

# Manufacturing



Manufacturing in Shibetsu began with the blacksmiths that produced the farming equipment used by migrant settlers to cultivate the land. From the Meiji period into the Taisho period, the cultivation of potatoes, mint, and flax thrived and a factory was constructed for processing. Factories that produced starch made from potatoes in particular were in operation across the area and, in the early Taisho period, the starch produced in the region was so important that it dictated market prices in Otaru markets. In 1936, the sugar mill for processing sugar beets that would eventually become the present-day Nippon Beet Sugar Manufacturing Co. Ltd.'s Shibetsu Sugar Refinery began operation.



Many sawmills for processing the areas abundant forest resources also began to spring up around Shibetsu Station from the Meiji period into the Taisho period. These sawmills operated as matchstick factories during the Meiji period before transitioning to factories in a variety of other industries such as piling, pile-driving logs, railroad ties, pulpwood, and plywood. However, with the shift to steel and concrete, the demand for items such as pile-driving logs and railroad ties as a material for mass consumption disappeared and along with it went these woodworking factories.