



Toko Dairy Factory

East Rd

1892

Use:	Commercial	Historic Value:	2 out of 5
Materials:	Concrete, iron roof	Architectural Value:	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered:	Not registered	Technical Value:	1 out of 2
Legal Description:	Pr Sec 34 DP 515 Pt Lot 1 DP 1546 Lot 1 DP 9876 Blk III Ngaere SD - Subject to R/W -	Symbolic Value:	- out of 3



Rarity Value:	- out of 2
Townscape Value:	1 out of 2
Group Value:	- out of 2
Overall Heritage Value:	5 out of 20

Toko means to pole a canoe; a direct reference to the many swamps in the area. The land in Toko was first surveyed by Davies and Climie in 1889. The town developed quickly – by 1892 it boasted a store, postal facilities, sawmill, hotel, school, and a telephone office. It was during this year that it was decided the community was sufficiently large enough to have its own creamery. This was built by the Crown Dairy Company, and owned by Newton King, K.C. George and Richard Cook.

For the first two years of the factory's existence, milk was paid for by the volume, and the butter fat content was not sampled. However, numerous farmers tried to cheat this system by adding water to their milk, to make it heavier and therefore worth more. Unfortunately for them, they were caught out when small eels were found in the milk – after water from the creek had been added. After this situation occurred, the milk was monitored more meticulously, and the farmers were paid on the butter fat content of their milk.

In 1901, the Crown Dairy Company added a cheese-making plant to the back of the factory, when it was decided that this venture held a large amount of profit. However, it was not as successful as anticipated, and so it only continued for two years, after which it was reverted back to being a creamery. By 1917, it was again decided to install cheese plants at Toko, as well as at Stratford and Huinga. The Toko cheese plant remained in action until 1934, when it was destroyed by fire.

Toko farmers wanted a share in the business, so in 1902 they consequently joined the Stratford Dairy Company who bought the Toko Factory from the Crown Dairy Company for £3347. In 1913 it was decided that Toko should venture into casein, becoming the first Stratford Company to do so. By this stage the rural town of Toko had become centered around the Dairy Factory, with most of the locals either supplying milk, or working at the factory.

In 1965 the Toko Factory came under the ownership of the Taranaki Co-operative Dairy Company, after the Stratford, Cardiff, Eltham, and Normanby companies amalgamated. By 1982, due to a decreasing population and therefore a decrease in factory production, the Toko Factory was sold.

Bibliography

Toko Centennial 1893-1993

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p2