many modern buildings, such as those at the Massey University transforming its appearance. The Public Relations Office actively promoted Palmerston North as a 'modern' city in a series of publications aimed at visitors. Advertisements for shops featured prominently in these publications, reassuring prospective visitors they would enjoy a positive shopping experience.

Product advertising by the three department stores provides valuable insights into evolving trends in consumer culture during the period under review. First, they were monocultural in nature, being aimed at a Pakeha audience. There were no identifiably Māori, Asian or Pacific peoples represented in the advertising or store displays. This reflects the assimilationist attitudes unfortunately generally present in wider New Zealand society at the time. Advertisements also became increasingly focused on what might hitherto have been considered luxury items, particularly in the prosperous economy of the 1950s and 1960s. Advertisements from 1945, when families were navigating the return to civilian life after war and avoiding a post-war slump, were rather cautious, albeit optimistic about what lay ahead for Palmerston North and its people.

Once consumers began to trust that their society would be more stable and there would not be a repeat of the slump which followed the end of the First World War, businesses became more positive in their advertising, promoting a new range of goods which reflected the values of family, homes, and children which were actively promoted by the government and reinforced by key opinion formers such as the media and the Church.

The first half of the 1960s saw more advertisements catered towards children and adolescents, as the baby boomer generation began to grow up. Advertisements shifted their focus to the new generation of consumers. Differing clothing styles began to be present here, with stores such as “Miss Manawatu” representing a nod to modernity. Stores such as Milne and Choyce increasingly referenced America in their advertisements to encourage younger customers to shop with them. The growing number of working women was another emerging customer market, with stores advertising clothing for the ‘career girl’. Suits remained an important item of clothing for men, but advertising for products such as Chesterton suits appealed to their capacity to be used for leisure as well as formal purposes. The shift from the commonly advertised clothing products to home appliances and other products marked a changing form of popular consumer activity and reflected the evolving needs and desires of consumers. The demand for materialistic items began to soar after the 1950s, resulting in customers wanting to be seen to be keeping up with the changing trends in society.

Overall, the advertisements from the selected department stores reflect the evolving trends of fashion, homeware, and other relevant goods for this period, for multiple types of consumers. For most of the period between 1945 and 1985, the central city department stores were the focal point of shopping in Palmerston North. The characteristics associated with department stores at national level - multi-story buildings, extensive product range and personalised service - were evident in Palmerston North but assumed particular expressions and forms within each of the stores. Similar patterns are evident in the development of suburban shopping centres, which are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - Suburban Shopping and The Manawatu Co-Operative Society

If The Square remained a constant, albeit evolving, shopping centre and focal point of consumer culture in Palmerston North, the expansion of suburban shopping was perhaps the most visible element of change in the post-war era. Palmerston North's rapid and sustained population growth between 1945 and 1985 saw the development of new suburbs, such as Awapuni, Kelvin Grove and Highbury as well as the consolidation of existing suburbs in Terrace End and Hokowhitu. Most suburban shops were sole-proprietor stores but some shopping chains such as Four Square established a presence in a number of suburbs. The Manawatu Co-Operative Society emerged as a distinctively Palmerston North organisation, with shops in both The Square and suburbs. This chapter discusses the emergence of suburban shopping in Palmerston North and its implications for consumer culture in the city.

The development of suburban shopping in Palmerston North mirrored trends at national level. Although, as noted, the Square remained a popular choice for shopping, many found accessing the city centre difficult, so preferred to shop in the suburbs. For many women who were home keepers and stayed home to mind the children, their daytime travel options may have been limited due to most families at the time having only one car. Although the 1950s saw a sharp increase in car ownership, with 500,000 cars registered nationwide by 1960, many families owned only one car which the husband generally used for travelling to work.⁵²³ This often left the wife at home with limited options for her shopping ventures during the week, with public transport or walking the usual means of transport. In this context, visiting suburban shops and shopping centres was a common activity for many women in the post-war period. With increasing shopping opportunities throughout the post-war decades, much of the shopping for food and necessities was able to be completed in one's neighbourhood, removing the need for frequent travel into the city centre. A 1968 survey revealed that there were 30 shopping centres in Palmerston North suburbs of three shops or more, so most Palmerstonians lived near a group of local shops.

⁵²³ "The 1950s - Overview," NZ History, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 17 April 2023, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/the-1950s/overview>

Suburban Shopping in Palmerston North's Post-War Period

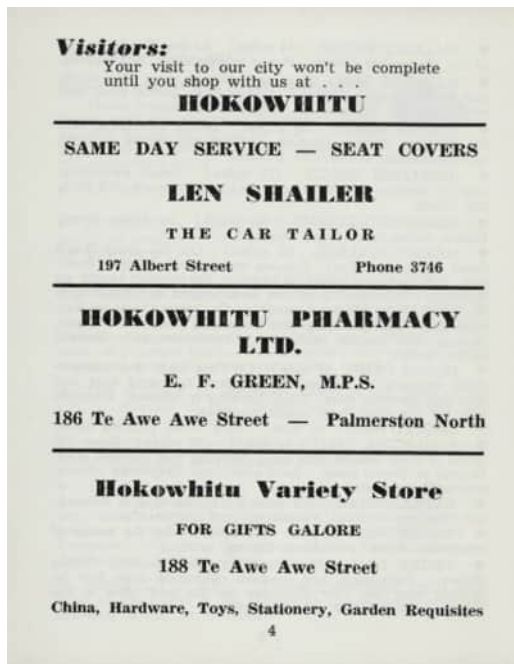
Suburban shops became an important part of their local community. As previously noted, there have been some works completed on several Palmerston North suburbs and their respective shopping centres, particularly the works of Garry O'Neill. Some Massey University research has discussed the development of suburban shopping stores and centres in Palmerston North's suburbs, including a thesis by Christine Worthington, who studied the location of various stores and the purpose of their establishments in certain suburbs.⁵²⁴ This section will investigate the development of shopping in both pre-established suburbs such as Terrace End and newer shopping centres, such as Awapuni that were located in the emerging suburbs of the city, with the aim of understanding how these changes impacted the experiences of consumers.

Suburban developments boomed in the post-war period, creating new divisions and extending Palmerston North's city boundaries. The old Kairanga County land was acquired to create subdivisions in Kelvin Grove, Awapuni, Milson, and Highbury.⁵²⁵ Within these suburbs, housing construction, including state housing, began to develop rapidly in a type of post-war boom, alongside suburban shopping centres. To accommodate suburban families, especially stay-at-home mothers and children, available shopping centres within walking distance were a necessity.⁵²⁶ Although primarily intended for locals, the attractions of suburban shops were also marketed to visitors. Advertisements for suburban shopping areas in different suburbs, promoting their shops as part of the experience of visiting the city, appeared in visitor's guides to Palmerston North published by the public relations organisation such as the advertisement below for Hokowhitu.

⁵²⁴ Christine Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services" (Master's Thesis, Massey University, 1969), 1,

⁵²⁵ Te Manawa Museum, "An 'Asphalt Jungle?': Palmerston North in the 1960s," Museum display information.

⁵²⁶ Lesley Courtney, "Back Issues: The Boom and Bloom of Palmerston North post World War II," Stuff, Manawatu Herald, July 2, 2022, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/300624878/back-issues-the-boom-and-bloom-of-palmerston-north-post-world-war-ii>



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An advertisement featured in a 1960 information booklet published by the Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation shows promotions for different suburban shops around Palmerston North.⁵²⁸

The purpose of suburban shops and centres was to serve the population that inhabited the nearby neighbourhoods, whereas the city centre hosted the majority of dominant stores, often larger stores that would not be as successful outside the city centre.⁵²⁹ Certain suburbs, such as Terrace End, had a larger range of shops and centres than other areas, largely based on the higher number of citizens in that area. In order to investigate this topic, it is important to look at a selection of specific suburbs to understand the different types of shops and shopping centres that existed in the post-war period. This will provide an understanding of the different types of customers that accessed these suburban centres.

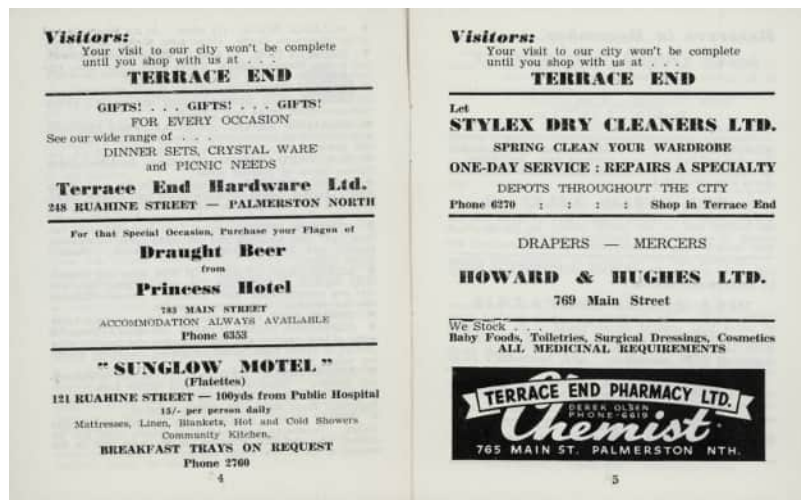
To begin, Terrace End was the most developed suburban area in Palmerston North. As the oldest residential suburb of Palmerston North, there was already an established array of shops in the area before the post-war period. As the post-war period brought forward its newfound sense of shopping, community, and family, the area grew in regard to its shopping opportunities, which

⁵²⁷ "Palmerston North Visitors Guide: March 1960," Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, *Manawatu Heritage*, March 1960, 4.

⁵²⁸ Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, "Palmerston North Visitors Guide: March 1960."

⁵²⁹ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 2.

included shopping centres and blocks. Due to the array of shopping available, many used the Terrace End stores as an alternative to travelling into the city centre, particularly for the need for smaller goods.⁵³⁰ The December 1959 edition of the Palmerston North Visitors Guide included a two-page spread for Terrace End businesses including advertisements for a chemist, draper and hotel, an indication of the range of services available in the suburb.



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Local historian Garry O’Neill wrote several books on the history of certain suburbs in Palmerston North. In *Terrace End: The Story of Palmerston North’s First Suburb* he notes that it was the first suburb to hold general stores, the first grocery store opening in 1893 on the corner of Main and Ruahine streets.⁵³² Other stores followed but it was not until the conclusion of World War I that Terrace End saw a significant progression of suburban shopping.⁵³³ The corner shared with the central Main Street and Terrace End saw a block of shops begin to form which became the centre of trade in its area, but with the 1950s seeing the evolution of home appliances and motor transport, trading in this area became more prominent.⁵³⁴ The Broadway Court Shopping Centre, located at the end of Broadway Avenue closest to Ruahine Street, was a

⁵³⁰ Worthington, “Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services,” 4.

⁵³¹ “Palmerston North Visitors Guide: December 1959,” Palmerston North Public Relations Organisation, *Manawatu Heritage*, December 1959, 4-5. <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/8af84693-0c42-4625-838c-838450d82fef?child=8af84693-0c42-4625-838c-838450d82fef>

⁵³² Garry O’Neill, *Terrace End: The Story of Palmerston North’s First Suburb* (Palmerston North: Palmerston North Historical Society, 2009), 81, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/25968111-69cf-42b0-b5ec-e9bd253688ea/pdf>

⁵³³ O’Neill, *Terrace End*, 82.

⁵³⁴ O’Neill, *Terrace End*, 82.

significant shopping centre for locals, including food stores and other retail shops.⁵³⁵ The further end of Broadway Avenue away from The Square is included in the Terrace End area, meaning there were a range of larger stores, including Briscoes which was located here in the post-war period, which allowed more extensive shopping to take place whilst still remaining in the suburb.⁵³⁶ The Broadway Court Shopping Centre, established near the corner of Broadway Avenue and Ruahine Street, included a variety of stores with accessible parking that allowed a group of retailers to accommodate local customers. Further shops and centres were situated along Ruahine Street, a street which saw higher rates of traffic whilst remaining in a residential area.⁵³⁷



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A photograph taken of the Broadtop Shopping Centre in 1969, with the Co-Op store featured.⁵³⁹

The Manawatu Co-Operative Society had a hand in many of the Terrace End shops in the post-war period, predominantly food stores.⁵⁴⁰ Through purchasing existing stores or building new property, the Co-Op owned a grocery store and a butchery which operated on weekdays, and a dairy which traded seven days of the week.⁵⁴¹ In the mid-1950s, the Co-Op purchased a pre-existing Four Square dairy on Limbrick Street, a street located further away from the city centre in a dense residential area, and refurbished it into a dairy/bakery with a butchery next door.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁵ O'Neill, *Terrace End: The Story of Palmerston North's First Suburb*, 82.

⁵³⁶ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 4.

⁵³⁷ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 4.

⁵³⁸ "Broadtop Co-Op," Manawatu Heritage, image, 1969, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/360ad057-0b68-409c-9193-c6b8b91e57f5>

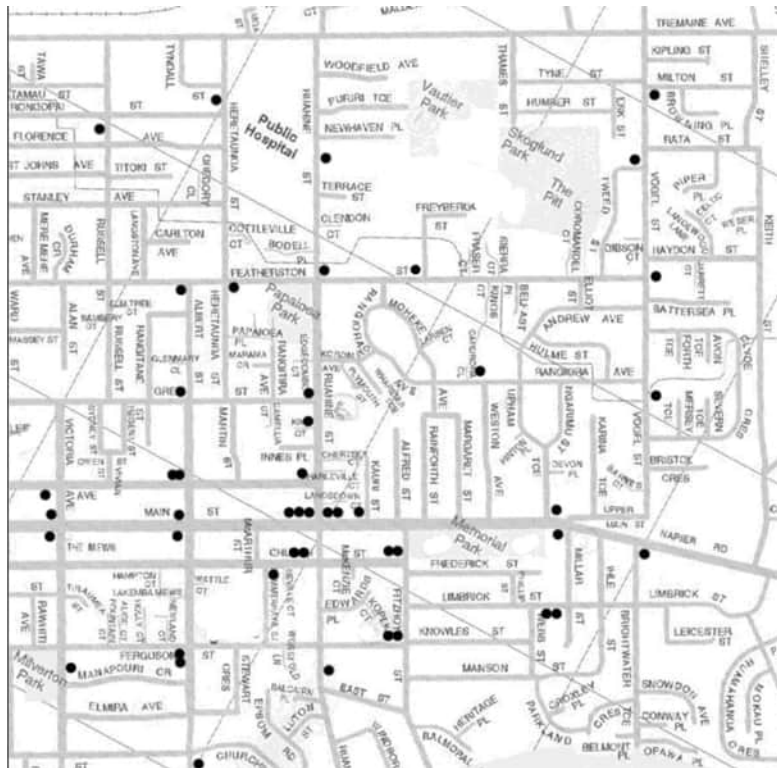
⁵³⁹ "Broadtop Co-Op," Manawatu Heritage.

⁵⁴⁰ O'Neill, *Terrace End: The Story of Palmerston North's First Suburb*, 82.

⁵⁴¹ O'Neill, *Terrace End: The Story of Palmerston North's First Suburb*, 82.

⁵⁴² O'Neill, *Terrace End*, 86.

With close proximity to the city centre and a larger suburb with a significant population to accommodate, Terrace End shops were essential to providing local citizens goods and products. Terrace End is a prime example of how suburbs evolved, especially in the post-war period, that allowed accessibility to families in their local neighbourhoods.



A map of Terrace End that shows the locations of dairies, grocers, and butcheries in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁴³

Hokowhitu is located next to the Terrace End suburb, with the city centre in close proximity for much of the suburb also. The first grocery, or dairy, in the area was opened in 1930 by Mrs. Edith Smith, located on the corner of Albert Street and Pahiatua Street, before a butchery was opened next door.⁵⁴⁴ At this time, dairies and butchers were only allowed to trade on Saturday afternoons and Sundays until 1970, when the evolution of supermarkets began.⁵⁴⁵ Prior to the Second World War, Hokowhitu had been a suburb with many market gardens and quarries. In the four decades after the Second World War, however, the area became a site of housing

⁵⁴³ O'Neill, *Terrace End*, 84.

⁵⁴⁴ Garry O'Neill, *Hokowhitu: The Story of Settlement and Development* (Palmerston North: Palmerston North Historical Society, 2012), 62.

⁵⁴⁵ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 62.

intensification.⁵⁴⁶ Throughout the post-war decades more stores were opened in this area including a pharmacy, a fish and chips takeaway shop, and a service station/garage.⁵⁴⁷ In 1978, Lower Hutt's Edward Jenning Investment proposed the idea of a shopping complex, which is known today as "Hokowhitu Village", which included a clothing store, a chemist, and a gift shop.⁵⁴⁸ In the following years a restaurant, beauty salon, bookshop, shoe store, delicatessen, and more all made up the Hokowhitu Village.⁵⁴⁹ The Village became a popular spot for locals to visit, with a variety of shopping opportunities available that accommodated a suburban shopping experience. The development of Hokowhitu Village may also have been influenced by the growing number of Massey University staff who chose to live in the area owing to its proximity to the University and its inclusion in the zone for Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School, Palmerston North Boys High School and Palmerston North Girls High School.



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Map of Hokowhitu showing its development since 1881, featured in O'Neill's *Hokowhitu: The Story of Settlement and Development*. The large number of streets in black are indicative of the many housing developments in the suburb between 1945 and 1976.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁶ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 4.

⁵⁴⁷ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 62.

⁵⁴⁸ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 62.

⁵⁴⁹ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 62.

⁵⁵⁰ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 19.

⁵⁵¹ O'Neill, *Hokowhitu*, 19.

Although the Hokowhitu Village shopping complex became the suburb's prime spot for local shopping, shops were also established in other locations. The corner of Albert Street and Ferguson Street, just up the street from Hokowhitu Village, hosted a butchery, dairy, and a chemist. Several areas of the suburb hosted small stores alike. As a larger suburb, Hokowhitu was a prime location for several suburban shopping outlets, with a large variety of consumers enjoying its opportunities.

The suburb of Awapuni developed markedly in the post-war period. Garry O'Neill discusses the development of the suburb, including a significant expansion in the number of suburban shops, in his book on the West End.⁵⁵² West End includes the southwestern quadrant of Palmerston North, and is situated next to the suburb of Awapuni, where many postwar shopping centres were established.⁵⁵³ At the beginning of the post-war period, Awapuni was relatively underdeveloped. Like Hokowhitu, it included some larger properties and nurseries. One of these was Arthur Just's florist shop located at 72 College Street, with an advertisement for the store appearing in the *Manawatu Standard* on April 2, 1945.⁵⁵⁴

ARTHUR JUST
FLORIST,
Only Address: 72 College St., Phone 6476.
Cut Flowers and Floral Work of all Descriptions. Member N.Z. Florists' Telegraph Exchange. We Telegraph Flowers anywhere.
Telegraphic Address: "Westo."

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Garry O'Neill notes that the first grocer/dairy in the area was opened in 1953 by Ina and Monty Salmon on Maxwells Line in Awapuni.⁵⁵⁶ The shop was described as a "small shed on the road

⁵⁵² Garry O'Neill, *The West End of Palmerston North* (Palmerston North: Palmerston North Historical Society, 2018), 4.

⁵⁵³ O'Neill, *The West End of Palmerston North*, 5.

⁵⁵⁴ "Page 1 Advertisements Column 1," *Manawatu Standard*, 2 April 1945, 1.

⁵⁵⁵ "Page 1 Advertisements Column 1," *Manawatu Standard*, 2 April 1945, 1.

⁵⁵⁶ O'Neill, *The West End of Palmerston North*, 66.

front of their home.”⁵⁵⁷ Awapuni at that stage had few residential areas. The city Abattoir and a home for pensioners were located on Maxwell’s line, in part because that location was well outside the city centre. Grocer shops of the type established by Ina and Monty Salmon remained an integral part of shopping in Palmerston North throughout the period. Alan Crews, whose father owned Crew’s Grocery on Featherston Street West, which was then close to the city boundary, recalled in 2017 how the store operated and its role in the community.⁵⁵⁸ It was operated as a family business with Alan and his brother helping out on deliveries.⁵⁵⁹ The store sold food and household items, where his father would attend to fruit and vegetable items at 4:00 each morning and a local baker delivered bread.⁵⁶⁰ Alan recalled his father knew almost all of his customers by name and that most of the customers were women.⁵⁶¹ He stated, “Most customers were women because they were at home doing their chores. Many shopped daily because they didn’t have a fridge.”⁵⁶²

During the 1960s, however, residential development in Awapuni accelerated and over the next two decades the area became much more suburban in character. One consequence of this growth was the establishment of the Awapuni shopping centre on the corner of College Street and Pitama Road, which Christine Worthington discusses in her Master’s thesis. The first shop to be established in this centre was a dairy in the late 1950s, followed by the Co-Op opening four shops in 1960.⁵⁶³ One of the four became a Co-Op grocery and butcher shop, while the remaining three were let and became a dairy, a chemist, and a produce store.⁵⁶⁴ In 1962, a service station was built and in 1966, a company purchased the section next to the service station and created College Court, a seven shop block that consisted of multiple specialist shops, including a butchery and post office with a small parking lot in front.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁵⁷ O’Neill, *The West End of Palmerston North*, 66.

⁵⁵⁸ “Oral Interview - Alan Crews,” Oral interview with Simon Johnson, Manawatu Heritage, Oral interview with Simon Johnson, July 11, 2017, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/0ef72ff8-da09-46f2-82eb-9aec0937be6b>

⁵⁵⁹ “Oral Interview - Alan Crews,” Manawatu Heritage.

⁵⁶⁰ “Oral Interview - Alan Crews,” Manawatu Heritage.

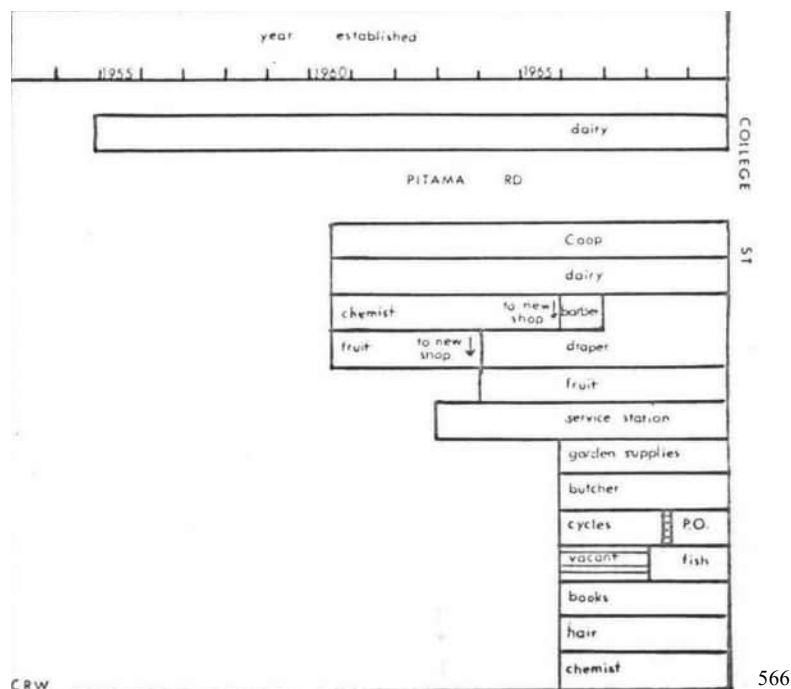
⁵⁶¹ “Oral Interview - Alan Crews,” Manawatu Heritage.

⁵⁶² “Oral Interview - Alan Crews,” Manawatu Heritage.

⁵⁶³ Worthington, “Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services,” 10.

⁵⁶⁴ Worthington, “Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services,” 10.

⁵⁶⁵ Worthington, “Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services,” 10.



This figure from Worthington's thesis shows the progression of the shops present in the Awapuni shopping centre and the years they were established.

The elderly population is another group that utilised suburban shopping often, due to difficulties accessing the city centre and the convenience suburban shops offered. Peter Crawford, from the City Council's Town Planning Department, completed a report in 1969 on senior citizens and their living locations and their shopping trends in Palmerston North.⁵⁶⁷ The report revealed interesting insights into how, when, and why this group used suburban shops.⁵⁶⁸ The main findings were that senior citizens went shopping for food and other necessary goods once or twice a week, with two thirds out of the seventy five individuals interviewed considered their shopping as their main outing of the week.⁵⁶⁹ It also found that senior citizens did not view their shopping trips solely as a venture to purchase goods, they also valued them as a means of social interaction, especially for those who lived alone.⁵⁷⁰ Out of the seventy five interviewed, thirty seven individuals stated that they would walk to their local suburban shopping centre, many of

⁵⁶⁶ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 20.

⁵⁶⁷ Peter Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, Palmerston North City Council, Town Planning Department Report no. 9 (Palmerston North, February 1969), 1.

⁵⁶⁸ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 1.

⁵⁶⁹ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 1.

⁵⁷⁰ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 1.

those who responded in this way were, owing to difficulties using and accessing transport, effectively confined to their suburban centres in their everyday lives.⁵⁷¹ Thirty-three respondents stated they travelled by bus, which could involve travelling into the city centre, whilst the remaining respondents indicated they occasionally used a taxi service.⁵⁷² This reveals that much of this age range had limited access to personal vehicles, therefore suburban shopping was their principal shopping option. In regard to visiting The Square, twenty-four stated that they rarely went to this location, with nine stating once a month, fifteen visiting once a week, and eighteen visiting twice a week.⁵⁷³ Again, this presents evidence that The Square was not a regular outing for many of the elderly age group. Each individual was asked where they completed their shopping, which yielded a variety of responses largely determined by where the person lived.⁵⁷⁴ Thirty interviewees resided in the Papaioea Place housing development, which was located in near proximity to the Terrace End section of Broadway Avenue, being located between Grey Street and Heretaunga Street.⁵⁷⁵ Out of these thirty participants, fourteen stated they shopped in The Square, whilst the remainder shopped at local stores around Terrace End.⁵⁷⁶ Those residing in flats in the West End suburb, which is located near multiple supermarkets, found equal results between shopping at a nearby supermarket and travelling into The Square.⁵⁷⁷ Crawford's report found that many of those who opted to travel into The Square for their shopping trips were driven by the desire for social interaction, as the city centre offered a larger crowd and therefore, a larger space for community.⁵⁷⁸

During the 1960s the advent of supermarkets in Palmerston North changed the nature of food shopping. What had previously been a personalised visit to the neighbourhood grocer where items were retrieved at the request of the customer became superseded by large, self-service stores which offered a much wider selection of products.⁵⁷⁹ As discussed earlier, grocery stores opened in Palmerston North as early as 1893, with the co-op opening several grocery stores

⁵⁷¹ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 3.

⁵⁷² Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 3.

⁵⁷³ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 4.

⁵⁷⁴ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 4.

⁵⁷⁵ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 4.

⁵⁷⁶ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Crawford, *Senior Citizens - Flat Location and Shopping in Palmerston North*, 5.

⁵⁷⁹ Labrum, *Real Modern*, 249.

across Palmerston North in the later years; however, larger supermarkets were not established significantly in the city until well into the post-war period. By the late 1960s, there were three main supermarkets located in Palmerston North: Parlanes Supermarket, Woolworths, and the Self Help.⁵⁸⁰ These supermarkets were all located on main roads within a short distance from the city centre with large car-parks, allowing accessibility to most consumers in Palmerston North.⁵⁸¹ Supermarkets acted as competitors to other local, smaller grocery stores and butcheries as they offered greater convenience by allowing consumers to shop for all their needs in one store, as opposed to travelling from a smaller food store to a butchery.⁵⁸²



Parlanes Supermarket, which was located on the corner of Pioneer Highway and West Street.⁵⁸⁴

Suburban shopping remained an integral part of Palmerstonian's lives in the post-war period. Indeed, the expansion of suburbs in this period saw many different groups benefitting from suburban shopping. Many customers valued their convenience, sense of community, and they became an important part of the local economy. With business owners finding success in suburban settings and many consumers opting to complete some of their regular shopping locally, some of them owing to difficulties accessing the city centre, suburban shopping benefitted traders and the consumers equally.

⁵⁸⁰ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 4.

⁵⁸¹ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 4.

⁵⁸² Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 4.

⁵⁸³ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 5.

⁵⁸⁴ Worthington, "Palmerston North: A Study of Suburban Shops and Services," 5.

The Manawatu Co-Operative Society

The Manawatu Co-operative Society and its stores were a very important part of shopping and consumer culture in Palmerston North. As the largest business in the area during its time, the Co-op owned a large quantity of the city's shops, large and small.⁵⁸⁵ The Manawatu Co-operative Society, established in 1935, initially owned only food stores such as butcheries and grocery stores.⁵⁸⁶ It was not until the 1950s when the Co-op shifted into ownership of other types of retail stores such as Manly Outfitters in 1951 and the P.D.C. in 1956 that it had a significant presence in the centre of the city, as discussed in the previous chapter.⁵⁸⁷ The Co-operative Society had a major impact on the consumerism sphere in the city as it created a local partnership within the community, allowing members to contribute shares and receive rebates from the profits of Co-op owned businesses.⁵⁸⁸ The idea behind the Manawatu Co-operative Society was to provide competitive prices on quality products and offer this service to members and non-members, allowing equal service to all.⁵⁸⁹

There is little literature on how the Manawatu Co-Operative Society operated between 1945 and 1985, with existing literature having primarily focused on its formative years in the 1930 and the collapse in the late 1980s. To understand the impact the Co-op had on Palmerston North, it is important to first understand how the Manawatu Co-operative Society was established and its structure surrounding membership and ownership. Consumer co-operatives were an established system in New Zealand long before the Manawatu Co-op came to be. The first consumers co-operative foundation was established by road-workers in Nelson in the 1840s, with numerous other co-operatives forming over the next century.⁵⁹⁰ The Manawatu Co-operative Society was not Manawatu's first consumers co-operative either, with the co-op's Chairman reporting in 1960 that there was a system in Palmerston North in 1922 that proved unsuccessful within two

⁵⁸⁵ Karen Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?: The Manawatu Co-operative Society Ltd, 1935-1939," (BA Honours Research Exercise, Massey University, 1995),
7, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/fe50257c-200a-44f9-a140-9f9b492ab4ca/content>

⁵⁸⁶ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 7.

⁵⁸⁷ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 7.

⁵⁸⁸ "Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North," Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, accessed on January 15, 2025, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/zoomify/9490/manawatu-co-operative-society-palmerston-north>

⁵⁸⁹ "Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North", Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁵⁹⁰ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 11.

years.⁵⁹¹ Other types of popular co-operative systems were dairy co-operatives, which were producer based rather than consumer co-operatives.⁵⁹² Farmers' co-operatives acted in a similar way, selling farming produce on behalf of co-operative members.⁵⁹³ The idea for the Manawatu Co-operative Society to be established, alongside several other regional co-operatives, came from the economic hardship of the Great Depression in the 1930s.⁵⁹⁴ Potential co-operators voted to create a branch which enabled all co-operatives to work together, which led to the establishment of the New Zealand Co-operative Alliance, with the intention of promoting co-operations as the solution to the then economic situation.⁵⁹⁵ In turn, the Manawatu Co-operative Society was established, with intentions of ensuring more reasonable product prices for consumers during a time of need.

An advertisement from the Manawatu Co-operative Society produced in 1937 promoted the co-op's success within its two years of establishment and explained in detail how the Manawatu co-op functioned and what the roles of members and management were.⁵⁹⁶ According to the advertisement, membership was open to all and by becoming a member, you become a partial owner of the stores.⁵⁹⁷ In 1937 it was stated that a member would have to purchase a share of at least £1, with two shillings and six pence required to pay when applying to become a member with the same amount as a continuing monthly payment until your shares are paid off.⁵⁹⁸ The Society was managed by an elected board consisting of seven individuals who are voted to be on the Committee of Management by members annually, with general meetings held quarterly.⁵⁹⁹ The grocery store opened by the Co-Op served to provide quality service and pricing to all consumers, both members and non-members.⁶⁰⁰ High and low class brands were carried and free

⁵⁹¹ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?" 11.

⁵⁹² Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?" 11.

⁵⁹³ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?" 11.

⁵⁹⁴ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?" 12.

⁵⁹⁵ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?" 12.

⁵⁹⁶ Manawatu Co-operative Society advertisement from 1937 cited in Malcolm Mackinnon, "Manawatū and Horowhenua region – Heyday: 1910s to 1960s," Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. Accessed on September 15th, 2025, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/manawatu-and-horowhenua-region/page-8>

⁵⁹⁷ "Manawatu Co-operative Society," Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁵⁹⁸ "Manawatu Co-operative Society," Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁵⁹⁹ "Manawatu Co-operative Society," Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁰ "Manawatu Co-operative Society" Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

delivery service to all suburbs of Palmerston North was offered.⁶⁰¹ By 1937, the Co-Op had opened a butcher shop located on the corner of Chelwood and Lyndhurst Streets, in the suburb of Takaro.⁶⁰² With this butcher, the Co-Op maintained “only first quality meat”, supplied “direct by a reputable stock farmer” would be offered to consumers at competitive prices.⁶⁰³ Free delivery of meat was also offered to all suburbs.⁶⁰⁴ What the Co-Op intended to bring to the community with these initial stores, and the following multitude of stores to come, was equal treatment for all customers, whether one was a member of the co-op or not.⁶⁰⁵ This allowed customers access to products at fair prices during a period of economic hardship, bringing forward a sense of community and fair treatment of all.

The profits made from trading were distributed back to the shareholders (members) based on the financial contributions they made, with each member allocated a membership number with records kept of what financial contributions each member made.⁶⁰⁶ For example, the Co-Op advertising poster published in 1937 claimed that in the last six months of trading, members received 8d (eight pence) in rebates based on £1 contributions to the grocery store and/or the butchery.⁶⁰⁷ With membership numbers increasing, rebates would increase accordingly, allowing the Co-Op to extend into other trades.⁶⁰⁸ After two years of trading, in 1937 the co-op had approximately 600 members, which increased over the coming decades and allowed the Co-Op to open several more stores around the Manawatu, eventually transitioning from food trading into other types of retail in the 1950s.⁶⁰⁹ The total annual turnover in 1937 was £22,000, with returned profits to members readily exceeding the common £1 subscription rate.⁶¹⁰ By the 1940s, the Co-Op was regarded as an exemplar of egalitarianism in New Zealand.

⁶⁰¹ “Manawatu Co-operative Society” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰² “Manawatu Co-operative Society” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰³ “Manawatu Co-operative Society” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁴ “Manawatu Co-operative Society” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁵ “Manawatu Co-operative Society” Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁶ “Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North”, Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁷ “Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North”, Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁸ “Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North”, Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶⁰⁹ “Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North”, Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.

⁶¹⁰ “Manawatu Co-operative Society, Palmerston North”, Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.



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This Co-Op advertisement featured in a 1975 copy of the *Manawatu Evening Standard* discusses the Co-Op's achievements in their 40 years of service. It mentions the variety of Co-Op owned stores, the 25,000 shareholders, the \$664,000 rebate payout, and the offer of becoming a shareholder for \$6.⁶¹²

A photograph of Betty Evans visiting the Co-Op was part of the Evans Family Collection used to promote New Zealand to British Migrants.⁶¹³ A Co-Op poster encouraging customers to “Avoid Waste” and thereby “Save Food for Britain”, accompanied by a map of Britain, is prominently displayed in the middle of the photograph, linking the Co-Op to “Home”.⁶¹⁴ The appeal to save food for Britons can be viewed within the wider context of what James Belich refers to as the ‘recolonisation’ era of New Zealand’s history between the 1880s and 1970s, when New Zealand linked itself economically and culturally to Great Britain.⁶¹⁵ The resumption of assisted immigration in 1947, which the Evans family photographs were intended to promote, was one element of recolonisation.

⁶¹¹ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, “Co-Op advertisement,” November 4, 1975, 12.

⁶¹² *Manawatu Evening Standard*, “Co-Op advertisement,” 12.

⁶¹³ “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at the Manawatu Cooperative Society shop,” Manawatu Heritage, image, 1947, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/5e19914a-f68e-4f12-8c1c-c3c973bf0f23>

⁶¹⁴ “Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at the Manawatu Cooperative Society shop,” Manawatu Heritage.

⁶¹⁵ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 53-86.



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Photograph included in the government's Evans Family Collection, showing Mrs. Betty Evans shopping at the Co-Op shop, with the link to Britain seen in the poster.⁶¹⁷

The Manawatu Consumers' Co-operative Society established its first store in November 1935 on Broadway Avenue, Palmerston North.⁶¹⁸ The small group of members at the time rented a former fish and chips store for 5 pounds (\$10) per week and transformed it into a grocery store, known as the 'Co-Op'.⁶¹⁹ The minimum shareholding for members to invest in the 'Co-Op' grocery store was 1 pound, revealing the remarkable dedication from these contributors as the average weekly wage was then 1.5 pounds.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁶ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at the Manawatu Cooperative Society shop," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶¹⁷ "Evans Family Collection: Mrs. Evans at the Manawatu Cooperative Society shop," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶¹⁸ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 1.

⁶¹⁹ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 1.

⁶²⁰ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 1.



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The first store opened by the Manawatu Consumers Co-operative Society, a grocery store located on Broadway Ave, Palmerston North in 1935.

From there, the Society opened multiple food stores around Palmerston North including butcheries and a bakery in suburbs such as Takaro and West End.⁶²² By 1945, there were 13 Co-Op owned stores in the city, creating a growing impact on Palmerston North's grocery consumer area.⁶²³ By the mid 1970s, former P.D.C. Assistant Manager Colin Dyer noted the Co-Op owned "some 35 grocery stores, 10 butcheries, a liquor store, a motorbike shop".⁶²⁴ From this time, however, they gradually declined in number because of the emergence of supermarkets, which had more buying power and offered a wider range of products.⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 1.

⁶²² "Manawatu Consumers Co-Operative Society Stores", Manawatu Consumers Co-Operative Society research file; A175/127, Palmerston North City Library, Community Archives, circa 1975.

⁶²³ "Manawatu Consumers Co-Operative Society Stores", Palmerston North City Library.

⁶²⁴ "Oral Interview - Colin Dyer, Part One," interview with Simon Johnson, *Manawatu Heritage*, April 20th, 2018, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/33d3969b-3ddc-4fd9-8efb-ab1cf2b08d1f>

⁶²⁵ "Oral Interview - Colin Dyer, Part Two," interview with Simon Johnson, *Manawatu Heritage*, April 20th, 2018, <https://manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz/item/8842b4d0-c5e1-4f17-a2a2-5d7f4a6e08c9>



A Co-Op advertisement for their Wholesale Liquor Store, located on Fitzherbert Avenue (close to the city centre), advertising their wide range of liquors.⁶²⁷ The advertisement reminds shareholders that purchases count towards the Co-Op Annual Rebate, and the store offers free parking for customers.⁶²⁸

Women had an important role in the Co-Op's development and progression throughout its years of operation.⁶²⁹ As shareholders, board members, staff members, guild members, and of course customers, women played a significant role in the success and development of the Co-Op and their business decisions.⁶³⁰ Because women did most of the household shopping in the period under review they exercised significant power as within the Co-Op.⁶³¹ With the initial minimum deposit required to become a shareholder being relatively low, many women were able to contribute to become shareholders in the Co-Op, allowing them to vote and accordingly influence the expansion of the Co-Op.⁶³² With women becoming increasingly involved, there was discussion about establishing a Women's Co-Operative Guild, which served as a connection between women's knowledge of shopping and the men's trading expertise.⁶³³ Edith Niederer,

⁶²⁶ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, "Co-Op Wholesale Liquor Store," June 22, 1983.

⁶²⁷ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 1983.

⁶²⁸ *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 1983.

⁶²⁹ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 31.

⁶³⁰ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 31.

⁶³¹ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 31.

⁶³² Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 31.

⁶³³ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 33.

already elected into the Management Committee, was elected president of the Women's Guild in 1936.⁶³⁴

Unfortunately, the Manawatu Women's Co-Operative Guild ceased its work in 1957, but that did not mark the end of women's contributions in the Co-Op. The largest contribution women made to the Co-Op's success was in their role as customers.⁶³⁵ It was believed by the national Co-Operative Alliance that in the 1930s, women were responsible for 90% of the grocery shopping in their homes.⁶³⁶ This percentage did not shift significantly in the post-war period. The success of the majority of the stores opened by the Co-Op relied heavily on women choosing to shop there, making the decision to stock quality and reasonably priced goods essential.⁶³⁷

Finally, women were employed by the Co-Op as employees in various shops, this number increasing dramatically when the Co-Op took ownership of the P.D.C. in 1956.⁶³⁸ With various departments selling clothing and items that related to women, female employees became crucial for trading success. In multiple ways, women were essential to the success of the Co-Op, allowing their voices to be heard and creating not only opportunities to have a place in the public sphere, but also creating financial opportunities through employment.

An oral interview conducted by Lee Matthews discussed the involvement of women in the Co-Op through the Women's Guild.⁶³⁹ Murial McDonagh, board member of the Co-op's Women's Guild, was approached by an employee at one of the Co-op's grocery stores to become a member, where she stated "That sounds right up my alley... a socialist movement".⁶⁴⁰ With her uncle being a MP in Invercargill, Murial had a keen interest in politics and coming from a privileged class, Murial did not believe in class divisions, stating "I felt that all people were equal... all have a right to equal results".⁶⁴¹ Murial was vocal in one particular meeting about

⁶³⁴ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 33.

⁶³⁵ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 34.

⁶³⁶ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 34.

⁶³⁷ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 35.

⁶³⁸ Morgan, "A Fragment of a Better Order?," 36.

⁶³⁹ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴⁰ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴¹ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

concerns relating to equity in trading, after which she was approached by Linda Bennett who offered Murial the opportunity to join the Women's Guild.⁶⁴² Murial described the Guild as working for "women, children and the society".⁶⁴³ She describes their work in raising money for various groups in need, such as the elderly and the intellectually disabled, and providing opportunities for women who wished for life beyond the home.⁶⁴⁴ Murial claimed that the Guild was dedicated to helping the community in various ways, revealing a service beyond sale and trading.⁶⁴⁵

Despite its ultimate demise in the late 1980s, the Manawatu Co-Operative Society was a prominent business in Palmerston North during its over 50 years of operation and trading. Becoming one of the strongest retail co-operatives in New Zealand, it certainly had a significant impact on consumer culture in Palmerston North's post-war period.⁶⁴⁶ With expansion into most suburbs around the city, stores in the surrounding towns and areas of the Manawatu, and the revival of the P.D.C and ultimately the Plaza, the Co-Op cast a great influence on shopping trends and behaviours for customers. The Co-Op employed thousands of employees, gave a sense of identity and belonging for men and women as shareholders and board members, and promoted fair sales and trading to all customers.

Summary

Suburban shopping played an important role in consumer culture in post-war Palmerston North. As Palmerston North's suburbs expanded significantly in area and population, new shopping areas were established to cater for them. Existing suburbs such as Terrace End and Hokowhitu saw new shopping centres established such as Broadtop in Terrace End and Hokowhitu Village in Albert Street. In addition, shopping centres were also constructed in newly developed suburbs such as Awapuni and Milson. Many people, particularly women and senior citizens, relied on suburban shops to purchase household necessities and services such as hairdressing and vehicle

⁶⁴² "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴³ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴⁴ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴⁵ "Oral Interview - Consumers' Co-Operative Society (Manawatu) Ltd," Manawatu Heritage.

⁶⁴⁶ Coy and Ng, "The Collapse of the Manawatu Consumers' Co-op - A Case Study," 1.

repairs. The Manawatu Co-Op became an integral part of suburban shopping in Palmerston North with a city-wide network of stores. It represented a different vision of consumerism, with customers and business-owners sharing the wealth created by shopping. Both the co-op, and suburban shopping in general, were strongly influenced by women and the decisions they made around shopping.

Chapter IV - Students as Consumers: The Impact of Massey University

The establishment of Massey Agricultural College in 1927, followed by its transition to full University status in 1964, had a significant impact in shaping Palmerston North as a city.⁶⁴⁷ The 1960's saw a boom in tertiary students relocating to Palmerston North as Massey University evolved into a renowned tertiary institution, recognised as one of New Zealand's top universities. With the Palmerston North Teachers College established in 1956 and Massey becoming an autonomous university with numerous degrees added to its growing offerings from 1964, students became a large community within Palmerston North's general population.⁶⁴⁸ Michael Belgrave alludes to these developments in his book *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen: A History of Massey University*.⁶⁴⁹ With increasing numbers of students enrolling in Massey University, by 1957 student accommodation on campus became increasingly overcrowded, pushing students to find accommodation in town.⁶⁵⁰ With this, the student population devolved to various suburbs throughout Palmerston North, creating an even stronger presence of students within the town. By 1972, Massey's number of enrolled students was close to 6000, with 40 percent of students already from Palmerston North, with the remainder coming from other communities, typically from the central to lower North Island region.⁶⁵¹

One of the significant impacts Massey becoming a full University had on Palmerston North was a change in the culture of the city. With the shift from the agricultural college to the university, a wider range of courses and degrees were introduced, including science and arts subjects, which brought in a wider array of students and staff.⁶⁵² With Palmerston North being a small city at the time population wise, this introduction of student population growth had a marked impact on the city, particularly in the social and economic aspects.⁶⁵³ The influx of students came at a time where youth culture was more prevalent in Palmerston North's society, particularly in the

⁶⁴⁷ Helen Dollery, "“Fools Abroad”: The Town-Gown Relationship between Massey University Students and Palmerston North at Capping Time 1963-1973" (Research report, Massey University, 2003), 5.

⁶⁴⁸ Petersen, *Palmerston North: A Centennial History*, 230.

⁶⁴⁹ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 173.

⁶⁵⁰ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 173.

⁶⁵¹ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

⁶⁵² Dollery, "“Fools Abroad”, 5.

⁶⁵³ Dollery, "“Fools Abroad”, 5.

consumer world where, as discussed in chapter two, shops began to advertise and cater to adolescents and young adults to a greater extent.⁶⁵⁴ As discussed later in the chapter, students became a target market for local businesses, with some advertisements specifically tailored for students.

Economic Impact of Massey University

Massey University had a significant economic impact on Palmerston North within this period, something Adrian Gover discusses extensively in his thesis on the relationship between the university and the city.⁶⁵⁵ Gover completed his thesis in 1978, so his research gives a good overview of the impact of Massey University on Palmerston North after its first decade as a university.⁶⁵⁶ Gover found that for every 100 students enrolled at Massey, 35 staff members were introduced into Palmerston North's population, with 19 jobs established at the university.⁶⁵⁷ The university boosted the city's income, as by the mid-1970s, Massey and associated entities had added \$377,075 to Palmerston North's revenue.⁶⁵⁸ When the combined effects of the University's impact on the city's population increase, the higher level of income to the region owing the large number of professional staff recruited, employment opportunities, and the construction of additional infrastructure established on and around the campus, are considered, it can rightly be argued the university had a transformative impact on Palmerston North.⁶⁵⁹

Population growth was an important feature of Massey's influence on the city. Palmerston North was already steadily increasing its population prior to Massey becoming a university in 1964.⁶⁶⁰ The 1950s and 1960s especially saw the city's population increase significantly, at a higher rate than the nation's average.⁶⁶¹ Palmerston North's population increased from 30,351 in 1951 to

⁶⁵⁴ Dollery, "Fools Abroad", 6.

⁶⁵⁵ Adrian Donald Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North: An Impact Study of Some Relationships Between University and City" (MA Thesis, Massey University, 1978), ii, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/7d7c9e88-69be-4694-afcd-6c78b07b1235/content>

⁶⁵⁶ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 123.

⁶⁵⁷ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North" 123.

⁶⁵⁸ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 123.

⁶⁵⁹ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 125.

⁶⁶⁰ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 28.

⁶⁶¹ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 28.

46,832 in 1966, equally a mean increase rate of 3.05%, compared to the average national increase of 2.23% for the same period.⁶⁶² By 1976, Massey internal students made up 5.92% of Palmerston North's population, with staff having an impact on these statistics also.⁶⁶³ In 1976, there were 788 people employed full time at the university, with many migrating to Palmerston North from other areas of New Zealand.⁶⁶⁴ Gover concludes that by 1976, the city's population gained an estimated 1367 people made up of university staff members.⁶⁶⁵ This data demonstrates the impact the university had on Palmerston North's population growth, in particular how it bolstered existing growth trends.

Complementing the population growth brought by the rise of internal students enrolling at Massey, short term visitors were also a component of the university's influence on the city and its economy. Contact courses were an important element of this, with extramural students required to come to the campus for a short period of time, usually a week, as a part of their course requirements.⁶⁶⁶ Other university related courses and events brought greater numbers of the wider community, both local and national, to Palmerston North's campus, including through extension programmes, conferences, and short courses.⁶⁶⁷ These numbers varied throughout the post-war years however, Michael Belgrave notes in *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen* that in 1972, the student enrolment number was slightly less than 6000, with an additional 3900 enrolled for the university extension programme.⁶⁶⁸ This number comprised of approximately 40 per cent from Palmerston North, with the remainder from other regions, primarily the wider Manawatū, Horowhenua, and the Hawkes Bay regions.⁶⁶⁹ With the additional meetings and conferences that took place on the Palmerston North campus, with a primary focus on agricultural related subjects, these sources brought considerable numbers of visitors to Palmerston North.⁶⁷⁰ This in turn, made Palmerston North something of a shopping destination,

⁶⁶² Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 28.

⁶⁶³ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 72.

⁶⁶⁴ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 76.

⁶⁶⁵ Gover, "Massey University and Palmerston North," 78.

⁶⁶⁶ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

⁶⁶⁷ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

⁶⁶⁸ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

⁶⁶⁹ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

⁶⁷⁰ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 256.

as visitors travelling to Palmerston North for university-related purposes, also ventured into the city for entertainment and shopping.

The establishment of the Palmerston North Teachers Training College in 1956, later renamed to the Palmerston North College of Education, was a significant addition to Massey Agricultural College, with the official opening of the College noted by Roger Openshaw as a “pivotal event in the history of the city and of education in the region” and Hon. P.O. Skoglund, city councillor and Member of Parliament for Palmerston North, recalling it as a “red letter day” for the city.⁶⁷¹ The first of its kind in New Zealand, the separate College from the main campus, was originally located in the centre of town on the corner of Princess and King Streets before relocating to a campus in Hokowhitu adjacent to the Manawatu Golf Club and opposite the lagoon. Following much demand for student accommodation, a hostel named Blair Tennent Hall was opened in Fitzherbert Avenue near the city centre in 1964, placing residents close to The Square.⁶⁷² It offered its students a different experience from other New Zealand tertiary institutions offered previously.⁶⁷³ The College provided another boost opportunity for consumer activity. Another positive benefit for consumer culture and shopping from the Teachers College presence is the fact that most enrolled students were women.⁶⁷⁴ As discussed previously, women made up the large majority of consumers, particularly young women as shopping was seen as a type of hobby for many. As the Teachers College brought in further groups of female students for its degree, it allowed the city to welcome a new set of potential consumers, one of the many positive consequences tertiary institutions had on the city’s economy.

Promoting Consumer Culture Among Students

With the student population increasing, many stores created advertisements catered specifically towards students. One example of this is a 1965 advertisement from the store Goldfinch & Cousins, one of Palmerston North’s longest running menswear stores which operated between

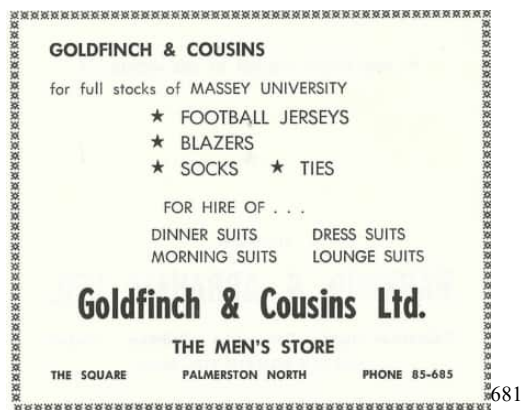
⁶⁷¹ Roger Openshaw, *Between Two Worlds: A History of Palmerston North College of Education 1956-1996* (Dunmore Press: Palmerston North, 1996), 25-26.

⁶⁷² Tamiro, “Palmerston North College of Education Timeline (1956-1996),” Massey University, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/25198>

⁶⁷³ Openshaw, *Between Two Worlds*, 25.

⁶⁷⁴ Openshaw, *Between Two Worlds*, 11.

1918 and 2022.⁶⁷⁵ The advertisement was featured in the 1965 edition of Massey University’s *Bleat*, the student magazine that was first produced in 1931 and continued until its final edition in 1968.⁶⁷⁶ The top section of the text in the Goldfinch & Cousins advertisement promoted their “full stocks of Massey University”, related clothing items.⁶⁷⁷ These items included football jerseys, blazers, ties, and socks, useful for club sports and significant university occasions, such as University Games.⁶⁷⁸ Belgrave records that males ‘were expected to wear ties and jackets at evening meals and for Sunday meals’, so formal attire was a necessity for many students.⁶⁷⁹ The text in the lower half of the advertisement featured a variety of suits available for hire, including dinner, morning, dress, and lounge suits.⁶⁸⁰ The provision of quality suits for hire was likely for formal occasions such as University Balls or Graduation ceremonies. The cost of hiring a suit was also much cheaper than purchasing a suit, which made sense for male students who may not have needed to wear a suit more than once or twice per year. By making suits accessible and affordable Goldfinch and Cousins extended their customer base, despite usually being known as being an upscale, more expensive clothing store.



The placement of this advertisement in a student magazine suggests the owners of Goldfinch & Cousins saw students as a potential market. The prominence of rugby union attire in the

⁶⁷⁵ Matthew Dallas, “Life after suits: Menswear retailers finding versatility a favourable fit,” *Stuff, Manawatu Standard*, January 6, 2023, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/300777861/life-after-suits-menswear-retailers-finding-versatility-a-favourable-fit>

⁶⁷⁶ “The Bleat, 1952”, Tāmīro Massey University, accessed December 12, 2024, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/2494>

⁶⁷⁷ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 56.

⁶⁷⁸ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 56.

⁶⁷⁹ Belgrave, *From Empire’s Servant to Global Citizen*, 176.

⁶⁸⁰ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 56.

⁶⁸¹ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 56.

advertisement is also noteworthy, as the Massey University Rugby Club had a strong presence in local rugby, which became stronger after it became a full university. Indeed, the number of rugby union teams fielded by Massey University in the local club competition increased from five to ten between 1967 and 1968, so the timing of the advertisement coincided with a growing catchment of players for Massey rugby.⁶⁸² The location of Goldfinch and Cousins in The Square, made it easily accessible for students who relied on bus services to travel around the city.⁶⁸³

Many of Palmerston North's well-established stores advertised in *Bleat*. A 1965 advertisement for Collinson and Cunninghame appealed to their heritage as a shopping staple in Palmerston North for decades to encourage students to shop with them. Their leading sentence in the advertisement "C. & C's. know but do YOU know..." alluded to the store having expertise in the fashion industry which the common student may not.⁶⁸⁴ The advertisement enquired whether the reader knew "where to find the most up-to-date, most fashionable, most reliable clothes?", with the accompanying rejoinder "The answer is so obviously... Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd."⁶⁸⁵ In this way the advertisement combined an appeal to modernity, with the inclusion of the words "up-to-date" with a reference to the store's long established reputation, with the word "reliable", reassuring readers customers of the store could rely on buying quality goods..⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² Geoff Watson, *MURFC 75: Massey University Rugby Football Club 75th Jubilee 1929-2004*, Massey University Rugby Club, Palmerston North, 2004, 9, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/14326#idx201644>

⁶⁸³ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 56.

⁶⁸⁴ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁸⁵ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁸⁶ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

C. & C's. know
but do YOU know . . .

WHERE TO FIND THE
 MOST UP-TO-DATE
 MOST FASHIONABLE
 MOST RELIABLE
 CLOTHES?

*THE ANSWER IS
 SO OBVIOUSLY . . .*

Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd.
AT THE HEART OF BUSY BROADWAY

C. & C's. have served the public of Palmerston North and surrounding districts for over 60 years . . . have catered for your parents — and their parents requirements — now they cater for YOURS with top fashions and quality essentials for pleasing appearance, relaxful living.

*We know what you want . . .
 . . . We have what you want!*

● **SOUVENIR SECTION**

A SECTION OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO OVER-SEAS STUDENTS WITH MANY INTRIGUING ITEMS.

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The text in the bottom half of the advertisement included an intergenerational appeal stating “C & C.s have served the public of Palmerston North and surrounding districts for over 60 years... have catered for your parents - and their parents requirements - now they [Collinson and Cunninghame] cater for YOURS”.⁶⁸⁸ This statement is used to potentially build trust in a new clientele, a younger generation that had an entirely different fashion sense to what their parents wore at their age approximately twenty years earlier. This is consistent with Collinson and Cunninghame’s pattern of advertising discussed in chapter two, whereby they presented themselves as selling up-to-date and fashionable clothing in addition to classic styles.⁶⁸⁹ The final sentence of the main advertisement reads “We know what you want... We have what you want!” further encouraged younger customers to trust that the store knew the styles teenagers and

⁶⁸⁷ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁸⁸ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁸⁹ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

young adults were interested in.⁶⁹⁰ This entire advertisement is aimed at building trust in a generation that may have accompanied their own parents or grandparents shopping at Collinson & Cunninghame. This inclusive promotion of trends and styles reflects Wood's contemporary observations on advertising in New Zealand. He argued companies attempted to elicit a 'feel good' emotion for consumers when imagining themselves purchasing and wearing the clothes advertised.⁶⁹¹

A text box at the bottom of the advertisement refers to a 'souvenir section' that may be of "special interest" to "overseas students."⁶⁹² The advertisement states that the souvenir section holds "many intriguing items" however, it does not list what these items were.⁶⁹³ It may be that the reference to overseas students was a response to the growing number of international students at Massey, some of whom may have been interested in purchasing souvenir items representing New Zealand or Palmerston North. Belgrave notes that in the post-war period a growing number of international students came to Massey, many coming to study agriculture as part of the Colombo Plan. The number of students from Asia increased from 101 in 1961 to 268 in 1969. The reference to overseas students possibly reflects their emergence as a sub-category of consumers within the broader student market. Collinson and Cunninghame intended to grow their clientele to incorporate tertiary students in the hope of making their store popular with youths just as it had always been with older adults.

While some advertisements in student publications appealed to university traditions, others referenced contemporary fashion trends. The following advertisement from Goldfinch and Cousins appeared in the Massey University student magazine *Masskerade* in 1965. *Masskerade* was published between 1938 to 1985 in conjunction with the University's annual capping parade. Proceeds from *Masskerade* sales helped raise money for capping related festivities.⁶⁹⁴ Although aimed primarily at Massey students, *Masskerade* was sold throughout the lower North Island, so

⁶⁹⁰ *Bleat*, Massey University of Manawatu, Palmerston North, July 20, 1965, 58.

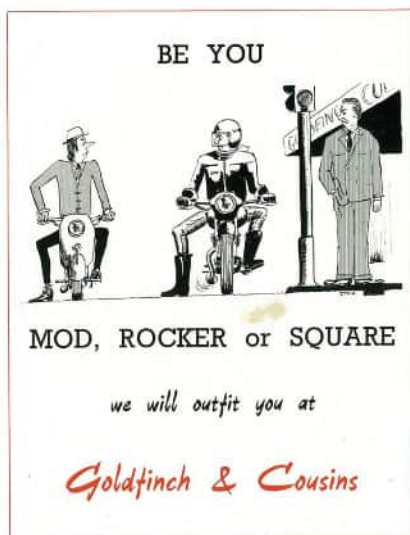
⁶⁹¹ Wood, "Frills and Furbelows," *The Wordsmiths: A Study of Advertising Practices in New Zealand*, 42.

⁶⁹² *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁹³ *Bleat*, July 20, 1965, 58.

⁶⁹⁴ *Masskerade*, Tāmīro Massey University, accessed December 14, 2024, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/166>

advertisers reached a large readership.⁶⁹⁵ In contrast to the exclusively textual form of the Goldfinch and Cousins advertisement for suits and blazers discussed earlier in the chapter, this advertisement is mostly visual. It featured a large cartoon-type image, which depicted a mod-type man on a moped scooter wearing clean, smart clothing, a motorcyclist wearing biker attire, and a male pedestrian wearing a classic suit.⁶⁹⁶ All three individuals are looking at each other, seemingly taking in the appearance of the others.⁶⁹⁷ The two words at the top of the advertisement read “BE YOU”, an invitation to people to dress how they choose.⁶⁹⁸



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The words underneath the image, “Mod, Rocker or Square” encompass the contemporary spectrum of styles and identities.⁷⁰⁰ A ‘mod’ in the 1960s was a young person who wore neat clothing, rode motor scooters, and enjoyed soul music.⁷⁰¹ This identity originated in Britain's youth culture, which was an influence for many in New Zealand.⁷⁰² A ‘rocker’ was a young person who in the 1960s, belonged to a subculture that wore leather clothing, drove motorcycles,

⁶⁹⁵ Dollery, “Fools Abroad,” 41, 67,

⁶⁹⁶ *Masskerade*, 1965, 59. Tāmīro Massey University, accessed December 14, 2024, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/3063?keywords=masskerade+1965&highlights=WyJtYXNza2VyYWRLIiwMTk2NSJd&lsk=c30d29c06ca3e65a4cd3e016378c590b>

⁶⁹⁷ *Masskerade*, 1965, 59.

⁶⁹⁸ *Masskerade*, 1965, 59.

⁶⁹⁹ *Masskerade*, 1965, 59.

⁷⁰⁰ *Masskerade*, 1965, 59.

⁷⁰¹ “Definition of ‘mod’”, Collins Dictionary, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/mod>

⁷⁰² “Definition of ‘mod’”, Collins Dictionary.

and enjoyed rock music, again a British trend that was influential in New Zealand.⁷⁰³ Lastly, a ‘square’ is someone who is traditional, who is not interested in current trends, and wears simple, slightly boring clothing.⁷⁰⁴ The text in the lower half of the advertisement read, “Mod, Rocker or Square we will outfit you at Goldfinch & Cousins”, signalling that Goldfinch and Cousins, a store usually associated with respectable attire, also catered for modern fashion. The placement of this advertisement in *Masskerade* suggests Goldfinch and Cousins saw commercial value in appealing to students.

Moving forward into the mid-1970s, we see a shift again in retail advertisements to promotions intended for university students living in town rather than on campus. As Massey University continued to expand as a tertiary institution, we see more advertisements geared towards students and their needs, including the growing number of students who were flatting.⁷⁰⁵ Many businesses offered student discounts, in their advertising, suggesting an awareness of students as a target market. Transport to and from Massey was a priority for many students. An example of this is an advertisement for motorcycles featured in the 42nd volume of *Chaff*, the Massey University Students Association’s newspaper, in 1975.⁷⁰⁶ The advertisement was from Tim Gibbes Motors Limited in which they advertised their Honda and Yamaha bike ranges.⁷⁰⁷ The title reads, “Honda and Yamaha: The Answer to Student Transport Problems”, immediately recognising students as their intended audience.⁷⁰⁸ The phrase “student transport problems” may allude to the fact that many students did not own cars and relied on other means of travel. Belgrave briefly discusses this matter referencing the fact that the Massey University campus attracted students from all over the nation, including those close but living rurally, meaning reliable transport was a necessity for many students.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰³ “Definition of ‘rocker’”, Collins Dictionary, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rocker>; Belgrave, *Becoming Aotearoa*, 425.

⁷⁰⁴ “Square”, Cambridge Dictionary, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/square> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 505-09.

⁷⁰⁵ Belgrave, *From Empire’s Servant to Global Citizen*, 259-62. Dollery, “Fools Abroad,” 62.

⁷⁰⁶ *Chaff*, Tāmīro Massey, accessed December 16, 2024, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/167>

⁷⁰⁷ *Chaff*, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷⁰⁸ *Chaff*, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷⁰⁹ Belgrave, *From Empire’s Servant to Global Citizen: A History of Massey University*, 216.

The advertisement featured identifiably student imagery, including a representation of a student dressed in their graduation attire adjacent to a motorbike.⁷¹⁰ The advertisement invited students to call or see Tim Gibbes to discuss “ your transport requirements”, in which a bike would be found to “suit your needs - at a price to suit your pocket”.⁷¹¹ The descriptions of the two bike models shown include words such as “reliable”, “safe” and “simple”, words that may have been used to encourage students to purchase a vehicle that is appropriate for their safety and their budget.⁷¹² This appeal to safety may also have been intended for parents of students, who may have been asked to contribute towards the cost of purchasing a motor vehicle for their children.



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The advertisement lists a range of prices and alludes to a payment plan, where students can pay a deposit and follow through with 12 monthly payments.⁷¹⁴ This option may have been appealing for students, as many had limited incomes. Tim Gibbes Motors was then located in Taonui Street, some distance from the city centre so would have required a dedicated shopping expedition.

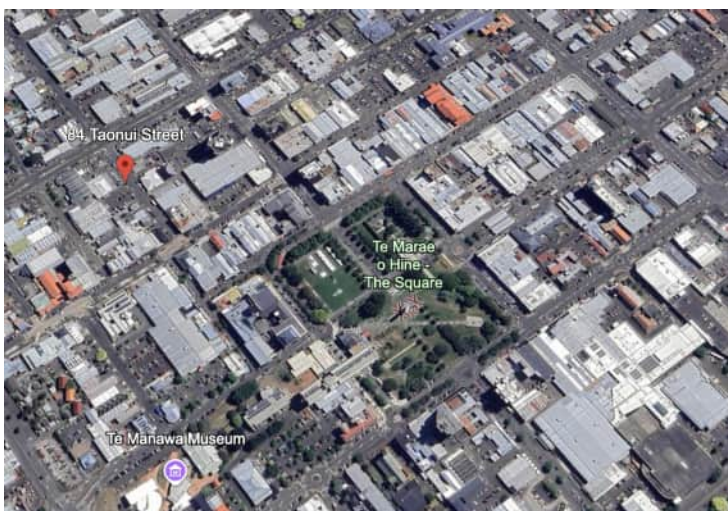
⁷¹⁰ Chaff, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷¹¹ Chaff, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷¹² Chaff, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷¹³ Chaff, March 6, 1975, 15.

⁷¹⁴ Chaff, March 6, 1975, 15.



During the 1970s and 1980s cycling became a common means of transportation to and from Massey for students living off campus. Many staff and students cycled to campus, which included many large bicycle parks.



A photograph taken in the 1980s showing a crowded bicycle stand at Massey University, featuring many 10-speed bicycles, a popular model of bicycle at the time.

⁷¹⁵ “84 Taonui Street, Palmerston North”, Google Earth, accessed December 16, 2024, https://earth.google.com/web/search/84+Taonui+Street,+Palmerston+North+Central,+Palmerston+North/@-40.35547597,175.61099526,35.02321549a,1522.07443332d,35y,7.05643245h,33.0000072t,0r/data=CqsBGn0SdwoIMHg2ZDQxYjJkM2UwNzhIMWNmOjB4M2FjOTYxMGJmZmFINGYyMRnEoW3rXS1EwCGd0JCWb_NIQCo8ODQgVGFvbnVpIFN0cmVldCwgUGFsbWVyc3RvbiBOb3J0aCBDZW50cmFsLCBQYWxtZXJzdG9uIE5vcnRoGAIgASImCiQJpXai_QsRMAR5DFHRsctRMAZdfK41rHzZUAhwq5oVi3zZUBCAggBOgMKATBCAggASg01AAA

⁷¹⁶ “Bicycle stand, 1980s,” Tamiro, Massey University, image, 1980s, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/4806?keywords=bicycles&highlights=WyJiaWN5Y2xlcjJd&lsk=199db72de802b89cabd1d2e97c31fc63>

Consequently, several businesses promoted themselves as suppliers of bicycles for students. An example of this can be seen in the following advertisement for P.D.C. from the 1980 ‘Massey Orientation’ handbook⁷¹⁷ As noted in Chapter Two, the P.D.C, was arguably the city’s leading department store and was also part of the wider Co-Op network.⁷¹⁸ The advertisement promoted one of their bicycle models which was sold at both its department store’s Bike Shop near The Square as well as the Terrace End Bike Shop.⁷¹⁹ By promoting bicycles in the orientation magazine, which came out at the beginning of the academic year, the P.D.C. may well have been targeting recently arrived students who had not bought bicycles with them.⁷²⁰

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The advertisement promoted the Morrison Monark 10 Speed Tourer and highlighted its purportedly distinguishing features in a captioned photograph.⁷²² These included the bicycle’s 40/52 dual plateau chainwheel; high-tensile tubing; efficient hand-bars; effective brake extension levers; and quality side-puff alloy brakes.⁷²³ The excerpt to the right of the image begins with “This is the Year of the 10-Speed”, thereby encouraging students that in acquiring a 10-speed they would be up with the latest trends.⁷²⁴ The period between 1979 and 1980 was referred to as

⁷¹⁷ *Massey Orientation ‘80 - The Year of the Monkey*, Massey University Students’ Association, 1980, 41.

⁷¹⁸ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

⁷¹⁹ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²⁰ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²¹ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²² *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

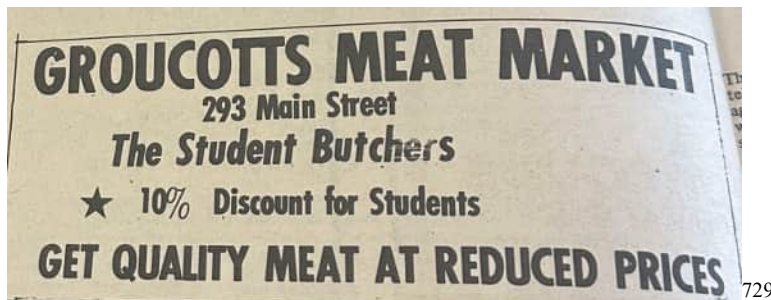
⁷²³ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²⁴ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 41.

the “bicycle boom”, owing to cycle shops reporting a surge in sales. It was in part encouraged by Government plans to introduce carless days to alleviate fuel shortages.⁷²⁵ The 10-Speed represented a significant advance on the 3-speed bikes with back-brakes that were then commonly sold for general use. It brought technology previously used only by a few competitive cyclists into general use.

The text of the advertisement advised prospective customers that the Co-Op Rebate applied to this product, meaning that customers would only be required to pay a 10% deposit and thereafter make follow up payments with an “easy” payment plan.⁷²⁶ This may well have been appealing to students on limited budgets. The excerpt concludes with a reassuring, “Remember too, we service what we sell!”⁷²⁷ This provides additional security for consumers that they did not need to have expertise in cycle maintenance in order to use the latest products.⁷²⁸

Promotions including student discounts appeared in many editions of *Chaff*. The following advertisement for Groucotts Meat Market, a butcher located on Main Street in Palmerston North, illustrates how smaller retailers promoted themselves to students.



Groucotts Meat Market presented their business as “The Student Butchers”.⁷³⁰ In the line below, a student discount of 10% is promoted.⁷³¹ The bottom sentence of the advertisement stated, “Get quality meat at reduced prices.”⁷³² This statement reinforced the idea that the meat sold from this

⁷²⁵ “Carless Days Help Bicycle Boom,” *Press*, July 27, 1979, 4,

⁷²⁶ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²⁷ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²⁸ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 41.

⁷²⁹ *Chaff*, Issue Four, May 1, 1975, 124.

⁷³⁰ *Chaff*, May 1, 1975, 124.

⁷³¹ *Chaff*, May 1, 1975, 124.

⁷³² *Chaff*, May 1, 1975, 124.

business is cheap, suitable for students who may have just started cooking for themselves since leaving home, whilst reassuring students that the meat is still of a high quality. The promotion of meat to students suggests it was an important part of their diet, particularly for those who may have come from farms.

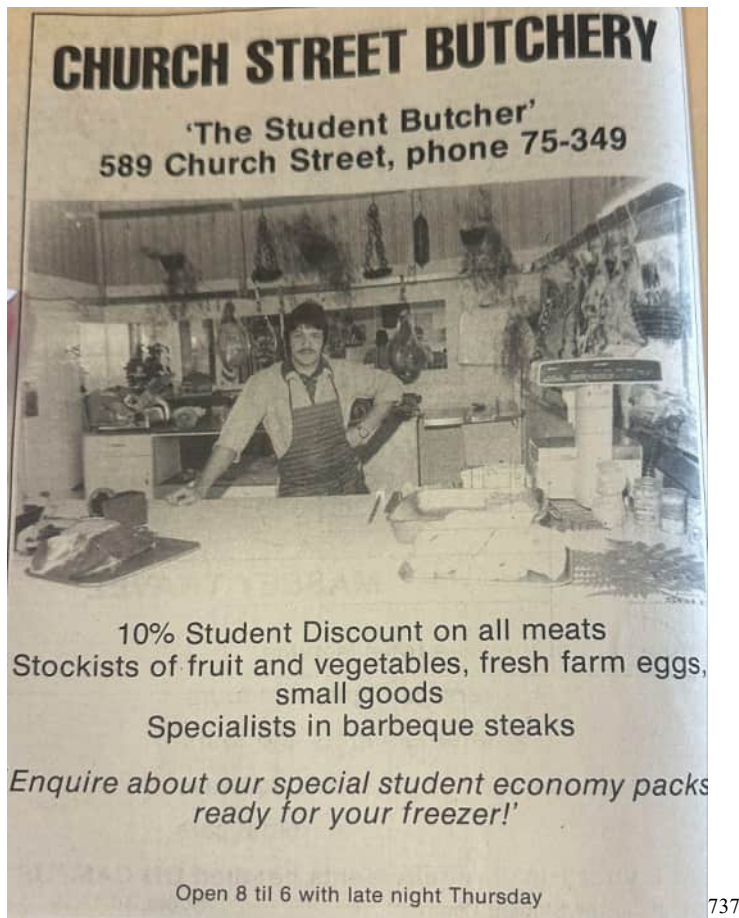
Another example of food retailers promoting themselves to students, likely student flatters, comes from a 1980 advertisement produced by the ‘Church Street Butchery’, a butchery located at 589 Church Street, outside the central Palmerston North district and in the Terrace End suburb, where, as previously noted, many other small stores were established in the later post-war period.⁷³³ The advertisement appeared in the 1980 ‘Massey Orientation’ handbook, a publication intended to coincide with orientation week which provided new and returning students with information about student life.⁷³⁴ The orientation magazine had a large readership among students and was extensively distributed on Campus, which may have made it particularly appealing for local businesses seeking to promote themselves to students. The second line of the advertisement featured the self-proclaimed second title of the business as “The Student Butcher”, similar to the advertisement for Groucotts Meat Markets discussed earlier, although it is unknown if the two businesses were connected.⁷³⁵ The store offered a “10% Student Discount on all meats”, immediately drawing in students as an audience.⁷³⁶ As meat can be a more expensive grocery item, students may have opted to buy cheaper, less nutritional food items in their grocery shopping trips if they were not aware discounts were available.

⁷³³ *Massey Orientation ‘80 - The Year of the Monkey*, ” Massey University Students’ Association, 1980, 10.
<https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/14887?keywords=massey+orientation+%26%23039%3B80&type=all&highlights=WyJtYXNzZXkiLCJvcmlbnRhdGlvbiIsIic4MCJd&lsk=65fc8102a6a72c005f437048c2356853#idx208387>

⁷³⁴ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 10.

⁷³⁵ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 10.

⁷³⁶ *Massey Orientation ‘80*, 1980, 10.



The advertisement also promoted additional food products, including fruits and vegetables, eggs, and other small goods, although there was no student discount offered for these.⁷³⁸ This separated the butchery from similar stores as they offered a wider range of products. Italicised text near the bottom of the advertisement informed students that the store offered “special student economy packs ready for your freezer”.⁷³⁹ This suggests the advertisement was specifically aimed at students who were flatting in the suburbs and wanted to store meat. The bottom line of the advertisement ends with the store’s operating hours, which were from 8am to 6pm on weekdays, with late night shopping on Thursday night. It was during the second half of the twentieth century that late night shopping was commonly shifted to a Thursday.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁷ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 10.

⁷³⁸ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 10.

⁷³⁹ *Massey Orientation '80*, 1980, 10.

⁷⁴⁰ Pilkington, “Remembering what we used to do on a Friday night,” *Stuff*.

Hairstyles became a distinguishing feature of youth movements, especially students in the 1970s and 1980s. This trend was particularly evident at Massey University and was on occasion a source of friction between staff and students.⁷⁴¹ By the 1980s ‘new wave’ hairstyles, which involved specialist hairstyling and use of hair products were becoming trendy.⁷⁴² During the mid-1980s, some hairdressers advertised modern hairstyles to students. An example of this is an advertisement in *Chaff* for Scarpers Hair, a hairdressing salon owned by Michael Miers, a popular hairdresser and salon owner in Palmerston North.⁷⁴³ The location of the salon near Porter Square Rangitikei Street, a short distance from The Square, made it accessible for those who travelled into the city centre regularly.⁷⁴⁴ The haircut styles featured mid-1980s trends including big hair, often teased, crimped, or spiked for women, and for males, choppy, longer cuts.⁷⁴⁵ The female models wore 1980s style makeup, underscoring the appeal to modernity in the advertisement.⁷⁴⁶ Across the eight hairstyle images is a banner that boasts the student price, \$17.95, beneath the mentioned normal price of \$19.95.⁷⁴⁷ This drew in that student population with their exclusive discount, whilst incorporating non-students by featuring the regular price. When adjusted for inflation, \$17.95 in 1985 equates to approximately \$62.00 in 2025, which would have represented a significant outlay for a student at that time.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴¹ Belgrave, *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen*, 288.

⁷⁴² “Kid’s Crazy about New Wave Hairstyling,” *Press*, April 5, 1986, 14, https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19860405.2.92.3?end_date=31-12-2001&items_per_page=10&phrase=2&query=new+wave+hair&snippet=true&sort_by=byDA&start_date=01-01-1985

⁷⁴³ *Chaff*, Massey University Students Association, volume 52, September 18, 1985, 14, <https://tamiro.massey.ac.nz/nodes/view/3130?keywords=chaff+1985&type=all&highlights=WyJjaGFmZiIsIjE5ODUjXQ%3D%3D&lsk=cbbc3b7fe78b33d09649b798254019d3#idx70390>

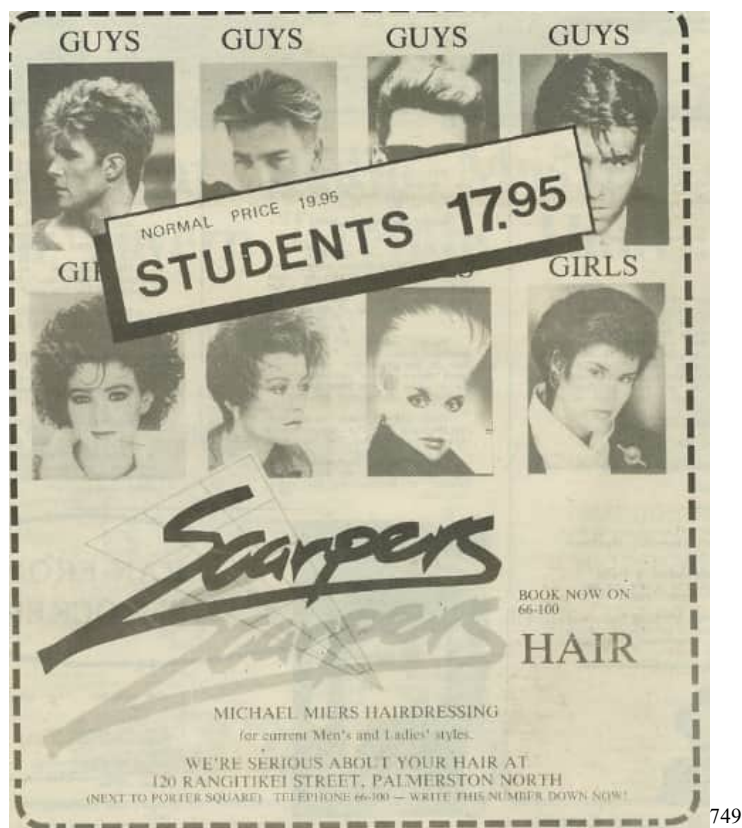
⁷⁴⁴ *Chaff*, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁴⁵ *Chaff*, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁴⁶ *Chaff*, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁴⁷ *Chaff*, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁴⁸ “Inflation Calculator,” Reserve Bank of New Zealand, August 25, 2022, <https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/monetary-policy/about-monetary-policy/inflation-calculator>



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The text appealed to modernity, assuring customers Scarpers was the place to go “for current Men’s and Ladies’ styles”.⁷⁵⁰ The text in bold below is, “We’re serious about your hair...” reassured readers of the professionalism of staff and that Scarpers Hair salon took fashion seriously.⁷⁵¹ The final line of the advertisement provided the business’ phone number followed by the imperative, “Write this number down now!” to encourage a sense of urgency among prospective customers.⁷⁵² The provision of what might have been termed ‘alternative’ or ‘trendy’ hairstyles in a provincial town is significant as students and younger people liked to experiment with their hairstyles in the 1980s. The liberty to express individual identity in the way people dressed and structured their appearance became a more generally accepted notion in the later years of the post-war period and reflected a wider pattern of social liberation in areas such as sexuality and feminism.⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁹ Chaff, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁵⁰ Chaff, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁵¹ Chaff, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁵² Chaff, September 18, 1985, 14.

⁷⁵³ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand Since 1945*, 159.

Summary

Students emerged as an important target market for Palmerston North Businesses in the post-war period. This accelerated with the elevation of Massey to full University status in 1964 and the opening of Palmerston North Teachers Training College in 1956. Both established businesses, such as Collinson and Cunninghame's and newer businesses, such as Scarpers, sought to appeal to students. Those with a longstanding presence in the city sometimes used intergenerational appeals in their promotions whilst others positioned themselves as purveyors of the latest trends. As more students began to live off-campus, many businesses, including suburban businesses offered student discounts in their promotions. Massey University publications such as *Chaff* and Orientation magazines were sought after by businesses, suggesting that they wanted to incorporate students as customers. Some businesses, such as Tim Gibbes, promoted themselves as catering specifically to student problems by providing motorcycles, while others such as the Church Street Butchery sought to place their products as part of student-oriented shopping experiences by offering student freezer packs. Other advertisements, such as the promotion for 10-speed bikes in the P.D.C. were more generic in nature but were still promoted in student publications as they were seen to appeal to that part of the market. The design of advertisements also evolved from the text-heavy designs of the 1950s to more sophisticated designs including cartoon style drawings and, from the 1970s, the incorporation of photographs. There was an element of competitiveness among advertisements aimed at students with a particular emphasis on modernity with many products being represented as the most up-to-date and trendy available.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate how shopping and consumer culture evolved in Palmerston North between 1945 and 1985. Most of the research on consumer culture in the post-war era is focused on a national level rather than regionally specific studies. Regional histories of Palmerston North, such as *City at the Centre: The History of Palmerston North* and *Palmerston North: A Centennial History* include some references to shopping and consumer culture but do not provide a detailed examination of the topic. Focusing on one city allowed a close focus on how products were promoted to particular groups of consumers and changes in consumer culture over time. For the purpose of this thesis, consumer culture has been interpreted in broad terms. In particular, the focus has been on how businesses looked to attract consumers through advertising and the ways in which shopping was a community experience. Consumerism was not simply an act of necessity in the post-war period. It became a social experience for many, predominantly women, and allowed some to find joy in acquiring and utilising material goods. As we have found, consumerism became an important area of life, as values shifted, and society introduced advanced products and new ways of life.

Choosing Palmerston North as the location of the study provided a window into how consumer culture and shopping evolved in a provincial town, which experienced considerable development in the post-war era. With a population of approximately 27,000 in 1945,⁷⁵⁴ and reaching approximately 69,700 by 1985, Palmerston North was a moderate size urban area which, like many provincial towns, serviced a large rural hinterland.⁷⁵⁵ Palmerston North served as the main business and shopping point for the Manawatu region, adding to its significance as a location for consumer activity. In addition, from 1964, when Massey Agricultural College became Massey University, the city hosted tertiary institutions and so the location provided insights into shopping and youth culture. Additionally, like many New Zealand towns and cities, there was extensive suburban development between 1945 and 1985 which provided an opportunity to examine consumer culture and shopping in the suburbs.

⁷⁵⁴ “The New Zealand Official Year-Book, 1946,” “Section 3 - Population”, Statistics New Zealand, https://www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1946/NZOYB_1946.html#idindex_1_314934

⁷⁵⁵ “The New Zealand Official Year-Book, 1986-87,” “5.5 Population,” Statistics New Zealand, https://www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1986-87/NZOYB_1986-87.html#idchapter_1_15701

Chapter Two focused on shopping and gender with a particular focus on three prominent central department store locations. Here, Palmerston North generally reflected wider trends in New Zealand, although some of these took a distinct expression in the city. Appliance shopping was a key element of consumer culture in both Palmerston North and New Zealand at this time. The Evans Family Collection, a series of photographs taken of the Evans Family who lived in the state housing development at Savage Crescent, with the intention of promoting New Zealand to British immigrants, provides valuable insights into shopping and consumer culture in the immediate post-war period. The images of Mrs. Evans in her modern kitchen and vacuuming the living room with a popular modern vacuum cleaner show how modernity was a crucial theme of consumerism. When products or styles were advertised as 'modern' it created a sense that everyone could and should possess similar items and styles. These images also represented her role as a housewife, another important factor of society at this time. The image of the family eating dinner together represented family as a crucial value, with hints to modern consumerism with the sewing machine in the background, another indicator of a woman's role or hobby in the home. The Evans collection underscored how shopping was then primarily an activity for women. Mrs. Evans was variously shown collecting her family benefit, visiting the Co-Op store and shopping at C.M. Ross and Co., where she was depicted buying shoes (and being served by women in the process) and in the C.M. Ross tearooms. These images were carefully selected by the government to promote the family-friendly nature of suburban life in New Zealand, in which a family living in a working-class suburb had access to the latest appliances and high-end retail shopping.

The three central city department store locations selected as case studies: C.M. Ross and Co and its successors Milne and Choyce and D.I.C.; Collinson and Cunninghame's and P.D.C. broadly reflected the characteristics Laurenson and Labrum identified in department stores elsewhere in New Zealand, but each had their own particular qualities. Window displays in all three stores, particularly Milne and Choyce and Collinson and Cunninghame, were as elsewhere in New Zealand, a form of popular culture, being an attraction as well as marketing devices. Each of these stores prided themselves in offering the latest goods to customers but were differentiated to some degree. Collinson and Cunninghame and C.M. Ross presented themselves as high-end

stores, albeit catering for a cross-section of customers. Milne and Choyce, D.I.C and P.D.C. tended to be aimed more at the middle classes, particularly after the P.D.C was taken over by the Manawatu Co-op. While the products and clientele of these shops overlapped to some degree, each had characteristics which were promoted as defining them. Collinson and Cunninghame's Christmas Cave became a feature attraction for successive generations of Palmerstonians. The tearooms at C.M. Ross were an integral part of social life for many Palmerstonians and an important part of the shopping experience for many women. The revolving Kiwi atop P.D.C. 's entrance became a Palmerston North landmark, while the four carparks the store offered customers featured prominently in advertising. Longer established stores such as C.M. Ross and Collinson and Cunninghame appealed to intergenerational loyalties while branch stores such as Milne and Choyce and D.I.C, promoted their lengthy brand history and national profile.

Appeals to 'modernity' were a constant theme in advertising. This was evident in both store-specific advertisements and promotional material for Palmerston North, which focused on promoting its self-image as a progressive city. The ways in which 'modernity' was represented evolved according to values of the time. Advertisements from 1945 promoted shopping and consumerism as an opportunity to "smile again" and encourage consumers to resume spending.⁷⁵⁶ By 1950, advertisements moved beyond war-weariness and focused on promoting modern appliances as, owing to the economic recovery, people now had more disposable income. Civic celebrations, such as the city's 75th Jubilee in 1952 and the 1971 centennial celebrations generated commemorative publications which businesses used as opportunities to share their histories and promote themselves. The 1960s saw another shift of trends particularly in fashion, with advertisements dedicated to teenagers, such as Milne & Choyce's 'Miss Manawatu' section, and their advertisements reflecting the growing influence of American trends in popular culture. Although appeals to 'modernity' were prominent in the period under review, its application was in some respects constrained. Advertising in Palmerston North publications in the period between 1945 and 1985 was almost exclusively targeted at people of European ancestry, reflecting the assimilationist views prevalent at that time. The emphasis placed on modernity was a national trend, so was not unique to Palmerston North. The term did, however, acquire a particular resonance when used in a Palmerston North context because the ability to

⁷⁵⁶ "Forgotten Man? Page 2 Advertisements Column 6," Manawatu Times, September 13, 1945.

provide quality, up-to-date shopping facilities was one element of Palmerston North's wider claim to being a modern, 'progressive' city.

Chapter Three focused on consumer activity in a suburban context. Although the Square remained an important shopping hub throughout the period under review, the expansion of Palmerston North in the post-war period saw significant developments in suburban shopping. The smaller shopping centres in the neighbourhood suburbs provided goods and services to those who either by choice or lack of transport wanted to avoid shopping in the centre of town. In the suburbs everyone was a consumer, from the elderly who generally stuck to their local shopping centres, to young mothers who were limited to their neighbourhood with their young children and restricted transport opportunities. Expansion of shopping opportunities occurred in both established suburbs, such as Terrace End, which saw significant improvements to their shopping centre in the postwar period, as well as newer suburbs such as Awapuni. At a general level, the expansion of suburban shopping in Palmerston North mirrored wider trends in New Zealand. The Manawatu Co-Operative Society, however, with its citywide network of stores and its focus on serving both consumer and business-owner alike, became a distinct part of everyday life in Palmerston North. Saving and redeeming Co-Op vouchers was part of the lifestyle of many Palmerstonians. The Co-Op played a major role in Palmerston North with its ability to offer cheaper prices for predominantly grocery products from their stores. Through partnering with other local businesses, prices were made competitive with larger businesses, offering accessibility to consumers who now had choice in their spending quantities and habits. Women played a significant role in the Co-Op movement, seen through the Women's Guild. As noted in chapter two, the Co-Ops acquisition of P.D.C. gave it a central city as well as suburban presence. By the 1980s the Co-Op network was coming under increasing pressure owing to the greater buying power of supermarkets and the demise of P.D.C. after the establishment of the Plaza. Nevertheless, the Co-Op represented a different form of consumerism because in addition to promoting spending and generating money for personal satisfaction its rebate system and shareholding structure gave consumer culture a collective expression.

Chapter Four discussed the emergence of students as a distinct category of consumer in post-war Palmerston North. This development was stimulated by the building of Palmerston North

Teachers College in 1956 and Massey Agricultural College becoming Massey University in 1964. This significantly increased the number of students living in Palmerston North, a significant number of whom were living in student flats from the 1970s. Many businesses used student publications like Chaff to promote themselves to students. Stores like butcheries advertised special deals for students, catering to their lower income by offering student discounts. Others such as Tim Gibbes Motor presented themselves as the “answer to student transport problems.”

The relationship between consumerism and gender was another focus of the thesis. The combination of the Family Benefit and post-war prosperity made luxury goods more accessible for women, as seen in the photos of Mrs. Evans using modern appliances. For much of the period under review shopping revolved greatly around women and their interests. Fashion, beauty, and home decor were extensively promoted to women, including the ‘Career Girl’. Shopping became for many, a time to socialise and step out of their regular home duties, and with places such as tea rooms being common in larger Palmerston North department stores, shopping allowed a space for women to indulge in leisurely experiences, rather than simply being an activity to obtain necessities. Children and teenagers also emerged as distinct consumer groups in their own right. Advertisements for menswear reflected both traditional and contemporary tastes. The growing number of children attending high school saw school uniforms become an important consumer item.

Although there were significant changes in the period under review, there were also some important continuities in Palmerston North’s consumer culture. The Square remained a significant aspect of Palmerston North, hosting the larger stores that were so popular to the region. The Square represented the city’s centre, where the accompanying streets and areas catered to the shopping needs and habits of its citizens, as well as visitors. With public transport stations, accessible parking, scenic surroundings, and a multitude of shopping opportunities, The Square was, and continues to be, an example of a successful central city shopping precinct which remains a favoured destination for shoppers.

There is much more research that could be done in the area of shopping and consumer culture in Palmerston North. This thesis has provided an analysis of the major trends in the period between 1945 and 1985, but more research could be done on particular suburbs. The relationship between shopping and consumer culture in Palmerston North and its neighbouring settlements in Feilding and smaller towns such as Ashhurst; Bunnythorpe and Rongotea would also be an interesting area of investigation.

In summary, this thesis has examined a number of elements of shopping and consumerism in Palmerston North. Overall, it is apparent that a strong consumer culture emerged in Palmerston North in the period under review. The Square remained the hub of consumer activity; but there was a diversification of consumer opportunities in the form of suburban shopping centres; goods aimed at children; an emerging student market and the elderly also being consumers in their own right. The period between 1945 and 1985 represented a fascinating time for shopping and consumer activity in which a great deal of evolution took place. Values, trends, and roles shifted immensely throughout these decades, in which Palmerston North, progressed to a new state of modernity. Identities shifted, new generations blossomed, and urban locations expanded into a new commercial world. The evolution of consumerism created a broader society, one where the freedom to spend shifted fundamental values and created a new sense of living.

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