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COMMERCIAL ORCHARDING IN

NEW ZEALAND

A Thesis presented for the  
Degree of Master of Arts  
and Honours  
in Geography

1055A

by

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years commercial orcharding in New Zealand has assumed a new form. Fruit exports are growing year by year and orchard production has become concentrated within certain districts. Alongside this change, and in part responsible for it, has been the formation of grower organizations. Indeed, New Zealanders are fast becoming aware that there is a fruit industry developing in this country which, even though limited in prospects, will be a worthwhile contributor to our primary production. It is with the view of providing an accurate picture of the present character of the industry that this thesis is presented.

The purpose of this investigation will be achieved if it helps to give a broad view of the industry as it differs from place to place, and if it succeeds in inducing those interested in the industry to undertake a systematic stocktaking and review of the elements which underlie these differences before embarking on any scheme of future development.

The geographer who defines his discipline as the study of the 'likenesses and differences among places on the face of the earth'<sup>\*</sup> is well equipped to present such a chorological survey. Using the regional technique a geographer can produce a balanced study of the

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\* James, Preston E. and Jones, Clarence F. (Edit.). American Geography Inventory and Prospect. Syracuse, (1954), p. 4.

present character of the industry, reveal its wider application and suggest the processes by which the present character has been derived.

In this thesis the regional studies represent 70 per cent of the total work. They are preceded by a series of maps explaining the general features of commercial orcharding and followed, in Part II, by an attempt to evaluate the locational factors of orcharding and the factors influential in affecting the present day regionalization. The thesis has been conceived as a unit, in which the regional studies are the core. The overall diversity is presented; a generalization into regions for the sake of clarity is made and Part II analyses the factors underlying the regional differences.

Wherever possible statistics and ideas have been presented in visual form and in this thesis maps, diagrams and illustrations are more important than the accompanying text.

Field work for the thesis was completed during 1956 and the summer of 1957. During this period all the major orcharding districts were visited. Eighty per cent of the orchards were seen and a more intensive study was made on 20 per cent of the holdings in each district. Questionnaires and impressions collected during this field work provide the basic information for the thesis. Statistics were obtained from the Horticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture and are based on records available at the end of the 1955-1956 season. Where statistics were not available estimates, based on questionnaires, have been made and where possible verified by district officers of the Horticultural Division.

By no means is it claimed that the whole field has been covered by this survey. Rather, this thesis should be regarded as a general reconnaissance survey which the author hopes future workers will use as an outline for a more detailed study of commercial orcharding in each of the major regions.

Preparation for a Dominion survey of this nature has involved much travel and many interviews, and I would like to acknowledge the willing co-operation that I have received from orchardists and officers of the Horticultural Division, Department of Agriculture. Mr Leslie Curry, my tutor, has carefully guided the work since the outset and I am grateful for his many helpful suggestions. To Ray Crutcher and Terry Satten who helped with the processing of the maps and photographs, and to my typist, Mrs Wright, I offer my sincere thanks.

The thesis is dedicated to my teachers both at Thames High School and Auckland University College. I sincerely hope that they will find in this work some reward for the everlasting contribution that they have made to my education.

PART I

