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**MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN HARTON :**  
**ITS ORIGINS, GROWTH AND PRESENT NATURE**

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Geography  
at Massey University

By

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Massey University  
1970

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his appreciation for the assistance and co-operation received from many people and organisations in the preparation of this thesis. There are, however, a number whose ready assistance has been particularly appreciated.

Greatest appreciation must be given to Mr. E.C.R. Warr, Geography Department, Massey University, for his helpful advice and constructive criticism.

Special appreciation is also due to the Marton Development Council who commended the survey to its members; to the manufacturers who not only gave willingly of their valuable time to answer the questionnaire but who also permitted the author to question many of their employees; to the management of M.S.D. - Speirs Ltd., for permission to carry out a case study on their firm; to the Marton Borough Council for making available statistical data and other information; to the Marton Historical Society for making available their files on the history of the town; to the Principal of Rangitikei College, Mr. S.G. Carter, for permission to conduct a survey of the school-leavers in 1968 and for making available certain statistical information; to the Department of Statistics, Wellington, for collating statistics not otherwise available; and to White's Aviation, Ltd. for permission to use two of their aerial photographs of Marton.

Particular appreciation is also due to Professor K.W. Thomson, Geography Department, Massey University, for assisting with the preparation of the two questionnaires; to Mr. H.P. Melody, editor of "The Rangitikei Mail", Marton, who was always available to assist me and to supply leads to elusive historical information; to Mrs. F. Thompson, Marton, and Mr. J. Gould, Ohakune, for permission to use two early photographs; to Miss E. Hathaway and Mrs. D. Ball for so ably typing the thesis; to Miss A. Hersey for doing the cartography; and, to Miss D. Scott, Photography Unit, Massey University, for the faithful reproduction of the diagrams, maps and photographs.

To the many others, too numerous to mention by name, who assisted in a variety of ways the author's appreciation is also extended.



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PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY

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## INTRODUCTION

"..... Marton can justly claim to be an ideal town for setting up secondary industries....." <sup>1</sup>

"..... The population over recent years has shown a steady increase and there are signs afoot that the potential of this centrally situated, well planned and solidly supported borough is being realised more and more and that a period of greater industrial development and growth is imminent...." <sup>2</sup>

".... The Borough of Marton has the fastest growth rate of any of the towns in the Wanganui Employment District..." <sup>3</sup>

".... For its size, Marton must be one of the most prolific factory towns in New Zealand...." <sup>4</sup>

".... Originally the settlement's sole purpose was to service the rich country areas that surround it on all sides, but it has, in recent years, developed into a centre that is above average in industrial development....." <sup>5</sup>

Such statements, gleaned from various articles and booklets about the town of Marton, suggest that, in terms of manufacturing industry, it is, in certain respects, atypical of other New Zealand towns of a similar size and has, in fact, considerable potential as a small, industrial centre. The Marton-born writer, too, was aware of certain other distinctive features of the town's manufacturing industry - for example, the virtual absence of industries for processing the produce of its agricultural and pastoral hinterland yet the presence of other industries using imported raw materials with markets of nationwide importance.

This research on manufacturing industry in Marton had

had three objectives:

(a) to consider, with particular reference to the role and influence of the development of transport, the growth and present nature of manufacturing industry in Marton;

(b) to consider the varying significance of factors of industrial location in the development of Marton's industrial landscape; and,

(c) to consider the role of decentralisation of some manufacturing industry from the major urban centres in the future economic stability of rural towns, especially in respect of the employment opportunities so offered.

#### Methodology

The chief sources of information for the chapters concerned with the growth and development of industry in Marton since its establishment in the 1850's were the recollections of residents who were often able to support their claims with old photographs and newspaper clippings, and the weekly newspaper, "The Rangitikei Mail", which regularly carries features of historical interest. Three works which proved to be particularly useful in this section were Evans' "A History of Agricultural Production and Marketing in New Zealand", Wilson's "Early Rangitikei" and "A History of Marton and Its People" which was published in 1954 to celebrate Marton's seventy-fifth year as a borough.

The chief sources of information for the remainder of the thesis, which is concerned with the present industrial landscape, were Estall and Buchanan's "Industrial Activity and Economic Geography", Greenhut's "Plant Location in Theory and in Practise",

Hoover's "The Location of Economic Activity" and two questionnaires (Appendix A).

Questionnaire A, which deals mainly with the present nature of industry in Marton, was the basis of the major part of the thesis. It was taken personally to all the factory managers in the area during November, 1968 and January, 1969.

Questionnaire B was given to 151 students of Rangitikei College who at the time (November, 1968) had indicated that they might be leaving at the end of the year. This questionnaire yielded, from a youthful viewpoint, information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of life in a rural town as compared with that in a city. This information was used in Chapter 10 which deals with the reasons for the migration of young people from Marton.

One complication arose in the selection of the factories for studying. The Department of Statistics' definition of a "factory",<sup>6</sup> which is used in their statistics, did not seem appropriate for the writer's research which was concerned with manufacturing industry only. It was thus decided to include all factories in the district which manufactured either a product or a component in the survey. Of the total of thirty-six so defined, two were located some distance outside the borough boundaries. These two were included because most of their labour force commutes daily from Marton. It should be noted that the total includes 'owner-operated' factories (which the Department of Statistics excludes) as well as several which are not solely concerned with manufacturing.

As a preliminary investigation before commencing the major part of the research, the industrial sector of Marton was compared with that of thirty-three other New Zealand towns, with populations ranging between 3000 and 7000, to see to what extent the town, and especially its industry, was characteristic. As it was not intended that this should form a major part of the thesis the towns were compared only on the basis of the current statistics of industrial production - numbers of factories, total factory employment, salaries paid, cost of materials, value of production, value added <sup>6</sup>, and employment in the manufacturing and transport sectors <sup>7</sup> (Table I).

It can be seen that Marton, with the exception of Stratford, contains a greater number of factories than any other town in the group. In respect of the other categories, the proportion per capita in Marton in each category is, with one exception (employment in the transport sector), in excess of that for over half of the other towns. Seventeen towns have a higher proportion of their population than Marton employed in the transport sector.

It is doubtful, however, whether Marton can be actually described as typical or atypical - for, what are the distinguishing features of a characteristic New Zealand town in the group? New Zealand's small, rural towns show great diversity in all aspects and to analyse a "typical character" would, apart from being very complex, probably prove of doubtful validity. It could be noted, however, and this is not apparent from Table I, that primary processing industries are relatively unimportant in Marton's industrial structure by marked contrast with most other towns in the group. In its own way, then, industry in Marton has its distinctive characteristics, and it is this distinctive character with which this thesis is primarily concerned.

**TABLE I**

**A COMPARISON OF SELECTED STATISTICS OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IN 34 NEW ZEALAND TOWNS**

**WITH POPULATIONS BETWEEN 3000 and 7000, 1966**

	Population (1966 Census)	Number of Factories	Factory Employment	Salary (\$'000's)	Cost of Materials (\$'000's)	Value of Production (\$'000's)	Value Added (\$'000's)	Employment in Manufacturing			Employment in Transport (Total)
								Male	Female	Total	
Kaitaia	3056	27	171	317	388	909	415	143	16	159	119*
Paeroa	3129	29	364*	615*	4396*	5653*	811*	209	82*	291*	147*
Kaikohe	3134	20	167	326	464	1022	445	183	11	194	124*
Waihi	3169	21	508*	912*	1985	3595*	1253*	320*	131*	451*	95
Te Aroha	3212	25	297*	358	3725*	4336*	443	223	46	269	93
Hokitika	3258	16	175	298	1433*	1928	371	209	42	251	123*
Bluff	3279	8	58	140	183	390	157	222	33	255	413*
Waimate	3300	18	129	213	441	819	303	184	50*	234	99
Kaipoi	3528	16	752*	1328*	2498*	4820*	1721*	592*	184*	776*	69
Carterton	3536	21	155	268	417	874	364	366*	107*	473*	84
Waipukurau	3569	24	219	365	743	1861	929*	160	43*	203	142*
Motueka	3748	21	254	354	999	1849	574	253	46	299	102
Ngaruawahia	3769	12	86	149	165	411	181	506*	46	552*	70
Matamata	3810	36	334*	596	1640	2603	735	242	77*	319	128*
Dargaville	3902	32	314	603	5346*	6611*	721	275	41	315	130*
Rangiora	4117	21	224	378	654	1424	621	273	128*	401*	169*
Balclutha	4419	24	244	560	817	1623	583	431*	35	466*	159*
Putaruru	4435	38	455*	991*	4097*	6531*	1921*	466*	42	508*	210*
Morrinsville	4497	38	413*	871*	12492*	14831*	1542*	426*	47	473*	132
Marton	4731	40	406	808	2068	3545	1180	351	72	423	151
Waitara	4790	13	788*	-	-	-	-	725*	127*	852*	104
Te Kuiti	4864	21	189	340	454	1080	468	259	22	381	210*
Wairoa	5100	21	400	846*	2882*	4318*	1102	328	25	353	161
Westport	5270	23	206	334	728	1313	455	355	40	395	330*
Huntly	5401	20	276	531	828	1926	741	338	81	419	165
Stratford	5441	45	599*	1137*	6271*	8400*	1571*	411*	91*	502	219*
Havelock North	5472	8	52	118	168	362	162	352	46	398	77
Thames	5599	29	686*	1385*	2094	4474*	1933*	503*	65	568*	154
Dannevirke	5728	34	279	479	591	1358	591	266	67	333	194*
Kawerau	5826	12	1815*	5812*	10485*	32029*	12893*	1477*	103*	1580*	87
Taumarunui	5864	32	212	475	896	1766	632	247	29	276	355*
Cambridge	5962	30	324	679	1502	2680	910	416*	64	480	164
Taradale	6253	17	98	208	370	771	327	401	85	486	209*
Te Awamutu	6719	38	615*	1203*	15275*	18611*	2281*	551*	95	646*	191

\*Towns with a higher proportion per capita than Marton

Sources: Dept. of Statistics, 1967, Census of Population and Dwellings (Employment in manufacturing and transport sectors only).

Dept. of Statistics, 1969, N.Z. Industrial Production 1966-1967, 46-47.

(All other categories)

FOOTNOTES

1. Marton Development Council, n.d., 5.
2. Marton Development Council, n.d., 7.
3. Marton Development Council, n.d., 7.
4. Marton Jaycee (Inc.), 1967, 31.
5. Young, 1966, 67.
6. It should be noted that these statistics "record only those factories engaged in manufacture, assembly, repair or treatment of articles which are classified within the Manufacturing Division of the New Zealand Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities .... The coverage applies to registered factories engaging two or more persons (including the working proprietor) with the exception of : cake and pastry kitchens; bespoke tailors, dressmakers and milliners; boat repairers; abattoirs; railway workshops; the naval dockyard." (Department of Statistics, 1969, New Zealand Industrial Production 1966-1967, 7.) As such, these figures are not solely concerned with manufacturing industry.
7. These two categories of statistics, from another source (the 1966 Census), are not exactly comparable with those of the other categories being derived on a different basis.