

**Capitalist and Co-operative Ideology in**  
**Small Town Industry: A Case Study of**  
**Desborough.**

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# Synopsis.

This dissertation is the study of the industrial growth of Desborough, a small Northamptonshire town, from 1800 through to 1914.

Taking a sociological approach to the research methods, it discusses the implications of the Industrial Revolution on the area, and how the mix of capitalist and co-operative ideologies worked together. Desborough was an agricultural area for hundreds of years before the Industrial Revolution. The dissertation will show that the area industrialised much later than other parts of the country. Real growth did not emerge until the building of the railway and its station in 1857.

Chapter two will discuss the Industrial Revolution and show that less happened less dramatically than many commentators once thought. It will also challenge the negative assumption that the poor got poorer as the rich got richer.

Chapter three (I to IV) will discuss the social and industrial realities of Desborough's own Industrial Revolutionary story. It will look at the Desborough Industrial and Provident Co-operative Society from its beginnings in 1863 through to its heyday in the early 1900s. The Society became one of the wealthiest industrial, commercial, land owning co-operative societies with the largest membership per capita in Britain. The dissertation will discuss the capitalist industries pre co-operation, and the conditions leading to the formation of the Co-operative Society. Several industries will be discussed: wool, linen, silk and lace manufacture, boots, shoes, corsetry, box making, mineral extraction and brick making. The Riley family, the first entrepreneurs in Desborough, and their commitment to the town and their continued industrial prowess will be discussed. The dissertation will show how expertise in one industry encouraged others to come and set up their businesses in town, and how the *truck system* was used to enslave workers and how co-operative ideology was to save the workers from this oppressive system of capitalist control.

In chapter four the dissertation will look at population growth, and its relationship to industrialisation.

Chapter five will bring all the elements together to show how industrialisation in the region evolved and will conclude that the Industrial Revolution came later than in other parts of Britain, that industrialisation was good for the working classes and that qualitative and quantitative indices improved. The dissertation will argue that the *truck system* was a bar to advancement, and how a combination of factors and people came together to make Desborough a prosperous industrial town.

Michael Stroud BA. (Hons) Open. Dissertation for MA History.

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