

**THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE BARBECUE BRIQUET
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES**

by

Raymond Lynn Bradley

An Abstract

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Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor

Dr. David W. Ganyard

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Much effort has been exerted by geographers on the analysis of large scale industries producing a myriad of products. However, they have given relatively little attention to small scale, widely dispersed, and vertically integrated industries which manufacture a single commodity. The barbecue briquet industry of the United States, an example of the latter, is the topic of investigation in this paper.

The central purpose of this study is to test the hypothesis that barbecue briquet manufacturers in the United States tend to locate closer to their raw material source than to their market. In order to test the hypothesis several objectives required investigation: (1) the location of each barbecue briquet manufacturer; (2) the consumption of barbecue briquets; (3) the production technology of the industry; and (4) the temporal development of barbecue briquetting.

Data for the study were obtained from various diverse sources including the Census of Manufacturers, 1963, a questionnaire, personal letters, interviews, visits to plants, and a wide variety of pertinent publications. The locational orientation of the industry was investigated through the use of cartographic and quantitative methods of analysis.

From the investigation it was learned that the industry is areally concentrated in the Ozark-Ouachita Uplands and the Appalachian Highlands. These are two areas which are well endowed with hardwood timber, the primary raw material for the industry. Other plants were found to be rather widely dispersed with their individual locations dependent upon the proximity to hardwoods and other types of raw materials.

Present charcoal consumption was found to be about equally divided between domestic and other types, with domestic consumption increasing.

Production of barbecue briquets in 1968 was greater than for any previous year. In fact, the output of barbecue briquets alone is now approaching the total amount of all charcoal produced in 1909, the peak year of production.

The findings of this study support the hypothesis concerning the areal pattern of barbecue briquetting in the United States. That is to say, the evidence indicates a high correlation between the location of the barbecue briquet plants and that of their raw materials.