

Mount Morgan: images and realities-
dynamics and decline of a mining town

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*A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts, Health and
Sciences, Central Queensland University.*

August 2001

Abstract

Most histories and reports of Mount Morgan concentrate on the mining experience and financial achievements of the first Company rather than the mining town. This dissertation presents a social history of Mount Morgan that addresses the establishment, rise and fall of the town during the period of the first syndicate and succeeding company, 1883-1927. The thesis contends that the transformation of the landscape was to industrial, urban space where the working-class attitudes of miners and others defined a town character, despite the aspiration of many to social status through private enterprise and public influence. Further, the scope of research encompassed local involvement in colonial and state politics, and the presence of local government authority, law courts and press that placed an urban stamp on the town. Issues discussed also relate to geographic, climatic and single company influences that caused the difference between Mount Morgan and other mining towns that did not survive. The traditional perception of mining town impermanence was contradicted at Mount Morgan, where town and suburban communities were witness to a range of collective support in religious adherence, benefit associations, fraternalism and ritual, leisure, sport, education, and social cohesion in times of mining disaster. Moreover, despite increasing familial connections, antagonistic attitudes prevailed between the defensively parochial town of Mount Morgan and the nearby regional centre of Rockhampton.

The rise of unionism at Mount Morgan challenged an apathetic working-class population to workplace solidarity in reaction to the Company's long established, almost feudal control of the town as well as the mine. It is argued that, despite a decade of failing ore markets and soaring production costs at the mine, the attitudes and actions of a union dominated workforce were paramount in decline of the town and ultimate closure of the mine. Mount Morgan survived the exodus of thousands of residents. A defiant place, the town exhibited a pride bolstered by the perpetuation of myths that presented a public image shielded from the life-long realities of economic and social adversity.

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance provided through an Australian Postgraduate Award for research and writing of this thesis. Sincere appreciation for academic and financial support is expressed also to the Central Queensland University, and to the Department of History in the School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts, Health and Sciences. Profound acknowledgement and sincere appreciation are offered to my academic supervisor, Associate-Professor Dr. Denis Cryle whose scholarly guidance, insightful advice and patience have been constant throughout this course of study.

Thanks are due to research organisations including, primarily, the Capricornia Collection in the Central Queensland University Library where staff and archive assistants including Leo Tidey, Kathy Dennis and Mary Bevis have provided support, to the Queensland State Archives, the Mitchell Library in the State Library of New South Wales, John Oxley Memorial Library in the State Library of Queensland, the Fryer Library in the University of Queensland, the Rockhampton and District Historical Society and the Rockhampton City Library.

My thanks for personal support are offered to my husband, Phil, for his confidence and care, to Dr. Steve Mullins for his succinct counsel, to Dr. Barbara Webster for her astute and encouraging observations, and to Dr. Lorna McDonald, O.A.M, my friend and mentor, for her abiding interest.

Declaration

I declare that the material contained in this dissertation is my own work except where properly acknowledged and that the substance of the thesis has not been submitted for assessment elsewhere.

Betty Cosgrove

August 2001

Abbreviations

Australian Workers' Union	AWU
Amalgamated Engineers' Union	AEU
<i>Brisbane Courier Mail</i>	BC
Capricornia Collection	CC
Central Queensland University	CQU
<i>Central Queensland Times</i>	CQT
<i>Daily Northern Argus</i>	DNA
<i>Daily Record</i>	DR
Electrolytic & Refining Company Limited, Port Kembla	E&RC
Fryer Memorial Library	FL
John Oxley Library	JOL
<i>Journal of Australian Studies</i>	JAS
<i>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</i>	JRAHS
<i>Journal of the Royal Queensland Historical Society</i>	JRQHS
<i>Morning Bulletin</i>	MB
Mitchell Library	ML
<i>Mount Morgan Argus</i>	MMA
<i>Mount Morgan Chronicle</i>	MMC
Mount Morgan Council (Municipal, Town, Shire)	MMSC
Mount Morgan Clerk of Petty Sessions	MMCPS
Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited	MMGMC
Mount Morgan Historical Museum	MMHM
Mount Morgan Oral History Project	MMOH
Oral History	OH
<i>Queensland Government Gazette</i>	QGG
<i>Queensland Government Mining Journal</i>	QGMJ
<i>Queensland Parliamentary Debates</i>	QPD
Queensland State Archives	QSA
<i>Queensland Votes & Proceedings</i>	QV&P
Rockhampton Anglican Diocesan Archives	RADA
Rockhampton & District Historical Society	RDHS

Women's Christian Temperance Union

WCTU

Introduction

At the mention of an old mining town, the stereotyped image might be conjured as a place dilapidated, useless, unwanted, allusions that in human terms might signify the waiting for death. The mental mapping that perceives such a town of a century ago might be lost as the image fades. Reasons for the collapse of mining towns come to mind: exhausted ore bodies, failed markets, conflict in labour relations and isolation from a large regional town.

Mount Morgan was settled in 1882 with the establishment of the mine as the town's *raison d'être*.¹ By 1927, some of the above reasons, but not all, caused the closure of the mine and liquidation of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited. Alongside this calamity, the town suffered the threat of complete decline. Mount Morgan survived, for perhaps the most obvious reason, because of its proximity to Rockhampton, the largest regional town in Queensland and a mere forty kilometres from Mount Morgan. Yet there was another, quintessential reason, unique to the place and indicative of the mining town people and their very difference - the spirit of Mount Morgan.

Fluctuating fortune is a constant theme in Australian mining history.² This thesis addresses town life at Mount Morgan during the period from establishment, through the

¹ F.W. Sykes, (comp.), *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan, its history, past, present and probable future*, Mount Morgan, 1888, p. 3. For the purpose of this thesis, the term 'Company' appears throughout in the context cited in paragraph 2 above.

² Alaric Maude and Graeme Hugo, 'Mining settlements in Australia', in Cecily Neil, Markku Tykkylainen, John Bradbury (eds), *Coping with closure: an international comparison of mine town experiences*, London, 1992, p. 68.

rise and fall of the first Company. Changing states of the town that mirrored the vicissitudes of the Company and its mine were played out on the rapidly developed urban stage that set Mount Morgan apart from many other mining towns. In foregoing the 'uncritical nostalgia' of local history this thesis explores the times of ordinary men, women and families of the town: mine employees and others, tradesmen, labourers, store assistants, self-employed workers, and women in gainful employment. In a town whose character and culture were forged before the social changes of world war and later economic depression, entrenched local attitudes discounted the peculiarities of a mining environment. Within the bonds of kinship, community and culture, these attitudes reflected conceptual images that obscured undesirable realities, an essence of the town. It is argued here that the town was a victim of pseudo-feudal existence that reflected acceptance of capitalist paternalism under the dominant agency of the Company. Paradoxically, despite the absence of core income from any other industry, Mount Morgan developed an enduring, self-serving character.

The spatial history of Mount Morgan relates to the use and changing use of public and private space. Gillian Tindall has pointed out in *The fields beneath: a history of one London village* that the townscape of Kentish town, a village of London dating from the thirteenth century, 'is simply disguised countryside'. In being built over, Kentish Town became by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an increasingly sharply defined landscape of human endeavour. Tindall's work collapses time to bring the reader to a sense of place between present and past where history as it *actually* happened might be comprehended. Taking the reader on this time journey through the centuries of Kentish Town, Tindall looks beyond the revelations of empirical research and legend to seek the changing social and cultural life of Kentish town inhabitants. Coincidentally, Tindall questions whether, because of physical change that leaves scant evidence of earlier haphazard settlement, a place becomes a matter of myth and romantic conjecture rather than historical fact.³

³ Gillian Tindall, *The fields beneath: the history of a London village*, London, 1985, pp. 73, 174.

To provide an understanding of the Mount Morgan environment and the changing use of land, a brief background in the first chapter documents the geographical location of the region. Aboriginal habitations were not centred in the inhospitable terrain that became the location of the town and the mine. The area was part of the moving frontier where by 1854 a European landholder took up three large runs that included the 'ironstone mountain' in the Dee Range. Here early fossicking activity occurred more than a decade before ultimate and devastating change in the land with establishment of the mine. The major themes in the first chapter deal with early European settlement at Mount Morgan and address consequences of the ongoing impact of the mine on the landscape and town. Moreover, the mobility of inhabitants within the town or elsewhere led to layers of land use, while environmental concern at denudation of trees and pollution of natural waterways emerged at Mount Morgan in the 1880s, albeit such disquiet remained for decades merely a paper-based issue.

In an awareness that the past remains static and verbal or physical action cannot be undone, the thesis addresses the changes and mental barriers that occurred in the perception and interpretation of past actions, as told or written over generations. Most existing historiography of Mount Morgan deals with the mine experience during eras of gold and copper production, and tends to rationalise any criticism from whatever quarter. Selections noted below are taken from a plethora of late nineteenth century and early 1900s pamphlets, booklets and papers relating to the mine and written variously by a shareholder, member of the mine hierarchy, director, general manager, or senior staff member.⁴ Most of these works were mine-sponsored and scrutinised by the board or major shareholders prior to circulation or publication. Further, the complimentary

⁴ Wm. H. Dick, *The famous Mount Morgan gold mine*, Rockhampton, 1887; Wm. H. Dick, *A mountain of gold*, Brisbane, 1889; F.W. Sykes (comp.), *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan*, Brisbane, 1888; Aleck Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Brisbane, 1888; J. MacDonald Cameron, *Report on the gold mine, Mount Morgan, Rockhampton, Queensland*, Rockhampton, 1887; F.W. Sykes, *The Mount Morgan gold mine*, Sydney, 1893; Rees Rutland Jones, *Gold Mining in Central Queensland and the Mount Morgan Mine*, Rockhampton, 1913; B.G. Patterson, *The story of the Mount Morgan Mine*, Rockhampton 1950; W.J. Long, (comp.), *The early history of Mount Morgan, Dawson and Callide Valleys*, Rockhampton, 1962; R. G. Casey, *Australian father and son*, London, 1966; F.L. Golding, 'An old mining town in Queensland, Mount Morgan', *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, vol. X, no. 3, 1977-78, pp. 75-86.

tone of prestigious gold mining journals and Company annual reports⁵ ignored the town which, although a child of the mine, provided crucial infrastructure, utilities and physical support, and a population of men, women and children. Greg Denning observes that 'the transformation of the past that is History is always made in social circumstances'.⁶ This work seeks to penetrate the silences in empirical research to discover a past dynamics of everyday life, and attitudes to decline at Mount Morgan. To find the real town behind the image is to challenge enduring myths that for generations have been extrapolated and refined to represent historical truth.

Leading the way in any contemporary social history of Mount Morgan, Lorna McDonald's *Rockhampton: a history of city and district* published in 1981 includes a substantial chapter, 'Marvellous Mountain: the Mount Morgan story'⁷ that presents some aspects of town life but relates predominantly to the mine. The narrative deals in depth with the discovery years, the early syndicate, the mine's purchase by shareholders and formation of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Proprietary Limited, demise of the Company and subsequent revival of the mine with the establishment of a new company, Mount Morgan Limited. John Kerr, in *Mount Morgan: gold, copper and oil*,⁸ draws significantly upon empirical research of mine records and regional press to document Company production, administration, and the wealth the mine brought to shareholders. Kerr's text is tempered with occasional descriptions of the town. In contrast, Cyril Grabs presents *Gold, black gold and intrigue the story of Mount Morgan*⁹ in the genre of the novel. This text is a blend of historical fact, autobiographical comment, and fiction, which for the reader, raises several social questions relating to Mount Morgan. A recent comprehensive and conclusive study of the second Company's hierarchical structure and the influence of mine management on

⁵ *Queensland Government Gold Mining Journal*; Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Pty. Ltd., *Annual Reports*; Mount Morgan and District Historical Society, unpublished papers, various, typescript.

⁶ Greg Denning, *Performances*, Melbourne, 1996, p. 49

⁷ Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton: a history of city and district*, St. Lucia, 1981, pp. 328-330.

⁸ John Kerr, *Mt Morgan gold, copper & oil*, Brisbane, 1982.

⁹ Cyril Grabs, *Gold, black gold and intrigue: the story of Mount Morgan*, Sydney, 1982.

administration, workings and production is presented in a thesis by Ray Boyle, 'A study of the management and growth patterns of Mount Morgan Limited, 1929-1950'. However, as indicated by the time frame cited in the title, historical reference to the first Company is limited.¹⁰

In his 1986 thesis, Bill Thorpe described Queensland historiography as 'parochial, conservative and narrow in focus.'¹¹ A decade later, in *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society*, he would define Queensland historiography prior to 1980 as 'antiquarian.'¹² Doubtless, most narratives of Mount Morgan have ignored aspects of mining town life that illustrated a difficult and generally deprived existence in which primitive living conditions and disease threatened survival, and a mining town mindset of impermanency that eroded any long term ideals. Geoffrey Blainey, doyen of Australian mining history, has pointed out that for many 'nomads' of mining,¹³ a transient life was the norm.

Whilst research for this thesis was not to be based upon the history of the once fabulous mine, an awareness of its absolute influence was essential to the investigation of town lifestyle and attitudes. Here was a culture forged primarily by those who came and stayed, complemented by the changing presence of transients that imposed perennial threads of otherness. It should be pointed out here that source materials for this thesis were relatively adequate and limitations to research similar only to any difficulties that might arise in any approach to comprehensive study. By 1991, Mount Morgan Limited lodged the extant records of the mine in the Capricornia Collection, Central Queensland University. The Mount Morgan Collection is so extensive as to incorporate perhaps 100 metres of compactor and cabinet space, but a large majority of

¹⁰ Ray Boyle, A study of the management and growth patterns of Mount Morgan Limited 1929-1950, MA thesis, Central Queensland University, 1995.

¹¹ William Thorpe, A social history of colonial Queensland: towards a Marxist analysis, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1986, pp. i, 371.

¹² Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society*, St. Lucia, 1996, p. 186.

¹³ Geoffrey Blainey, *The rise of Broken Hill*, South Melbourne, 1968, p. 113.

the holdings deal with Mount Morgan Limited of the post-1927 era. The small holding of Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited records includes few references to town or district.

A large body of primary source material held in the Capricornia Collection relates to Mount Morgan. The holdings include many photographs and maps, a source that offers adequate illustrations for this thesis. Other essential sources include local authority offices, state and interstate archives, university and regional collections, diocesan offices, church and school records and newspapers of the region. All have been critical to research, their information encompassing the needs of the thesis and filtering through every chapter. Newspapers were an important source of public notices, political or sporting commentaries, commercial and leisure advertisements, and controversy or crisis at the mine. However, token space only was devoted to news of the town scene, suggesting, not unexpectedly, that here was 'a man's town'. The paucity of records that relate to Mount Morgan women, particularly mining women, cannot be overemphasised. The relevant records available are generally in archives of association, church and court. However, as described below, a diversity of research provided some insight into the world of the Mount Morgan woman in terms of social attitudes and an unsung and routine existence.

A threat to balanced research exists for the outsider confronted with a body of unreferenced historical writing at local level, much of which displays unbridled parochialism. Moreover, some oral history interviews directed towards reflection on personal experience and insights into perspectives and attitudes within living memory yield verbal images of the 'superiority' of the town and people of the time. Most of the interviewees volunteered for an earlier project and provided considerable local history. However, interviews excluded hearsay, providing detail of personal experience and opinion. On occasion, conflicting information between primary records and oral history has necessitated appropriate authentication of sources. Moreover, this thesis addresses

evidence of realities in Mount Morgan that contradicted entrenched public images of the town.

It will be seen from the above that historical narrative of Mount Morgan provides mere snippets of town life and times. No *explanation* is forthcoming of the actual happenings at the place in which the strengths of domestic, commercial and social life coexisted in strange harmony with the hegemony of the Company. Power and authority was reified by local deference to the status of management and senior staff, and public ceremony accorded to the numerous visiting dignitaries who came for one reason - to see the mine.¹⁴ By comparison, the growth of mine workers' solidarity stemmed from fear of potential loss of this omnipresent 'master' that controlled their destiny. Ultimately, when this did occur, the people and those who worked the ore, the machines and smelters, mechanics and maintenance tradesmen and labourers were left to make their own way. At the same time, significant change of status of a higher social level of residents occurred with the collapse of the mine hierarchy and town trade. A question arises, whether, after closure of the mine, a cultural ethic that caused people to remain perpetuated the town's laboured breath of life.

Post-modernist Clifford Geertz addresses the 'conceptual morass' of cultural theory in relation to Kluckhorn's definition of culture which includes the deceptively simplistic 'a way of thinking, feeling and believing'. Taking analysis of culture to be ethnography - interpretation in search of meaning - Geertz uses the term 'thick description' - borrowed from Gilbert Ryle's theory of social anthropology.¹⁵ Rhys Isaac, in his monograph *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*,¹⁶ described at once as comprehensive and 'graceful',¹⁷ adopts an ethnographic approach to the search for understanding of space, place and people. He presents changing physical and material

¹⁴ Greg Denning, *History's anthropology: the death of William Gooch*, Lanham, MD, 1988, p. 31.

¹⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*, New York, 1973, pp.4-6, 27.

¹⁶ Rhys Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Virginia, USA, 1982.

¹⁷ Phillip Morgan, 'The medium and the message: *The transformation of Virginia*', *Historical Studies*, vol. 20, no. 81, October 1983, pp. 590-599.

landscape in eras and slices of history, tracing the hierarchy of living standards, social mores and culture reflected in architectural interiors and design. He also compares the ethnicity of European and African Negro populations through investigation and interpretation of lifestyle, and description of social change. To explain his hypothesis and historiography, Isaac includes the substantial and intriguing 'A discourse on the method: action, structure and meaning'.¹⁸

Greg Denning's¹⁹ ethnographical method interprets rather than rationalises attitudes and happenings that empirical research has left unexplained.²⁰ In his premise that the abiding grace of history is the theatre in which we experience truth, Denning contends that truth is 'clothed by story' that at times seems uncertain, contradictory, obscure, or blindingly clear.²¹ By contrast, Keith Windschuttle acknowledges 'a realist and empiricist' account of history and refutes Denning's philosophy of ethnography as 'cultural literacy'.²² Yet, Windschuttle seems to overlook Denning's commitment to empirical research, as discussed in *History's Anthropology as 'History in the making, discovery, discipline, discourse'*. Here Denning asserts also that historical fact changes with author and narrator and that the circumstances of history have more than one meaning.²³

The action play which sees individuals as actors on their town stage is evident in Bill Williamson's *Class, culture and community: a biographical study of social change in mining*.²⁴ The author stands aside as Chorus to introduce the players in the presentation of his grandfather, a miner and family man in the village of Throckley in the Northumberland coal mining region, where the consequences of war and industrial

¹⁸ Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia*, pp. 323-357.

¹⁹ Greg Denning, 'Ethnography on my mind', in Bernard Smith, John Mulvaney, Greg Denning, Henry Reynolds and Graeme Davison, *Boundaries of the past*, Carlton, 1990.

²⁰ Greg Denning, *Performances*, p. 62.

²¹ Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures*, p. 38.

²² Keith Windschuttle, *The killing of history*, Sydney, 1994, p. 90.

²³ Denning, *History's Anthropology*, pp. 15, 23-47.

²⁴ Bill Williamson, *Class, culture and community: a biographical study of social change in mining*, London, 1982.

unrest are reflected in social change. Williamson uses to advantage the family records and reminiscences that reach back to nineteenth century Throckley. Throughout, his graphic descriptions of micro aspects of life - family, town and mine - maintain a powerful sense of atmosphere in the narrative.

Williamson's socially informative study contrasts with the comprehensive social history of the colony of Queensland in which William (Bill) Thorpe asserts that the hierarchical status of communities followed a more established pattern in new towns of the 1890s. He is adamant that Queensland exhibited class, status, racial and gender divisions, and also questions the study by Ronald Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, that claims a status hierarchy existed rather than class consciousness.²⁵ Thorpe's approach toward a Marxist analysis uses statistics strategically and cuts across traditional time-frames as he writes decisively of climatic, economic, topographic and demographic influences on society. Whilst Thorpe presents an intriguing investigation of class, he admits to minimal discussion on mining.²⁶ However, June Stoodley provides in her thesis a case study of the Mount Morgan influence in Queensland politics in the McIlwraith government, particularly by Rockhampton member, William Pattison, MLA, wealthy shareholder in the Mount Morgan mine. In other chapters and several associated published articles, which relate mostly to Gympie and Charters Towers, Stoodley presents aspects of the seemingly accepted character of the gold-miner in the late nineteenth century, nomadism, larrikinism, lack of thrift, and disregard for safety.²⁷ By contrast, this dissertation provides a close study of the Mount Morgan miner during the period 1883-1927, in terms of his attitude and reaction to the workplace, fellow workers, and more critically, to his family, social milieu, and environment.²⁸

²⁵ Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 133.

²⁶ Thorpe, *A social history of colonial Queensland*, p. v.

²⁷ June Stoodley, *The Queensland gold miner in the late 19th century, his interests and influence*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1964, pp. 82-132.

²⁸ In the interests of simplicity, and except where the reference refers to the entire workforce of 'miners', this dissertation uses the term 'miner', for those working underground, whether at the face, or as tradesmen and labourers, whilst 'mineworkers' refers to surface workers. These terms of reference derive from a tradesman electrician who spent his life at Mount Morgan and the mine and stated that 'miners' were underground men, and that open-cut men were 'mineworkers'. James Leigh, interview with the author, 14 October 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

The era during which a mine was established reflected difference between mining towns in eastern Australia. The Mount Morgan mine was opened more than forty years after the first colonial gold rushes that saw Ballarat, Broken Hill, Bendigo, Gympie and Charters Towers rise in the glare of gold and fade as seams petered out, mining costs rose and gold prices fell. Most early gold-miners were alluvial diggers and in terms of claims were individualists rather than collectivists, but were not necessarily capitalists. The comparatively late opening of the Mount Morgan mine (1882) saw the short-lived syndicate replaced by the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company in 1886. With substantial capital investment, the single company operation developed during a period of drought and economic depression to be the greatest gold mine in the world. Coincidentally, the immediate, nascent working-class population at a tent village showed signs of permanency with the emergence of Mount Morgan town.

Most mining town histories concern a particular place, but investigation here relates aspects of the Mount Morgan experience to other mining towns. Comparisons that filter through are drawn from substantial sources: Geoffrey Blainey's *The rise of Broken Hill*, mentioned earlier, presents the silver city that created a 'Barrier' to capitalism, and a searching thesis by Diane Menghetti documents gold-mining at Charters Towers.²⁹ Lush hills and valleys were the places for mines at Ballarat as Weston Bate observes in *The lucky city*, a seminal social history of early mining in Victoria to 1920.³⁰ Raymond Paull describes graphically the flood prone valleys that harboured mining at Walhalla in Gippsland.³¹ At Moonta, South Australia,³² Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, a pattern of early mining confined settlement to the shadow of mine workings.³³ The reasons for this were that individual diggers occupied and guarded their claims or lived as close as possible to their

²⁹ Diane Menghetti, Charters Towers, PhD thesis, James Cook University, 1989.

³⁰ Weston Bate, *The lucky city*, Melbourne, 1978.

³¹ Raymond Paull, *Old Walhalla: portrait of a gold town*, Carlton, 1980.

³² Jim Faull, *The Cornish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1983, p. 75.

³³ Geoffrey Blainey, *The rush that never ended: a history of Australian mining*, Melbourne, 1978.

workplace. At Mount Morgan also, rapid settlement followed the traditional pattern of crowding adjacent to the mining operation. Gradually, however, abysmal living conditions and escalating threat of disease spurred relocation to higher ground and at a distance from the mine.

Mining towns were located in a variety of terrains including Charters Towers, documented in Geoffrey Bolton's *A thousand miles away*,³⁴ and Diane Menghetti's thesis. Edward Stokes addresses the problem of conditions and lifestyle in a graphic slice history of Broken Hill, 1908-10, a period of industrial unrest and strike.³⁵ Geoffrey Blainey briefly discussed the social consequences of mining in his biography of Broken Hill,³⁶ the history of Mt. Lyell in south-west Tasmania³⁷ and other mines in *The rush that never ended: a history of gold-mining in Australia*.³⁸ However, he discussed the phenomenon more closely in *The Golden Mile*, a history of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie in Western Australia.³⁹ Historiography of mining in North Queensland is substantial, with the diversity of essays in *Readings in North Queensland Mining history*, and *Lectures on North Queensland history* including profiles of the ill-fated Ravenswood⁴⁰ and Gilberton.⁴¹ In his 1996 thesis on Cooktown, Glen Ormston includes discussion of questions relating to the Cooktown experience that were left unanswered in earlier historiography of the region.⁴²

The first chapter of this work sets the background to Mount Morgan history and concerns the changing use of land. This includes the geographical description of the

³⁴ Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1972.

³⁵ Edward Stokes, *United we stand: impressions of Broken Hill 1908-1910: recollections and photographs from the period*, Canterbury, 1983.

³⁶ Geoffrey Blainey, *The rise of broken Hill*, South Melbourne, 1968.

³⁷ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Peaks of Lyell*, Melbourne, 1978.

³⁸ Geoffrey Blainey, *The rush that never ended*, Melbourne, 1978.

³⁹ Geoffrey Blainey, *The golden mile*, St. Leonards, NSW, 1993.

⁴⁰ D.C. Roderick, 'Ravenswood: surveying the physical evidence', Kett Kennedy (ed.), *Readings in North Queensland mining history*, vol. 1, Townsville, 1980.

⁴¹ L. Brown, 'The desertion of Gilberton', *Lectures on North Queensland history*, Townsville, 1974.

⁴² Glen Ormston, *Cooktown: the rise and fall of a frontier mining town 1873-1885*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1996.

region under investigation and addresses, briefly, the circumstance of Aboriginal habitation, the moving frontier, and the first European land holders in the Mount Morgan area. The period of the mine establishment is significant in terms of land use in mining method. The chapter argues the environmental impact of the mine and single industry town. The difficulty of access to Rockhampton and the consequences of the Company's repeated moves from the 1880s for a railway; the delay in government construction necessitating continued use of a dangerously steep track over the Razorback Range.

Rockhampton, a large port town on the Fitzroy River and in close proximity to Mount Morgan, influenced the development and continuing life of the mining town. It will be seen also that, in a not unusual situation for neighbouring towns, a deep-seated sense of pure rivalry or social conflict arose and remained between the towns. Perhaps this was an attitude of defiance on the part of the smaller, distanced, and less advantaged but intensely proud mining town as opposed to a long-established regional town that became a city.

Most mining locations soon lost their natural beauty and some simply endured as empty space, denuded and excavated. For example, in the rugged, unwelcoming country of south-west Tasmania, mining at Mt Lyell diminished dense forest landscape to the perspective of a moonscape. This terrain might not have been more inhospitable in its virgin state than the Razorback and Dee Ranges that dictated accessibility to Mount Morgan. A theme of the first chapter documents the denuding of Mount Morgan and its environs in the name of mining and its lesser offshoot, domestic building. Discussion of a timbergetting industry cites independent timber cutters and others contracted to supply the mine mill, an operation that functioned to satisfy the seemingly insatiable demands of capitalist enterprise and its derivative, the mine.

Located initially on the slopes or at the base of the mine hill and close to the Dee River, tents at Mount Morgan preceded temporary dwellings of wood and canvas, these followed by small timber cottages. The first permanent settlement at Tipperary Point across the Dee River from the mine extended later to suburban locations among the seven hills that became the town. Peter Bell, *Timber and Iron*⁴³ investigates the North Queensland mining house style, and declares that building styles derived from southern colonies rather than creating an immediate vernacular style. By contrast, Rod Fisher and Brian Crozier⁴⁴ attribute influences of need, economy and social stratification to the evolving architecture of the Queensland mining house, from the two roomed cottage to the four roomed cottage and verandah. In almost any early development, including mining towns, and in whatever era, the small size of dwellings inhabited by the large families of the working-class poor was a common feature of the townscape.

The timber dwellings of Mount Morgan are compared to the hot and uncomfortable corrugated iron houses at Broken Hill⁴⁵ and underground habitations and later stone terraces of Cornish miners at Burra Burra.⁴⁶ Moreover, the Mount Morgan Company provided housing for the general manager and later upper management and senior staff in residences of superior size and quality to the dwellings of mine employees of lesser status. This policy instigated inherent divisions in the town at the social level and within the physical landscape. Yet, in its rush to urban style development in isolated space, Mount Morgan home builders demonstrated their independence by ignoring the benefits of government assistance. In a recent article, Judy Rechner discusses the government designed 'Queensland worker's dwelling', made available through government finance to working class applicants from 1910.⁴⁷ Mount Morgan's rejection of the scheme suggests that much building contracted by capitalists

⁴³ Peter Bell, *Timber and iron: houses in North Queensland mining settlements 1861-1920*, St. Lucia, 1984.

⁴⁴ Rod Fisher and Brian Crozier (eds.), *The Queensland house: a roof over our heads*, Brisbane, 1994.

⁴⁵ Edward Stokes, *United we stand*: p. 10.

⁴⁶ Jim Faull, *The Cornish in Australia*, pp. 48, 49.

⁴⁷ Judy Rechner, 'The Queensland worker's dwelling 1910-1940', *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, vol. XV, no. 6, February 1994, pp. 265, 279.

was for rental to working class tenants. This and other perceived reasons are discussed further in the second chapter.

Urban history was at the core of numerous theoretical categories, areas for study, research methodology, and formal discourse in the thesis. Richard Rodger, in his substantial 1992 article 'Urban history, prospect and retrospect' asserted that guidelines relating to the temporal and thematic approach to urban history were minimal, and that prior to 1960, most urban history works were 'gilded centenary or celebratory accounts of a mainly antiquarian nature.'⁴⁸ Since the mid-1970s however, urban history has embraced wide issues of land ownership and use, spatial and morphological features, medical and demographic topics which indicate subgroups studied in urban history research, including class, the influence of elites, family, gender and culture.⁴⁹

Contemporary urban history is different to local history in its commitment to the pervasive historical process of explaining the development and use of the urban milieu. This is different from sociology in the concern to explain a dominant past, and from economic history and geography in its deep interest in the humanistic and functional elements of life.⁵⁰ Graeme Davison's definitive study, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*⁵¹ offers diverse documentation of urban history. Geoffrey Bolton provides an insightful commentary on the cultural mores of Australians at and away from the workplace in *Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment, 1788-1980*, relating to urban beginnings and suburban spread in Australia.⁵² The lively narrative leaves no doubt of the general and alarming lack of town planning, roadways, transport, and the public necessities of water and sanitation essential to regional development. Wherever and for whatever reason rapid European settlement occurred in Australia, it

⁴⁸ Richard Rodger, 'Urban History: prospect and retrospect', *Urban History*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 2 December 1992, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Discussion of societal groups and sub-groups as they existed at Mount Morgan are integral aspects of the thesis chapters.

⁵⁰ H J. Dyos, *Urbanity and suburbanity*, Leicester, 1973, cited in Rodger, 'Urban history', p. 9.

⁵¹ Graeme Davidson, *The rise and fall of marvellous Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1978.

⁵² Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment 1788-1980*, Sydney, 1981.

followed the urban style of towns that became cities, reflecting paucity of local authority finance that ensured inadequate infrastructure similar to those described by Davison.⁵³ However, until his subsequent discourse in *The outcasts of Melbourne*, Davison addressed public health in nineteenth century Melbourne only marginally.⁵⁴ Limited resources denied regional municipalities or city councils the opportunity to provide infrastructure that kept pace with burgeoning settlement. Stringent budgets reflected minimal investment in road and transport systems, public health facilities, water, waste disposal and sanitation, so the threat to life from accident, infection and disease was ever present. In her 1960s study, Stoodley discussed life hazards in mining towns and two decades later, Menghetti provided disturbing narrative relating to water and sanitation at Charters Towers, the deadly consequences of mining accidents, miner's phthisis and diseases that encompassed the town.⁵⁵ The main thrust of Vera Whittington's history of Western Australian mining, *Two fevers - gold and typhoid: a social history of Western Australia during the decade 1891-1900*,⁵⁶ concentrates on the dominance of human greed within the mining industry, whereby all involved disregarded the threat to survival from disease epidemics caused by lack of town water and public sanitation.

As observed earlier, histories of Mount Morgan address difficulties of access to Rockhampton and elsewhere in terms of trade and merchandise. This necessitated a hazardous ride on a bridle trail or by coach or wagon up the Razorback track. The second chapter documents the hazards of transport and pedestrianism on roads, or tracks, to and within the town. Moreover, from the late 1880s pamphleteers writing of the mine provided single sentence warnings relating to problems of town water, health

⁵³ Davison, *Marvellous Melbourne*, pp. 233, 234.

⁵⁴ Graeme Davison, et. al., *The outcasts of Melbourne*, Sydney, 1985.

⁵⁵ June Stoodley, 'The Queensland gold miner in the late nineteenth century', p. 117; Diane Menghetti, 'Mine and town - health and safety on Charters Towers', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol. XIII, no. 7, August 1988.

⁵⁶ Vera Whittington, *Two fevers - gold and typhoid a social history of Western Australia during the decade 1891-1900*, Nedlands, WA, 1988.

and hygiene.⁵⁷ By the 1900s, government medical officers who reported to the Mount Morgan Town Council were alarmed at the increasing threat of disease and the absence of pure water and sanitation.⁵⁸ The reports were direct indictments of Company greed and neglect in terms of commandeering local watercourses for mine use and the pollution of natural water courses by mine waste. Yet the problems surfaced only intermittently through the press, probably because Company reaction to criticism might threaten trade or job security. Progressively, local opinion was left in quiet ferment.

The focus of the third chapter is on the business life of the town. Themes address early and subsequent trade, competition for local custom between town and Company enterprises. Essential issues include the benefit of railway connection with Mount Morgan and the town's dependence on Rockhampton for inwards trade and outward transport of ore through the city's port facilities. The chapter also cites fundamental similarities and differences in Mount Morgan trading style with other mining towns. For example North Queensland goldfields, mentioned earlier, struggled to survive without railway or proximity to a regional centre or port. The chapter also addresses the consequences of fire at Mount Morgan, which on three occasions over thirty years changed the location of the central business area.⁵⁹ Moreover, the establishment of suburbs that decentralised trade contrasted with the initial settlement of Tipperary Point that remained over time to become a suburb adjacent to the mine.

European enterprise was not the only form of business. The chapter addresses the attendant problems of racism directed at Chinese storekeepers and gardeners who commanded a significant niche in the fresh produce market at Mount Morgan from the 1880s, and confirms Ormston's discussion of anti-Chinese attitudes at Cooktown in the same era.⁶⁰ In his *Working Australia*, Charlie Fox describes the white miner as one

⁵⁷ Jack Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Brisbane, 1888.

⁵⁸ Municipality of Mount Morgan, Sanitary and Health Committee Minutes, 15 December 1900, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives (MMSCA).

⁵⁹ Mount Morgan did not have a fire brigade during the period under study.

⁶⁰ Ormston, Cooktown, pp. 257, 321.

who 'rushed from find to find, following rumour upon rumour', compared to the clannish Chinese groups who 'tended to stay...fine-combing abandoned mines and diggings'.⁶¹ Moreover, racist attitudes on which Charles Price asserts 'the great white walls were built' was reinforced by legislation throughout the colonies for exclusion of non-Europeans including Chinese.⁶² At Mount Morgan, Chinese were storekeepers and market gardeners who also suffered persecution. The fourth chapter investigates conflict between Chinese, and court charges against Chinese for unlawful trading and activities.

Exercise of the law by police officers and in the courts at Mount Morgan probably occurred similarly at any other mining town of the era. Crime was not gender specific, and local courts dealt with most cases from social and moral offences to matters of licensing and illegal trading. Yet this chapter addresses a number of issues pertaining to application of the law in the town. For example, the chapter contends that an anomalous situation existed involving members of the mine hierarchy who, as appointed Justices of the Peace, presided on occasion at the Court of Petty Sessions. Here the influence of the Company was apparent in the manipulation of sentencing, whereby mine workers charged with drunk and disorderly or obscene language were dismissed with a caution if they were mine employees required for shift.⁶³ Moreover, theft of gold was an ongoing crime at Mount Morgan mine just as theft of equipment and materials continued throughout the era of the Company.⁶⁴ As counterpoint to this, and ostensibly to avoid press publicity, the Company sought always to control and settle unlawful matters at the mine, whether of petty larceny or illegal demonstration by union labour during industrial conflict. It should be pointed out that Rockhampton was the regional centre for the District and Supreme Courts, where in matters of law, all major

⁶¹ Charlie Fox, *Working Australia*, Sydney, 1991, p. 51.

⁶² Charles Price, *The great white walls are built: restrictive immigration to North America and Australasia 1836-1888*, Canberra, 1974, pp. 53-60.

⁶³ Clerk of Petty Sessions Mount Morgan, Deposition Book, CPS

⁶⁴ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, Pilfering file, 1920-1930, D15/541.2, Capricornia Collection, Central Queensland University CC/CQU.

cases of crime, from murder and sex charges to grand theft at Mount Morgan were conducted in the Rockhampton courts, thus emphasising the encompassing 'difference' between the towns.

E.P. Thompson, in his seminal work *The making of the English working class*,⁶⁵ states that the influence of membership of building societies and mutual benefit associations was critical to the establishment of working class culture of eighteenth century England. These associations were supported generally by petite bourgeoisie or artisans including miners, rather than unskilled labourers on the lower scale of wages and status.⁶⁶ Membership of associations ensured particular support in relation to the dangers of mining, and the future of families in case of death or incapacity of the breadwinner. As Shani D'Cruze and Jean Turnbull point out in their investigation of fellowship and family in nineteenth century Britain, 'local societies developed as working people sought solidarity and an elusive security in the uncertainties of early industrialisation.'⁶⁷ It will be seen in the fifth chapter that benefit societies and associations brought British traditions to Mount Morgan, which over time became integral to the town ethos. Moreover, the transience of an unattached male workforce at Mount Morgan contrasted with a permanent mining population influenced by religious adherence and secular associations, enterprise, education and cultural institutions. The social and economic influence of the nineteen friendly societies and lodges at Mount Morgan by 1917⁶⁸ was evidence of intersecting social networks that evolved through some lodges.

⁶⁵ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1980, p. 457.

⁶⁶ Merfyn Jones, 'Of men and mines: radicalism and protest in North Wales, 1850-1914', in Deian R. Hopkin, Gregory S. Kealey (eds), *Class, community and the labour movement: Wales and Canada, 1850-1930*, Llafur/CCLH, 1989, pp. 101-118.

⁶⁷ Shani D'Cruze, and Jean Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family: Oddfellows' lodges in Preston and Lancaster, c.1830-c.1890' *Urban History*, vol. 22, pt. 1, May 1995, pp. 25-47.

⁶⁸ *The Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 12 July 1917.

Patrick O'Farrell has declared that members of the Catholic church in Australia supported chain migration, and with the incidence of large families, found security in networks of kinship and the Hibernian association, a benefit linked with the Catholic church, and with the Australian Natives Association.⁶⁹ In the name of religious adherence also, the Caledonian society⁷⁰ of the Presbyterian church was the stimulus for education and financial enterprise. Non-conformist sects embraced many immigrants; Jim Faull accredits Methodism⁷¹ with providing the cornerstone for self-improvement studies, demand for free speech and democratic government in Britain. Thompson has reservations about this claim, and declares that the anti-intellectual influence of Methodism remained embedded in English popular culture.⁷² At Mount Morgan, Catholic services were claimed as the first held at the mountainside diggings. However, this thesis contends that itinerant preachers of the Primitive Methodists also held service. Moreover, Methodism was enmeshed in principles of moral discipline, the ethics of the Rechabites and the American driven Women's Christian Temperance Union. By 1900, in addition to Catholic, Methodist and Anglican, the non-conformist Baptist chapel and the Salvation Army citadel were places of worship. With minimal exceptions, the male hegemony of church, hospital or government school board, association, or School of Arts committee prevailed.

Essential to investigation of the mining town was the masculinist 'presence' that was also demonstrated in the mass of miners, mineworkers and those at any level of mine staff and hierarchy, town commerce, trade and local government. However, in this thesis, the sixth chapter deals with the attitudes and actions of men who dug and treated the gold and copper, and those who took the bounty and left the town. For miners, close proximity in the confines of the workplace led to a workers' ethic. Men who grouped together might be expected to have like attitudes, and with the rise of

⁶⁹ Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Kensington, NSW, 1987, pp. 88-90, 290.

⁷⁰ Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1987.

⁷¹ Faull, *The Cornish in Australia*.

⁷² Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, pp. 811, 812.

unionism, exert their combined influence to protest their lot. Greg Patmore's assertion in his article 'Community and Australian labour history', confirms that a sense of community can inhibit working-class militancy, especially in towns where there is a narrow economic base or single employer.⁷³ Further, Andrew Metcalfe suggests numerous aspects of working class attitudes that seem related to the psyche of the Mount Morgan miner: larrikin values, claims of masculinity in physically demanding labour, and unity against the common bourgeois threat. Yet Metcalfe declares also that miners' interest in defeating political or economic oppression was contradicted by claiming an abiding sense of their own dignity - their worth just as they were.⁷⁴

The bonds of mateship, fraternity and patriarchy at Mount Morgan might subsume issues of collective identity and difference on occasion. Conversely, by 1908, as a result of the two fatal disasters at the mine, union membership escalated rapidly and was entrenched years before World War I.⁷⁵ Yet the image of union solidarity that seemed integral to the miners' ethos was fragile. By 1912, the men took the decision to strike, but attitude shifts driven by subjective interest – to return to work and safeguard individual jobs – hinted at capitulation, despite a claimed influence of union representation that dictated solidarity.⁷⁶ Investigation of the effects of mining culture and unionism also reveals an increasing community conscience for the welfare of families in terms of death benefits and worker's compensation.

It should be pointed out here that despite the assertion in historiography that the miner's attitude to safety was careless and nonchalant,⁷⁷ the sixth chapter suggests that the miner's persona of larrikin confidence blanketed a deep-seated fear of the

⁷³ Greg Patmore, 'Community and Australian labour history', Terry Irving (ed.), *Challenges to labour history*, Sydney, 1994, p. 184.

⁷⁴ Andrew Metcalfe, 'Sex and solidarity: fraternity, patriarchy and labour history', Irving (ed.), *Challenges to labour history*, pp. 91-93.

⁷⁵ *MB*, 21 November 1908.

⁷⁶ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-1918*, Sydney, 1987, pp. 65, 66; *MB*, 24 July 1917.

⁷⁷ Blainey, *The rush that never ended*, pp. 296, 302; Stoodley, 'The Queensland gold miner in the late 19th century', pp. 174-179.

workplace.⁷⁸ Moreover, intrinsic to mining *mentalité* was the collective attitude towards death from accident, this heightened at the most atmospheric of celebrations in a mining town, the *en masse* funeral attendance. This was the stuff of mining town culture - the cathartic outpouring of public grief at multiple death in the workplace and manifested symbolically in the display, ecumenical religious ceremony and secular ritual of the funeral. Conversely, the horror of lingering death from the disease known commonly at the time as miner's phthisis - brought sorrow and mourning, but did not engender the same emotive anger and frustration as those deaths that were the result of underground accident, fuelled by press reports that laid bare every ghastly detail of the macabre event, thus engendering a sense of public mourning even if the victim was unknown to readers.

The conservative press in Central Queensland supported the Company and its mine from the outset, whilst the Liberal press fluctuated and the ostensibly a-political press demonstrated profound Labor bias. Chapter seven contends that as newspapers changed hands, and editors came and went, journalism fluctuated between conservative, Labor, or pragmatic liberal. In the event, the attitudes of townsmen, Council, or miners were swayed by the power of press that reflected the attitude of owner-editor of the newspaper. Readers were privy to differing viewpoints from various press in relation to international or local news, colonial, state or federal politics, social or wartime conflict. A profile of local journalism during the Boer War suggests that nationalist and imperialist reaction to the South African conflict each had its place in the press.

The political rivalry of Rockhampton candidates equalled antagonism between organs of the press. It seems that until Labor candidates were elected to representative government, Mount Morgan politics remained in the shadow of publicity accorded to Rockhampton candidates who would represent Central Queensland. June Stoodley's thesis includes a chapter on 'Mount Morganism' in Queensland politics during the term

⁷⁸ S.J. Rachman, *Fear and courage*, New York, 1990, pp. 94, 95.

of the McIlwraith government when, as might be expected, the conservative press supported the influence of Company politics in the House. Mount Morgan press, the *Chronicle* and the *Argus* provided a blend of conservative, Liberal and Labor opinion until 1902, when local Labor candidate Henri Cowap won the first seat of the new Mount Morgan electorate. From that time, Labor journalism in the town was positive rather than rhetorical. This was stimulated from 1903 by *The Critic*, a new Rockhampton owned and edited press that declared unbiased journalism, but overt Labor press was its forte. A *Critic* journalist visited Mount Morgan weekly and seemingly, radical local news appeared in the press. For example, the *Critic* exposed and deplored the Company's perceived coercion of the mine labour force to vote for a preferred, conservative candidate.⁷⁹ That this occurred was local knowledge, if unpublicised. Undeterred by public opinion or press, and unchallenged legally, *Critic* adhered to the rule of 'no fear or favour' and, on occasion, drew aside the town image to present the reality of place and people. By the late 1920s, when most trade faded, shopkeepers closed their doors and Mount Morgan newspapers folded. The Rockhampton and Brisbane press cavilled at liquidation of the Company, Labor journalism blamed the Company for the fire and flooding of the mine, and the conservative press harangued the erstwhile labour force for being union dominated and ignoring arbitration or Company compromise.

Fear of the mine was a social commodity for most women at Mount Morgan, whether as a dangerous workplace, controller of domestic economy or the means of family survival. The circumstance of women from the first of the families to arrive at Mount Morgan introduces the eighth chapter. Not unexpectedly, little is known of early working-class women, so few at first and arriving to a brush shelter, tent or hut, the customary accommodation for initial settlers.⁸⁰ The town that evolved in two decades

⁷⁹ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

⁸⁰ See chapter two. Not only miners, but also early staff lived in tents: engineer Henry Trenear, metallurgist H.G. Neill, and chorinator G.A. Richard, who married Neill's daughter. Richard became general manager in 1903.

consolidated into a heterogeneous society where the family unit became the spindle of community. However, as historical moments of Mount Morgan move through the pages of each chapter of this thesis, women's social and cultural influence in the town demonstrates that they were at once agents and victims within and outside their place and space. The primary role of women in the gender division of labour was indisputably domestic and socially subservient, albeit some women conducted boarding houses, shanties and tent kitchens of canvas or shingle in the 1880s.⁸¹ By 1900, female enterprise included small stores and home enterprise from primary produce of milk, butter and eggs, to dressmaking. Given the customarily gendered trading ethic of the town, this chapter identifies the substantial number of women who engaged in town enterprise and wage labour outside the home.⁸² From the outset, midwives attended maternity cases at Mount Morgan whilst female staff at the hospital included nurses and domestics. Other women conducted independent lying-in hospitals.

By the new century, a certain status was evident for the majority of women who aspired to a rising middle-class. Social involvement at Mount Morgan might include membership of church and charity groups in which the wife of the mine general manager might hold office or be accorded the role of patroness.⁸³ This was not the lot of most mine women, whose life meant the constancy of housework and family duties, albeit for some women this brought a measure of control, a least in the domestic sphere. Others, for whom the family budget might be scant and irregular, were as victims dependent on the agency of the breadwinner. More than that, families lived with the underlying fear of loss of a wage earner by mine accident or mining related illness. For its part, the town was fearful of the ever-present threat of mine closure that was politically motivated by the Company for its own manipulative purposes to perpetuate workers' concern for job security.

⁸¹ See chapter two, 'Mrs. Burke's boarding house' was at 'Burke's Flat', adjacent to the mine.

⁸² *Pugh's Almanac*, Brisbane, 1911, 1925; Aldermen of the Municipality of Mount Morgan, Rate Book, 1890, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives.

⁸³ Alice Richard, wife of G.A. Richard, general manager of the mine (1904-1912) was an association patroness, see chapter eight.

The numerous contemporary monographs and articles relating to women's history include *On the edge: women's experience of Queensland*,⁸⁴ in which editor Gail Reekie writes 'Women, region and the "Queensland difference"', Jenny Craik discusses the Queensland house in terms of 'cultural politics', where public and private living intermingled as women 'took a range of roles in diverse spheres', and in 'Speaking from the warm zone', Gillian Whitlock addresses the effect of a sub-tropical climate on northern society.⁸⁵ In addressing the subject of 'historical homes' in relation to building size and occupancy, domestic servants and labour relations, Marilyn Lake declares that 'buildings are important documents in the history of class relations as well as gender relations.'⁸⁶ For housewives and daughters at Mount Morgan, house size depended on economic and social status and, essentially, family increase. For the most part, female employment came slowly, through domestic labour, shop and clerical work and, after World War I, to office work at the mine, this last ensuring a social standing of its own. Throughout, hospital nursing staff were an individual group that remained apart.

It might be expected that mining wives at Mount Morgan were overtly supportive of their men in times of turmoil, but empirical research and oral history yield slight reference to this circumstance.⁸⁷ Rather, in an attitude of guarded pride, female respondents demonstrated loyalty - outwardly at least - to the company, their husbands' employer. Perhaps the reticence of many women stemmed from entrenched familial subservience, or a sense of the vulnerability of their own dependent situation. For most women, power lay in the social space of domestic and life-style boundaries, the significance and use of the home, their language and protocols.⁸⁸ For women anchored

⁸⁴ Gail Reekie (ed.), *On the edge: women's experiences in Queensland*, St. Lucia, 1994.

⁸⁵ Jennifer Craik, 'Verandahs and Frangipani: women in the Queensland house', and Gillian Whitlock, 'Speaking from the warm zone', in Reekie (ed.), *On the edge*.

⁸⁶ Marilyn Lake, 'Historical homes', in John Rickard and Peter Spearritt, *Packaging the past*, Melbourne, 1991.

⁸⁷ Numerous respondents interviewed for the Mount Morgan Oral History Project (MMOH) 1992-1994 are now deceased.

⁸⁸ E. Marcombe, interview with the author, 27 March 1997, (OH).

to the social status of the family breadwinner, his workplace promotion or success in enterprise might bring status and provide opportunities for change in attitudes and lifestyles. On the other hand, the independent woman who had from necessity assumed the role of breadwinner or self-employed worker at Mount Morgan had no expectation of status in a mining town where entrenched masculine values were more profound than elsewhere.

Aspects of forty years of popular culture at Mount Morgan addressed in the final chapter reveal mores and traditions that reflected the essence - and eclecticism - of early European heritage in social behaviour, leisure and sport. In his comprehensive history of popular culture, *Private pleasures, public leisure*, Richard Waterhouse provides the researcher with an opportunity to compare and contrast aspects of pleasure and sporting pursuits at Mount Morgan with those elsewhere.⁸⁹ For his part, Mark St. Leon defines the changes in popular entertainment from vaudeville, to film, but concentrating on the circus ethos that existed within this milieu.⁹⁰

Male group relationships at Mount Morgan extended from the workplace to leisure, at hotels, sport or other pastimes. For women, home and family, church and localised community gatherings encompassed social life. Yet, in addressing the concomitants of leisure pursuits, amusements and sport at Mount Morgan, the final chapter reflects the overlapping of political, religious, gender and economic boundaries. The predominantly working-class town showed a plebeian preference for variety entertainments, skating rink and dance hall. However, as counterpoint to these institutions, the pervading influence of music crossed every social barrier. Classical, sacred and secular music entertained audiences and congregations whilst town brass bands roused working-class fervour in open-air recital and ceremony. Within the male

⁸⁹ Richard Waterhouse, *Private pleasures, public leisure: a history of Australian popular culture since 1788*, Melbourne, 1995.

⁹⁰ Mark St. Leon, 'The circus in the context of Australia's regional, social and cultural history', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 72, part 3, December 1986.

domain, changing levels of sport developed over time from earliest footrunning, horseracing and tennis, to the ubiquitous Rugby and cricket.

The chapter considers the significance of the annual end of year exodus by rail from Mount Morgan for holidays at the 'seaside' on the nearby coast. There, low-cost camping and a simplistic menu were the accepted conditions of the holidays.⁹¹ However, the thesis argues that miners and local employees had limited leisure choices when the mine closed for two weeks during the searingly hot Christmas period. The Company provided an annual April picnic to the coast by train for all employees, but was not obliged to take responsibility for a compulsory unpaid two weeks period that meant added financial difficulty for those in poor economic circumstances.

Association and club picnics that were annual or seasonal events incorporated competitive events that were pastimes typical of the era and included social sporting events for women. However, investigation of competition between the vast number of sporting clubs in the suburbs of the geographically fragmented town marked the leisure time of many hundreds of local men and boys dedicated to team sport. This led also to comprehension of the entrenched rivalry, both on and off the field, between Rockhampton and Mount Morgan and its effect on their seemingly generic social conflict.

Whilst the rise of unionism and claimed solidarity in industrial conflict was a powerful force for the social and economic progress of miners, strengthening unions and company failure at Mount Morgan saw the mine close in 1927. This followed the physical removal of breadwinners and family members who in the years of winding down of the mine were compelled to find work elsewhere. As thousands left the town, hundreds of houses were dismantled and removed. Moreover, life changes for those who stayed were significant and compounded the profoundly defensive attitude of a

⁹¹ Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

town in despair. The loss of the mine to industrial relations, fire, flood, falling markets and a Company in liquidation, all brought the dearth of town enterprise. Unforced leisure became the lot of those who could not or would not leave Mount Morgan. Many, unwillingly perhaps, played sport regularly and social functions continued despite decline in patronage and audiences. Mount Morgan town was no longer in the news, or regular glossy supplements in the esteemed bi-monthly *Capricornian*. After more than five years of public uncertainty that veiled private conviction that the mine would close, town pride that had prompted a flourishing folk lore to mask earlier disadvantages changed to defensive parochialism.

Comparison of Mount Morgan town experiences when the company mine was stable or in a state of flux included periods of satisfaction at full employment at the mine interspersed with a sense of angst at strikes, gradual retrenchment, mine closure and the decline of the town. This was during the years of Labor government which, whilst connected with the unions, did not control the unions which led the men in demands that were not met by management. The Company was brought down ultimately in a time of national economic disadvantage, social and political turmoil. Whilst the mine hierarchy moved on, Mount Morgan saw the years of threatened disappointment manifested in stark relief as the image of optimism dimmed on the closing stage of a town in crisis.

In attempting to provide insights into the encompassing cultural strengths and perpetuating style of the first forty-five years of one regional town, this work aims to further an understanding of the historical fabric of the region and the wider community of erstwhile mining towns. Many who left Mount Morgan and relocated as the mine declined and closed retained ties with the mountain town. This perpetuated the network of familial relationships throughout Central Queensland and beyond that was stronger than any economic or political affiliation. The continual if shifting relationship with Rockhampton, remained through kinship that tempered long-term rivalry between the

towns. Yet, as the unforgiving minute passed into a new decade, Mount Morgan defied the realities of a threatened existence and tenaciously promoted memories and images of a perceived golden past imbued with a spirit that would not die.

Chapter One

'Up Razorback': space and settlement in transformation of the landscape

Man he comes with his savage saw,
With his angry face, and the tree must go,
Down to the earth with a crash and a roar,
With the last protest at the deadly blow,
With foliage bent through the air is sent
Its last sweet song from its heart outrent.¹

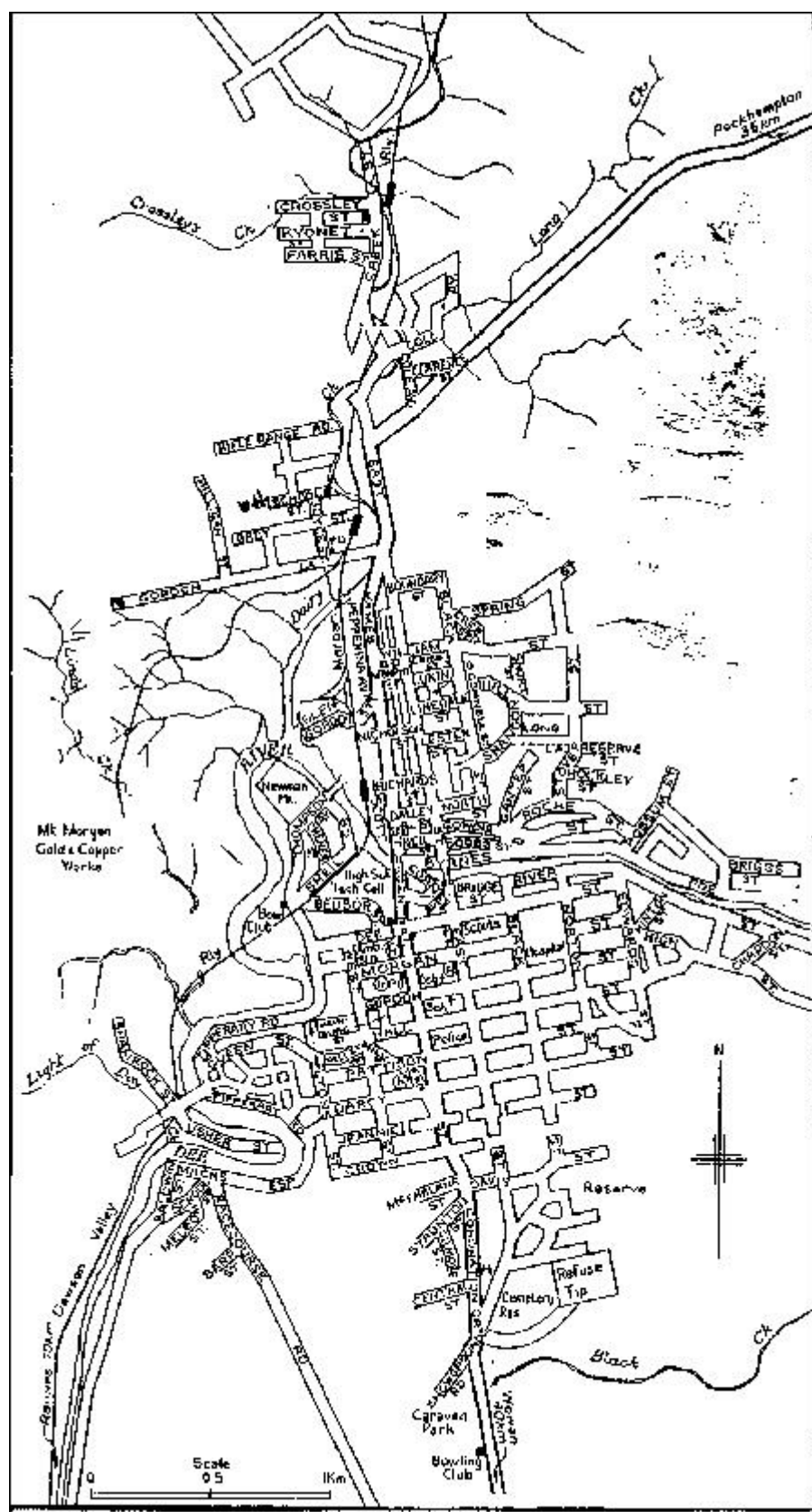
'The bloodwood stump',
Robert Burns Tait, 1914.

The town of Mount Morgan, Central Queensland, almost forty kilometres southwest of Rockhampton and over the Razorback Range, lies to the north, east and south of a now topless mountain and in a valley of the Dee River.² The derelict Mount Morgan mine extends along the entire western side of the town, itself a place divided by the river, where ravine like banks rise above shallow, green-blue waters that flow across copper coloured rocks in the riverbed. The town is on the Burnett Highway that runs, like the river, south-west through Mount Morgan, then on to the Dawson Valley on an inland route that stretches to the southern Queensland border and beyond.

To visit Mount Morgan gives a sense of something ended yet incomplete. This ailing place could be any mining town of the past, but an inexplicable atmosphere of 'presence' prevails, a spirit, sad, yet tenacious and parochial. The significance of the

¹ Robert Burns Tait, *Poems*, Brisbane, c. 1932, p. 98. Tait (1887-1929) was born at Yaamba, north of Rockhampton, educated at Mount Morgan and worked at the mine. He adopted the pseudonym 'The Australian National Poet' by 1919. Tait's *Poems* was published posthumously by his family.

² B.G. Patterson, *The history of Mount Morgan*, 1949, typescript, 1955, D15/309.15, Capricornia Collection (CC), Central Queensland University (CQU).



Map 1. Section of Mount Morgan street map, showing the separation of town and mine areas. c. 1968.

town is manifested in landmarks, memorials, and a local attitude of defensiveness of a generally dilapidated town facade so indicative of material decline.

The history of Mount Morgan that describes the use of space in the name of mining is well documented. Extant historiography also complements a confounding collection of archival MS, maps, plans and photographs that provide the researcher with a profound visual history of a large scale, single company mine. Conversely, the town of Mount Morgan, seen always in the shadow of the Big Mine, has received scant attention. This situation raises intriguing questions of spatial history relating to the 'travellers and settlers' who, as Paul Carter suggests, belong to our past as we belong to their future.³

The town has known one life, but the mine has known several masters. The first was a small syndicate that conducted mining operations (1882-1886). The second was the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited (1886-1927) in which large shareholdings provided the controlling capital. The third was Mount Morgan Limited, (1929-1968) a public company that reopened the mine and which from 1968 experienced changes in ownership, investment and administration.⁴ This thesis deals with the era to 1927, suggested here as most significant to the town in social, industrial, economic and political terms. In identifying characteristics of early settlement, this chapter seeks to explore and explain the reflexive influence of land use upon the town and people.

Evidence of past land use is all about: to the west the mine site with its rearing, smokeless stack; the crumbling dam walls across the river close to the mine; the creaking cables of the surviving suspension footbridge that sways precariously across

³ Paul Carter, *The road to Botany Bay: an essay in spatial history*, London, 1987, pp. 67, 68.

⁴ Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton: a history of city and district*, St. Lucia, 1981, pp. 295, 306, 321; John Kerr, *Mount Morgan gold, copper and oil*, St. Lucia, 1982, pp. 230, 236.

the Dee River at Tipperary Point. On the Upper Dee River is the 'Big Dam' that was the mine's 'No. 7' dam, a much publicised construction which, owing to the Great Drought a century ago, remained unfilled for four years after its completion in 1899. Over time, the dam and its surrounds became and remained the local 'beauty spot'. Signs throughout the town direct the visitor to the places that residents claimed as their suburbs, all within an overall town area of eight square kilometres. Yet, neither icons of earlier 'presence' nor the town facade reflect evidence of past wealth. Along every lane and thoroughfare are land areas now empty but used in another time, perhaps several times over and for different reasons as the essential mobility of a proportion of the population brought constant changes in land use. However, the township of Mount Morgan, much of its space concealed, changed or destroyed, cannot be seen as 'simply disguised countryside'.⁵ The erstwhile 'mountain of gold', its peak long gone, remains now as an unplanned plateau with benches of stunted regrowth and expanses of solidified overburden that sweep down to a huge hole in the ground.

The place that became Mount Morgan was not undisturbed before European settlement. Historiography of the location declares its significance to the Balili (Bayili) clan who knew the area as 'Bundoona'.⁶ This thesis suggests that writing the history of Australian Aborigines is the prerogative of indigenous descendants, and from their traditional sources. However, for the purpose of this study, relevant Aboriginal history provided to the writer and anthropological researchers by Gangulu tribal elders and other Aboriginal clan members is incorporated in the narrative. Suggested territorial boundaries of the Gangulu clan extended through Dawson River country north to the Razorback Range, while Balili lands extended from south of Rockhampton to the range.⁷ The inhospitable terrain of the Dee and Razorback Ranges suggests that indigenous habitation was probably spasmodic and scattered.

⁵ Gillian Tindall, *The fields beneath: the history of a London village*, London, 1985, p. 13.

⁶ Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 286.

⁷ William Toby, Gangulu clan elder, interview with the author, 5 May 1993, Mount Morgan Oral History Project (MMOH).

European reports provided stereotyped descriptions of early friendly and sociable contact until the pressure of European settlement caused relations to deteriorate.⁸ Henry Reynolds points out that European and Aborigine met in such a wide variety of circumstances that the historian may never be able to reduce the diversity of behaviour.⁹

Accounts of Aboriginal contact in Central Queensland tell of 'no little danger' owing to the fierce character of the 'Dawson River blacks' involved in the stealing of stock and the killing of shepherds and lone stockmen.¹⁰ Oral history of the Gangulu claims a reprisal massacre of Aboriginal people near Lake Victoria south of Mount Morgan and that bodies were thrown into the lake.¹¹ As the impetus of pastoral expansion barely slowed in the region, by 1868, T.H. Fitzgerald surveyed the vast Calliungal holdings that comprised three extensive parcels of land, Calliungal 1, 2 and 3.¹² European boundary lines were typically described and gazetted in the manner that Rhys Isaac suggests occurred in the British settlement of Virginia:

The most decisive action of the invaders in reshaping the configuration of the landscape was the imposition of the lines of exclusive property rights.¹³

Mount Morgan was not a place of government inspired or subsidised development. The first European use of the land was as early as 1856 and before separation of the Colony of Queensland. Carter suggests that a place gains a history when it is named, but that the poetic power of English to evoke an image of living space

⁸ Carl Porter, Scott L'Oste Brown and Luke Godwin, A report on the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Theodore North area, ML5657 for the Palmtree Wutaru Aboriginal Corporation for Land and Culture, Brisbane, February 1997, p. 18.

⁹ Henry Reynolds, *The other side of the frontier*, Townsville, 1981, p. 17.

¹⁰ Oscar de Satge, *Pages from the journal of a Queensland squatter*, London, 1901, p. 52, in Porter, et. al, p. 22.

¹¹ E. Hatte, Palmtree Wutaru, oral history 1996, cited in Porter, et. al, p. 24.

¹² B.G. Patterson, Concerning old Mount Morgan, 2 November 1955, p. 1, paper read posthumously at Rockhampton and Historical Society (RDHS), typescript; N. Chardon, F.L. Golding (eds.), *Centenary of the Town of Mount Morgan 1882-1982*, Mount Morgan, 1982, p. 21.

¹³ Rhys Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA, 1982, p. 19. For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'landscape' refers to environment, including natural terrain and space that bears the acknowledged or ignored mark of settlement or development.

remains patchy.¹⁴ Moreover, he suggests that the lack of language skills between European and Aborigines caused much English transliteration of indigenous words to be nonsensical in terms of naming lands and localities. Europeans took up the vast holdings named 'Calliungal'. The Aboriginal name translates variously as 'light shower of rain' or 'thunderstorm'. Edmund Woods held land that encompassed almost fifty square kilometres of this well-watered country.¹⁵ He was probably unaware that an Aboriginal meeting place was in the vicinity when he built a homestead with a standard feature of the 1870s - loopholes for protection against attack.¹⁶ Subsequently, Woods moved to higher ground at Lake Pleasant, but the same European lore suggests that Aborigines declared he reconstructed the huts on sacred tribal lands. Finally, in the 1890s, Wood moved the homestead again, this time to nearby Double Creek.¹⁷ Whilst some dispossessed Gangulu who had inhabited the lands east of the Dawson River relocated in the area that became Banana, small numbers remained near Wura ('kangaroo') about fifteen kilometres south of Mount Morgan and on Woods' run.

Aboriginal dispossession in the region was never absolute. For example, a descendant of the Morgan family who lived at Mount Morgan during the early syndicate years recalled that in the 1880s, Aborigines lived on their holding. Men were stockmen and women cooked and washed for the Morgans.¹⁸ Moreover, by 1900, six families of mixed descent, Aboriginal, Asian and European settled at Walmul (native bear) north of Wura. Others of Aboriginal descent camped about the southern fringe of Mount Morgan including the areas of Crows Nest and Horse Creek.¹⁹ Men of the clan, their horsemanship learned from Europeans, were in demand as stockmen on pastoral

¹⁴ Carter, *The road to Botany Bay*, pp. 46, 137.

¹⁵ Nessie Chardon, *The history of Calliungal*, 1 March 1974, p. 3, typescript, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM); Lorna McDonald, *Cattle country: the beef cattle industry in Central Queensland 1850s-1980s*, Brisbane, 1988, p. 3.

¹⁶ B.G. Patterson, *The story of the Mount Morgan mine*, Rockhampton, 1950, p. 5.

¹⁷ Chardon, *The history of Calliungal*, p. 4.

¹⁸ Cissie Beard, *Discovery of the Mount Morgan gold mine*, c. 1978, typescript, held privately. Mrs. C. Beard (née Morgan) was the daughter of Edward Morgan, shareholder in the initial syndicate that commenced the Mount Morgan mine.

¹⁹ Toby, 5 May 1993, MMOH.

properties to the south and across the Dawson. Others worked in the bush south of the new mine, in the areas of Crows Nest and Box Flat, where they cut bark from ironbark trees for sale at sixpence or one shilling per slab.

European history is inexorably linked to Calliungal No. 2, where pastoral runs²⁰ included Moongan, Moonmera, Ulogie, Gelobera and the rugged terrain of the 'iron mountain' where, by the 1870s, fossicking occurred intermittently.²¹ William MacKinlay, a boundary rider for Calliungal station, set up a heifer run on the Box Flat area of Calliungal No. 2. In the course of his stockwork, he discovered gold in the Crows Nest area of the run. Progressively, fossickers conducted mining operations through the Dee and Razorback Ranges for a decade before the investigation of the ironstone mountain that became Mount Morgan. William MacKinlay's daughter, Minnie Gordon, told Frederick and Edward Morgan the secret of her father's find on the mountain. The Morgans in turn confided in Thomas Skarratt Hall, manager of the Queensland National Bank at Rockhampton.²² In 1882, Hall, William Pattison and William Knox D'Arcy joined the Morgan brothers in a syndicate when the name 'Mount Morgan' was coined. By 1886, the Morgans had sold their shares to 'the other half of the syndicate' T.S. Hall, Pattison and D'Arcy who purchased the mining rights to Section 247 the area that included the mine.²³

Initial European settlement below the mine on the banks of Mundic Creek and across the Dee River at Tipperary Point reflected village style, seemingly reminiscent of mining villages in Britain. Lewis Keeble asserts that 'oddly, nothing which could be reasonably called a "village" exists in Australia'.²⁴ In counterpoint to this, two case studies that J.H. Winston-Gregson presents in his interpretation of Australian rural

²⁰ Chardon, *The history of Calliungal*, p. 5.

²¹ Patterson, *Concerning old Mount Morgan*, p. 4.

²² Kerr, *Mount Morgan gold, copper and oil*, pp. 19-21.

²³ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 294-298.

²⁴ Lewis Keeble, 'Australian urban form', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 1, 1988, p. 22.

landscape are defined as villages settled in the eastern Riverina in the late 1840s.²⁵ Aspects of village community life at Mount Morgan were evident also in settlement 'over the hill' and 'around the valley': Horse Creek, Dee River, Upper Dee, Dairy Creek, Red Hill and Happy Valley.²⁶ In Australia, the ubiquitous term 'town' rather than 'village' defined settlements of similar size and structure to those in other countries, but perhaps contemporary historiography and emergent multiculturalism in Australia lends local meaning to the more cosmopolitan 'village'.²⁷

Tents and canvas dwellings were the early means of family and communal living. Camps scattered along the banks of watercourses near the mine were places of makeshift habitations, as were the small Duck Island in the Dee River and Burke's Flat on the east bank. The ubiquitous eight feet by ten feet tent progressed from canvas to canvas and bark. Women reared children, cooked and socialised in the temporary structures that remained part of the Mount Morgan landscape alongside the development of permanent timber and iron dwellings.²⁸ It should be pointed out here that throughout, the term 'landscape' in this thesis applies to the environment: natural terrain, industrial, commercial, social or domestic spaces that bear the acknowledged or ignored marks of society.

Whilst Carter argues that names are invention rather than the interpretation of places,²⁹ naming of districts, locations and streets at Mount Morgan reflected both conventions. The early practice of government use of Aboriginal words to define pastoral lands and runs prevailed in the Mount Morgan district with the naming of

²⁵ J.H. Winston-Gregson, 'People in the landscape: a biography of two villages', *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, no. 2, 1984, p. 27.

²⁶ Aldermen of the Municipality of Mount Morgan (Council), Rate Book 1890, Mount Morgan Shire Archives (MMSA). The records held at Mount Morgan Council were stored haphazardly in an unsealed room beneath the building and were uncatalogued.

²⁷ Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia*, p. 31.

²⁸ Peter Bell, *Timber and iron*, St. Lucia, 1984, p. 207; Council, Finance Committee Minutes, 19 March 1924, MS 255/4, CC/CQU.

²⁹ Carter, *The road to Botany Bay*, p. 61.

small, separate settlements along the railway and outside the town boundary. Moonmera and Moongan were located over a distance of ten kilometres from the base of the Razorback to the town boundary, with Walmul and Wura a similar distance from the southern boundary of the town. Unimaginative if descriptive English names identified locations of topical European usage, or perhaps celebrated a prominent person in the new town. Moreover, the name of a single place might change over time. The name of the mine itself changed with some regularity from the 'ironstone mountain' and 'Iron Mountain', so-called in the 1870s, to 'Morgan's Mount,' when the Morgan brothers took up the 640 acres that included the mine site. The company formed later retained the name in 'Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited'. Whilst outsiders took the opportunity to buy shares, the four major shareholders that now included Hall's brother Walter Russell Hall gained profit and status through the brilliant success of the mine in the late 1880s. Now pamphleteers cited the place as 'the mountain of gold.'³⁰ Every title referred to one location, but each name was indicative of its time, circumstance, or literary zeal.

The local government authority of the Borough of Mount Morgan proclaimed in 1890 divided Calliungal No. 2 into the municipalities of Calliungal and Mount Morgan. With this advance, townspeople anticipated provision of essential infrastructure, but this was not to be. Progress from primitive conditions was slow; Council funds were scarce always; and the constant demands of enterprise for roads and bridges took precedence over humanitarian needs of hygiene and sanitation.³¹ An official survey in 1887 defined the central town area in the grid formation that Keeble suggests is typically Queensland style.³² Permanent naming of streets honoured the original syndicate: 'Gordon', 'Morgan', 'Hall', 'D'Arcy', 'Pattison'. Oddly, the ubiquitous 'East' and 'West' streets ran almost directly north to south. Other official street names indicated their location. For

³⁰ William H. Dick, *A mountain of gold*, Brisbane, 1889.

³¹ Council, Minutes, 4 January 1895, K17/967.2, CC/CQU.

³² Keeble, 'Australian Urban Form', pp. 23, 24.

example, a track from the Dee River through the town to the south became Central Street. East Street was the main thoroughfare until construction of a traffic bridge linked Central Street with the track north over the Razorback and on to Rockhampton.

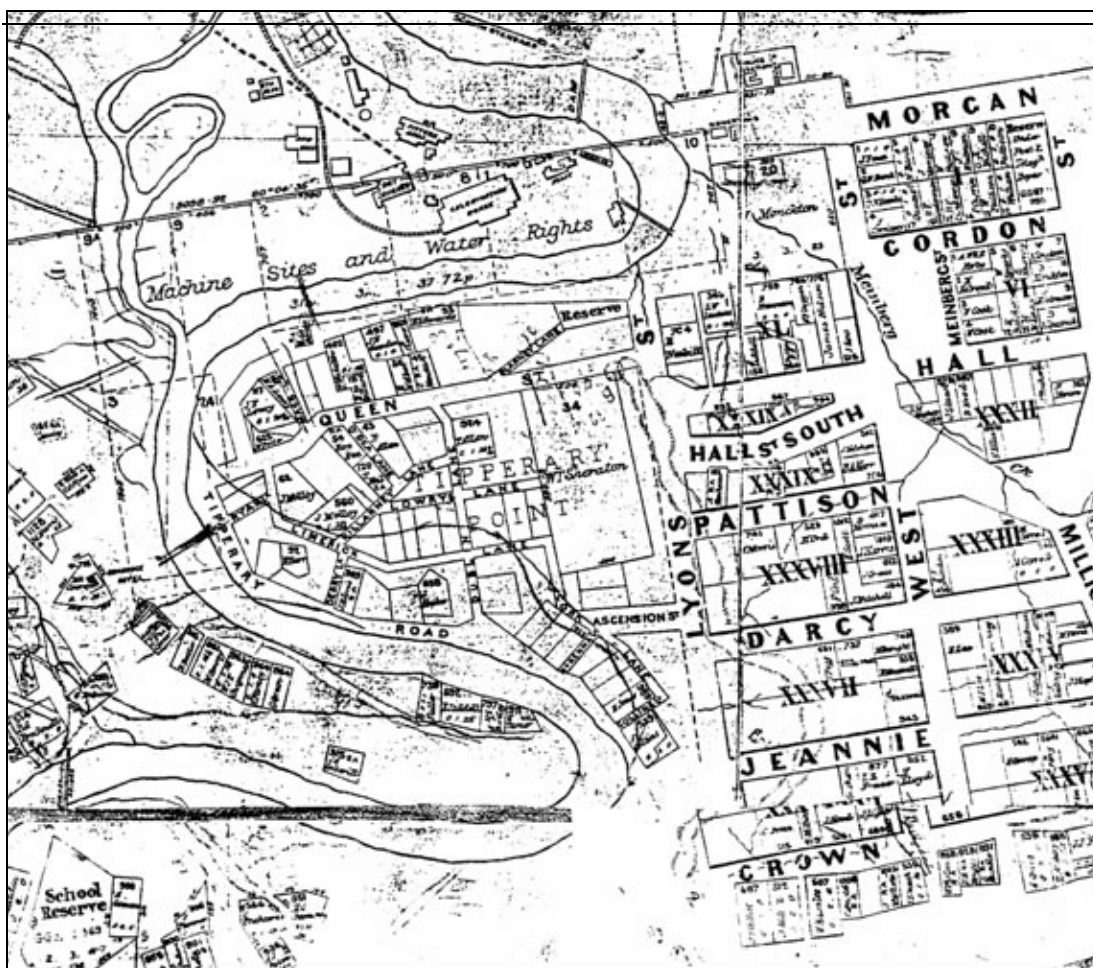
Hotels and stores provided the earliest centre of trade at Tipperary Point, a settlement confined on three sides by the Dee River, and backing up to Jubilee Hill. Within a decade, the place was already an Irish enclave and indicative of the use of space that contributed to the phenomenon Greg Denning suggests must 'belong to the stranger's eye' – culture³³ - in this instance, an emergent town culture. As more Irish arrived at Mount Morgan, a clannishness demonstrated the desire to settle near those of their own background. To the north and east beyond the hill a scattered town developed, but Tipperary Point retained its air of ethnic clustering.

The place was a network of small, oddly shaped miner's rights holdings, one small lot boasting eight boundaries. The blocks lined short, irregular and narrow laneways, named for Irish places and people in arbitrary identification that denoted space as no other at Mount Morgan. Lanes included Dublin, Killarney, Cork, Limerick, Derry, Blarney, Collins, Mac's, Lowry, McKenna, O'Dea and Ryan.³⁴ By 1900, 20 per cent of the town's almost 600 dwellings were at self-identifying locations in the Tipperary Point area; 62 at Tipperary Point, 29 at Tipperary Gully and 17 at Tipperary Flat.³⁵ Ultimately, the single title, Tipperary Point, denoted the three areas. The place remained accessible from Tipperary Road that wound around the bank of the meandering river to join Ascension Street to the south. Incongruously, Queen Street divided Tipperary Point from the top of Jubilee Hill down to the river.

³³ Greg Denning, *Performances*, Melbourne, 1996, p. 57.

³⁴ See Map 2, p. 38.

³⁵ Council, Rate book, 1890, (MMSCA).



Map 2. Tipperary Point shows unsurveyed lots, lanes and Irish names. *Environs of Mount Morgan, Crocodile Creek Gold Field, Parish of Calliungal, Brisbane, 1897.*

Over time, 'Duck Island' and 'Burke's Flat' directly below the mine were polluted and laid waste. However, the obliteration of settlements and creeks was not unique to Mount Morgan or mining towns *per se*. Gillian Tindall declares that with population increase and associated expansion at London's Kentish Town, the Fleet River slowed from a river to a waterway, from a waterway to a creek, from a creek to a ditch, and from a ditch to a drain, to simply disappear below the ground.³⁶ At Mount Morgan, the settlement at Mundic Creek near the mine was lost to vast deposits of waste ore and shale from the mine workings. Moreover, the Mundic Creek waterway once flowed into the Dee River near Tipperary Point, but was ultimately lost when over years, vast

³⁶ Tindall, *The fields beneath*, pp. 26, 27.

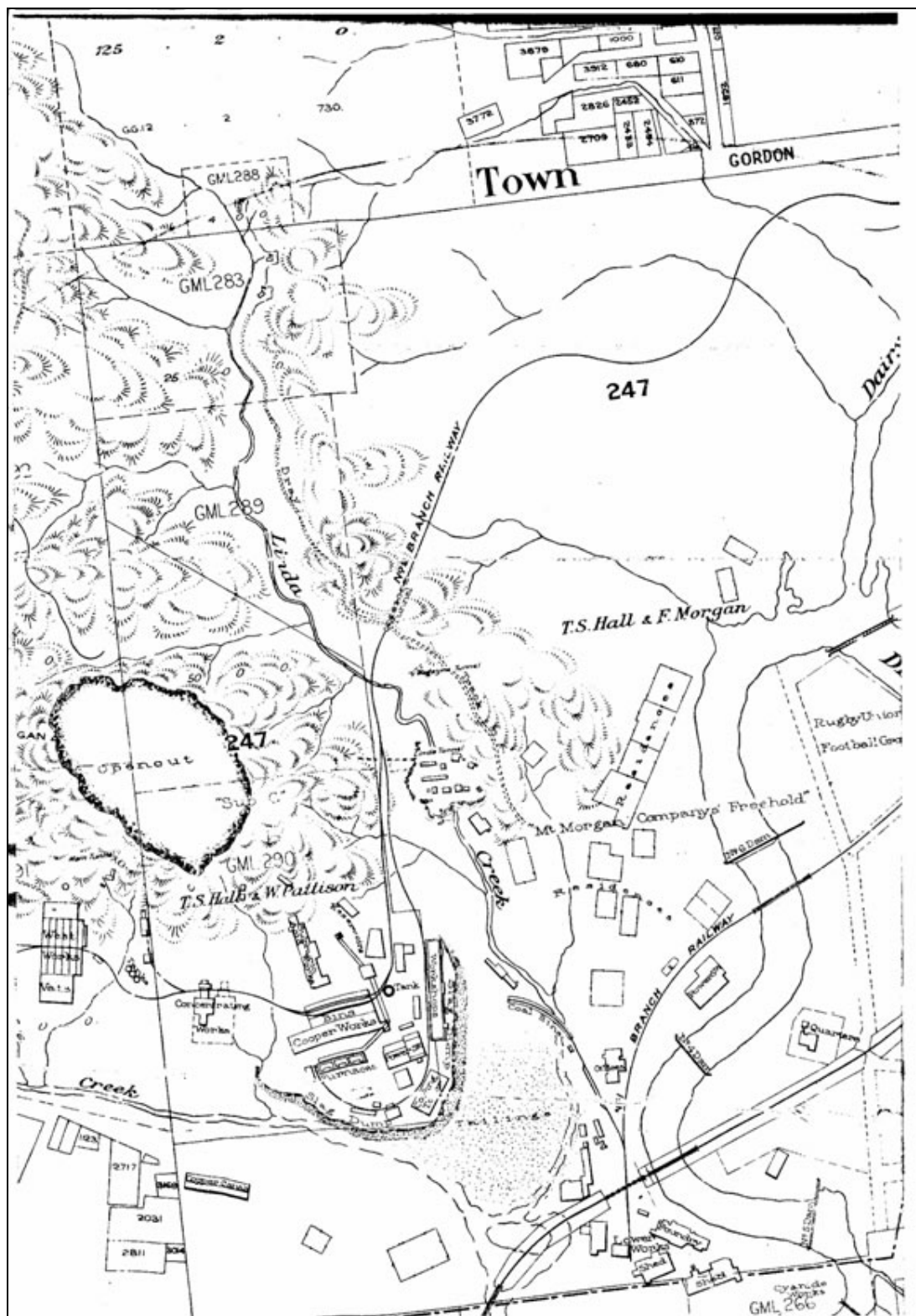
tonnages of mine tailings were dumped into the creek.³⁷ In comparison to reconstruction above the Fleet River area, Mundic Creek settlement and the watercourse were not reclaimed. Other places and identifying names at Mount Morgan changed or were lost to development and mining practice, but the town accepted the loss of settlements. This suggests an aspect of the mining ethos that mines and their towns had limited life. However, as townspeople, miners, developers, local authority and others located or relocated in the town at spaces they made their own, early locations and names passed from use and finally, from memory. For example, the 'Dee Track' along the riverbank to the east was officially named River Street and the 'Two Mile' became the suburb of Baree.

Geoffrey Bolton deplores the hastening of transformation of the countryside by a 'casually destructive' first generation, whose use of limited expertise and technology in gold mining and railways impacted severely on the environment of the 1850s.³⁸ At Mount Morgan fifty years later, denuding of native bush and pollution of natural watercourses and the atmosphere were the results of rapid physical and material 'progress' at the mine. When the availability and cost of transporting outside materials across the harsh, mountainous country ensured a consistent demand for local timber, lack of foresight that might have protected the town environment and surrounding landscape was manifested within a few years. The physical scarring that marked Mount Morgan more than any other place in Central Queensland resulted not only from large scale mining operations, but also from devastation of the bush that surrounded the town. Those who formed a brigade of timbergetters for the Company³⁹ gradually moved through the hinterland to almost inaccessible locations in order to cut and haul timber.

³⁷ Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 4 March 1998, Oral History, (OH).

³⁸ Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment 1788-1980*, Sydney, p. 58.

³⁹ The term 'Company', as spelt, is used throughout this thesis in reference to the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited.



Map 3. Section shows the spread of tailings to Mundie Creek and Dee River, also three dams. Note Linda Tunnel on Linda Creek, also Company freehold with residences for management below the mine, and 'paddock' flat east of the river, showing staff quarters and sports ground.

It was not for these hardworking hewers to observe or consider the natural significance of ironbark, or brigalow when ironbark stands were exhausted. They simply assaulted the bush; their only concern to avoid discovery of unlicensed removal of timber.⁴⁰ Destruction of the bush continued into the 1900s as the insatiable appetite of the mine increased for above ground structures, shaft timbering, bridges, Works and mine buildings. Moreover, when the mine developed underground workings, chambers were timbered as mine shafts penetrated deep into the mountain.

The Company retained a large number of immigrant charcoal burners brought to Mount Morgan for the express purpose of instructing others in the practice. Discussion in chapter three will include the increasing costs of timbergetting, fuel, and the continued demand for timbering in construction and underground mining, despite the change from timber to coal burning boilers.⁴¹ This is not to say that bricks were unavailable at Mount Morgan. The mine opened a quarry at Mundic Creek and constructed brickworks to provide for mine buildings and chimneys. However, most early public buildings in the town were timber, including the post office and primary school, Council offices and town hall, also the police station and courthouse then located in Morgan Street. Commercial, domestic and community buildings were timber also, including the large Foresters Hall of timber and iron. However, an independent brickmaker in the settlement contracted to supply bricks for the Anglican Church that was completed in 1899.⁴² Gazettal in 1897 of a police and municipal reserve that extended between Hall and Pattison Street saw a substantial stone courthouse and police station built alongside local government offices by 1902. A typically large, double storeyed Masonic temple built in brick by 1903 completed a physical nucleus of places

⁴⁰ Mount Morgan Clerk of Petty Sessions, (MMCPs), Deposition Book, 22 November 1898, CPS 7B/P4, Queensland State Archives (QSA).

⁴¹ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, (MMGMC), Minutes, 17 December 1896, Lorna McDonald papers, held privately.

⁴² MMGMC, Mine superintendent's records, 1883-1885, M1/914.14, CC/CQU.

of spiritual faith and temporal brotherhood, local authority and law and order, all within two blocks from the town centre.

Haphazard settlement in the outer areas of the new town indicated leasing on miner's right.⁴³ Access was critical to use of space and a network of pathways, bridle paths and tracks extended not only around hills and through valleys but also cut across land holdings. Various methods of possession were evident; some simply camped on unsurveyed land, or in the Company's 'paddock' near the mine, and formed tracks across unused areas. Tensions between an occupier and others might be near flash point at any time. A lease holder on miner's right was required to show evidence of his occupation, yet others who might have used the land for access previously were confident they could continue to cross a leasehold after it was taken up. In the absence of permanent land tenure at Mount Morgan as elsewhere, land possession, however tenuous and particularly under any threat to miners right, was not taken lightly. In 1898, a mine employee who held a block for which he applied to the Warden's Court for miner's right charged another miner with assault. The defendant took a path that led across the block and past the tent of the claimant, who declared:

After tea I was sitting in front of my galley smoking. The defendant came by. I said, 'Don't you make a track over my holding. When I am in the camp you go behind the creek. I have blocked the butcher beside you from going through the ground and have checked boys looking for horses.'⁴⁴

The defendant declared he had always used the track through 'ground camp claims', and although the claimant gave evidence that the defendant swore at him and assaulted him, the court dismissed the case.

Roads emerged from early tracks formed along the shortest and least difficult distance between source and destination. Before the Razorback track, access to pastoral

⁴³ Map: *Mount Morgan and Bouldercombe*, Brisbane Survey Office, 1898, CC/CQU.

⁴⁴ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 4 October 1898, CPS 7B/4 QSA.

holdings or diggings south of the ironstone mountain had been via the Westwood rail terminus and a hazardous bridle track that entered the Mount Morgan area from the southwest. This was also the outside access to the short-lived settlement and diggings of Mt. Victoria [sic], about fifteen kilometres across the range from Mount Morgan.⁴⁵ Within the Mount Morgan town boundary, initial tracks bore scant similarity to the streets laid out in the central town grid. When fire caused relocation of the town business area to change three times in less than fifty years, the significance of thoroughfares changed. The first fire razed rough timber stores at the original Tipperary Point settlement in 1893, and the 'main' street or commercial centre of town redeveloped within the grid.⁴⁶ The approach to urban expansion at Mount Morgan differed from other mining towns. Diane Menghetti suggests that Charters Towers developed at a distance from the early workings and according to a municipal grid plan defining commercial and residential zones.⁴⁷ Ravenswood was different again, surviving as 'a statement of the absence of any degree or form of urban planning.'⁴⁸

Small timber dwellings were replacing the earliest tents and huts by the 1890s. Moreover, some town expansion reflected the distancing of place of residence from workplace when some areas in close proximity to the mine became socially undesirable. By contrast, Rockhampton in the 1890s had a permanent commercial centre and a custom authority that controlled the port trade. The replacement of old, original timber buildings in the port town was not only influenced by trade and fortune that flowed through Rockhampton from the Mount Morgan mine, but also by fires that burnt the 'temporary' structures of the 1860s. New buildings for government, commercial, educational and religious purposes were of prestigious design and quality in brick and

⁴⁵ Nessie Chardon, A short history of Mt. Victoria, 20 September 1973, typescript, MMHM.

⁴⁶ These fires might be compared with destruction of timber buildings at Rockhampton in August 1862, when shops, warehouses and the first Custom House were razed. P.F. MacDonald to J. Riddell, 10 September 1862, MacDonald Papers, CQ Collection, Rockhampton City Library.

⁴⁷ Diane Menghetti, Charters Towers, PhD thesis, St. Lucia, 1984, pp. 57, 93.

⁴⁸ D.C. Roderick, 'Ravenswood: surveying the evidence', Kett Kennedy (ed.), *Readings in North Queensland mining history*, Townsville, 1980, p. 62.

stone, most located in Quay Street on the Fitzroy River and in the central town area. Between 1881 and 1895, large, private schools built in brick dominated the skyline on the Athelstane Range, a long, low hill that flanked the town to the west. The Range emerged as a remote and elite suburb where horse transport proliferated for the more affluent residents who preferred to live at a distance from the fetid atmosphere of the river flats encompassing the town area.⁴⁹ A settlement known as 'Irishtown' was below the Range.⁵⁰ Similarly, on the Company freehold at Mount Morgan, an area on a low hill over the river and known as 'the Range' was the residential area for mine top management. Moreover, the location was a short distance from the mainly Irish Tipperary Point.

Road transport brought supplies and communication to the early settlement. Sure-footed horse teams soon replaced bullock wagons as the pivotal method of transport and cartage to and from Mount Morgan. At the mine, a large stable of horses provided an essential source for heavy transport and construction both on the surface and underground.⁵¹ Whilst a majority of the early mine labour force preferred to live adjacent to their workplace,⁵² many who lived on the outskirts rode to the mine and grazed their horses in the Company 'paddock'.⁵³ A section boss walked to the mine, and whilst at weekends, his children rode their pet pony in a paddock at the rear of their house the family did not have a horse vehicle for transport or leisure.⁵⁴ Some who worked in the bush used stabling at saddlers, hotels or pubs when in town.

A single phenomenon that became more significant as settlement moved away from the mine vicinity was the need for access across the Dee River. This was solved

⁴⁹ *The Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 2 February 1886.

⁵⁰ *Central Queensland Times (CQT)*, 5 October 1889.

⁵¹ Frank Cunningham, Mount Morgan Mine horses, paper delivered at a meeting of the Mount Morgan Historical Museum, 1974, typescript. MMHM.

⁵² Geoffrey Blainey, *The rise of Broken Hill*, South Melbourne, 1968, pp. 107-111.

⁵³ Information provided by Barbara Webster, from her father, Robert Cole, April 2000.

⁵⁴ Marcombe, 4 March 1998, OH.

somewhat by the building of at least five suspension footbridges. However, whilst these assisted pedestrian traffic, by their flexible construction, the bridges required regular council maintenance.⁵⁵ They crossed the river at Tipperary Point, Red Hill to the southwest, and Horse Creek to the southeast of the town. Similar bridges were upstream from the mine at East Street, and along the Dee Track towards the Big Dam. Given that the slim funds of Council barely provided for any major construction, bridge planning was problematic, with each proposed location investigated thoroughly to ensure maximum benefit to residents. A fixed bridge for single vehicle traffic was at Central Street to provide access across the river from north to south. The bridge was the scene of numerous accidents between horse vehicles and pedestrians but remained until the use of motor vehicles in the early twentieth century demanded a wider bridge.⁵⁶

A one-industry city presents different sets of social characteristics from a multi-industry city,⁵⁷ yet, operations for Mount Morgan's single company mine were of such magnitude that the town developed in environmental conditions that equalled the worst industrial suburb. Folklore of earliest Mount Morgan includes a graphic description of hundreds of miners at the end of shift 'rushing down the mountain like a tribe of Red Indians',⁵⁸ which suggests that ablution facilities at the mine were later provisions. Air pollution that was a constant in the town caused the roofs of dwellings and other structures to appear bronzed from the mine fallout. The town existed under a blanket of pollution: an awful mixture of dust from mining excavation and crushing, and smoke, ash and vapour that belched from chimneys and Works. The choking contamination and stench from the early chlorination process, and the later use of sulphuric acid in the smelting process for copper extraction, permeated the atmosphere.⁵⁹ As a result, many townspeople suffered respiratory tract damage.

⁵⁵ A. Christmas, Mount Morgan Historical Museum curator, discussions with the author, 1997.

⁵⁶ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 5 September 1917.

⁵⁷ G. Wirth, 'Urbanism as a way of life', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. XLIV, no. 1, July 1933, p. 12.

⁵⁸ Sykes, *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan: its past present and probable future*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Kerr, *Mt. Morgan gold, copper and oil*, p. 78.

It should be emphasised here that the paucity of sanitation methods and hygiene at Mount Morgan was similar to settlement anywhere. Society at large suffered from life threatening living conditions, and high death rates remained until medical science and technology for public health was improved, financed and implemented.⁶⁰ The wealthy of any community were the first to benefit from this infrastructure, whilst the poor were last. At Mount Morgan, the Company installed septic tanks at ground level to serve the mine, offices and some staff residences. A power house on site provided electricity to the surface Works,⁶¹ to some points underground and to offices and residences on the mine freehold. Dams constructed along the Dee for mine use simply drained the existing chain of waterholes that framed the river through the town. Impediment to the flow silted the already fouled river. The waters of the river, symbol of life at first and later, death, had brought early residents together at Tipperary Point until suburbs that became small separate communities grew about the seven hills of the town.⁶² Thus, the spatial nature of settlement was contrasted in buildings tightly grouped, or dispersed and directed outwards.⁶³ However, Mount Morgan suffered from lack of foresight in the location of settlement and available water. Had the town been settled along the Dee River three kilometres north east of the mine, the main town area would have had fresh, natural water well above the mine workings. This occurred at Walhalla in Eastern Victoria, where early settlement was upriver from the mine, and subsequent settlement along the river was more distant, and behind a nearby mountain, out of sight and sound of the mine.⁶⁴ Yet, without reticulated water, sanitation or fire brigade, Walhalla reflected similarities with Mount Morgan.

⁶⁰ Weston Bate, *Life after gold: twentieth century Ballarat*, Melbourne, 1993, p. 41.

⁶¹ The term 'Works', so written, appears throughout Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited records relating to workshops and departments at surface level. This thesis uses the term similarly.

⁶² Council, Rate book 1890, MMSCA.

⁶³ Susan Lawrence Cheney, 'Uncertain migrants: the history and archaeology of a Victorian goldfield community', *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, vol. 10, 1992, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Raymond Paull, *Old Walhalla: portrait of a gold town*, Carlton, 1980, p. 51.

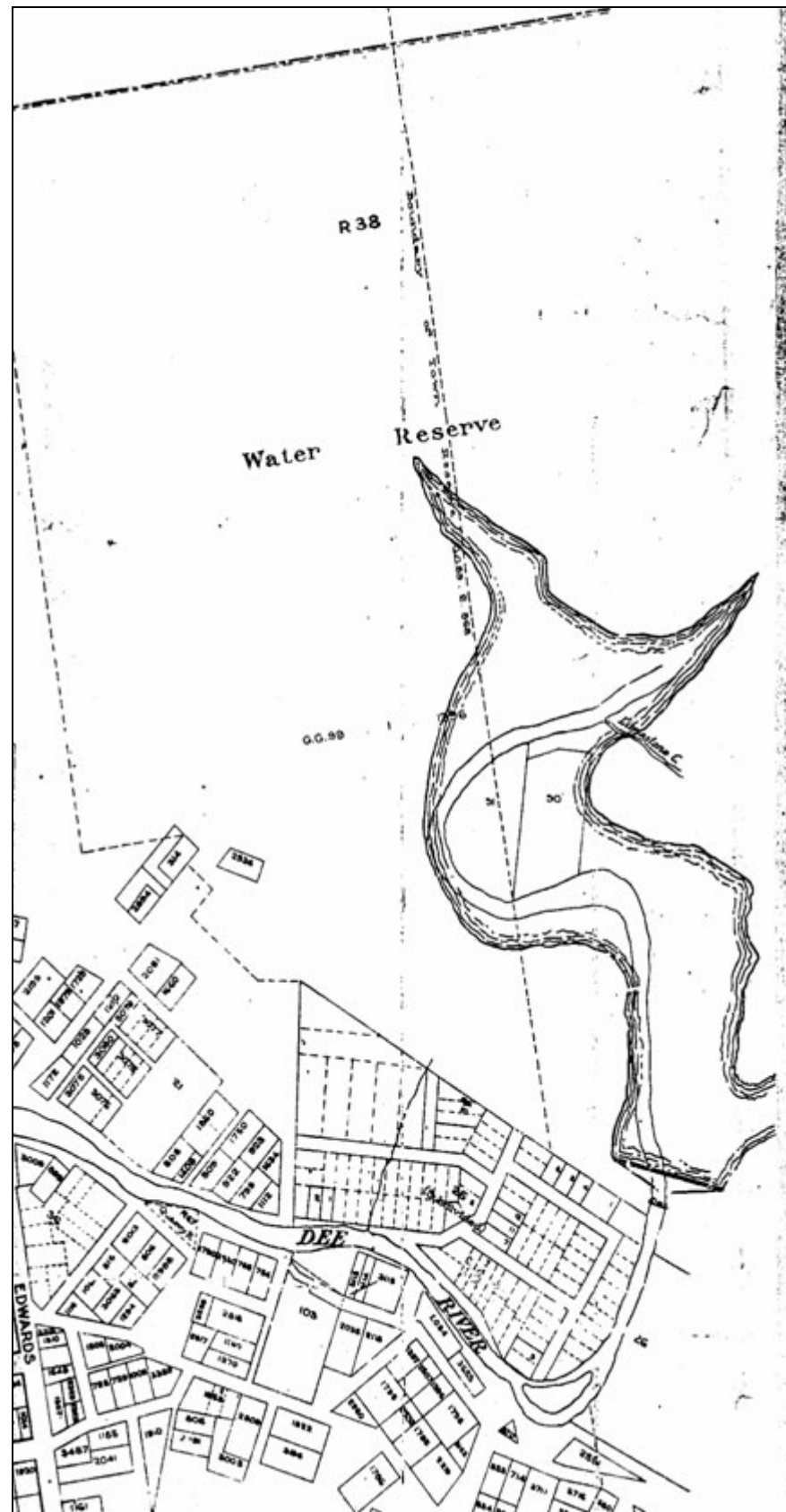
During a forty-year period of mining, the Works used and abused the Dee River and its tributaries adjacent to the mine. With construction of numerous dams over the river in less than twenty years, management was well aware of the effect on the town of deterioration or loss of waterways. Environmental change was drastic as chemical leaching made town waterways life threatening for human or animal consumption, and deadly to marine and plant life. However, the Company's annual report presented to shareholders in 1895 stated that the town water problem related to floodwaters:

The whole of the watershed above these dams is composed of steep, hilly country and is traversed in all directions by bush tracks which form ruts and channels which assist the washing away of the soil, and diverting small watercourses into new channels, with the consequence that of late years the river is always heavily changed in floods.⁶⁵

The report made no reference to flooding that swept through the valleys south of Mount Morgan, spreading pollution across river flats and posing a threat to human and animal health and future land use.

The supply of pure water in the town became critical as damming of the river continued upstream above the mine. By August 1900, Council contemplated borrowing £25 000 from government to provide electricity and reticulated water for the town. However, the scheme was doomed almost before its formulation. A number of aldermen, influenced perhaps by constituents, strongly opposed the proposal. It is argued here that without going to the people, aldermen demonstrated a misuse of local government. They decided in closed meeting that the cost was too high and that the necessary water levy to redeem the loan would not be forthcoming from residents. The

⁶⁵ MMGMC, Minutes, 18 December 1895, McDonald papers.



Map 4. This image (1914) shows No. 7 Dam completed by Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company in 1900. Location of the section of river and catchment area of the 'Big Dam', was within the east boundary of the town.

scheme supporters reminded aldermen voting on the issue that the water rates would reduce with repayment of the loan. Their rationale was unacceptable, the loan proposal collapsed and with it Council hopes for improved local infrastructure.⁶⁶ Coincidentally, the Queensland government commissioned hydraulic engineer J.B. Henderson to investigate and report on the Mount Morgan water situation. In the interests of 'furnishing pure, and only pure water' for the community, he condemned existing wells as dangerous in the extreme, and warned against the proposal for more wells to provide drinking water. Despite Henderson's advice, wells sunk revealed contaminated water. Dwellings on hills and in valleys meant that drainage and leaching of waste affected water sources, and made water unfit for human consumption. Henderson's report recommended that the vast capacity of the Company dam No. 7 then under construction and located up river towards the watershed of the Dee, should provide a town water supply for some years. Moreover, he suggested a long-term proposal for a town dam further up river from the mine's new dam. This suggestion was unacceptable, as Council were aware that residents considered water should be supplied from the new dam. However, in this Company controlled town, opinion was voiced carefully, as retribution for complaint might come swiftly. Mine workers risked dismissal and Council might find mine hierarchy opposition formidable.⁶⁷

By 1903, the Company had taken up ten 18 hectare leases, each three kilometres in length, the total extending 32 kilometres down the Dee River. In the absence of environmental legislation and at a total annual rental of £480, the Company gained the right to dispense tailings and polluted water down the natural channel of the river below the mine. Assuming a cavalier tone, management declared that 'others have the same right, [to apply for water rights] so they cannot question ours.'⁶⁸ Thus, fouling of the

⁶⁶ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)*, 3 August 1900.

⁶⁷ Under-Secretary S. Pring to Mount Morgan Municipal Council, 6 December 1900, miscellaneous inward correspondence, MMSCA. See *Telegraph*, 18 December 1889, A3914, Mitchell Library (ML), also *MMA*, 27 April 1900. Both press reported Company contempt for the town.

⁶⁸ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, 27 July 1903, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

river was entrenched. The water that flowed away many kilometres to the south was dense and green, the rocks along the riverbanks oxidised to a bright orange.

Many of the 4 000 population at the end of the nineteenth century were settled in houses they built or rented on land occupied under the *Goldfields Homestead Leases Act of 1886*, or the later, less restrictive *Mining Act of 1898*. The Acts provided for annual rent of five shillings per lease to be paid by 31 December of any year, and if not paid by the following April, the lands were forfeited unconditionally to the government and were thrown open to the first applicants. In April 1900, two hundred leases were forfeited, but a local agent for resident leaseholders made representations on their behalf to the Under Secretary of the Mines Department to waive forfeiture in favour of a fixed penalty.⁶⁹ The success of this action prompted the *Mount Morgan Argus* to lobby the Mines Department that the public interest would be served with time for payment granted on a penalty of twenty per cent per month.

Transport access to a large commercial centre was significant to any mining town, but here, the steep, mountainous ridge between the mine and Rockhampton perpetuated the sense of physical and mental barriers between the towns. The name 'Razorback'⁷⁰ that pre-dates the Mount Morgan mine was used by 1866 with proclamation of the Crocodile Creek Gold Field southwest of Rockhampton.⁷¹ Significantly, the network of diggings and shafts that became Mount Morgan and district was mapped within the vast Crocodile field and many diggers who flocked to the shortlived Crocodile rush tried their luck later along the gullies of the Dee River. They crossed the Razorback in various places and fossicked near a place that a generation later became Struck Oil, about fifteen kilometres from Mount Morgan and scene of a brief rush by the early

⁶⁹ *MMA*, 6 April 1900.

⁷⁰ B.G. Patterson, The Razorback, paper delivered at the Rockhampton and District Historical Society, 3 April 1952, p. 1, typescript, RDHS. The ubiquitous title 'Razorback' derived from the notoriously steep ridge that Governor Darling recognised officially in 1829 as 'Razorback Mountain' between Camden and Picton on the Sydney to Goulburn road, New South Wales.

⁷¹ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 289.

1900s.⁷² The most commonly used track across the ridge at this time was that which was the main access to Mount Morgan and known simply as 'Razorback'. Benjamin Patterson points out that the name related to the ridge crossed, rather than the road that crossed the ridge, and that although the 'range itself' might have been named for the 'particular Razorback',

The Razorback Range is no range at all; it is merely the northern escarpment of what denudation has left of a great earth movement traceable from Curtis Island westward. To the south, this so-called range drops away gently to Mount Morgan and the valley of the Dee River - a plateau in miniature.⁷³

The earliest means of transporting mine machinery and supplies were by sea to Rockhampton and bullock wagon to Mount Morgan. Existing historiography states that for the first ore crushing at the mine, Burns and Twigg, Rockhampton supplier and



Fig. 1. The Razorback Hotel at the foot of the range, c. 1895. Stopping place for coaches and supply wagons, the hotel had many rooms and provided accommodation and stabling. The image shows three horse teams. The large iron boiler, centre right, is en route from Rockhampton to Mount Morgan mine.

⁷² *Critic*, 11 September 1903. The quaint name of the place was coined after the performance at Mount Morgan of the musical *Struck Oil*, starring Maggie Moore.

⁷³ Patterson, *The Razorback*, pp. 2-4.

fabricator of heavy equipment, erected a ten-head stamper battery on the Dee River.⁷⁴ However, most early evidence fails to emphasise the almost incomprehensible difficulties of hauling heavy, huge equipment such as the first boiler and engine to Mount Morgan in the 1880s. B.G. Patterson provided a description of the exercise:

When the drays had conveyed their loads as far as the Table Mountain bullock teams could take them (and there were no better bullock teams in the district) [the drays were] partly unloaded, so they could be slowly hauled, half empty, up the mountain side with the equipment the men had brought with them. To do even this, the rough track had to be levelled and filled, to give a path for the vehicles. It was not possible to take the loads right to the top with one pull: the slope would not permit. Everything had to be taken up by stages: and by making several trips, the machinery was gradually brought up. The most awkward part of the consignment was the portable engine and boiler that was to drive the battery. It broke away at the first attempt to get it up, when a chain snapped. But it went up all right at the second attempt, at the end of the heaviest Manila rope that Rockhampton could supply. With blocks and tackle made fast to trees, with bullocks pulling down-hill on ropes passed through the blocks, and for other pulls with a gang of men straining at the handles of a crab winch that had come from Port Alma. It took nearly a month to negotiate the ascent.⁷⁵

Withal, the final comment of 'one month' to haul the equipment emphasised the barrier the Razorback presented between Mount Morgan and the outside. Yet, the length of time that Company geologist Patterson cited in his 1952 paper was a mythical period that served only to perpetuate an image of the town's inaccessibility. In fact, seasonal rains delayed transport of the massive boiler in the 1880s, just as delays were anticipated on any tracks in the Wet season. The boiler remained at the Burns and Twigg factory in Rockhampton until the track to Mount Morgan was passable, when the boiler arrived in Mount Morgan within a week.⁷⁶

Two coaches weekly, and Scott's transport service, reliable and frequent, plied between Rockhampton and Mount Morgan. Scott also established at Razorback and ran four ten-horse teams, each making five trips per fortnight from Rockhampton, up and over the Razorback and return. An associated enterprise at the foot of the range was a

⁷⁴ Kerr, *Mt. Morgan gold, copper and oil*, p. 26.

⁷⁵ B.G. Patterson, *The Razorback*, pp. 3, 4.

⁷⁶ Cunningham, *Mine horses*, p. 4.

hotel of the same name that flourished during the coach and wagon era. Drays pulled from four to six tons at an average cartage price of £3. 10s. per ton.⁷⁷ In relative terms, this was equal to a labourer's wages for a fortnight. William Pattison, MLA (Rockhampton), a Company shareholder and director, replying to a query at a meeting in 1888 on the cost of Company cartage declared that only one carrier in the district was equal to the task:

Mr. Scott is paid £3 per ton, but he does the work in a thoroughly satisfactory way - as many as 30 or 40 horses ... whatever the emergency, whether wet or dry, weekday or Sunday, he has never been an hour behind time. That, with a Company as large as ours, entitles him to some consideration' (Applause).⁷⁸

Although a rail connection from Kabra to Mount Morgan was mooted by 1885, the government refused to accept the financial responsibility for rail extension and the matter lapsed until after formation of the Company. At an Ordinary General Meeting in December 1889, shareholder Albert J. Callan, MLA, (Rockhampton) addressed the railway issue. He asserted that before the vote in the House, Pattison declared that the large shareholders were prepared to build the line to Mount Morgan, and if they were not, he was.⁷⁹ Ongoing argument concerned cost, and the covert capitalistic power that was always just below the Company's espoused paternalistic image was made public in the press report of statements by the mine superintendent J. Wesley Hall that:

he did not want a government survey. They did not want the line to cost £140,000. £80 000 and possibly less would be sufficient to build a line for their purposes. There was no necessity to go to the expense the Government[sic] proposed to build a line to a place like Mount Morgan, making it as if it were to last forever. (Hear, Hear).⁸⁰

Given that the press reported Hall accurately, the statement confirmed his interest in fiscal return from gold and the need to appease shareholders. His seeming conviction that Mount Morgan was a stereotype of other mines and thus should expect a limited

⁷⁷ Alec Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Brisbane, 1888, p. 41.

⁷⁸ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, vol. 1, 1888, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

⁷⁹ MMGMC, Minutes, 17 December 1889, D15/271.2, CC/CQU.

⁸⁰ *Telegraph*, 18 December 1889, A3914, Mitchell Library (ML).

life reflected a more ominous lack of concern for the future of mine employees and others who had established the town. More interesting to management and the board were annual carriage costs that amounted to £3 541 by 1892. The board informed shareholders flatly:

your Company has spent £2 370 in making and keeping in repair the road from the foot of the Razorback to Mount Morgan, yet our beneficent government, which has drawn so much from us, when petitioned by the carriers and settlers in the district to open a new road, refused to take any action unless the whole cost was guaranteed by the Company.⁸¹

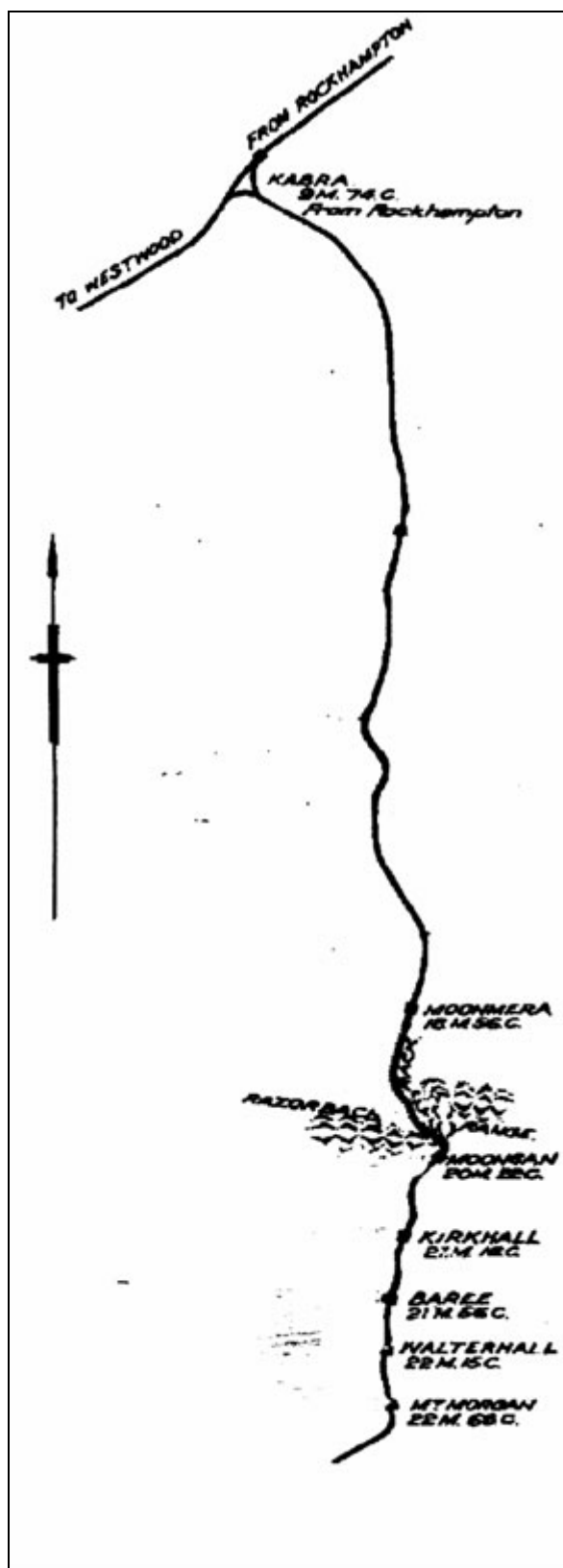
Despite four surveys, the railway to Mount Morgan was not completed until 1898. Kabra was fifteen kilometres from Rockhampton on the western railway and construction of the Mount Morgan line extended for sixteen kilometres from Kabra to Moonmera at the base of the Razorback. The section from Moonmera to Moongan at the top of the range rose one hundred and thirty metres over a distance of less than two kilometres. As the line extended up and over the Razorback, an Abt rack rail engine⁸² was coupled to the rear of the train to ascend the Range, and to the front of the train for the descent. The rack engine operated by means of a special cogged section between the wheels to engage a ratchet system between the rails, so affording train and passenger safety on the steep grade.⁸³ Doubtless the rail journey was marginally more comfortable, but in terms of time, the forty kilometre one way trip to Rockhampton meant two hours by rail, not including the engine changes at Moongan, Moonmera and Kabra.

The line that offered closer access to Rockhampton and the south also changed early spatial perceptions in terms of transport in and about Mount Morgan. The issue of suburban stations at Mount Morgan is addressed in chapter two, but it should be pointed

⁸¹ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, vol. 7, 1892, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

⁸² *MB*, 6 March 1957, p. 11; John Kerr, *Triumph of the narrow gauge*, Brisbane, 1990, p. 93; The rack railway system was unique in Queensland and similar to the installation at Mt. Lyell mine in south-west Tasmania (1892).

⁸³ Lou Rae, The Abt Railway, Discussion Paper, Australian Mining History Conference, Hobart, 29 September-1 October 1999, p. 2, typescript.



Map. 5 Kabra to Mount Morgan railway, opened 1898, with stations at Moonmera and Moongan.

out here that residents who lived along the line took the train to work in a style similar to suburban rail. Yet, although mine hierarchy and town bourgeoisie travelled for business or leisure, the advance in technology for Mount Morgan transport and communication did not mean that many working-class employees of the town travelled extensively elsewhere. Large families and limited funds meant that train travel to Rockhampton or the Central Queensland coast was a rare treat for most of the labour force.

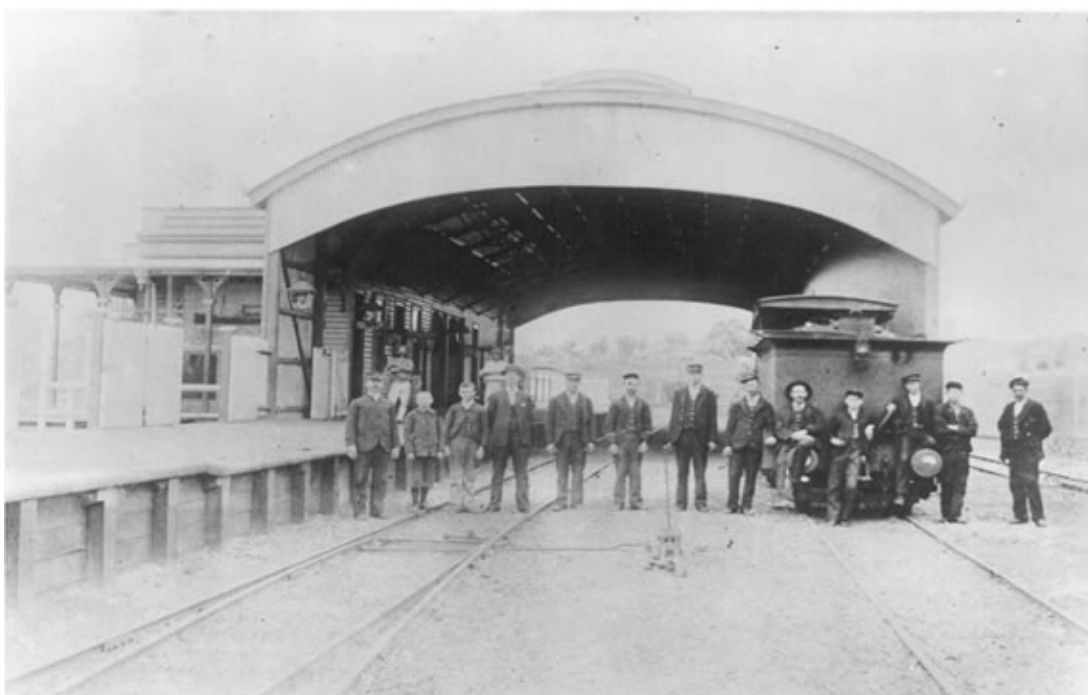
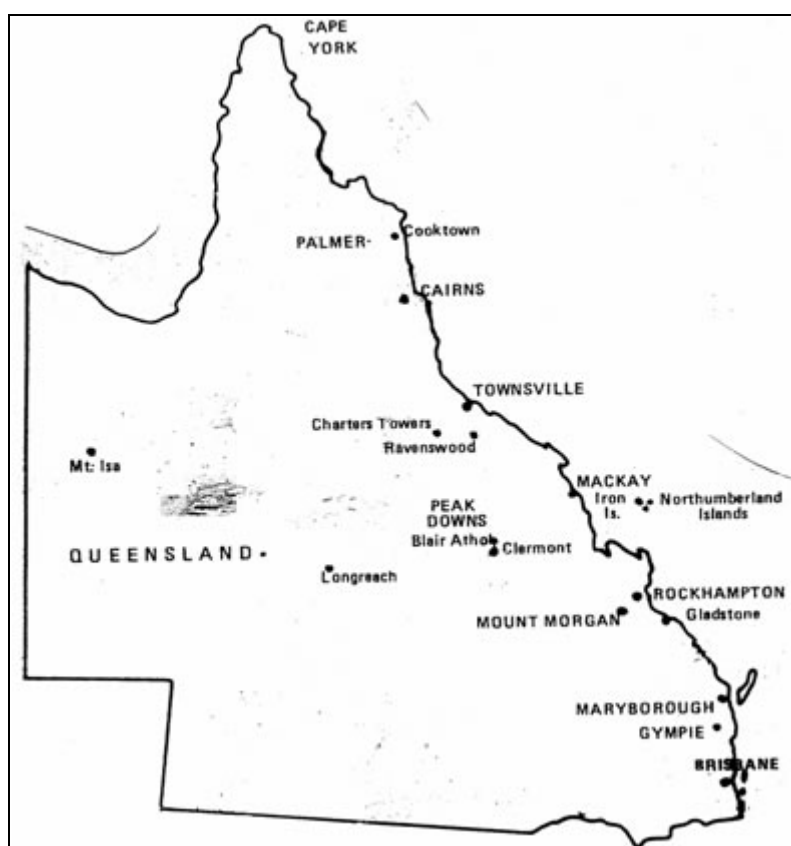


Fig. 2. Mount Morgan railway station and staff, c.1911. Stationmaster wears watch chain, tie and wing collar, porters in hard caps, maintenance workers in soft hats and caps, railway lad in knickerbockers. Note hand operated line switch in the foreground.

The demise or survival of a mining town was dependent on any one of a number of influences: the extent of infrastructure and the services offered, local productivity other than mining, town access to surrounding productive areas, and proximity to a large town or city.⁸⁴ Mount Morgan prevailed in sharp contrast to the comparatively rapid decline of early, undercapitalised mines in remote, inhospitable and inaccessible

⁸⁴ Paull, *Walhalla*, p. 105; Don Roderick, Ravenswood, p. 62.

locations without satisfactory access to rail or port. Rockhampton, encircled by gazetted gold fields and already enmeshed for thirty years in the dreams and drama of gold-seekers, was by the 1880s the second largest town in the Colony, and the largest port north of Brisbane. The town was confident of the perceived economic benefits from the supply of goods and services to Mount Morgan. The Company's need for a shipping port influenced not only transport to and from the mine and town but also wharfage and port duties charged at Rockhampton.



Map 6. Queensland outline shows major mining areas and the close proximity of Mount Morgan to Rockhampton.

A competitive mentality between the two towns became endemic. Perhaps this was because opinions before 1900 suggested that, in providing the port town with substantial trading benefits, Mount Morgan had saved Rockhampton from 'a slow death' from drought and economic depression. In counterpoint, Rockhamptonites perceived

the initially nomadic and independent Mount Morgan population as lesser beings.⁸⁵ Aspects of the tensions between the towns are addressed in chapter two.

Whilst the use of space at Mount Morgan reflected change with the ebb and flow of population, technological advance, and encroachment of lands by mine operations, the town showed scant evidence of material progress or local government infrastructure. The importance of the mine to the colonial and national economy was not apparent in the town, despite Company claims of benefits to the working-class population from the success of the mine. With resignation rather than concern for environmental damage, changing use of space in the town and environs, and disadvantaged town resources, residents from Red Hill to Moongan took stoic pride in their space and community that essentially reflected a 'man's town'.

⁸⁵ Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, pp. 17, 34, 41.

An abiding sense of place emerged with the construction and maintenance of domestic buildings, surrounds that provided physical space, and from entrenched social commitment, activity and status. For example, residents' perception of their space: at work, home and leisure might have been influenced by their reaction to hierarchical attitudes and patterns of wealth recognised as the agents of class structure. The mental mapping of Mount Morgan neighbourhoods derives from historical attitudes to urban space and the realities of empirical research, oral history and photographic memorabilia. These reveal the interaction of domestic experience, the workplace, response to public space, order, pursuit of leisure and the influence of local and outside communication.⁴

Mount Morgan town development occurred within the social and economic omnipresence of Rockhampton and contrasted with the gold town of Gympie north of Brisbane and Charters Towers west of Townsville. Founded in the 1860s, Gympie continued throughout as a place where the absence of monopoly by a single mining company was significant to the success of local industry and enterprise.⁵ Mount Morgan was different also to Charters Towers, located 130 kilometres from Townsville, and a town of separate ventures of capital investment and gold reward. As the commercial centre for an array of mining operations that extended from the town through nearby settlements, Charters Towers inspired the pseudonym, 'The World'.⁶

At Mount Morgan, the predominantly male population that increased tenfold within a decade comprised mostly waged miners at the Company operation. Others worked individual or group claims in the surrounding ranges, where self-employed or mine employees were timbergetters. By 1900, however, Mount Morgan exhibited an

⁴ Mike Savage, 'Urban history and social class: two paradigms', *Urban History*, vol. 20, part 1, April 1993, p. 74-77.

⁵ June Stoodley, *The Queensland gold miner in the nineteenth century: his influence and interests*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1968.

⁶ Diane Menghetti, *Charters Towers*, PhD thesis, James Cook University, 1984.

urban character, when 'service class'⁷ merchants or professionals were the providers who employed a substantial workforce.

The plethora of accommodation styles was witness to the number of single males at Mount Morgan, whether they became settled or remained 'urban nomads'.⁸ Many from throughout central and western Queensland were labourers whose casual employment and mobility dictated a transient lifestyle. They pitched camps and many lived dormitory style in tents or a canvas 'boarding house' and took meals at a tent kitchen nearby.⁹ Mine management granted permission for a boarding house to be erected on mine land in 1885¹⁰ and Mrs. Burke's boarding house built on Company land was directly across the river opposite the mine. The first town bakery was nearby and adjacent to McLaughlin's butchery opposite the mine gates.¹¹ This location, known unofficially as Burke's Flat, was space that by the 1900s disappeared beneath mine tailings. The place faded from living memory until anonymity shrouded knowledge of its ignominious origins and precise location. Boarding houses proliferated in the developing urban landscape until up to nine establishments might operate simultaneously, the majority conducted by women. As frequently as they opened, others tended to close, for reasons perhaps relating to standard of residence, board and hygiene, or the attitude of the proprietor. In any event, despite oral recollections of the location of early boarding houses - for which registration was not required – no record seems extant of their operations or, indeed, their existence.

Establishment of permanent dwellings brought a building industry, owner builders and much construction for rental. Timber for commercial and domestic building was cut in increasing quantity and hauled from the surrounding district, adding to the scarring of the physical landscape by the denuding of native timbers for construction at

⁷ Mike Savage, 'Urban history and social class', p. 70.

⁸ Graeme Davison, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*: Melbourne, 1978, pp. 176, 177. Davison's term 'urban nomads' is used here to confirm the assertion in chapter one that Mount Morgan was predominantly a single industry town of urban development.

⁹ Mount Morgan Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mount Morgan (MMCPS), Deposition Book, 14 April 1890, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

¹⁰ M.A. Parker to T. Hall, 27 July 1885, D15/915.19, CC/CQU.

¹¹ Nessie Chardon and F.L. Golding (eds.), *Centenary of the town of Mount Morgan 1882-1982*, Rockhampton, 1982, p. 23.

the mine. No suggestion arose that timber cutters should work at a distance from the town, rather the nearest and thus the cheapest suitable hardwood - ironbark - was the preferred material and, ironically, the best for building purposes. In the early years, this timber proliferated in ridges of country extending in an arc around the area south of the town and within about five kilometres of the mine. A compulsory license was required for all logging and unlicensed cutters faced fines if they were apprehended cutting or hauling timber. Few could afford to pay fines for this poorly paid work and continued to cut timber at secret locations in the bush. A family contracted by the mine to cut hardwood might be forced to change to brigalow logging in the area available to them; but such change became a mining issue that brought a furore of protest. Miners and others declared that brigalow was unsuitable for mine timbering, a circumstance to be explored in chapter six.

Mount Morgan was a timber town, but this followed canvas, canvas and bark, timber and bark, timber and iron. Changes to dwelling style and size at Mount Morgan heralded the altered state of domestic space. The tent – most mobile of manufactured accommodation - was unsubstantial but dictated early communal living within the family context. Most permanent dwellings at first were the size of a tent, and even huts built later tended to retain the rectangular shape but were larger, measuring perhaps ten feet by twelve feet. In the transition from canvas to timber change in size and style followed long-standing tradition in colonial settlement. Peter Bell's comprehensive analysis of architecture in Queensland mining towns describes miners' cottages as directly influenced by styles and materials from the south. With a predominance of English miners, houses followed the style of earlier colonial mining towns. However, Bell suggests also that a dwelling of the 1890s known later in Queensland as a 'high house' offered a variety of advantages including coolness above and shaded space beneath.¹² Mount Morgan, a place of hills and valleys, had few early dwellings that were on high stumps. Over time, houses were raised, but many were built into hillsides with direct

¹² Peter Bell, *Timber and iron, houses in North Queensland mining settlements 1861-1920*, St. Lucia, 1984, pp. 60, 68, 93.

access at ground level at front or rear and with a flight of external stairs of whatever number required for access to the floor level.¹³ Miners' houses, as elsewhere, were timber with two or four rooms and, by the time of Mount Morgan development, included front verandahs that were primarily for purposes of shelter in the sub-tropical climate. Yet, these were social spaces and at times places of additional accommodation.¹⁴ Increased family size brought house extensions, usually to the rear elevation. Working-class owners customarily made the alterations with previously used material.¹⁵



Fig. 3. Miner's family and cottage, note corrugated iron wall, lattice screen and in the ubiquitous style of the 1890s verandah railings of this design adorned houses, residences, hotels and the large office building at the mine.

After almost twenty years of town settlement, rental housing was entrenched. In one week of June 1900, thirteen houses were available for rent. These ranged in size and weekly rental from a two-roomed cottage at 4s, nine four-roomed cottages 8s, a dwelling of five rooms for 9s, a residence of six rooms for 10s and at 12s, a 'commodious dwelling suitable for a boarding house'.¹⁶ Sale prices for houses varied more: a fenced, four

¹³ Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment 1788-1980*, Sydney, p. 114.

¹⁴ Edith Neish and Lorna McDonald, *Sketches of old Rockhampton*, St. Lucia, 1981, p. 12. The gendered use of domestic space is discussed in Chapter Eight of this thesis.

¹⁵ Colin Heberlein, interview with the author, 21 October 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

¹⁶ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)*, 9 February 1902.

roomed cottage at Chelmer Hill in town 'faithfully built and containing every convenience...in a portion of the borough that is the best built and neatest looking suburb' was priced at £125. Conversely, a six roomed house with stove, tank and fence and located on a flat site in the older part of town was priced at £75.¹⁷ The difference confirms the preference for residence on hillsides at a distance from the mine and the polluted river.

Few buildings in the town were brick or stone. The local government building in Hall Street was a timber structure that included the small, and only, Town Hall, its only claim to prestige a tower that in the early 1900s boasted both clock and bell. Council hopes for new offices in 1897 were dashed when finance granted provided only for alterations to incorporate secure storage of Council records.¹⁸ The temporary centre of law and order at Mount Morgan included a timber courthouse, police station and lockup in Morgan Street, but in 1897, A.J. Callan, MLA and Company shareholder, confirmed that a sum of £2 000 was on the Estimates for a new Court House. By 1903, with a change of precinct to the police reserve alongside the Council chambers, a brick courthouse and police station in impressive style had a facade unequalled in the town. However, timber remained the major building material when structures of two storeys and balconies became an option in the town, such places overshadowing the generally simple domestic architecture.

¹⁷ *MMA*, 2 June 1900.

¹⁸ *MB*, 8 July 1897.

The town simply became, rather than evolving gradually. Formation of the Company in 1886 ensured the status of mine hierarchy, professional appointment, and private enterprise. Local perceptions of class¹⁹ also became evident in the size and quality of buildings. For example, the Company built the general office, Works offices and sheds, in timber and brick. However, by 1889, 'three substantial houses' were built on the mountainside of the mine freehold. These residences for the manager of the mine and two senior staff were of a standard that 'would not be out of place in the suburbs of the metropolis'.²⁰ Company residences that demonstrated the social division between mine hierarchy and employees increased in number as the mine developed. Moreover, the mountainside 'Range' became the traditional residential area for upper management consolidating a local class distinction based on professional and thus, social status.

The general manager's residence built on the slope overlooking the mine was high-blocked, a large, timber house with iron roof and 'verandahs everywhere'. The main building was 49 feet by 37 feet, comprising six rooms, bathroom and hall seven feet wide. The rambling garden included a croquet lawn. An attached wing built in 1904 was 44 feet long, the interior space providing a living room and a billiard room measuring 27 feet by 23 feet. Later, a wide timber-louvred verandah of the residence was converted to a 'ballroom'.²¹

Whilst earlier titles of the most senior officer at the mine included 'superintendent', 'mine supervisor' or 'mine manager', George Anderson Richard was the first to bear the title 'general manager' (1904-1912). Richard came to Mount Morgan from Ballarat during the years of the mining syndicate (1882-1886). He was qualified to operate stationary engines, and was the mine chlorinator and later metallurgist for the Company formed by 1900. He was a chronic insomniac whose affliction was severe by 1906. Local director and shareholder R.S. Archer recommended the construction of a

¹⁹ Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 117.

²⁰ Alec Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Rockhampton, 1889, p. 4.

²¹ *Evening News*, 15 June 1927.

Company residence 'out at the Big Dam' or elsewhere away from the Works 'where his [Richard's] sleep would not be disturbed'.²² However, the general manager's residence - known as the 'Big House' after construction for J. Wesley Hall, first 'supervisor' of the mine - remained on the Range.²³ Benjamin Magnus, foundation manager of the Electrolytic Zinc and Smelting Company Pty. Ltd. in 1909, succeeded George Richard as general manager at Mount Morgan in 1912. Magnus arrived to find his residence an old 'Queenslander' that he perceived was a poor substitute and marked a lower status than the large brick villa of nine rooms built to his requirements at Port Kembla in 1908.²⁴

Class formation polarised the population. Local wage earners and mine workers were socially removed from mine upper management and town petty bourgeoisie. Moreover, 'workers' self-perception did not reflect aspirations to a higher class:

We always considered the people on the Range, up around the mine were the upper crust. They were the mine houses, the mine manager, the mill manager. They were nice people, but we considered they were out of reach...we were the working class. We worked for a living and just enjoyed life.²⁵

However, members of senior staff and upper management at the mine were also employees and few were on high salaries.²⁶ Notwithstanding, the local perception of class was based on the status of authority as much as income. The majority of residents acknowledged the town as working class, negating the efforts of town employers whose commercial ventures spurred aspirations for upward mobility to the status of professionals and upper management. For example, town photographer Jens Hansen Lundager also worked on a part time basis as the official mine photographer.²⁷ As such,

²² R.S. Archer to R.G. Casey, 25 November 1906, Letter Book 1904-1912, K1014, Mitchell Library (ML).

²³ Profiles of G.A. Richard and B. Magnus are included in chapter six.

²⁴ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

²⁵ Elaine Millers, interview with the author, 10 December 1992, MMOH.

²⁶ MMGMC, Salaries of mine officials, 1912-1928, M14/1581, CC/CQU.

²⁷ Grahame Griffin, 'J.H. Lundager, Mount Morgan politician and photographer: company hack or subtle subversive?', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 34, September 1992, pp. 16, 17.

he was an employee of the Company in addition to his photographic enterprise and ownership of the *Mount Morgan Argus*. His studio and newsagency was a town centre for latest news and his radical journalism stimulated public response and comment. However, when Lundager marketed postcards of the mine and town for his own enterprise, he exemplified the individual diversity of ideology and attitude within a small town milieu.

By comparison, the authority and influence of the Company on town life and urban growth was a major element in Mount Morgan existence. In the name of gold and the millions the mine generated, shareholders, government officials and visitors spent brief times only at Mount Morgan and ignored the poor living conditions in the town. It was of scant account to short term visitors that the town infrastructure for hygiene and sanitation was minimal, that fallout from the mine shrouded the place and that life was lived to the deafening, perpetual thumping of the stampers.

The prosperity of the mine was not the reward of miners or other residents. Company shareholders and management cultivated the socially connected and financially privileged. At Rockhampton, a substantial legacy from the ironstone mountain was a wealth of marvellous architecture financed from the stream of gold that flowed away to the south and overseas. However, Mount Morgan's short lived claim to architectural splendour was Carlton House, the Company's grand residence built in the early 1890s and which graced the town until 1929. Built on Company land and in Queensland style, the place was set on a rise on the town side of the river and constructed on one-metre high brick piers. The floor space encompassed six thousand square feet, the double-hipped iron roof extending over internal timber walls with exposed external studs and bracing. Measuring eighty-two feet by forty-two feet, Carlton House had nine rooms, a hallway seven feet wide, brick chimney and fireplaces. A ten feet wide verandah roofed with bull-nosed iron surrounded the building and included a verandah lounge twenty-one feet by ten feet. A billiard room was between the main building and the two bathrooms,

lavatory, linen room, also storeroom and semi-detached kitchen. The caretaker's quarters of several rooms had a verandah seven feet wide to one side and back. Timber stands held six tanks, each of one thousand gallons capacity. In the rear yard was a timber and iron washhouse.²⁸

The verandah balustrades were of decorative cast-iron and wide concrete steps swept down to terraces and landscaped gardens that local myth claimed were designed in France by Anthelme Thozet, a professional botanist at Rockhampton in the 1860s. However, Thozet's death at fifty-two years in 1878²⁹ indicates that he was deceased twenty years prior to construction of Carlton House. Notwithstanding, the fenced gardens soon displayed trees and shrubbery of exotics and native species and a splendid rose garden. Pathways curved between lawns, fountain, fishpond, fernery and a glass house whilst a carriageway from the stables and coach house extended to the house and drive and town beyond.

Before the railway connection between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton, travel required an overnight stay after a rough, prolonged journey by rail and coach. Carlton House was the Mecca for Company guests who were entertained in a style reminiscent of a country seat or planter's mansion. Directors and their wives visiting from the south were guests at the residence where meetings and functions were the nature of events during their stay.³⁰ A succession of officials, dignitaries and vice-regal representatives included the chairman and shareholders of the Company, Sir Samuel Griffith during his periods as colonial secretary and later premier of Queensland, Bishop Halford of the Rockhampton Anglican Diocese, state governor Lord Chelmsford, and governor-general Lord Stonehaven.³¹ However, the protocols of class dictated the enjoyment of comfort

²⁸ Information provided by Ray F. Boyle, private papers, 30 August 2000. Boyle's career path was as engineer at the mine, and chief engineer at final closure of Mount Morgan Limited, 1992.

²⁹ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 404, 406.

³⁰ Carlton House, typescript, n.d., Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

³¹ *Critic*, 3 July 1907, 19 July 1907.

and service at Carlton House. When vice-regal parties and other dignitaries were entertained, less important visitors to the Company at the same time were 'put up' at a Mount Morgan hotel.³²



Fig. 4. Carlton House, c.1910, the pride of Mount Morgan town, and Company residence for the exclusive use of visiting directors, shareholders and VIP officials.

The gardens shrouding the house at ground level provided privacy for guests at the garden parties that became a part of the Mount Morgan ethos. However, Carlton House was in the view of workers on the mountainside across the river, and from cottages high on the town hills. It was maintained and served by employees who were included on the mine payroll: carpenters, gardeners, female domestics, driver, and a caretaker who also served as a steward.³³ Yet an anomaly in class distinction existed whereby, in their gritty, sepia toned lives, the working-class population displayed an attitude of pride in Carlton House and its display of wealth. Theirs was the pride of actors in performance that brought *their* 'production' of gold to symbolise Mount Morgan. Here they reaped the psychological reward of a sense of shared status with the Company that financed the

³² Archer to R.G. Casey, 24 November 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

³³ Chardon, Golding (eds.), *Centenary of Mount Morgan*, p. 42.

mine. As an urban icon at Mount Morgan, the place perpetuated an image of refinement and culture. Gradually, social change that brought altered attitudes and language might reflect – cautiously - a desire for social justice. However, the communal claim to the abstract touch of gold and the concrete 'presence' of a house that was the town flagship remained with those who identified with Mount Morgan, a town that ignored any opportunity for a cause célèbre to denounce the Carlton House ethic of affluence.

The days of lavish entertainment at Carlton House ended by 1912, with lower market prices and falling profits that required economy by degree essential for mine progress. Coincidentally, this time saw the departure of general manager Richard, the appointment of Benjamin Magnus as general manager and Robert Stubbs Archer as managing director. In his allegiance to the executive of the Melbourne board, Archer effected economies throughout Company holdings including the mine and satellite operations at Marmor and Many Peaks. He wrote to director R.G. Casey:

Carlton House is cut down fairly fine. No carriage and pair at the disposal of employees, no cigars, wine or other luxuries. Good plain food which I hope you and Mr. [Kelso] King will appreciate on your visit.³⁴

With closure of the mine and Company liquidation in 1927, directors Kelso King and J. Niall sold Carlton House to the Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton in 1929, for the 'gift' sum of £400. However, removal and re-erection at St. Faith's Anglican Girls' School, Yeppoon, was closer to £4 000.³⁵ Notwithstanding its heritage of mobility, the house moved into Central Queensland folklore.

As with the status of local residents, the townscape was polarised. Town shops were timber, and some were substantial, if simple. A butcher shop measuring 30 feet by 20 feet extended to the fence line of its land and 14 feet from the butcher's cottage at the rear. Front door and display space extended 15 feet across the frontage to River Street, with high walls to the upper roof and with a skillion verandah to the front. Three shops

³⁴ Archer to Casey, 17 May 1912, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

³⁵ A.A. Fellows, *Full time*, Rockhampton, 1967, p. 125, 126.

at the corner of East and Morgan Street had 12 feet high walls in the ubiquitous internal cladding style, ceilings were timber and roofs were galvanised iron. A scant six inch wide space separated each shop, whilst four inch by four inch posts to a height of 10 feet supported a skillion iron verandah that extended across the three shop fronts.³⁶

Some commercial buildings in the town grid were surprisingly large. A bakehouse built in 1909 at the end of Campion Street and adjacent to existing shops was 40 feet deep, one shop was 28 feet wide with double front windows, and one large store with frontage to two streets had a wide corner entrance. Details of shop interiors at Mount Morgan's mostly ground level stores are scant. However, more than one 'emporium' of the 1900s had a central, platformed area for the exchange of all monies, and for supervision of shop staff. The central area was enclosed with half walls and accessed by several steps. Long counters fronted stock displays along the side and rear walls of the store and sales dockets and cash placed in small canisters were catapulted by a system of spring-driven wires from wall fixtures behind the counters to the central register.³⁷

As the clustering style of earliest development faded, some relocated at a substantial distance from their place of work, exhibiting social attitudes in terms of residential status and lifestyle. Yet every resident faced the difficulties of settlement and threat to health in a developing town. Reasonable road access to any town area was at a premium, and relocation was of necessity only several kilometres at most for those who hoped for unpolluted air. In fact, few escaped the all-pervading, choking fumes of the chlorination works and later, the foul smell of sulphur from the copper smelters. This physically dangerous atmosphere, together with shrill and regular whistle blasts, ensured that residents were ever conscious of and affected by the mine.

³⁶ W.B. Leighton to Mount Morgan Town Council (Council), 14 December 1909, Inward Correspondence, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives (MMSCA).

³⁷ Albert Rowe, interview with the author, 16 October 1992, MMOH. At Charters Towers in the 1980s, an elevated central office and overhead system for the exchange of monies continued to operate at a large emporium.

Following a survey for roads in Mount Morgan, the Office of the Surveyor General ordered the Borough Council to bear the additional expense of all materials and skilled labour for street and corner construction to allow pathways twelve feet wide.³⁸ Within the limited finances of Council, the Works Committee commanded the highest budget to construct and maintain 'roads' and bridges.³⁹ In the town, thoroughfares were simply tracks, gouged and rutted by constant horse traffic and the narrow, steel rimmed wheels of loaded wagons and drays. An example of this was the destruction of roads by pairs of



Fig. 5. Tipperary Point and Tipperary Flat, looking west, background, Red Hill, c.1905. Note devastated Dee River, minimal flow, the result of seven dams built for the mine.

semi-draft horses pulling heavy sanitary carts – vehicles indicative of urbanisation - that made tracks untrafficable quagmires, particularly in Mount Morgan's sub-tropical Wet.⁴⁰ Accidents with horse vehicles proliferated not only on outside tracks, but in town also. Local reaction to the problem was evident in Council elections when in 1900, eighty-

³⁸ Surveyor General's Office, Brisbane, to Council, 27 February 1897, Inward Correspondence, MMSCA.

³⁹ Roads were not macadamised or bitumened at Mount Morgan, nor, indeed, were most of the roads and streets in regional Queensland until after 1945.

⁴⁰ Council, Sanitary and Health Committee (S&HC), Minutes, 16 May 1911, 4 November 1919, MMSCA.

five signatories supported a Labor sympathiser's nomination for candidature. Immediately upon his election to Council, many of his voters lobbied the new alderman to have the neglected and dangerous Cemetery Road south of the town suitably repaired, 'so that sorrowing relatives would not be in peril when following their dead to the graveside'.⁴¹



Fig. 6. Mount Morgan, south west of the town towards Horse Creek, c. 1910. Cemetery, centre left; Jubilee Hill, right centre.

Local government authorities in some larger towns kept time by means of a public clock or whistle and at Rockhampton, 'the one o'clock gun' operated until 1894.⁴² At Mount Morgan, apart from the Town Hall clock, the town functioned to the system of time management at the mine. Two 'whistles' operated, one at the Top Works on the mountain, the other at the chlorination Works at the base level. Whistle blasts indicated the beginning and end of eight-hour shifts at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Heralding the midnight shift was a steam ship's horn, salvaged from the *S.S. Geelong* wrecked on the Queensland coast.⁴³ It is arguable that the mine operated to its own time, and the town to the accuracy or otherwise of mine time. The early whistles and the hooter that

⁴¹ Use of the term 'Labour' continued in Queensland, although by 1919, 'Labor' became the official title of the party and the term for party politics. See also *MMA*, 6 April 1900.

⁴² McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 149.

⁴³ William Dick, *A mountain of gold*, Brisbane, 1889, p. 8.

regulated life at Mount Morgan also symbolised the concerns of a community in irregular or prolonged blasts that warned of war, mine disaster, and fire, or heralded celebrations of peace and remembrance. By 1919, a steam hooter installed to define shift changes superimposed its blast on time signals at the mine and in town. Fabricated at the mine's foundry, the hooter was a steam operated siren which, local lore claims, was so powerful that when a southwesterly was blowing, the hooter might be heard at Rockhampton.⁴⁴

In terms of Davison's concept of the time-thrift of 'respectable Australian immigrants', the parameters of time that impacted on Mount Morgan townspeople lent a rhythm to everyday life and its discipline of obedience through punctuality. Yet for many adults, their entrenched ethic of routine work, progress and profit scarcely demanded a clock to remind them of the value of the hours.⁴⁵ The discipline of time directed temporal and spiritual life - even the small but resonant bell that a Sister of



Fig. 7. Mount Morgan Town Hall, c. 1911. Timber building, shows clock tower with 'Mafeking Bell' in belfry above. Hall Street frontage has picket fence and hitching rail.

⁴⁴ *MB*, 36 May 1993.

⁴⁵ Graeme Davison, *The unforgiving minute: how Australia learned to tell the time*, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 29.

Mercy rang at the Catholic school for the noon incantation of the Angelus was the midday 'clock' for neighbouring residents. Children at the nearby government schools might hear the bell, but all at the secular school acknowledged their own bell with its doctrine of punctuality whilst they were educated within hearing or sight of public or private timepieces. By 1900, the 'Mafeking Bell' that was erected in a tower at the Council Chambers tolled on significant public occasions and in the 1920s was the fire bell for a town without a brigade.⁴⁶ The bell, cast before the mine was a copper producer, bore an inscription that it was cast at the mine from pennies donated by town school children to honour the relief of Mafeking.⁴⁷

The prevalence of disease in any settlement, new or old, might be endemic. In Brisbane,⁴⁸ where early settlement areas were the locations of the poor by the 1890s, the threat to public health continued through the 1920s. Mount Morgan, settled some fifty years after Brisbane, experienced typically slow progress towards public health and sanitation, whilst at Rockhampton, infrastructure remained as primitive as elsewhere, for example, the old, inner locations and burgeoning suburbs of Melbourne,⁴⁹ where local infrastructure for roads and sanitation was no better than in most regional towns. The Brisbane - Gympie relationship demonstrated a polarity of existence. Although many working class wage-earners in Brisbane experienced the continued dreadful conditions of early settlement,⁵⁰ at Gympie, a town of traders and local investors in individual mining ventures, the benefits of gold returns were manifested in local development, infrastructure and services that reflected pride in the townscape and environment. During a Queensland tour in the 1890s, Irish parliamentarian Michael Davitt declared that Gympie presented:

⁴⁶ *MMC*, 2 November 1900. Suggested initially as the 'Pretoria Bell' and identified later as the 'Mafeking Bell'. Copper production commenced at the mine in 1903.

⁴⁷ *A history of scouting at Mount Morgan 1908-1982*, Rockhampton, n.d, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 118.

⁴⁹ Davison, *Marvellous Melbourne*, p. 233.

⁵⁰ Michael Davitt, *Life and progression in Australia*, London, 1898, p. 249, also cited in Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland, perspectives on a frontier society*, Brisbane, 1996, p. 139.

a captivating aspect, with its elevated and clean streets and well-built houses...a large proportion of the capital invested in Gympie mines is of local enterprise, and this accounts for the comparatively prosperous look of the town....the improved character of streets and dwellings.⁵¹

By comparison, Mount Morgan was a place where gold retrieved by a monopolist employer passed by and away from the town.⁵² Local commerce and residential development were fluid, whilst the barely evident infrastructure implemented by the recently formed Borough Council functioned on its limited advance from the public purse. Davitt's unashamedly caustic comments on Mount Morgan were graphic. He deplored that, in single company employment, miners worked eight hour shifts for 7s. 6d., and that the town exhibited an air of subservience he had not noticed anywhere else in the colonies. Furthermore, the place was

terribly disappointing when you get there in everything except its famed ten acres...the most backward in a municipal and sanitary sense I have seen in any part of Australia. The 'streets' are mere muddy tracks...wooden causeways with gaping holes here and there are lifted on supports so as to give some facility for walking...houses and shanties...perched anywhere, without apparent sense or rhythm.⁵³

Frequent local outcry and complaints at the escalation of illness and disease brought matters of sanitation and public health to the Council chamber, where the issues tended to revolve around the problem of cost. Geoffrey Bolton points out that remedial action to overcome environmental hazards was delayed just so long as the hazards were shielded from the gaze of the prospering public.⁵⁴ Philippa Mein Smith and Lionel Frost assert in their study of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Adelaide that sewerage provided to any poor area was a final resort rather than a primary place for connection. Moreover, the situation of conditions in areas of the urban poor, combined with the incidence of large families living in mean dwellings was instrumental in a higher degree of

⁵¹ Davitt, *Life and progression in Australia*, pp. 257, 258.

⁵² McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 321.

⁵³ Davitt, *Life and progression in Australia*, pp. 266, 267.

⁵⁴ Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 122-124.

infant mortality than circumstances in middle-class suburbs where space was not at a premium.⁵⁵

Mine pollution of waterways and atmosphere was not the only danger to public health at Mount Morgan. Population growth, the high numbers accommodated in individual dwellings, and careless use of public facilities made control of hygiene at Mount Morgan almost impossible. The weekly sanitary collection service did little to overcome the threat of disease. Moreover, Council drainage system was constructed piece meal, with open drains installed initially, and even when these were underground, blockages and inefficient sumps caused further problems.⁵⁶

Owe'd to our drains
When it is dry
Oh my!
The drains that trickle through our streets
Oh Hell-
The smell
Is the reverse of sweet.
Men tear their hair,
And Swear,
Then clasp their nose in tight embrace
What time
The slime
Doth permeate the place.⁵⁷

The Council monitored conditions at boarding houses and hotels to ensure they complied with drainage and sanitary regulations, but residents were more vigilant and their official correspondence demanded that the health committee and medical health officer investigate complaints. Inspectors also targeted places of production or sale for human consumption: abattoirs, dairies, butchers and market gardens. Places for public consumption of food and beverages: hotels, boarding houses, cafes, and private hospitals were inspected also, with boarding houses and hotels fined on occasion for

⁵⁵ Philippa Mein Smith and Lionel Frost, 'Suburbia and infant death in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Adelaide', *Urban History*, vol. 21, part 2, October 1994, pp. 257-258, 265.

⁵⁶ Council, Works Department, Minutes, 22 February 1915, MMSA.

⁵⁷ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

failing to comply with drainage and sanitation regulations.⁵⁸ Mount Morgan was typically urban in relation to the number of dead animals left in the streets and which posed a considerable health risk.⁵⁹ Moreover, repeated Council efforts to find and charge owners with the considerable cost of removal were unsuccessful.⁶⁰

Not only mine pollution, but also domestic refuse and human waste whether by placement, drainage or leaching, were present in the river and some wells. Over decades, a low standard of habitation was not only a problem of hygiene, but also a social concern not confined to those of particular race. European camps and humpies might be unhygienic and a health threat and by 1900, Chinese market gardens were targeted for Council investigation.⁶¹ Fifteen Chinese stores and four market gardens operated to provide almost all the fruit and vegetables for the town and district,⁶² but local complaints resulted in the inspection of two gardens and huts at Red Hill, adjacent to Tipperary Point. Dr. Samuel J. Richard, resident doctor at Mount Morgan Hospital and local government medical officer described one hut as a 'really a rough shanty' in bad repair. With 'walls and roof in many places consisting of bags and sugar mats, pieces of tin, etc.,' the place was very small, very dirty and unfit for human habitation. Ripening vegetables were stored in a tiny room that also contained the bed of the gardener. Vegetables ready for sale were stored in another small area where a dog slept amid rags and rotting matter.

Dr. Richard submitted his findings on the Chinese situation, the main thrust of his specific and alarming report relating to the limited use or the disuse of the toilet at each market garden and the suspicion that human waste was being used for garden fertiliser. Dr. Richard's pithy observation that a well at the bottom of a market garden 'served

⁵⁸ Council, S&HC, Minutes, 20 September 1917, 13 May 1924, MMSA.

⁵⁹ Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 63.

⁶⁰ MB, 14 July 1909; Council, S&HC, Minutes, 11 November 1913, MMSA.

⁶¹ Council, Minutes, 20 April 1900, K8/968, CC/CQU.

⁶² *Slater's Almanac*, Brisbane, 1899.

admirably to draw off all the impurities from the premises' begged the question of pollution of surrounding areas.⁶³ However, concerns elsewhere at Chinese methods of production were similar; and at Rockhampton, a vendor's advertisement for the sale of 'white grown' fruit and vegetables suggests a customer concern regarding Chinese produce as much as promotion of anti-Chinese attitudes.⁶⁴ The xenophobia typical of Europeans⁶⁵ at Mount Morgan excluded Chinese not only from social interaction, including patronage of hotels, but also from any responsible participation in town affairs.

Early Council structure saw chairmen and aldermen drawn from private enterprise and the professions. The first mayor and Council chairman was mine supervisor J. Wesley Hall. Townsmen who joined him at the Council table included a medical practitioner, chemist, bank manager, publican, storekeeper, stationer and fruiterer.⁶⁶ Connell and Irving suggest that municipal council elections reflected a working-class mobilisation that challenged commercial domination of local authority.⁶⁷ At Mount Morgan, the move toward more democratic local government brought aldermen of a different calibre to Council - despite the demand that local authority must be above politics - providing some balance between bourgeois and working class. For example, with one exception, all signatories to nomination for Francis Bunny, mine assayer of Morgan Street, were mine employees. They included a storeman, engineer, miner, clerk, labourer, blacksmith, foreman, carpenter, wheelwright, and the Town Clerk who worked on a part-time basis. Moreover, an increasing number who nominated candidates for Council election leaned politically towards emergent Labor.⁶⁸ Over time, miners were elected to local government also, but most were shiftworkers who experienced the frustration of unavoidable absence from Council meetings and the resultant exclusion

⁶³ S.J. Richard to Council, 23 April 1900, Inward correspondence, MMSCA.

⁶⁴ *Critic*, 23 September 1908.

⁶⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, 'The Chinese in Queensland, *Quadrant*, vol. XXXIV, no. 5, May 1990, p. 39.

⁶⁶ W.Mc. Metzger, Candidature form for alderman of the municipality, 20 January 1892, Inward Correspondence, MMSCA.

⁶⁷ R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, *Class structure in Australian history: poverty and progress*, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 129, 130.

⁶⁸ F. Bunny, Candidature form for alderman of the municipality, 19 January 1892, Inward Correspondence, MMSCA.

from voting in the perceived interests of constituents.⁶⁹ Chapter six will address miners' involvement in issues that related to their workplace labour. The attitudes of most demonstrated that these matters were above local authority requirements to increase quality of life for the town.

The tradition of vast water requirement for large-scale mining operations⁷⁰ was a given at the Mount Morgan Works. Within a decade of settlement, the matter of a town water supply was a symbol of Company oppression and a constant issue at the local Council table. As early as 1888, bottled water was provided in hotel guest rooms and children took bottled water to school, but the sources of these supplies are not known. Moreover, a water reserve gazetted in 1894⁷¹ did not result in installation of a reticulated water scheme for the town. By 1897, the water available in rainwater tanks at the Mount Morgan Hospital was inadequate for hospital requirements, and to safeguard the timber premises from a constant threat of fire. New management at a refurbished hotel might canvass guests successfully with the promise of 'shower and plunge baths and an abundance of water'.⁷² However, the probability of pollution leaching to wells from nearby areas left guests open to the threat of disease if drinking water was drawn from a well in the hotel yard.

When supplies in the Company's dams dwindled alarmingly with the onset of drought, mine management continued to direct operations to empty local waterholes. By 1901, they also applied to the Council for permission to cut a channel in the bed of the river to allow the water to run into an existing dam adjacent to the mine. However, Alderman Thomas Cowap, a town plumber who conducted his own business objected, declaring that such action would interfere with the water rights of residents. The

⁶⁹ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 3 August 1917.

⁷⁰ Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 166.

⁷¹ *Queensland Government Gazette (QGG)*, 3 November 1894, p. 959.

⁷² *MMA*, 18 May 1900.

majority of aldermen argued that Council would permit wells to be sunk and races could be cut from wells to the channel, so the residential supply of river water would be increased. The Council granted permission for the channel, which, in the event, was not required, because management purchased water from Stanwell instead.⁷³ At the same time they secured the right to empty tailings down river. The local authority was familiar with Company policy to commandeer and refuse to share the town's natural water. Yet, Council deference in the matter of a Company proposal that did not guarantee proved benefit to the town suggests outside influence on an elected local government. Aldermen depended on the Company for personal support and status, despite their election to public office in the name of service to the town and, ostensibly, without conflict of interest.

In collapsing time to understand local reaction to circumstances of disadvantage, it seems that bourgeois and working-class attitudes towards the actions of the Company reflected resignation more than apathy. The ten inch diameter main pipe laid along the Dee River bank to the mine south west of the No. 7 dam was in open view in the town that hoped for a solution to the water problem. Yet, the Company was less than generous in sharing the supply. Water from the Big Dam was pumped to a Company reservoir and through a meter to the several standpipes installed in the town. Most of the pipes were of one-inch diameter, and none exceeded two inches. Moreover, the general manager of the mine, Adam Alexander Boyd, insisted on receiving official records of local water use.⁷⁴ The Council chairman reminded Boyd that the water belonged to the people, which he acknowledged, but asserted that if residents wanted a water supply, they must provide their own pumping station, mains, and lay their own pipes. The suggestion of such an expense for ratepayers was unacceptable and brought bitter protest. Typically perhaps, many deploring the town's water problems in 1917

⁷³ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 314. At Stanwell in 1902-1904, water from Neerkol Creek near the Kabra junction on the line from Rockhampton, was pumped into special tanks and transported by rack rail over the Razorback to Mount Morgan.

⁷⁴ *MMC*, 3 August 1917.

were amongst those residents who refuted an earlier Council proposal for a reticulated supply, as discussed in chapter one. Undaunted, Council devised a water scheme to cost £3 500, which would include a pumping station reservoir on the hill at the eastern end of Hall Street. The water pumped at reticulated pressure 'would throw a stream of water twenty feet over the top of the School of Arts'.⁷⁵ However, the vision of some aldermen was still not acceptable to a majority of ratepayers who rejected the move at a public meeting called to resolve the issue. Lack of public foresight cost the town dearly in further decades of water shortage.

Regular inspection of 'nuisances' - unsanitary, unhygienic conditions at public and commercial yards, drains, stables, and pits, was a requirement of any urban local authority. This responsibility fell to the Sanitary and Health Committee of Council at Mount Morgan where, in 1917 for example, conditions remained much as they had been for most of the town's existence. This suggests that situations experienced in an earlier period as acceptable – or unavoidable - are perceived by subsequent generations as human neglect, despite the fundamental sources of pollution, lack of hygiene and disease that persist in any generation in seeming defiance of state legislation or local government by-law.

Some aldermen were privately ambivalent about the occasional illegal tapping of the main town pipe, but Council, fearing precedent, refused connections to private residences, groups and churches. Yet when this occurred, the Company reserved the right to grant the connection. For example, mine management overruled a Council decision made according to by-law to refuse connection to St. Mary's Institute.⁷⁶ In further authoritarian action, Boyd did not respond to a Council application for permission to extend water pipes at Tipperary Point, but demanded to know who ordered tapping of the main pipe in town. The Town Clerk stated that he had authorised

⁷⁵ Council, Minutes, 3 August 1917, K8/968, CC/CQU.

⁷⁶ As discussed in chapter one, the Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton included the Parish of Mount Morgan and received financial support from numerous shareholders in the Company.

the work under direction of the chairman of the Health Committee, at which Boyd demanded that the work must cease or he would cut off water to town standpipes. The Council realised that Boyd would have granted permission if requested, but they concurred pragmatically that they abused a 'privilege' and must cut unauthorised connections or lose the meagre water supply available by arrangement with Boyd.

The sycophantic Council then suggested that the Company should lock the taps to the standpipes. Boyd declared he did not want to do this, but in defending his perceived autonomy, he objected absolutely to any connection without *his* authority.⁷⁷ At the same time, however, he granted Mount Morgan Council's request for permission to extend the standpipe at Tipperary Point from Limerick Lane to O'Dea Lane. The Health Committee requested installation of a pipe from a standpipe in the centre of town to a nearby corner, because 'it was too much to expect a man to hump water from the standpipe to flush the urinal in Morgan Street'.⁷⁸ Boyd declared he felt compelled to refuse as Council had abused the privilege, and he considered the connection unnecessary.⁷⁹ Two years later, he refused the Calliungal Shire Council's request for permission to install a one inch diameter pipe extension from the main at the mine stables on Company freehold to Walterhall, at the junction of the railway to town and the line extension to the Works.⁸⁰

Mount Morgan Council funding imposed limitations the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure and the delay, danger and 'nuisance' of large holes in roadways where rotting matter - including fish heads - might be thrown was typical of the conditions that ensured the ongoing threat of disease.⁸¹ Deep drainage was the obvious solution, but the high cost of concrete pipes for such work prompted Council to decide on an alternative. At a cost of £50, a pipe-making unit imported from Brisbane could be used at the Council yards 'as no skill was needed'.⁸² This indictment of the

⁷⁷ Author emphasis.

⁷⁸ *MMC*, 28 August 1917.

⁷⁹ *MMC*, 14 September 1917.

⁸⁰ Calliungal Shire Council, Minutes, 23 October 1919, K17/970.7, CC/CQU.

⁸¹ *MMC*, 4 September 1917.

⁸² Council, S&HC, Minutes, 3 August 1917, MMSCA.

ability of unskilled local authority employees to fabricate pipes on site was not publicised in press reportage of the ordinary Council meeting that discussed the issue. Aldermen might rationalise the cost of pipe manufacture against the hospital cost of infectious disease at two guineas per patient per week, but they were aware that residents would respond negatively to any imposition of an excess 'small health rate'.⁸³

Numerous committees of the local authority met fortnightly concerning the use of public lands for cemetery, racecourse, playground, parks, slaughter yards, sanitary depot and rubbish dump. However, despite close investigation of sites, lack of vision in planning for future expansion was evident with the proclamation of space for public utilities. Much of this land at Mount Morgan included areas where leaching of waste ensured a constant threat of disease.⁸⁴ For example, the need for a permanent sanitary site for the town was a major issue by 1897 and Council proposed a reserve near Horse Creek of about 20 hectares for the deposit of night soil. In the area surrounded by surveyed land, Council questioned the necessity for survey of the land for a reserve,⁸⁵ whereupon the goldwarden, F. Millican, warned against locating the sanitary site too near occupied land. He suggested that a recreation reserve only was appropriate for the location within a 'stone's throw' of numerous homestead leases.⁸⁶

The Council addressed with some trepidation complaints and inspections that raised issues of slaughter yard method. Whilst the abattoir was some distance from town at Horse Creek, the health committee made regular inspections for pollution or lack of hygiene. However, one dairyman threatened a counter charge of defamation against seven owners of neighbouring residences when they filed a petition of complaint

⁸³ *MMA*, 3 August 1900.

⁸⁴ Council, S&HC, Minutes, 22 February 1915, *MMSCA*.

⁸⁵ A. McDonald, Surveyor-General, to A.J. Callan, MLA, 7 September 1897, Inward Correspondence, *MMSCA*.

⁸⁶ *MB*, 10 July 1897.

that his dairy was a public nuisance and that he slaughtered cattle at the same premises.⁸⁷ Those registered as cowkeepers and milksellers were required to conduct their businesses according to the Act and on the spot inspections were usual, but in this instance, delayed action after notification provided the vendor with ample time to clear and clean the premises. As a result, government medical officer Dr. Richard found on arrival at the dairy that the paddock was clean, all droppings collected and placed in an enclosed, adjacent yard. Dr. Richard was so impressed that he declared 'The manure itself was practically free from flies and had no offensive smell'.⁸⁸ The necessity for the care of all perishable food remained a problem despite constant advertising by local butchers claiming that meat was inspected by a government veterinarian. However, some butchers served meat to customers irrespective of compulsory inspection.⁸⁹

Inspection of hygiene and sanitation in the domestic environment was not compulsory unless the Council health committee received official notification of infectious, potentially fatal diseases including typhoid, cholera or diphtheria. Significantly perhaps, Mount Morgan authorities rigorously monitored transport into the town in 1900, and so averted the dreadful effects of plague in 1900. Cases of notifiable disease totalled 119 in 1910, but by the 1920s,⁹⁰ diphtheria and scarlatina extended to the local schools. Mount Morgan hospital staff took special swabs of diphtheria bacillus from pupils, but as the swabs were sent to Brisbane, analysis results were slow. In accordance with the *Infectious Diseases Act of 1900*, Council employees were required to disinfect dwellings where victims had lived or expired. However implementation of this section of the *Act* at Mount Morgan was not enforced until disease reached epidemic proportions. When the town was threatened by the nation-wide Spanish influenza epidemic in 1919, Council sanitary works employees used a powerful, expensive

⁸⁷ J. Long to Council, 16 April 1909, Inward Correspondence, MMSA.

⁸⁸ S.J. Richard, Report to Council, 28 April 1911, Inward correspondence, MMSA.

⁸⁹ *MMA*, 11 May, 8 June 1900.

⁹⁰ Council, S&HC, Minutes, 3 February 1914, MMSA.

chemical to disinfect dwellings where victims died.⁹¹ As a result of that epidemic, a Commonwealth Bacteriological Laboratory was established at Rockhampton in 1922.⁹²

The opening of the Mount Morgan Hospital in 1890 followed a tradition of establishment for the care of male patients. The institution also predicated the change from mining settlement to an urban-village environment. Public contribution funded the hospital, which was neither a government facility, nor a private hospital. The founders anticipated that the Company would provide primary financial support but this was not to be, despite the function of the hospital being directed towards the mine labour force. Company influence was apparent however, in the contribution of labour for the installation of new equipment. This was typical paternalism whereby the Company did not charge for the work; the cost seemingly absorbed in mine production expenses. The hospital existed simply and with difficulty in terms of financial stability, albeit charges to patients were according to their means or on the scale of a lodge benefit. The resident medical officer at the hospital did not conduct private practice.

Paradoxically, in a move that had marked effect, the Mount Morgan Hospital board in 1907 vetoed the longstanding arrangement whereby the hospital resident surgeon Dr. Richard took his meals with the staff.⁹³ Within a year, and perceivably in reaction to his sense of isolation by the hospital board, Dr. Richard moved to establish a private hospital in the town. He requested the Company to lease him a section of their land with frontage to Rockhampton Road, pointing out that,

Besides the average working class, there are a lot of other people who occasionally require hospital treatment, officials and others, who are not inclined to be treated in a government subsidised charitable institution.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Council, S&HC, Minutes, 4 December 1917, MMSCA.

⁹² Council, S&HC, Minutes, 19 December 1922, MMSCA.

⁹³ *Critic*, 26 July 1907.

⁹⁴ S.J. Richard to R.S. Archer, cited in Archer to Hall, 20 January 1909, Letter Book, K1014, ML.

Private patients at Mount Morgan were treated at home or admitted to a private hospital in Rockhampton. While suggesting to major shareholder Walter Russell Hall that Dr. Richard should be permitted to lease the land, Archer commended Hall for his past 'generosity' to Mount Morgan. The words seemed as hollow as his platitudes regarding industrial harmony at the mine:

Of course in every case, they turn to the Company for help, but the continued kindnesses of yourself and your brothers for the past twenty-five years has spoilt the Mount Morganites. I am sure, however, your policy was wise as well as kind, as witness our good relations with our men, against the troubles elsewhere.⁹⁵

Archer's comments suggest a certain conflict with Dr. Richard, brother of the general manager G.A. Richard who had a firm relationship with Hall. Dr. Richard did not expect 'kindness' and expected to pay for a sub-lease of the land. His private hospital venture failed; patients preferred the Mount Morgan Hospital, which treated seven hundred and twenty cases in 1910.⁹⁶ Within four years, Dr. Richard requested Archer to reduce the lease of the land to a nominal £2 per year. Archer refused this 'unreasonable request' outright, arguing that the lease must continue at land tax value 'as in the case of others who have built on our Company property'.⁹⁷

The Company derived income from leasing unused sections of the mine freehold to others including Chinese market gardeners.⁹⁸ In this way, the land was available for recall when a lease expired, and the right to mine additional areas of the freehold was secure. During the period however, the board sold more than 12 acres at almost £120 per acre, thus realising almost £1 470 for the quarter acre blocks. This was offset against a leasehold commitment of 38 hectares of land granted to local cricket, football, swimming, tennis and rifle shooting clubs. With changes to the *Land Tax Act* in 1911,

⁹⁵ R.S. Archer to W.R. Hall, 20 January 1909, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

⁹⁶ *Critic*, 23 October 1917; Government Statistician's Report: Statistics of Queensland 1910, Appendix p. xxii. *Queensland Votes and Proceedings*, Brisbane, 12 August 1911.

⁹⁷ *Critic*, 17 March 1913.

⁹⁸ CPSMM, Deposition book, 21 January 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA. Chapter four addresses the Company practice of leasing or granting public use of sections of the 'paddock'.

Archer stressed that the Company should make every effort to obtain tax exemption for their land that was not under sub lease.⁹⁹ His brother Edward Archer, erstwhile MLA and a practising land tax agent in Brisbane, was in close communication with the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation and interceded with him to gain exemption on behalf of the board.¹⁰⁰ Edward Archer was unsuccessful in his bid, the Deputy Commissioner reminding him that the Act stipulated such exemption applied only to person or persons holding land under grant or in trust for purposes specified.¹⁰¹ Ironically, when industrial conflict closed the mine for one year in 1921, the Company sold about three acres for £800, almost twice the price received ten years earlier.¹⁰²

A gendered approach to health care witnessed the increasingly patronised small private establishments that midwives conducted as lying-in 'hospitals' for pre-natal and maternity care. The issue of female occupation in health care in Mount Morgan will be addressed in chapter eight; however, this chapter addresses the conduct of several hospitals located within a radius of half a kilometre of the town centre. Many women gave birth at home, but over time, many others chose to enter lying-in hospitals. This situation concerned medical practitioners deeply as, in addition to loss of income, they were aware that not every 'hospital', so called, had trained nursing staff, adequate facilities, or a policy of care according to health regulations. By 1924, lying-in hospitals faced the threat of closure through lack of response to Council warnings against operating without the required license, or for breach of health regulations relating to hygiene, sanitation and drainage at the premises.¹⁰³ An exception was the Albert Hospital that operated until 1920, then changed hands and became the Dudley Hospital where town doctors supervised nursing staff and domestics. The Mount Morgan Hospital committee took over the Dudley ultimately, relocating the building in the

⁹⁹ Archer to G.A. Richard, 28 February 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

¹⁰⁰ Archer to Kelso King, 27 February 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

¹⁰¹ Archer to Kelso King, 6 March 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

¹⁰² MMGMC, Sale of Land, 10 February 1921, typescript, D15/281, CC/CQU.

¹⁰³ *Critic*, 23 October 1917.

hospital reserve where it became part of the complex. This consolidated facilities for clinical and surgical purposes and ensured further domestic infrastructure to provide adequate water for hospital hygiene and sanitation.

Water was not the only desired liquid to quench the thirst in a dry, dusty environment. A liquor trade was a given at any new settlement, and many miners at Mount Morgan went directly to pubs or hotels after shift instead of their camps, boarding houses or homes. Whilst a pamphleteer of the 1880s asserted that the place was not a settlement where the effects of alcohol abuse were evident, earliest pubs and hotels included establishments on the west side of the river and in close proximity to the mine. The Miners Rest and the Australia Hotel were on Mundic Creek, and the Shamrock Hotel was opposite Tipperary Point. They vied for custom with the Sunburst Hotel and Monckton's large hotel on the east side of the river. At Tipperary Point on the riverbank, the Sunburst Hotel was structured as a barracks style line of rooms, each opening to the single, full-length front balcony. The premises also had a detached store and billiard room alongside. The above mentioned pamphleteer touted Monckton's as a symbol of progress and already a 'fantastic enterprise', accrediting the place with 'thirty rooms and a balcony' noted for coolness and splendid views across the river to the mine, and the best place of accommodation for travelling traders and the vaudeville troupes that appeared at Sheratons Hall on Jubilee Hill.¹⁰⁴ More significantly, Monckton's was reported in the press as the stopping place for the coach from Rockhampton.

To facilitate the movement of rolling stock direct to the Works, the Company installed not one, but two extensions from the main line. The junction of the first branch line was near the Mount Morgan station, the second extended from the earlier mentioned Walterhall, a suburb named for the major shareholder and chairman of

¹⁰⁴ Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, p. 56. Monckton's hotel was substantial, but given the period and place, 'thirty rooms' seems exaggerated.



Fig. 8. Walterhall, railway bridge over Gordon Creek, Company residences, top left, c. 1905.

directors, Walter Russell Hall.¹⁰⁵ By 1911, Walterhall was a railway siding, but residents requested a station, on the basis that a Walterhall store received 50 tons of goods on rail annually. However, when the minister for Railways declared Walterhall the place for a station,¹⁰⁶ Baree was not to be outdone in the push for a similar service, and cited its own burgeoning development. The Baree station became a commuting point for many who travelled the few kilometres to town and, for miners, breakfast reputedly comprised 'steak with a dash - for the train' that ran to a railway timetable rather than a mine shift schedule.¹⁰⁷

The suburbs of the town developed their own communities where some facilities were significant to local progress and status. The village of Baree was relatively

¹⁰⁵ F. Golding, *The Walter Russell Hall and the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust, May 1912-May 1972*, typescript, 1972, pp. 1, 2, MMHM. A suburb north of Walterhall was named 'Kirkhall' for Hall's wife, Eliza, (née Kirk).

¹⁰⁶ *Critic*, 14 July 1911.

¹⁰⁷ *Critic*, 11 August 1911.

independent within 27 years, with railway siding, store, post office, school, churches, School of Arts, sporting clubs, film and dance hall. Set in hills out of sight of Mount Morgan, Baree was only 'a brisk walk' from town. However, the intensely parochial suburb posed a challenge in terms of services and lifestyle, retaining a separateness that for residents was also psychological. By tradition, 'a Baree man remained a Baree man'.¹⁰⁸

Three town fires that occurred during the period devastated the business centre wherever it was concentrated at the time, and left as their ultimate legacy a main street of nondescript, if eclectic shop fronts. Not only that, with single fires destroying so many buildings, necessary renewal and some relocation fragmented any existing shopping area where surviving stores remained. East Street, with its north-south town access, was by tradition the most suitable main street within the town grid; but ultimately, Morgan Street became and remained the main shopping centre.



Fig. 9. Buggies and telegraph poles, Morgan Street, looking east, c.1913. Mount Morgan Hospital extends across the hill, background.

Mount Morgan Town Council faced a spatial challenge to its authority by 1925, through the proposed restructuring of shire boundaries. In the interests of expansion,

¹⁰⁸ Charlie Stratford, interview with the author, 10 July 1992, MMOH.

Banana Shire Council had succeeded the Banana Divisional Board and coveted the Mount Morgan area. However Mount Morgan was aware that should the Banana Shire absorb both Mount Morgan and Calliungal these Councils would cease to be. In this event, local government representation would be reduced to four aldermen, the municipal identity would be lost and the town merely a division of the Banana Shire Council. Mount Morgan was concerned for its status as the commercial centre of Banana Shire, previously a main pastoral district, but opening rapidly to agriculture.¹⁰⁹

At the same time, many ratepayers of the Calliungal Shire Council requested rate concessions.¹¹⁰ Reasons were various, perhaps that the leaseholder was terminally ill, or a timber carter lost work in the downturn in fuel requirements at the mine when the Company purchased and operated the Baralaba coal mine in 1922. Mount Morgan Town Council and Calliungal Shire Council land valuations in 1925 were only 60 per cent of the 1924 total, but neither Council attributed the low valuations to the threatening depression, rather that lands in Mount Morgan and Calliungal were publicly overvalued, a situation that had existed for years. Treasury had set the ground rate for every parcel of land at a minimum of £30 but some lands in the Calliungal shire were worth only £10-£15 and some lands were worthless. Thus, in excess of three hundred appeals against the rating level carried little weight with the Council and valuations remained. The extensive list of abandoned properties in Mount Morgan town included locations in Walterhall.¹¹¹ As outstanding rates remained unpaid when people walked off their leases, the Calliungal Council saw its overdraft escalate and appealed to Treasury for additional loan finance. This was not to swell funds, but to settle Council debts. The result was a loan of £3 000. However, Calliungal Council reeled from the

¹⁰⁹ Council, Minutes, 19 March 1925, 255/4.1, CC/CQU.

¹¹⁰ Calliungal Shire Council, Minutes, 18 September 1931, K17/970.7, CC/CQU.

¹¹¹ On occasion, anomalies in land possession occurred relating to areas claimed within the Town Reserve, 1889, or the Borough of Mount Morgan, 1890.

economic effects of closure of the mine and small enterprises within the shire. Ten per cent of rateable properties were forfeited in 1929, with rates on twenty other leases simply written off. The Calliungal Council Works Committee reported by 1930 that under existing economic conditions, they could no longer carry out road maintenance work.¹¹² By October 1931, the disconnection of the telephone and ignominious closure of the Calliungal Shire office in East Street, Mount Morgan, preceded advice from the Office of the Home Secretary that confirmed abolition of the Calliungal Shire Council.¹¹³

Mount Morgan Council suffered similarly but survived. The town was more confined in terms of space and more densely populated than Calliungal, whilst trade and the mine brought the town higher status. Rate reductions *en masse* by July 1925 benefited from the government valuer's declaration that valuations conducted by Mount Morgan Council staff over a twenty-year period presented many anomalies.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, such consideration was not offered to Calliungal. Yet, the dilemma for the Mount Morgan Town Council was whether to impose a staggering general rate in the town, or, to advise the Queensland Home Secretary that the Council was unable operate the municipality at its existing level of finance.¹¹⁵ The latter course resulted in Mount Morgan's survival on a government loan of £7 100 that contrasted sharply with the Calliungal figure of less than half that amount to service a larger shire. Mount Morgan absorbed the Calliungal shire in 1931 to become the Mount Morgan Shire. Quite apart from an increasing economic depression and cost cutting measures in terms of changes to shire boundaries, bureaucratic expectation that the mine would be reopened probably contributed to survival of the town authority.

¹¹² Calliungal Shire Council, Finance and Works Committee, Minutes, 24 April 1930, 11 June 1930, K17/970.7, CC/CQU.

¹¹³ Office of the Home Secretary, to Calliungal Shire Council, 5 November 1931, 255.13, CC/CQU.

¹¹⁴ Council, Minutes, 19 March 1925, K8/968, CC/CQU.

¹¹⁵ Council, Valuer's report, 19 March 1924, K8/968, CC/CQU.

The urban progress of Mount Morgan was haphazard at best. Development was more reactive than planned and the lack of reticulated water hampered Council works. Residents of the insular, somewhat isolated town defined their own level of social acceptance and space, most exhibiting a seemingly generic tolerance of Company domination of the town. Withal, the place survived the vicissitudes of oppression and deprivation of public facilities.

The 1920s that brought falls in world prices of ore and upheaval in local industrial relations saw the town in jeopardy by 1925. Closure of the mine in 1927 brought economic and social despair. Discussion in the following chapter will address petty bourgeoisie attitudes and the business ethic that thrived, fluctuated and faded at Mount Morgan during forty-five years. With trade cut to basic services by 1927, the suburban facade was reduced as people left and houses were removed. The town that had looked away from the mutilated mountain across the river looked back across the gully of the devastated waterway to the silent mine. The ominously still Works gave no hint of a future that residents comprehended only in terms of a mining revival. Closer to home, the stark, encompassing legacy of a once dynamic mining town was the pattern of house stumps on land returned to unused space that was within a whistle blast of the once richest single gold mine in the world.

Chapter Three

'The value of things': patterns of trade and aspects of custom

In the wake of wider settlement and trade that prevailed despite the ongoing hazards of transport, the flow of exploration and pioneering throughout the central Queensland region abated by the 1880s. Rockhampton was the regional hub of the pastoral industry, an established river port for the beef and wool trades, an immigration receiving depot and a town that aspired to be the capital of a separate colony encompassing Central Queensland. Three decades after the ill-fated Canoona rush, gold mining in the Rockhampton region continued to attract diggers and local investors. Rockhampton trade facilities and financial interests provided impetus for various commercial enterprises that developed at Mount Morgan.

Whilst chapter two presented Mount Morgan from a burgeoning urban place in the late nineteenth century to a town in decline in 1927, this chapter presents the dynamics of its European trade and commerce that rose and fell on the fiscal tide of Company operations. It is argued here that the mine was the *largest* employer but that other local and primary producers, traders and commercial institutions competed for town custom outside the mine and its associated Company enterprises.¹ Issues addressed include the influence of Company on Rockhampton trade and the freights by sea and rail, competition for custom between the Company and Mount Morgan trade,

¹ Pugh's *Almanac 1900-1901*, pp. 806-807.

domestic imports to the town, trading ways and means, customer attitudes and the assumption of status and class by local petty bourgeoisie.

The stream of miners and others to Mount Morgan and environs included diggers at operations elsewhere in the hills and valleys of the range surrounding the great mountain.² They worked independently or as groups in scattered isolation, purchasing staple necessities at Rockhampton and otherwise living off the land. By contrast, diggers at the Company mine frequented the tents and huts of the first stores and shanties where enterprising traders who might offer credit until payday plied their trade on unsurveyed land.³ Such were the roots of town enterprise. The cost of goods and services rather than wages earned indicated consumer consciousness. From the outset, diggers bought food at prices regulated by custom, although bargaining for scarce

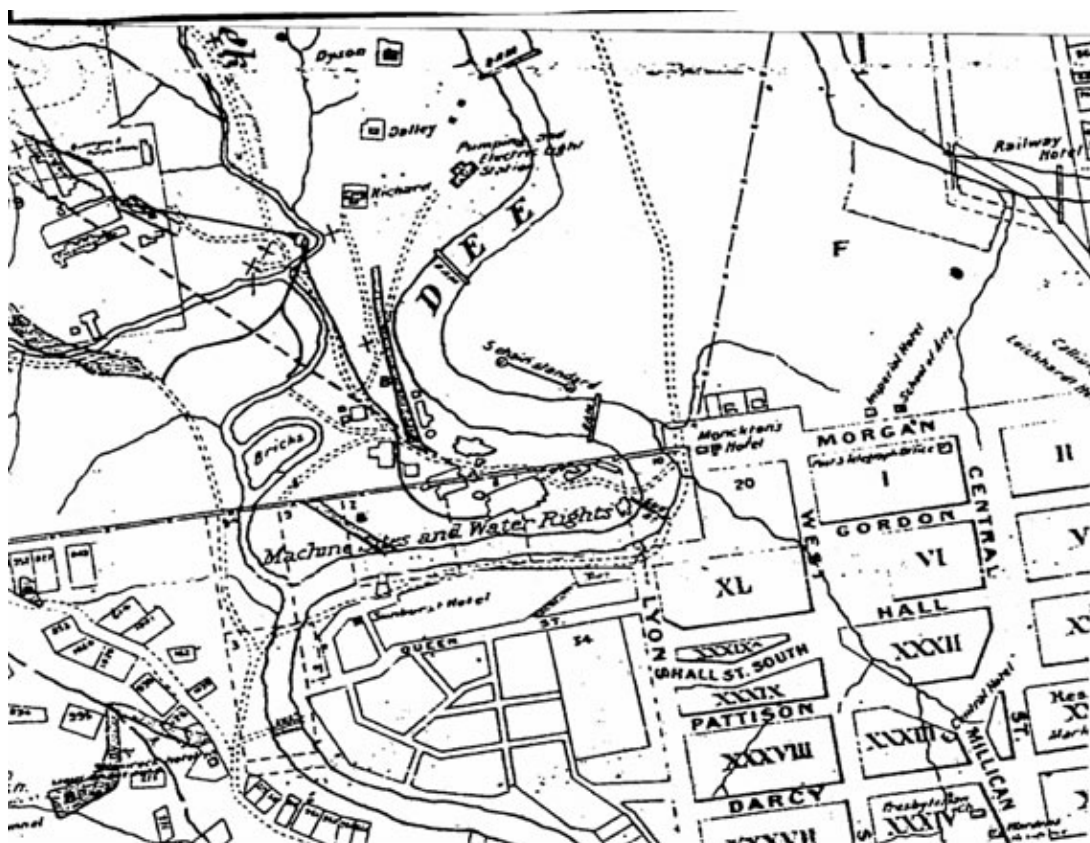


Fig. 10. Moongan Hotel, c. 1897. This structure shows a single line of rooms with french doors, a similar construction to the Sunburst Hotel. A detached kitchen and stables are at rear. These buildings contrast with the large Razorback Hotel, where rooms extend along a passage from front to back, (see Fig. 1).

² F.W. Sykes, *A practical treatise of Mount Morgan: its history, past present and probable future*, Mount Morgan, 1888, pp. 37-52.

³ Aleck Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Rockhampton, 1888, p. 55.

commodities might bring prices that challenged the law of supply and demand.⁴ Bullock and horse teams hauled town requirements, from essentials of primary produce to household goods. Carriers faced the constant challenge of the dangerous track, steep and narrow, that was life threatening to animals and drivers.⁵ The stopping place at the crest of the Razorback Range was the Moongan Hotel, the last at Monckton's Hotel located by the river crossing to the mine and a short distance from Tipperary Point.



Map 7. Section, 1898: Broken lines indicate the track to Monckton's Hotel, Mount Morgan. Note branch track to mine across the river. The main track continued to Tipperary Point, crossed the river and continued south from the town.

The first traders in essentials of food and shelter were butchers. Cattlemen from south of the settlement drove stock to slaughteryards near canvas butcher shops. To ensure supply, cattle and sheep were driven from the west via the stock route and across

⁴ F.L. Golding, *Mount Morgan: fifty years 1927-1977*, typescript, 1977, p. 2, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁵ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, *Annual Report*, 1888, D15/271, CC/CQU; B.G. Patterson, *The Razorback*, typescript, 2 April 1952, pp. 11, 12, MMHM; Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton: a history of city and district*, St. Lucia, 1981, p. 175.

the Dawson River south of Calliungal. Butcher Henry Aldridge came to Mount Morgan from Charters Towers to conduct his trade in a shelter of bough and bark. He moved later to the diggings at the lesser fields of Struck Oil and Dee rushes, but his trading premises and slaughteryards remained essentially primitive.⁶

Wandering stock might be found in any city or regional towns in Australia⁷ more than half a century after herds were driven through Kentish Town near London in the 1830s and butchers slaughtered beasts at their shops.⁸ By 1900, Mount Morgan hotelier William Monckton, and licensee Franklin at the Razorback Hotel conducted licensed slaughteryards near their premises. Moller Bros, family butchers, had yards near their shop and advertised that 'customers can have fresh meat punctually delivered at their doors daily'.⁹ The Mount Morgan Graziers' Butchering Company Limited had three shops in Mount Morgan, serving customers from Tipperary Point through the town centre to Gordons Lane. The Graziers' Company claimed that all meat was examined by a government expert, and assured customers of the cleanliness of the establishments, 'to effect which neither time nor water is spared'.¹⁰ Local butchers also slaughtered beasts at private licensed yards within the town boundary, for example, Leyden's yards were on the riverbank at Upper Dee.¹¹ Rhetorical press advertising proclaimed cleaning and sluicing at business premises where perishables were prepared and available for sale. Ironically, scant attention was paid to animal fouling of streets. Of more concern was the noise of cowbells, as cattle wandered freely in town during the day, out of hearing of their owners, but disturbing the sleep of shiftworkers.¹²

⁶ Henry Aldridge, autobiography MS, 1927, held privately.

⁷ Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment 1788-1980*, Sydney, 1981, p. 123.

⁸ Gillian Tindall, *The fields beneath: the history of a London village*, London, 1985, pp. 128, 129.

⁹ *Mount Morgan Argus*, (MMA), 11 May 1900.

¹⁰ MMA, 8 June 1900.

¹¹ Clerk of Petty Sessions Mount Morgan (CPSMM), Register of Licences, 6 January 1899, B/1301, Queensland State Archives, (QSA).

¹² *Critic*, 12 April 1903.

As settlement expanded, the creep of human habitation reached the vicinity of these small scale abattoirs and surrounded them. When legislation prohibited the slaughtering of livestock within town limits, land gazetted in 1911 for slaughteryards that would remain under the control of the local authority were at Horse Creek, several kilometres out of town.¹³ Such official action confirmed the urban character of Mount Morgan, in the light of generations of rural practice of private slaughter or village butchering of beasts. This practice continued in the surrounding districts of Mount Morgan; one surface boss at the mine purchased his family meat from a supplier at Upper Ulam, a mining settlement in the Dee Range east of Mount Morgan.¹⁴ To the south of Mount Morgan was Wowan, a regional dairying district. By 1919, a local outcry occurred against a butcher whose slaughteryards were within three kilometres of the town and butter factory. He was charged and convicted for knowingly exposing for sale certain meat that had been in contact with bullocks infected with disease.¹⁵

Necessity as much as economic progress dictated relocation of businesses. The regularity of destruction of shops by fire was a typical hazard in terms of timber buildings built close together, and lack of a town water supply.¹⁶ Some traders changed direction also; Jack Cunningham operated the Mount Morgan bakery at Burke's Flat, but moved to the new business centre by 1894 when, 'together with his indefatigable wife', he expanded to a bakery and confectionery business in large, airy buildings at the corner of Morgan and West Streets, in 'the heart of the town'.¹⁷ An increasing number of 'universal providers' - general stores - operated in East Street and by 1900, some bakers had followed Cunningham's example and changed or diversified their enterprise. For example, S.L. Duus simply took over a business that traded as a universal provider.¹⁸ Town trade was as diverse as service a century earlier at Kentish Town where artisans,

¹³ Arthur Barnham, interview with the author, 24 April 1993, Mount Morgan Oral History, (MMOH).

¹⁴ Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 23 March 1997, Oral History (OH).

¹⁵ *Daily Record (DR)*, 15 August 1919.

¹⁶ Mount Morgan did not have a fire brigade during the period studied for this thesis.

¹⁷ *MMA*, 11 May 1900.

¹⁸ *MMA*, 8 June 1900.

professionals and others engaged in glass engraving, painting, laundry, dentistry and piano making.¹⁹ At Mount Morgan, professionals and artisans included a dentist, piano tuner, photographer and music warehouse, cast iron fencing for cemetery graves and painting works. By 1900, twenty-seven categories of trade and commerce operated:

Aerated Waters	3
Agents	6
Assayers & Civil Eng	3
Bakers	4
Banks	2
Blacksmiths	6
Boarding Houses	10
Booksellers & Stationers.	4
Bootmakers	6
Builders & Carpenters	9
Butchers	4
Cabinetmakers	5
Chemists	3
Confectioners	3
Drapers, Clothiers	7
Fishmongers	2
Fruiterers	6
Grocers	9
Hotels	22
Medical Practitioners	4
Newspapers, Printers	2
Photographers	2
Plumbers	4
Produce Merchants	3
Saddlers	3
Timber Merchant	1
Undertakers	2

Table 1. Mount Morgan town enterprises, *Pugh's Almanac*, 1900.

In addition to sanitation and public hygiene regulations, the Council acted on legislation for prescribed hygienic standards in the preparation of food and drink for human consumption. By 1926, the installation of fly-proof cabinets was compulsory for all perishables, and water from wells - or the town standpipes - was prohibited from use in the manufacture of food or aerated drinks. Water was supplied from rainwater tanks

¹⁹ Tindall, *The fields beneath*, p. 146.

fitted with purification filters.²⁰ Residents also installed tanks for domestic purposes, but the extent of filtration is unknown.

The categories 'boarding houses', 'hotels', 'grocers', 'butchers', included Irish proprietors, whilst 'grocers' and 'fruiterers' included Chinese stores. The early Chinese-Irish experience at Tipperary Point reflects spatial rather than social association. Within a few years of the first mining operations, Hop Kee operated a market garden at Burke's Flat, near the initial settlement at Tipperary Point. By 1890, he had a general store where he sold his garden produce. Adjacent to Hop Kee's shop were O'Dea and Allan's store and Yee Yok's fruit shop that was the front room of his two-roomed hut. These cramped buildings were opposite Joseph Moulds' Mountain View Hotel. Twenty yards away, O'Dea's dwelling was near a boarding house 'where a lot of single Europeans lived', and opposite was the shop of Fong Foo, a Chinese 'confectioner'.²¹

Statistics of Chinese on Queensland goldfields in 1910 listed 50 persons categorised as 'Gardeners and others, including women and children' at Mount Morgan.²² However, a figure cited here of 75 Chinese at Mount Morgan during the period 1890 to 1910 is suggested as reasonably accurate, despite European spelling of Chinese names varying between records.²³ Some Chinese found employment as hotel cooks, but Chinese enterprise in the town during four decades included fifteen stores, including seven fruiterers. Their stores stocked fresh produce from seventeen market gardens where most Chinese lived and worked. An individual Chinese might operate several stores and a market garden.

²⁰ Council, Sanitary and Health Committee (S&HC), Minutes, 25 November 1926, MMSCA.

²¹ CPSMM, Depositions Book, 1 February 1892, CPS 7B/P2, QSA.

²² 'Government Statistician's Report, "The estimated population of the several goldfields in the State on the 31st December 1910"', Table XI, Appendix 8A, *Queensland Votes & Proceedings (QV&P)*, Brisbane, 1911.

²³ Arthur Christmas, History of the Chinese in Mount Morgan, typescript, c. 1994, MMHM; *Voters' List for the Western Ward of the Municipality of Mount Morgan*, Rockhampton, 1898, MMHM.

Arrant racism in colonial Australia manifested xenophobia promoted through the press, parliamentary debate and public oratory.²⁴ Bill Thorpe suggests in his challenging history of colonial Queensland that western attitudes defined Chinese as the 'racially and culturally inferior "other" in hegemonic discourse promulgated through classes at any level'.²⁵ A deep-seated fear of the alien's perceived 'corrosive moral viciousness' in early gold-mining years compounded with later concerns that Chinese posed a threat in terms of space and financial return, whether for wages or enterprise.²⁶ Rockhampton and Mount Morgan as elsewhere stereotyped Chinese as simian and at the perceived level of Aborigines.²⁷ Whilst Chinese at Mount Morgan in the late nineteenth century found strong European trade at their market gardens and stores, for most, the firmly drawn barriers of race and language confirmed them as outcasts in European social space and the mine workplace. Chapter four will address issues of law and order relating to Chinese at Mount Morgan.

Mineworkers, management and others in the town adopted anti-Chinese attitudes but confined aggression to scornful defamation. The Chinese presence continued in the 1900s, but the stringent conditions of the *Commonwealth Immigration Act 1901* ensured the gradual dwindling of the mostly male Chinese population. Anti-Chinese sentiment in Central Queensland remained trenchant however, not least through the local press. The vitriolic *Critic* challenged the moral rectitude of Rockhampton women of any class who conversed cordially and at length with Chinese vendors who sold fruit and vegetables door to door. The same issue of the press denigrated Chinese shopkeepers:

Health Department officers are busy in the south west of the state and some of the Chinese alleged fruit shops in Rockhampton want shaking up. Fruit dusted down with a feather duster, used for what other purpose is unknown. Those who buy from such shops deserve what they get.²⁸

²⁴ Ross Fitzgerald, 'The Chinese in Queensland', *Quadrant*, no. 266, vol. XXXIV, May 1990, p. 38.

²⁵ Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland, perspectives on a frontier society*, St. Lucia, 1996, p. 198.

²⁶ J.M. Graham, "'A danger that no language could magnify': *The Newcastle Morning Herald* and the Chinese question", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 69, part 4, March 1984, p. 248.

²⁷ *Critic*, 25 September 1903.

²⁸ *Critic*, 24 November 1903.

Notwithstanding, Chinese trade in fresh fruit and vegetables continued as their market garden produce graced tables at Mount Morgan as elsewhere. Yet the local press denigrated the Chinese presence in local business when describing the new premises of Bolton's Store:

A beautiful building, replete with every modern convenience and crammed to the roof with new and up-to-date goods. Also, it is situated in close proximity to Ken Yen Kee's. It's another noble effort to whitewash a bit more of Australia.²⁹

The ritual scorn levelled at Chinese by regional towns and press spurred the upsurge of 'white grown' produce from European market gardens. These developed primarily at Alton Downs near Rockhampton, at Gracemere and Kabra on the western line, and along the branch line from Kabra to Moonmerra, in the shadow of the Razorback Range.³⁰ Moreover, as pointed out earlier, rail connection by 1911 to the Dawson Valley to the south-west consolidated coal mining and agriculture, and opened a market at Mount Morgan for fresh garden produce from the Valley. European concern for natural freshness and quality fuelled demand, while free advertisements in the weekly *Critic* social column declared that storekeeper Dorrell:

lands big consignments...every week. White grown vegetables fresh daily. Soft drinks and finest confectionery on the market. All Fruits straight from the Growers. Remember Dorrell's the wholesale fruiterer.³¹

Despite the racist overtone in this paragraph, Ken Yen Kee prospered and opened two more stores, but his sensitivity to derogatory press is unknown.³² Further, social change over time saw respectful reference to Ken Yen Kee in contemporary if patronising local history. His descendants might have sensed a hint of tokenism in the article written at Mount Morgan in 1973 that read in part:

²⁹ *Critic*, 13 November 1908.

³⁰ George Cunningham, Stanwell, interview with the author, 10 December 1998, OH.

³¹ *Critic*, 14 July, 21 July 1911.

³² Christmas, *History of the Chinese*, pp. 2, 3.

The hatred and mistrust which characterised the relationship between Europeans and Chinese on the goldfields at Ballarat, Bendigo and even at Crocodile Creek, [south of Rockhampton] was not evident in this town.³³

As early as 1888, suggestions arose for irrigation for agriculture on land in the Mount Morgan district.³⁴ This did not occur, but Mount Morgan became the commercial centre for trade in outlying districts and settlements where pastoralism, agriculture and dairying developed alongside mining and its subsidiary industries.³⁵ Moreover, on reasonable country south of the town at Wura and Walmul, some families of mixed descent including European, Aboriginal and Asian established farming and dairying. However, their production did not equate with the level of European agriculture and farming south of Mount Morgan that received the impetus of rail extension to the Dawson Valley in 1911. This situation was similar to the verdant, fertile hinterland of Ballarat where, from the end of the gold era, many erstwhile mine workers, storekeepers and others farmed and marketed primary produce. Weston Bate declares in his study of Ballarat after gold that primary production included an incentive to locate fruit orchards on clay soils adjacent to old mines.³⁶ At Marmor, over the Dee Range and north east of Mount Morgan, agriculture and mining continued while the small settlement developed further during the Company's operation of a limestone quarry. Spreadborough's farm in the vicinity grew 'the finest paw-paws in Central Queensland'.³⁷

Cowkeepers and milksellers, so identified, accounted for forty-nine licences issued to either males or females between 1890 and 1908. A licence was compulsory in order to keep a single cow, whether for family domestic use or to supply neighbours and others. A small percentage of licences applied to town dairies, but despite successive

³³ Nessie Chardon, Chinese influence on Mount Morgan's early history, typescript, 28 February 1973, p. 4, MMHM.

³⁴ Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, p. 39.

³⁵ MMC, 24 February 1914.

³⁶ Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 70; Weston Bate, *Life after gold: twentieth century Ballarat*, 1994, pp. 26, 27.

³⁷ *Change Room Comments: the Works magazine of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company's mine and Works*, no. 1, vol 1, October 1920, p. 2, Mount Morgan, M14/1566.18, CC/CQU.

legislation and local authority by-laws to control the sale of perishable goods, numerous unlicensed sellers also supplied milk to nearby householders and others. By 1918, Queensland legislation required regular inspection of food and perishable goods outlets, including Mount Morgan. Health Inspector John Hoad laid charges against milk sellers who used open containers that exposed milk to dust during delivery to customers.³⁸ Outside dairies also provided butter. A large dairy operation at Gracemere was a family enterprise of mine director and shareholder Robert Archer. Their 'Archers' Dairy Butter fresh three times a week' found a ready market at both Mount Morgan and Rockhampton.³⁹

By 1900, women conducted most of the nine boarding houses, albeit some operations tended to come and go. For example, poor hygiene at Mrs. Coloquhon's boarding house, 'near the Queensland National Bank' [Morgan Street] and a robbery at Mrs. Bury's boarding house in Gordon Street north of the town did little to reassure the public of satisfactory standards at these establishments. However, Mrs. J. Woods advertised her 'Star' boarding house 'next to the *Argus* office' in Morgan Street, offering board at £1 per week, and assuring readers that 'the whole place has been thoroughly cleaned'.⁴⁰ Mrs. Evans' Railway Boarding House was located alongside the line and near the Railway Hotel that opened before the line to Mount Morgan was completed.

The railway that was essential to the mine was also the trade lifeline for local merchants. Despite town concern, the Department of Railways decided, typically, in terms of railway depot and workshop space, to locate the station away from the trading centre. Hotel buggies met trains, and town cartage of rail freights was a new enterprise. However, whilst the railway served the town and district, with 5 071 passenger bookings in 1907, the road to Rockhampton remained the awful Razorback track,

³⁸ CPSMM, Bench record and summons book, 13 November 1918, CPS 7B/S8, QSA.

³⁹ *Critic*, 11 January 1907.

⁴⁰ *MMA*, 4 May 1900.

unused by most and rarely maintained by local or state authority.⁴¹ The Mount Morgan mine received vast tonnages by rail compared to rail freight to the town. Moreover, the increased demand for copper in World War I saw Mount Morgan production boosted to greater tonnages. Paradoxically, passenger returns increased for a time when men left Mount Morgan to join up, and some families left the town for the duration.

<u>Mount Morgan Railway, Freight Report, 1908</u>			
<u>received</u>		<u>forwarded</u>	
Company	22 127 tons	Company	585 tons
Town	937 tons	Town	82 tons ⁴²

Table 2. Rail freight and passenger returns, Mount Morgan, 1908.

Local enterprise was dependent throughout on the economic stability of the Company. Industrial conflict closed the mine for the year of 1921 and many left the town, causing rapid commercial decline. Frequent rail services soon fell away and demand for rolling stock diminished. Therefore, Mrs. Evans' substantial boarding house lost custom as railway workers were dismissed or relocated to another line.

A constant, highly competitive liquor trade flourished at mining towns where populations increased rapidly.⁴³ However, no hotel was perpetually lucrative at Mount Morgan, given the number and fluctuating standards of establishments. Their trade was also affected by population change and availability of work in the town. By 1900, with twenty-two hotels and six wine saloons operating,⁴⁴ the local authority refused licence applications for proposed hotels, declaring that existing premises catered adequately for the population.⁴⁵ The constant change of licensees at Mount Morgan, not only within the town, but also those who moved between the town and Rockhampton indicated

⁴¹ The parlous state of regional roads after railway connection remained a perpetual issue in Central Queensland.

⁴² *MB*, 8 September 1908.

⁴³ A.E. Dingle, "'A truly magnificent thirst': an historical survey of Australian drinking habits", *Historical Studies*, no. 75, vol. 19, October 1980, p. 240.

⁴⁴ *Queensland Government Gazette (QGG)*, 1900, no. 14, vol. LXXIII, pp. 109, 111.

⁴⁵ *Morning Bulletin (MB)* 10 July 1896.

inter-town trade connection and customer influence. For example, W. Crowe advertised his years of experience as an hotelier at Mount Morgan when he took over the Argyle Hotel at Rockhampton. Even when he moved on to the Windsor Hotel, Crowe continued to advertise his Mount Morgan connection.⁴⁶

Strong competition between licencees saw hotel advertisements offering 'clean accommodation', 'spacious balcony rooms', 'an excellent table' and 'best wines and spirits'.⁴⁷ Establishments might be promoted as 'clean', but few advertisements mentioned a standard of hygiene. Hotels varied in size and appointments, but most provided space at the rear of the premises for horses and stabling. On the scale of quality service, large establishments in the centre of the town offered facilities where, by tradition, male associations and fraternities held meetings and social functions. These activities ranged from formal meeting and discussion to an illuminated address or entertainment from the floor in songs and verse, the latter hosted by the hotelier.⁴⁸ On the lower scale of service, some concentrated on bar sales, with perhaps a billiard hall and wine saloon attached to or near the hotel premises. Six billiard rooms operated in Mount Morgan in 1900 compared to seven in Rockhampton.⁴⁹ Enterprising publicans who moved to other hotels renamed their new premises in the process; for example, by 1908, James Stack, of the old Sunburst Hotel, Tipperary Point, moved to the more prestigious Leichhardt Hotel in the centre of town. His brother John, late of the Golden Spur Hotel, Baree, took over the Sunburst and renamed it the Exchange.⁵⁰

The earliest pubs and hotels sold spirits, and three wine saloons functioned in the Tipperary Point area alone. However, for quantity sales and turnover, beers soon became more than a novelty, their market overcoming the illegal and suspect

⁴⁶ *MMA*, 12 April 1900.

⁴⁷ *MMA*, 11 May 1900.

⁴⁸ *MB*, 22 February 1909.

⁴⁹ *QGG*, 8 August 1900, vol. LXXIII, no. 14, p. 112.

⁵⁰ *Critic*, 2 August 1908.

distribution of bulk spirits, an issue to be discussed in chapter four. Conversely, as some beers deteriorated during storage periods, drinkers became wary of poor quality. Licensed victuallers reassured patrons publicly of the purity and wholesomeness of new beers; for example, a news item promoting Abbotsford as 'a beer especially for this climate' and claiming that the working-man would not suffer ill effects from the brew, appeared with the advertisement :

Abbotsford beer, brewed by publicans for publicans, on tap at leading hotels in Rockhampton and Mount Morgan. Obtainable at Calliungal and Queensland and National Hotel, and Stacks Exchange Hotel.⁵¹

Trade in accommodation and meals perpetuated the entrenched cultural tradition of provision of food and shelter for casual and permanent guests. By the late nineteenth century, hotels that replaced the inns and shanties of earlier years were licensed to operate within the conditions of Queensland legislation. Public houses were required to remain open during gazetted trading hours, a regulation that applied even if, as Tindall points out in relation to Kentish Town, during development and extensions to buildings, hotels might be 'left amid acres of churned mud'.⁵² At Mount Morgan, trade continued during alteration or extensions. Further, licensees required permission from the court to be absent from the premises even for a single day, and must name another to take charge of the establishment during the licensee's absence.⁵³ By 1908, the change in liquor trading hours meant hotels closed to casual drinkers on Sundays, but might serve paying guests. This brought immediate and typical public reaction, not only from local imbibers, but hoteliers also:

To cope with Sunday hotel closing,
Abbotsford beer will be sold here
Every day of the week except Sunday,
So make it all right to buy on Saturday night
Enough beer to last you till Monday.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

⁵² Tindall, *The fields beneath*, p. 147.

⁵³ CPSMM, Deposition Book, 15 August 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁵⁴ *Critic*, 13 November 1908.

John Tucker took over the licence of the Calliungal Hotel in 1911, declaring through the press that he 'had taken a grip on the management' of the most popular house in the town and that it offered 'every comfort and convenience'. Whilst Tucker's wife conducted the domestic and dining arrangements of the hotel, his added incentive for trade was the latest telegraphic sporting information received through Rockhampton.⁵⁵ Yet by 1925, and despite the threat of legal proceedings, Tucker's widow ignored local authority notices to renew the urinal trough and downpipe at the hotel.⁵⁶ Her inaction was probably a reflection of decline at the mine and town, for, by 1927, general deepening of the economic depression and closure of the mine saw traders' expenditure on sanitation and maintenance cease. This simply compounded the general problem of inadequate hygiene at commercial premises.⁵⁷

Hotels and boarding houses became the main diningrooms until tearooms gained popularity and reflected social change. Women who were 'respectable' did not frequent hotels, but for those who could afford the cost, the growing popularity of the teashop provided refreshments and a place for social interaction. Such non-gender specific establishments suggest a form of the traditional 'tea meeting' popularised in Central Queensland by some associations including the Independent Order of Rechabites, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.⁵⁸ In a six-day working week at Mount Morgan, not all businesses closed in the middle of the day and merchants or employees might frequent tearooms during the 'dinner hour'. The A.B.C. Refreshment rooms operated by 1907,⁵⁹ while locally produced goods and drinks were the mainstay of business at Mrs. I.E. Banks' 'new and up to date tea and soft drink rooms' in East

⁵⁵ *Critic*, 3 May 1912.

⁵⁶ Mount Morgan Municipal Council (Council), Minutes, 23 September 1897, 14 June 1898, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives (MMSCA).

⁵⁷ The legal consequences of failure to observe by-laws to overcome poor public sanitation and hygiene are addressed further in chapter four.

⁵⁸ *CQT*, 14 September 1889.

⁵⁹ *Critic*, 18 August 1907.

Street.⁶⁰ When a Council by-law permitted such establishments to remain open after normal shop closing hours, trade extended to cater for evening walkers who bought papers that arrived by the late train, and for film 'interval' periods and local dances. Mrs. Stokes conducted the Dainty Little Pie Shop next to the Olympia theatre in East Street, opening for light lunches from 12 noon until 2 p.m. and in the evening for light refreshments from 8 p.m. until midnight.⁶¹ By 1913, the Arctic Cafe in Morgan Street was 'cheek by jowl' with chemist Hempenstall on one side and tailor Sid Gray on the other.

In addition to Rockhampton aerated waters, vendors sold locally manufactured drinks: J.V. Hennegan was a brewer in town who in 1900 manufactured an entirely new 'seasonable' soft drink from a recipe imported from another brewer. A similar venture two years previously was unsuccessful for Hennegan, but his new 'Ultrya Cocktail' became popular. His manufacture to marketing of the entire product took place at Mount Morgan, bottles blown at the factory, contents brewed and the label design 'a work of art'.⁶² Hennegan was a competitor of Butler & Childs who manufactured and marketed under the 'Boxton' label a range of 'cordial and special drinks' including Lager Ale, Dandelion Ale, Horehound, Tonic, Kola Champagne, Ginger Ale, Lemonade and Ginger Beer.⁶³

The newsagency business was a profitable enterprise and offered upward mobility for the proprietor.⁶⁴ The newsagent's image of heightened literacy accompanied press distribution and sale of published literature. Newsagency licences ensured a regular income, carried goodwill and were limited in number for any town. Those connected with the press and newsagencies included Sam Lee, E.H.L. Eastwood, Charles Briggs,

⁶⁰ *MB*, 8 September 1908.

⁶¹ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 1 June 1917.

⁶² *MMA*, 4 May 1900.

⁶³ *Pugh's Almanac*, 1900-1901, pp. 805-806.

⁶⁴ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1991, pp. 679, 689.

John Geddes Hay and Jens Lundager. The diversity of their enterprises ranged from newsagency-bookseller, newspaper owner, photographer and other agencies including musical instruments.⁶⁵ However, small general stores throughout Mount Morgan also sold newspapers. By 1908, four suburban outlets operated for the *Capricornian*, and thirteen for the *Critic* including four at Baree.⁶⁶ In 1911 at Rockhampton, seventeen stores were newspaper outlets.⁶⁷ Mount Morgan newsagents sold a variety of magazines, mostly gender specific and marketed in about similar quantities. These were distributed not only in the town and district, but also through newspaper post to the Dawson Valley and western Queensland.

The bootmaking trade was essential in town development, but by comparison with the newsagency business remained low on the social scale. The trade seemed committed to the class that Rev. Samuel Marsden in 1820 equated with criminality, declaring that the thief 'had been' raised as a 'shoemaker, taylor[sic] or barber'.⁶⁸ Responsibility and permanency of residence brought respect and although some trades might not be lucrative, income that was sufficient to support a family elevated the status of an artisan. Rising unionism found much support from the trades of bookmaker, tailor, barber, carpenter, blacksmith and stonemason, but the self-employed might appear suspect to unions and unionists. In the manufacture and marketing of footwear, work boots were commodity constants. At Mount Morgan, the mining environment destroyed footwear into rotting leather and rusting boot nails, whether miners worked above ground in areas of mud or chemical leaching, or in the hot and humid conditions underground where water usage decreased dust pollution. Some young Mount Morgan bootmakers remained in the trade, but many others, including J. (Nobby) Tuesley, used their bootmaking years to mark time whilst awaiting the opportunity to work at the

⁶⁵ *Critic*, 5 December 1913.

⁶⁶ *Capricornian*, 4 January 1908; *Critic*, 20 November 1908.

⁶⁷ *Capricornian*, 24 March 1911.

⁶⁸ Scott Brown, 'The clothing trades in colonial New South Wales: a study into the status of tailors and shoemakers in colonial New South Wales', *Perspectives on Australian history*, Internet Family History Association of Australia, February 1999, pp. 1, 4.

mine.⁶⁹ Another was Charlie Shannon who recalled that both his uncle and father made and repaired miners' boots at their shop 'over the hill on the way to the mine'.⁷⁰ This was at Tipperary Point, where the Shannons belonged to the close-knit Irish community. The family was profoundly anti-conservative, their Labor leanings correlating perhaps with the seminal unionism of the bootmaking trade.⁷¹

Edgar Foreman conducted 'universal' emporiums at Rockhampton and Mount Morgan, the latter occupying one of the largest buildings in the town. The extensive boot and shoe department operated only at Mount Morgan, where the vast array of footwear included more than 62 styles: 17 for men, 25 for women, 15 for boys and girls and five for infants. Foreman's kept large stocks of 'miscellaneous' footwear from slippers to goloshes.⁷² However, their Quaker co-operative ethic was evident in their prices set lower than those of competitors and their trade for cash only. Foreman's did not employ bootmakers, but Hy McLean was a town bootmaker whose most successful products were his hand-sewn 'Linda' Blucher (green sole) boots for 7s.11d and 8s.11d a pair, 'the easiest and best wearing Working Boots ever introduced to Mount Morgan miners'.⁷³

Mount Morgan historiography concentrates on perhaps one or two individuals in relation to a particular trade or profession. One such was Jens Hansen Lundager, mentioned in chapter two and above. As the first professional, official photographer for the mine who conducted his own photography and newsagency business in the town, Lundager entered the fourth estate as journalist and leader writer of the *Mount Morgan*

⁶⁹ Marcombe, 23 March 1997, OH.

⁷⁰ Charlie Shannon, interview with the author, 8 October 1992, MMOH. Shannon, a retired tradesman carpenter at the mine was in his 80s when interviewed. He was the most forthright of many unionists amongst forty-two interviewees.

⁷¹ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 284; Graeme Davison, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*, Melbourne, 1978, p. 62.

⁷² Edward Foreman, *The Edward Foreman Almanac: Direct Importer and Universal Provider*, Mount Morgan, 1906, pp. 47, 48.

⁷³ *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

Argus. Graeme Griffin's insightful thesis of Lundager suggests he was a Labor radical.⁷⁴ However, while the mine hierarchy ignored Lundager's politics, they criticised the Labor leanings of employees. Frederick Wham became mine photographer after Lundager, and other photographers established in the town.⁷⁵ Local operations survived the infiltration of outside agencies like the International Studios of Sydney that opened a Mount Morgan agency in 1911 but closed after a short period despite undercutting town prices.⁷⁶

Charles Briggs, mentioned above, was primarily an auctioneer and commission agent who used handsome and expensive press advertisements to ply his trade. Perhaps this prompted his own press to tout him as 'knight of the hammer'.⁷⁷ The interest in urban land boomed at Mount Morgan by 1905, when Briggs was an alderman. He became mayor later, his terms of office doubtless advancing his local status and his enterprise in real estate. An erstwhile lay preacher and seeming devotee of community interest, Briggs served on committees for the School of Arts, Central Boys School, and Technical College.⁷⁸ From 1900, he operated the weekly *Mount Morgan Argus*, located next door to his auctioneering and commission agency that adjoined the Argus Printery, another Briggs enterprise.⁷⁹ However, as will be seen in chapter four, the consequences of his gregarious journalism revealed the character flaws behind his public persona.

With the exception of a few enterprises that included the press, ties of common interest connected the mine to outside contractors, traders and merchants. Contractors and other self-employed were in a position to work unregulated hours, but outside markets and economic circumstance affected trade and custom. Other forces, including

⁷⁴ Graeme Griffin, *Photographs of old Mount Morgan and its mine: a study of the historical and cultural context of a photographic archive*, vol 1, 1987, pp. 62, 66, MA thesis, Murdoch University, WA.

⁷⁵ *Critic*, 25 August 1911; Mercer family papers, 1900-1920, Rockhampton and District Historical Society, (RDHS).

⁷⁶ *MMA*, 11 May, 8 June 1900.

⁷⁷ *MMA*, 6 February 1900.

⁷⁸ *MMA*, 4 September 1908.

⁷⁹ *MMC*, 11 October 1894; F.L. Golding, Alderman Charles Briggs, typescript, October 1982, MMHM.

the licensing court, exerted considerable control. Licensing was a legal requirement for most trades, but payment of a fee in order to operate was a contentious issue and a threat to enterprise for many.

Licensed industries included timber getting, in which cutters hauled the forest bounty to the mine timber mill. The local timber industry flourished at a time when devastation of the natural environment received scant thought and rare public comment. Timber getters included those under contract to the mine as well as outsiders. They tended to work in remote locations and in an enterprise that was barely lucrative. Many were charged and fined regularly for working without a licence. Given the one guinea fee, and that the location of logging suggested the unlikelihood of detection, this was probably enough incentive to forego payment of a licence. For example, George Curtis, 16, cooked for his father and brother, timbergetters, at their Oakey Creek hut south of Mount Morgan. Curtis senior and his elder son worked at a camp nine kilometres distant. Three times weekly, George took their meals for two or three days. Whilst at the camp, he carried tools from tree to tree at the felling site about one kilometre from camp.⁸⁰ Charged with timbergetting without a licence, George, his father and brother received a fine of £5 each and costs at the Mount Morgan Court of Petty Sessions.

By 1896, the mine sawmill cut hardwood at the daily rate of 8 000 super feet, including round timber for shafts and tunnels and more than 2 000 shingles for buildings.⁸¹ At the peak of the timber industry in the early 1900s, some 150 timber haulers were contracted to the Company.⁸² These probably included those teamsters who transported loads of charcoal processed in the bush. This commodity was much in demand for industrial purposes in the later nineteenth century, and mine management

⁸⁰ CPSMM, Deposition Book, 22 November 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁸¹ Frank Cunningham, Mount Morgan mine horses, typescript, 1974, p. 2, MMHM. Frank Cunningham snr. supervised stabling, care and use of the horses from 1909 until 1928, when the horses were sold after closure of the mine.

⁸² John Kerr, *Mount Morgan gold, copper and oil*, St. Lucia, 1982, p. 78.

brought Italian immigrants to Mount Morgan to produce and supply charcoal for the mine. They worked in gangs and on contract, operating within a ten-kilometre radius of the mine and moving through Mount Victoria, Trotters Creek, Charcoal Gully and Dee Range as they selected and felled timber to be burned in pits. About 100 bags of charcoal equalled five tons, the loads transported to the mine on flat-topped drays.⁸³

Timbergetting for the mine declined after twenty years of constant supply to satisfy the seemingly insatiable appetite of the mine for construction timber and fuel. The focus of supply shifted from 1905 when coal replaced billet wood as the principal fuel for the mine. Supplies of the fossil fuel were imported at first, brought up the Fitzroy River by freighter to Rockhampton and consigned on rail to the mine. However, as pointed out in chapter two, the railway extension from Mount Morgan to the Dawson Valley in 1911 saw the district's coal industry increase. In 1921, the Company acquired the Baralaba colliery in the Valley and railed coal direct to Mount Morgan. The extension of operations increased the town's connection with Baralaba and stimulated local enterprise at the coal settlement.⁸⁴

At the expense of the mine labour force, large and small traders and outside contractors, the greed of mine management brought profit to the Company from small scale trading. One such was the sale of surplus timber left from the vast quantities used at the mine.⁸⁵ Although locals gathered firewood from the bush, progressively, the mine mill supplied town households. Deliveries in 1920 exceeded twelve hundred loads of firewood, each weighing approximately one ton and priced at 14s. Compared to town tonnage and load prices, the mine price undercut the two local wood merchants by almost 100 per cent.⁸⁶ Some timber getters supplied a town timber yard, so the industry, *per se*, operated at three levels, production, wholesale and retail.

⁸³ William O'Brien, Some notes on Mount Morgan, typescript, n.d., p. 3, , MMHM.

⁸⁴ A.A. Boyd, A history of Mount Morgan, typescript, c.1936, p. 16, D15/309.2, CC/CQU.

⁸⁵ Sykes, *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan*, p. 29.

⁸⁶ MMGMC, Firewood sales, 4 February 1921, D15/281, CC/CQU.

The use of horses as the main form of personal and regional transport was significant to economic and social life in the nineteenth century and early 1900s. Horses were valued and valuable. Whilst feed and paddocking of the animals was essential, horses might go missing if not hobbled. A reward of £2 was standard in 1888 and remained so for two decades. By contrast, the serious offence of horse stealing brought a reward of £50 on conviction of the 'stealers'. Horse-trading was sound business. Rutherford's Horse Bazaar at Rockhampton was the major dealer in Central Queensland and provided the Mount Morgan Company with saddle horses for the use of mine supervisors at the mine site, and coach horses for general manager, directors and important visitors.⁸⁷ At the mine, and until tram and rail lines were installed, horses were used for haulage, not only of timber, but also to haul trucks of ore from the underground stopes to ore passes, trucks of molten slag from the furnaces, and to manoeuvre heavy machinery into position at the surface Works. The Company purchased draft horses, some with Suffolk and Clydesdale bloodlines and bred in Rockhampton or western Queensland. The Archer family at Gracemere supplied horses for the Australian contingents during the Boer War and by 1907, Archer sold draught horses at £5 to £8 each to the Company 'where there is a fair demand'.⁸⁸

Not all mine horses were heavy stock; the replacement of male truckers with pit ponies to haul ore trucks from underground was a cost cutting method introduced in 1916. The care of mine horses was essential and expensive. Three sets of stables operated over time, the last constructed in 1919 at a location within two kilometres of the mine site. Grazing did not sustain mine workhorses. Outside trade benefited with Company purchase of feeds from Rockhampton primary produce merchants in ever-increasing quantities and cost, the goods brought to the mine by rail. By 1905, the number one rail line to the mine branched off near the town station and later, the

⁸⁷ Cunningham, Mount Morgan mine horses, p. 5.

⁸⁸ R.S. Archer to A. Hughes, 31 July 1907, Letter Book 1904-1912, Archer Collection, K/1014, Mitchell Library, (ML).

number two branch line extended from a junction at Walterhall. Each extension was less than two kilometres. The store for grain and chaff railed direct to the mine was a Works building where bags of chaff were unloaded and the grain discharged from rail trucks and fed by bucket elevator to a silo.

The influence of the mine on the general economy reached far beyond the local scene. Data prepared by the company in 1919 and cited below claims an umbrella of

<u>Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited.</u>			
<u>Statement No. 1</u>			
Number of persons dependent on Company's operations			
<u>QUEENSLAND</u>			
Direct employees			1 700
Timber and Firewood cutters			73
Railway employees			250
Waterside Workers			63
Seamen			20
Merchants, Storekeepers and Manufacturers			130
Farmers			15
Coal Miners			
Howard	2		
Ipswich coke	14		
Ipswich "coal"	25		
Blair Athol	<u>90</u>		<u>131</u>
			2 382
<u>Population of Mount Morgan</u>			
Marmor and Calliungal (MM)	12 150		
Company's employees	<u>1 700</u>		
Dependents	10 450		
MM & Marmor dependents			10 450
<u>Employed in Queensland</u>			
outside Mount Morgan	682		
Dependents (each)	<u>5 (each)</u>		
outside dependents on the mine			<u>3 410</u>
sub-total			16 242
<u>Port Kembla and dependents</u>			
(Mount Morgan Proportion)			<u>1 000</u>
<u>APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PERSONS DEPENDENT ON</u>			
<u>THE MOUNT MORGAN MINE FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD.</u>			
			17 242 ⁸⁹

Table 3. Estimated number of persons dependent on the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, 1919.

⁸⁹ MMGMC, Statement No. 1, 13 November 1919, D15/281, CC/CQU.

dependence on the mine for employment and commercial enterprise within the region and, indeed, Queensland. Some inaccuracies in the analysis suggest management's assertion that the *total* Mount Morgan population depended on the mine to be incorrect. Nonetheless, use of the data provided a bargaining point against union action in 1919, and in industrial negotiations in 1921 when the Company required the men to accept a wage reduction.⁹⁰ Chapter six includes discussion of this issue.



Fig. 11. Baree Post office and store, c. 1918. Wide horizontal cladding to interior, exposed external timbers, enclosed verandah on left with skillion roof provides shop space. Frontage to the road is terraced to the ground level of steps, right, near split slab fence. Wide metal plates above foundation posts of bush timber protect against white ants.

The original settlement known as the 'Two Mile' north of Mount Morgan was proclaimed 'Baree', where settlement developed near the Golden Spur Hotel. The old establishment had several changes of licensee in little more than twenty years, but patrons were reassured always of the high standard of the hotel 'table'.⁹¹ Decentralised shopping at Mount Morgan began at Baree's Golden Cob Cash Store and other

⁹⁰ A.A. Boyd, *A history of Mount Morgan*, p. 17, D15/309.2, CC/CQU.

⁹¹ *Critic*, 23 January 1914.

storekeepers brought trade. In turn, resident numbers warranted a school, churches, post office, (incorporated with McGladdery's Store, above), and other services as pointed out in chapter two. The character of Baree consolidated after 1909 when alteration to municipal and shire boundaries saw the suburb administered by the Calliungal shire. Doubtless, the rural oriented shire by-laws differed from those for Mount Morgan municipality; for example, in the regulations for the conduct of sporting fixtures, to be discussed in chapter nine.

Baree was also at the opposite end of town to the older, generally unseen suburbs to the south, including the large area of reserves including the cemetery, sanitary depot and town slaughteryards that extended south-east along Horse Creek. Geographically, Baree was out of sight of Mount Morgan and the mine and promoted a self-imposed image of difference, albeit existing within the economic structure of the town. On a broader note, if Mount Morgan was a microcosm of Rockhampton, so was Baree of Mount Morgan.

The rough tracks, hills and valleys of Mount Morgan encouraged a horse taxi trade. The vehicles used were four-wheeled, covered buggies. Travel at night was hazardous, with only a carriage lamp to guide a vehicle on dreadful roads in a poorly lit town. River crossings were equally dangerous for horse vehicles, particularly at night. The easiest available crossing was directly below the mine, in a shallow, river bed area outside the wall of the number five dam.

With the railway station located typically some distance from the town centre, taxis met all trains and also took fares to rail departures. Within twenty years, however, motor vehicles, their drivers wearing long 'dust coats' and driving caps joined horse taxis to provide transport for those who could pay and were not afraid of combustion engine technology. Perhaps the cost of the fare and travel in a noisy, smelly,



Fig. 12 . Dee River crossing between mine and town, c. 1900. Note position of buggies in river bed crossing below the dam wall. It is probably summer, see harnessed horses stand in the water, an action typical of some animals in north Queensland; figures in the foreground wear light clothing and wide brimmed hats of the era.

automobile taxi reflected passenger preference, and accounted for the mix of vehicles on the 'rank' along the centre of Morgan Street, the shopping centre and widest road in town. Private motor vehicles were typically few during the period, although a motor vehicle added to the public persona of the merchant with a large store and who assumed



Fig. 13. Horse and motor taxis, Morgan Street shopping centre, c. 1923.

petite bourgeoisie status. He might hold office in local government, provide financial and administrative support to the town hospital and serve on community committees. D.D. O'Connell was such a merchant. He conducted a large emporium for soft furnishings and furniture, fashion and drapery, commanding much of the flourishing tailoring trade in town for both male and female customers. Moreover, his investment in real estate and associated commercial interests elevated him to a local status the equivalent of mine senior staff.⁹² Astute in business, O'Connell placed attractive advertisements in the local press for 'D.D. O'Connell Tailors', advising when a consignment of new worsted and woollen suitings was on the floor and assuring the public that a three-piece suit tailored in the workroom would be completed within three weeks.⁹³ The circumstance of female employees at local stores and workrooms is addressed in chapter eight, but this chapter suggests that O'Connell employed tailors, seamstresses and unskilled assistants in workrooms where wedding gowns and ensembles were designed, sewn and embroidered. His main competitor was Ferriter's Store, their succinct advertising texts appearing without charge in the columns of the *Critic*, where readers might peruse the rhetoric before becoming aware of an embedded advertisement:

Australia for the Australians every time. Just to hand, the famous Marrickville Tweeds - manufactured by Vicars. Strong, durable, and the price is most reasonable.⁹⁴

Employment at O'Connell's and Ferriter's was a contradiction in terms to the local maxim that a woman's place was in the home. However, Kelly's Store employed males only, a practice that throughout the period was a tradition at the family operated store. The public image of Kelly as a staunch supporter of sporting clubs and male only hotel functions suggests a gender specific employment style to enhance his local status. Mount Morgan enterprise did not have a monopoly on trade. Travelling markets

⁹² *Critic*, 4 September 1908.

⁹³ *Critic*, 2 August 1917.

⁹⁴ *Critic*, 24 November 1911.

operated in Queensland by 1900 and Russell Wilkins' Red Arcade, at which 'The Shilling Table' was a major attraction, operated in Mount Morgan for two weeks only, selling for cash at lower than town prices and claiming to give the best value in the state. However, townspeople visited the Arcade for entertainment as much as a bargain and the effect on local trade was minimal.⁹⁵ More significant were the Rockhampton business competitors who visited the town and challenged local suppliers. One representative took rooms at the Calliungal Hotel to receive local orders for suits to be tailored by J.W. Jones, a Rockhampton tailor who advertised extensively in the local press during sales promotions at Mount Morgan.⁹⁶



Fig. 14. Male employees, Kelly & Sons, 'universal providers', 1917, the store extends over two land blocks and features two wide entrances.

Large, established stores at Rockhampton tended to open branches at Mount Morgan and rural towns further west. This applied mainly to general and clothing traders, including Woods & Company, Kirby & Co., and James Stewart & Co. Ltd. Stewart was a partner in a drapery and furniture shop at Rockhampton by 1863 and

⁹⁵ *MMA*, 8 June 1900.

⁹⁶ *Critic*, 6 November 1903.

within twenty years traded independently in what remained for generations the most prestigious department store in the main street of town. A shareholder and director of the mine Company by 1888, Stewart was appointed board chairman from 1889 to 1893, after which he relinquished his positions but retained his shares.⁹⁷ An avid mining investor, he held shares in seventeen operations in the Rockhampton region by 1903.⁹⁸ However, as founder of James Stewart & Co. Ltd., Rockhampton, he was also the quintessential town merchant, with store branches at Blackall, Barcaldine and as far as Longreach, 800 kilometres west but connected by rail with Rockhampton. These branches traded as subsidiaries under the name of the parent organisation.

At Mount Morgan, Stewart's financial operation was The Mount Morgan Trading Company, for which he built the largest, most impressive timber store in town on land described as the 'Estate of Minnie Gordon, Mount Morgan, Portion 247'.⁹⁹ The Mount Morgan Trading Company paid rent of less than five per cent on the value of the building. Discussion in chapter one confirms that Portion 247 included the 'square mile of 647 acres of freehold' that was the mine holding of the Mount Morgan mine syndicate. The Portion was historic space already and the name 'Minnie Gordon' was significant to the site when in 1896, Stewart leased the south eastern corner from the estate. Mount Morgan history suggests that Minnie Gordon, who told the Morgans the location of the mine, became destitute and was institutionalised until her death, when the annual rent to the estate was a mere £18.

For almost 30 years the Mount Morgan Trading Company transferred substantial net profits annually to the three Rockhampton shareholders. Division of the first £500 profit in July 1896 read: James Stewart, Capital Account 'four-sixths', Robert McFarlane

⁹⁷ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, vol. 1, nos. 3-8, 1888-1893, D15/271, CC/CQU.

⁹⁸ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 501-503.

⁹⁹ James Stewart, *Private Journal 1894-1931*, January 1929, Folio 239, James Stewart & Co. Ltd. Collection, M11/1677, CC/CQU.

and Charles Steele, one sixth each.¹⁰⁰ Within twelve months, Mount Morgan profits doubled, then for three years increased by almost 25 per cent annually until 1901. During the worst years of the great drought, profits fell by 40 per cent. The vast rains that rejuvenated the state revived business also and Stewart's at Mount Morgan saw net profit increase by 120 per cent in 1904.¹⁰¹ The store reaped steady profits for transfer to Rockhampton until 1918, when high overhead costs to accommodate a large staff, and competition from five similar retailers in the town hampered profits. The first bad debts appeared in the accounts, while salaries increased to almost £2 400 for a gross profit of little more than £5 000. The profits of the Mount Morgan store slumped in 1919 yet, despite the death of James Stewart in 1923 and closure of the western branches by 1926, staff numbers and salaries at the Mount Morgan Trading Company remained unaltered in the face of bad debts of about £330. In 1927, reduced staff brought a total wages



Fig. 15. James Stewart & Co. c. 1917, includes emporium, adjoining stores for shoes, furniture and furnishings

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, Private Journal, January 1896, Folio 7, M11/1677, CC/CQU.

¹⁰¹ Stewart, Private Journal, 24 July 1900-July 1904, Folios 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, M11/1677, CC/CQU.

reduction of 75 per cent, but this could not prevent a gross trading loss of more than £1500 and the doubling of bad debts. James Stewart & Co. Rockhampton closed the Mount Morgan Trading Company in 1928, transferring the stock on hand to Rockhampton and selling the Mount Morgan land and buildings at a loss of £450.¹⁰²

For many at Mount Morgan, the opening of the Company co-operative store in September 1919 came too late. In 1911, a public meeting in the Mount Morgan School of Arts rejected a motion for the establishment of such an enterprise, a refusal that stemmed probably from recollections of a mine co-operative that failed years earlier. Declared reasons at the time were the lack of union support and capital, also inept organisation and a location distanced from the main business area. If reported correctly, this indicated a venture doomed as it began. A journalist of the radical *Critic* asserted that strong union support in both organisation and custom was critical for the success of a store. Furthermore, the press declared that mine employees should take the opportunity to support an enterprise that would offer goods at prices that were 25 per cent less than in town: 'Workers, bung in solid and avail yourselves of it'.¹⁰³ Despite press agitation, the matter of a store at Mount Morgan rested for eight years until management opened a co-operative store on Company land.

Staffed and administered by a committee of fifteen, the store included four Company staff members and other representatives nominated by general manager Adam Boyd. Three were general office employees, another was in the transport department, and eleven worked in other sections of the mine: Works, construction, workshop, the concentrator, sinter and powerhouse.¹⁰⁴ Rules for trade included bonus tickets to five per cent of account value that were paid on certain dates each month and applied only to Company employees, and on purchases by Company employees. The rights and

¹⁰² Stewart, Private Journal, July 1923, Folio 239, 1928, Folios 146, 154, 155, 157, 284, 188, 226, 233, M11/1677, CC/CQU.

¹⁰³ *Critic*, 14 July 1911.

¹⁰⁴ *Change Room Comments*, no. 1, vol 1, October 1920, p. 2, M14/1566.18, CC/CQU.

privileges of the well-stocked co-operative store extended to wives and householders, with the warning to employees not to negotiate bonus tickets for friends, or friends' tickets for themselves. The cash receipt provided with goods also showed the bonus detail, thus recording any infringement of the conditions by outside purchasers.¹⁰⁵

The four-weekly turnover for the store ranged from a low £955 in March 1920 to a high of £3 170 in December 1921. By August 1921, the discounts on clothing, manchester and piece goods averaged 19 per cent, while on new stocks of general lines discounts were between ten and fifteen per cent. Prices to Company employees for work clothing were at least 20 per cent lower than local store prices, whilst special



Fig. 16. Company Co-operative Store, 1919; image suggests at least eight staff.

purchases provided 'job lots' for sale at even greater discounts.¹⁰⁶ Although the store at Mount Morgan opened during a period of escalating industrial turmoil and economic

¹⁰⁵ *Change Room Comments*, no. 6, vol 1, January 1921, p. 2, M15/1556.18, CC/CQU.

¹⁰⁶ MMGMC, Employees' Co-operative Store, Price reduction statement no. 12, 12 August 1921, D15/281, CC/CQU; Employees' Co-operative Store, Creditors' Ledger 1919-1927, D15/289, CC/CQU.

decline for Company and town, extant records do not reveal whether the store extended credit at any time. In comparison, 1921 sales at the Throckley District Co-operative Society Store during the colliery strike in Durham fell by one-third, while average credit escalated by 400 per cent. Extended credit was available from the Throckley co-operative, and whilst members could settle debts by not claiming dividends, the privilege included a warning against incurring large debts. For many during strike periods in Throckley, social mores of integrity and 'respectability' ensured the payment of debts, although many more left their debts unpaid.¹⁰⁷ At Mount Morgan the co-operative was shortlived, staff clearing stock and closing the doors by 1927 when the Company went into voluntary liquidation.¹⁰⁸

Fraud was endemic in much trade practice. Most residents perceived traders as conservatives interested in profit at any risk and uncaring of fraud against the worker. As a result, honest traders at Mount Morgan suffered as much public suspicion as those guilty of false practice. Despite agitation from union organisers and the press for fair dealing, the threat to the integrity of town enterprise persisted and any consumer might be the victim of fraud. The cost of living was out of proportion to wages for many. Moreover, the treadmill of poverty did not offer escape for the poorly paid worker whose domestic budget demonstrated lack of thrift or non-payment of debt, with the resultant refusal of service and credit. If, from sheer necessity, lack of funds brought a family to destitution, thereafter their credit rating remained non-existent, even if their financial situation recovered. At the same time, families had no redress from the unscrupulous merchant.

Financial liquidation occurred for any number of reasons, including lack of operating capital and trading expertise. Insolvency at Mount Morgan was a common

¹⁰⁷ Bill Williamson, *Class, community and culture: a biographical study of social change in mining*, London, 1982, pp. 185-187.

¹⁰⁸ MMGMC, Employees' Co-operative Store, Creditors' Ledger, D15/289, CC/CQU.

dilemma that emphasised also the universal threat of impermanence in the mining industry. Failure was not exclusive to trade in any one commodity. Groups and companies, suppliers, miners and labourers, traders, contractors and self-employed moved on when reefs ran out, water reserves dwindled and the market value of mined ore fluctuated. Insolvencies at Mount Morgan in the quarter century 1896 to 1920 totalled almost 230, with an annual high of 25 in 1909 and a low of one in 1919. Numbers averaged fourteen annually from 1896 to 1911 and less than five from 1912 to 1920.¹⁰⁹ As liquidation encompassed a spectrum of enterprise and labour from tobacconists to timber getters, carpenters to commission agents, bakers to brick makers and log haulers to labourers, the trauma of insolvency and destitution struck at any person without resources. For example, insolvent James Cunningham suicided in 1899, three years after applying for *in forma pauperis* on 4 March 1896. He was the brother of successful baker and businessman, John Cunningham.¹¹⁰

<u>Insolvencies, July-October 1899</u>	
William Haughton,	tobacconist
Geo. Keillar Aitken,	commission agent
Gore	woodcutter
Mitchell	log hauler
Dan Morgan, Nine Mile,	timbergetter
J.T. Crompton	carpenter
A.J. Brown	brickmaker
H.A. Williams	woodcarter ¹¹¹

Table 4. Mount Morgan Insolvencies, 1899.

Formation of the Mount Morgan Traders' Association offered mutual protection against defaulting debtors. Yet, when the Official Trustee for Insolvency, J.R. Gair visited Mount Morgan in 1910 to investigate ten of the sixteen insolvent estates in the town – compared to six in Rockhampton – the branch executive or association members were

¹⁰⁹ MMGMC, List of Mount Morgan insolvencies, 1896-1920, D15/281, CC/CQU.

¹¹⁰ CPSMM, Deposition book, 6 April 1899, CPS 7B/P5, QSA.

¹¹¹ Supreme Court, Central District, Liquidation Register 1896-1927, A18937, QSA.

less than helpful.¹¹² Consequently, he was unable to settle insolvents' affairs to the benefit of creditors. Causes of insolvency were not exclusively attributable to dealings with town or mine, but suggested lack of capital, or a want of thrift and business acumen. Nevertheless, ten years later, local downturn was influenced by mine production, ore prices, rising costs and industrial conflict that brought the insidious, gradual loss of jobs and ultimate mine closure.¹¹³ The town reached its nadir when less than half of a peak population of twelve thousand remained, many trapped hopelessly in the cumulative effect of loss of the town's largest employer and escalating economic depression. Council 'found work' for fifty men in January 1926 but could do no more. Attendance at a regular local government meeting was abandoned for want of a quorum, the *Critic* declaring pithily that most aldermen 'had gone bush', their whereabouts unknown. Optimistic verse in the press offered only momentary relief from despair:

This life is elusive
 And chaps get abusive
 When troubles come over again;
 There is always some sorrow
 Prepared for tomorrow,
 Till hope seems to wither and wane.

Both in joy and disaster
 No man is his master,
 And nothing is certain in life;
 There are bills from the bakers
 And candle-stick makers,
 And rows by the score with your wife.

Life is very uncertain-
 We ring down our curtain
 With feelings more puzzled than plain-
 It's a joy to remember
 In June or December,
 The streets will be up once again!¹¹⁴

¹¹² J.S. Gair, 'Report of the official trustee of insolvency at Rockhampton: Queensland Statistics 1910', *QV&P*, 1911, pp. 545, 546,

¹¹³ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 30 May 1927.

¹¹⁴ *Critic*, 19 November 1927.

Government inspectors under the *Pure Foods Act* brought prosecutions against local storekeepers for unhygienic trading practice. This and other issues pertaining to law and order for trade and enterprise during the era of the Company are addressed in chapter four. However, in light of discussion in this chapter, prosecutions relating to trade in perishables as the town declined in the 1920s suggest the consequence of minimal staff and the extension of shelf time for produce. In the town that two decades earlier was a thriving urban place, the local facade changed drastically. Looting was not prevalent when stores closed down, but in the absence of a water supply or fire brigade, few buildings were saved when dwellings and other structures were destroyed in unexplained fires. Enmeshed always in a short-term materialism that relied on weekly wages for its buoyancy, Mount Morgan moved by necessity to an overwhelming dependence on government sustenance. While remaining traders displayed a desperate optimism that the complete closure of the mine would be brief, the *Critic* reported bleakly that:

It is going to be a poor Christmas compared to past years for a lot of people on the Mount. Unemployment is still rife and every day adds further to the ranks. Most of the sustenance allowance has expired, and the prospect of getting work in the immediate future is very remote.¹¹⁵

Ironically, a week later the same press claimed that the town had rallied and over Christmas 1927, at least:

The town will not be so dead after all...each incoming train during the week has been well filled with men who have been working in different parts of the state returning to their families...With those here who are still working, the payout of Christmas Cheer...and [with] the extra ration dole, a good bit of cash should be in play.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ *Critic*, 3 December 1927.

¹¹⁶ *Critic*, 10 December 1927.

Chapter Four

Order and disorder at Mount Morgan: the power of the courts and manipulation of the law

In the British tradition, intervention of police and court action in colonial settlement thwarted the purpose of much violence. The court was also the guardian of laws that defined rights and obligations for social order in domestic, workplace and economic situations. Police magistrates and justices of the peace presided in court practice that enacted the power of the law over local citizens, albeit most people tended to live within the law, perhaps from fear of retribution rather than natural integrity.¹ Thus the courthouse was the theatre where protagonists enacted dramas of law and disorder before the bench, whose role was to ensure that justice was served according to the scripts of legislation that directed every case.² The practice of the law protected the rights of most Mount Morgan residents for possession of property, whether money, land under miner's right, a pair of boots, trousers or a horse. Yet, despite the supposed invulnerability of the courts, bench decisions might demonstrate conflict of interest.³ This chapter presents issues and cases that demonstrated the power of the law at the local level, and others that reflected parameters of law and order in the wider sphere.

Illegal activities that were a microcosm of crime in established towns and cities reflected the urban character of Mount Morgan. At the Small Debts Court and Police

¹ Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: the beginning*, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 338, 341; Rhys Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1982, pp. 348, 349.

² Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, pp. 4-5, 138.

³ Clerk of Petty Sessions Mount Morgan (CPSMM), Deposition Book, 14 November 1887-9 - June 1893, CPS 7B/P1, Queensland State Archives (QSA).



Fig. 17. Mount Morgan courthouse, facing north to town centre. Constructed by 1903, the building included the police precinct.

Court in the Court of Petty Sessions, a visiting magistrate or perhaps several local justices of the peace presided. Courts extended throughout Central Queensland and were not limited to the urban areas of Rockhampton and Mount Morgan. However, pivotal to the Central Queensland legal sphere were the Rockhampton District Court, Criminal Court and Supreme Court that dealt with cases of embezzlement, moral and sexual offences, grand larceny and murder.

By 1901, criminal and civil sittings of the Southern Division District Courts were each held four times yearly at Rockhampton Supreme Court, six times at Brisbane and twice yearly at other towns in central, western and southern Queensland.⁴ Officers of the District Court gained increasing influence - Rockhampton Police Magistrates and District Court judges conducted trials by jury to deal with charges from grand theft to murder. Those charged with minor offences at Mount Morgan were brought before the local courts and if convicted and sentenced were committed generally to Rockhampton

⁴ Thomas Macleod and T.W. McCawley, *The Queensland Justice of the Peace and Local Authorities' Journal*, vol. V, December 1911, pp. 149-153.

Gaol. The 'lock-up' at Mount Morgan held those charged before hearing, or sentenced for several days in default payment of fines. Others, depending upon the seriousness of offences, were committed for trial at the Rockhampton District Supreme Court after initial hearing of the charge at Mount Morgan. This obvious superiority in court authority, proceedings and representation served to reinforce Mount Morgan resentment of Rockhampton.

Many cases heard at the Mount Morgan court reflected a sub-culture that was much removed in social structure and space from most of the general working-class population. Doubtless, similar petty offenders and criminals existed elsewhere,⁵ but the Mount Morgan situation instanced the mobility of miners in an industry notorious for short-lived enterprises. Policing of the law to maintain order was critical to development in a town where many did not aspire to permanence or respectability within the community. When Mount Morgan passed an era of early settlement and town expansion occurred at a distance from the mine, spatial determinants influenced attitudes to the law more noticeably. As pointed out in chapters one and two, early settlements including Tipperary Point, Red Hill and Dee River flats became permanent suburbs while miners' camps tended to relocate periodically according to town development. Moreover, Chinese habitations consolidated south along the Dee River and Horse Creek, while Aboriginal camps were on the outskirts of town.

The local court dealt with charges of drunk and disorderly, obscene language and threat, illegal trading, gambling, drugs, petty larceny and assault, desertion and neglect. At the same time however, not all charges for perceived offences proceeded. Frequently, neither plaintiff nor defendant appeared in court, the charges were dismissed⁶ and court expenses incurred were the responsibility of the public purse.

⁵ Weston Bate, *Life after gold: twentieth century Ballarat*, Melbourne, 1994, p. 43.

⁶ CPSMM, Bench record and summons book for the Children's Court (Bench book, Children's Court), 28 September 1905, CPS 7B/S3(a), (QSA). Children's Court Bench books (a) and (b) at QSA are bound with CPS 7B/S3.

Moreover, even if the plaintiff and defendant were present for a case of threat by an individual against another's person, the bench tended to dismiss the case.⁷

The development of Mount Morgan demonstrated that the type and frequency of offences changed little in the passage of a century from first colonial settlement. Perhaps the raw style of Mount Morgan brought excessive numbers of drunk and disorderly, obscene language, and assault charges similar to earliest settlement.⁸ Graeme Davison suggests that in the case of Melbourne, the inner-city environment became by the 1880s 'unpleasant and dangerous...[with] rising indices of crime and mortality'.⁹ At Mount Morgan also, the location of criminal elements was reflected in the changing facade of the town. In the 1880s, offenders cited addresses as the settlements of Mundic Creek, Burke's Flat, the nearby Dee River area and Tipperary Point. This last, confined by the river was known also as Tipperary Gully or Tipperary Flat where, on St. Patrick's Day, according to local lore, none other than Irish ventured near the narrow lanes and hotels, including the Shamrock across the river and Red Hill.¹⁰ The area might be compared to the 'vigorously Irish' population at Warwick, Queensland, a 'horsey, crude' society where St. Patrick's Day violence at the racetrack was customary. Further, the potato growing village of Bungaree outside Ballarat was known also as 'Tipperary Gully' and 'Irishman country' that boasted a Shamrock Hotel in the 1870s.¹¹

The changing locations of the Mount Morgan shopping area, as discussed in chapter three, dictated the place of much petty crime. Moreover, alcohol abuse remained endemic, and charges of drunk and disorderly were not limited to the native-born. Convictions of males for drunkenness in November 1909 included seven

⁷ CPSMM, Bench book, Children's Court, 16 January 1906, 7B/S3(a), QSA.

⁸ Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, p. 199.

⁹ Graeme Davison, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*, Melbourne, 1978, p. 154.

¹⁰ Information provided from a private source.

¹¹ Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1987, p. 136.

Queenslanders, nine Irish and two English.¹² The charge for obscene language was prevalent also and in a majority of cases, a single charge arose from these two offences. Charges were not gender specific and most cases against women related to those of a perceived lower class, a circumstance to be discussed later in this chapter. Heading the lists of repeated court appearances were miners, labourers and others whose language was peculiar to their male dominated lifestyle, workplace habits and frequent patronage of pubs and hotels. Conversely, the *public* language of merchants, traders, hoteliers and land agents was usually more restrained, their convictions for language offences, unless combined with drunkenness, numbering few by comparison with those of lower socio-economic status.

The law was critical to town order for which the bench dealt with charges of calumny and assault, acts of cruelty to animals, petty larceny, family neglect and desertion, gaming and prostitution. Assault charges heard at Mount Morgan permitted conviction without a formal inquiry, and in many double charges of assault and abusive language, the latter tended to be struck out.¹³ The availability of mixed spirits that local merchants and hoteliers served and bottled in contravention of section 109 of the *Licensing Act 1885* exacerbated the endemic consumption of alcohol.¹⁴ However, charges against victuallers who sold their illegally mixed bulk spirits did little to quell the demand for cheap liquors. Moreover, as observed in chapter three, the improved quality and marketing of beers by 1900 affected the common consumption of spirits and wine.

Some bench decisions were not brought down according to court procedure. An anomaly existed in the processing of many charges against mine workers. When the general manager or other senior official of mine management presided on the bench, charges of drunkenness against mine employees were on occasion summarily dismissed

¹² CPSMM, Bench record and summons book (Bench book), 20 December 1909, CPS 7B/S6, QSA.

¹³ CPSMM, Deposition book, 11 November 1890, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

¹⁴ CPSMM, Bench book, 14 January 1900, CPS 7B/S3, QSA.

with a caution. This situation was not tenable to the Company if offenders were required for shift. For example, on 26 April 1890, managing director H. Wesley Hall, JP, dismissed with a caution seven of eight such charges against mine employees. Manipulation of the law served not only to reinforce employees' obligation to the Company, but might also endorse a miner's larrikin attitude to the law. By contrast, William Hannam, JP, was not associated with the mine and for the same offence, imposed the fine of 20s. or 48 hours jail.¹⁵ This situation also suggests that convicted offenders who could not afford to pay fines were confined to the lockup.

Children to the age of fourteen years at Mount Morgan might be charged as neglected and detained for up to five years at industrial schools or asylums.¹⁶ The addicted and diseased were committed to the Rockhampton Receiving Depot and Lock Hospital for one month.¹⁷ Before incarceration in one of Brisbane's numerous asylums, they were examined and treated at Rockhampton according to terms of the *Contagious Diseases Act*.¹⁸ Parental charges and evidence against their children who were considered wayward and sentenced to imprisonment by the local court suggests a lack of family care at Mount Morgan within sections of a traditionally nomadic mining population.¹⁹ Such committal of adults and children to institutions suggests authority at the local level that Paul Werth declares indicated power from below.²⁰ Moreover, children were more vulnerable to charges of neglect when the male breadwinner

¹⁵ CPSMM, Deposition book, 26 April 1890, CPS 7B/P1, QSA. A century earlier, convicts were not prosecuted for debt if conviction interrupted the terms of their labour; see R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, *Class structure in Australian history: poverty and progress*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 39.

¹⁶ CPSMM, Deposition book, 13 December 1897, CPS 7B/P4, QSA; CPSMM, Bench book, Children's Court, 3 November 1907, CPS 7B/S3(b).

¹⁷ J.T.S. Bird, *The early history of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1904, p. 60. The Immigration Depot (later the Rockhampton Receiving House and Lock Hospital) built fronting the Fitzroy River was at the corner of Albert Street, some distance from the town centre. The addicted and sexually diseased were detained and treated for a minimum of one month at the Rockhampton 'Receiving Depot' before committal to a Brisbane institution. The Depot was relocated on swampy land at Depot Hill, south of the town.

¹⁸ CPSMM, Deposition book, 7 July 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA. The term 'asylum', also applied to institutions for neglected children, and for habitual inebriates convicted of 'unsound mind'.

¹⁹ *Weekend Australian*, 22-23 April 1995, suggests that more than one hundred and eighty children buried in an early cemetery at Randwick included a large percentage of children placed in the asylum for destitute children when parents left for the goldfields.

²⁰ Paul W. Werth, 'Through the prism of prostitution: state, society and power,' *Social History*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 14.

deserted the family, a circumstance that occurred frequently at Mount Morgan. For example, in the four months from June to October 1905, twelve men were convicted of child desertion.²¹

Young boys and girls might be at once agents and victims of their own actions. When compared with the conviction of adults, judgements on juveniles for misdemeanours and offences were more severe in terms of removing them from society for extended periods. For example, the sentence for two boys who stole 10s 6d from miner John Fraser of Limestone Creek in 1905 was three years' imprisonment each in Westbrook Reformatory.²² In 1906, a case that drew local attention was a charge of theft at Mount Morgan levelled against ten year old Thomas Lloyd, who alleged he found a gold watch valued at £9, which he attempted to sell to various people in the street. The boy saw the owner remove her watch at a football match and he picked it up when it was left on a seat. His mother, who had seven other children, declared in evidence that the boy's father was dead, the boy refused to attend school, and that he was beyond the control of his mother or stepfather. Thomas Lloyd was convicted and sentenced to nine years at Westbrook Reformatory.²³ As convictions against male adults for child desertion increased, the charges of 'neglected child', misdemeanour and petty larceny involved at least twenty-one children in 1908 and 1909. From February to May 1908, boys committed about 70 per cent of the offences dealt with in the Children's Court, but girls who faced charges might also be incarcerated 'for their own benefit'.²⁴ Female delinquency tended to be defined as sexual misconduct:²⁵ on 5 May 1908, Thomas Parkes 'charged' his daughter, Christina Parkes with being a neglected child. The girl was found guilty of 'misconduct and having immoral relations' and

²¹ CPSMM, Bench book, Children's Court, June-October 1905, CPS 7BS3(a), QSA.

²² MB, 26 October 1905.

²³ MB, 19 May 1906.

²⁴ CPSMM, Bench book, Children's Court, 1908, 7B /S3(b), QSA.

²⁵ Stephen Garton, 'Sir Charles Mackellar: psychiatry, eugenics and child welfare in New South Wales', *Historical Studies*, vol. 22, no.86, April 1986, p. 31.

sentenced to the Industrial School for Girls at Woolloowin for five years. Other girls were sent to Yeronga Girls Reformatory and Holy Cross Retreat Industrial School.²⁶

The Police Court dealt with cases against employers who failed to pay wages due to employees and with charges by shopkeepers against customers who refused to pay for goods and services.²⁷ Convictions were usual for such charges in which refusal to pay amounted to loss of income for the provider. The offence of larceny was serious, however small the amount of money or value of goods stolen; but those of the lower orders who were summonsed frequently, had no skills, and were considered shiftless, suffered little from the stigma of conviction. This suggests that they had nothing to lose in respect or status. On the other hand, some victims found the theft of their possessions or legal tender resulted in financial straits that led to the loss of social standing, assets and employment.

The theft of gold was an ongoing hazard for the Company hierarchy. A case of grand theft to the value of £60 000 from the mine became the centre of court attention for Queensland press and public in 1893, when nine men were charged with stealing and receiving gold from the mine. As early as 1890, a suggestion that theft occurred to overcome wage cutting was published in the *Worker*, but whether Mount Morgan employees rationalised theft against poor wages is not known.²⁸ Whatever the situation, directors of the original Mount Morgan syndicate were aware in 1884 that two men had stolen gold and sold it at Charters Towers, but the syndicate took no action, in order to prevent publicity that a golden hoard was retrieved from their mine. Subsequently, Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited directors were haunted by their suspicions of gold theft, while rumours abounded over the years that some employees had more money than their wages provided. Yet, the Company took no action until 1893, when retrieval figures were so abysmal that an immediate explanation and

²⁶ CPSMM, Bench book, Children's Court, 1908-1909, CPS 7B /S3(b), QSA.

²⁷ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)*, 6 April 1900.

²⁸ *Worker*, 1 March 1890.

desperate measures were essential.²⁹ At the same time, a local woman spoke freely of seeing some gold stored beneath the house of a mine employee. With the world's greatest gold mine on Rockhampton's doorstep, it is probable that the population attracted to the district included vagrants or sometime itinerants who moved from rush to rush, mine to mine. However, major theft at the new mine was committed by a group of mine employees and others who were employed by the Company or outside enterprise, and several who were self-employed. Their subsequent trial in the Rockhampton Criminal Court highlighted the vulnerability of security at large mining operations.³⁰

In attempts to identify and apprehend thieves, the Company engaged a succession of detectives (unnamed) from the south, but the first to move into the town was identified unexpectedly by a member of a travelling vaudeville troupe. The Company persevered, however, and in August 1893 appointed Thomas Carlton Skarratt to take charge of the gold department where some Assay Office staff were suspects. He was the nephew of Thomas Skarratt Hall, who was manager of the Queensland National Bank at Rockhampton and one of the Hall brothers who held a majority of the mine shares.³¹ The Company also retained Sydney detective Frederick William Gabriel who, bearded and dressed as a miner, joined the Assay Office. Ingratiating himself with the thieves and receivers, Gabriel's claim of gold theft in South Africa brought him the promise of a share of gold stolen at Mount Morgan. The thieves' accomplice in Rockhampton was sometime jeweller George Raynor Percy who aspired to politics as one of six nominees from whom the two Labour candidates chosen contested the previous state elections.³² Percy withdrew from candidature when insolvent *in forma pauperis*, but within weeks, reopened business in William Street, Rockhampton, and continued as receiver and seller of Mount Morgan gold.

²⁹ MB, 25 September 1893.

³⁰ MB, 25 September 1893.

³¹ John Kerr, *Mount Morgan gold, copper and oil*, Brisbane, 1982, pp. 88-90.

³² W.J. Long, *The early history of Mount Morgan, Callide and Dawson Valleys*, Rockhampton, 1962, pp. 7-8.

Despite the significance of Rockhampton's role as the regional centre of justice, police force numbers were inadequate to permit officers to travel to Mount Morgan in order to apprehend numerous offenders at one time; the men targeted for arrest were in scattered locations within a radius of 20 kilometres of the mining town. Moreover, the Rockhampton District Court was sitting and a number of constables were required to attend, so were unavailable for police duty. As all arrests were to be simultaneous, ten constables travelled from Brisbane. Communication regarding their arrival in Central Queensland was in telegraphic code,³³ publicity of such information suppressed by arrangement with the press. Although 38 men were suspected, a token number of nine was arrested.³⁴ They included Duncan Milne, proprietor of the Mount Morgan Mountain View Hotel, where alluvial and bar gold was found in the safe, and Frank Rogel, previously a mine employee who was arrested at his claim at Mount Victoria where he and Milne planned to float a large syndicate. David Hughes, a nightwatchman at the Top Works, was arrested; also father and son, David and Donald McQueen who were miners at Crows Nest near Mount Morgan, and two mine employees, Duncan McGregor and William Rowley, who worked in the 'smelting room'. Another, William Goy, who was T.S. Hall's messenger in earlier years, was a suspect but was not arrested. A long serving employee of the Company,³⁵ Goy was in charge of the smelting and battery rooms at the mine and had access to the gold from the time it left the charcoal filters to its dispatch to Rockhampton under escort.³⁶ Reuben Mangin of the Assay Office was a suspect with whom detective Gabriel arranged to transport the stolen gold to Rockhampton. They left Mount Morgan by special coach, the ebullient Mangin providing cigars and brandy for the journey, but finding himself under arrest on arrival at Rockhampton.³⁷ Police also took gold receiver Percy into custody.

³³ MMGMC, Telegraphic code, 1893, D15/449, CC/CQU.

³⁴ Long, *The early history of Mount Morgan*, p. 6.

³⁵ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 267.

³⁶ T.S. Hall to Gold Warden and Colonial Secretary's Office, Application for provision of a gold escort, October 1885, M11/915.16, CC/CQU.

³⁷ *MB*, 25 September 1893.

The involvement of the Mount Morgan police in the operation was simply to guide the Brisbane constables through rugged terrain when they rode out to Mt. Victoria to apprehend Milne. Perhaps the integrity of the Mount Morgan police was suspect in the demand for utmost secrecy to ensure every offender was arrested without time to warn his accomplices. By the time the suspects were removed to Rockhampton, the public display of support for those charged with the serious offence against the Company suggested lack of employee loyalty and a larrikin attitude among miners, as:

A great crowd was about the Court House [sic] all the afternoon, and as the party left, one individual tried to raise a cheer, which was sharply suppressed.³⁸

None of the accused retained legal representation and Percy was the only one to apply for bail, which was refused. Three of the men arrested were found guilty of the theft and sentenced to hard labour at Brisbane Gaol, Rowley for sixteen months, Mangin and Macgregor for seventeen months. The receivers, Percy and the others, were found not guilty. Reuben Mangin's conviction was quashed on the grounds that detective Gabriel admitted certain evidence improperly. It seems the confession he obtained from Mangin was induced under misrepresentation; in this case the fact that as an officer of the police, Gabriel wore plain clothes at the time of the arrest. Clause 64 of the *Evidence and Discovery Act* undoubtedly restrained the authority of officers of the law where a jury might reject evidence in which the conversation between a criminal and a policeman included the taking of a prisoner's confession. Gabriel's submission was seen as 'untrue representation' when he misrepresented himself as a civilian rather than a uniformed policeman. With the letter of the law challenged, the *Criminal Law Amendment Act 1896* replaced the clause citing 'untrue representation' and 'threat or promise' with the provision that if a prisoner was induced by untrue representation to make a confession, such confession could be used in evidence against him. Further, the

³⁸ MB, 25 September 1893.

amendment required that a confession must be taken by 'some person in authority', rather than under 'any threat or promise whatever' as stated in the previous *Act*.³⁹

An aftermath of the court case had far reaching effects on Company policy. During the case one of the accused, David McQueen, declared that management was loose and that the Company should have apprehended those stealing gold long before the current case, from which numerous dismissals resulted and departmental supervision was tightened. Goy was one who, whilst not charged, was probably close to staff and under suspicion when the case was publicised. Typically, however, the full blame for loss rested with management. The directors dismissed managing director Roger Lisle for alleged poor administration; albeit, Board interference in management was entrenched already, suggesting that undermining of Lisle's authority predicated the end of his short term.⁴⁰ His departure in 1893 after only eighteen months in the position was not surprising; he carried the blame for gold loss, decline in retrieval figures, management error, and a court case relating to major theft which brought the Company adverse inter-colonial publicity. Additional security measures in the Assay Office by 1896 were described in a letter from Joseph (Joe) Hickman, aged 63, to an old friend, George Haswell, of Birmingham, England:

I got a situation among the gold in the assay and smelting rooms as a caretaker. This is the place where the gold robberies took place. It would do your eyes good to see about £30 000 worth of gold at a time. Last month we sent three parcels away, I should say about £30 000 in each. In the chlorination process, the solution of gold passes through filters of charcoal. My duties are to burn off this charcoal in furnaces, which takes about 24 hours, the gold dust remaining. This is put into a smelting furnace and refined. The rooms are now constantly locked with two locks. I cannot go in by myself. The overseer has to take his lock off before either of us can go in to fire up and stir the charcoal. We both go in together and come out at the same time. I have a Colt's[sic] revolver beside me all the time....One week I go on from 4 p.m. till 12 midnight, the next from midnight to 8 a.m.⁴¹

³⁹ *Capricornian*, 12 January 1896.

⁴⁰ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, (MMGMC), *Annual Report*, no. 13, 1895, D15/271.1

⁴¹ Joseph Hickman to G.H. Haswell, cited in George H. Haswell, A Tyneside worthy, paper prepared and read by Haswell at the Tyneside Club, Birmingham, England, 27 November 1897, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library, (FL).

Given that theft and assault were common offences, the gold Escort from Mount Morgan to Rockhampton seemed to invite attack. The Escort departed Mount Morgan at various times on the order for immediate travel, confirming a clandestine rather than public operation to transport the Company's gold. Harry Holmes was a Rockhampton horse cab driver and drove the Escort in a covered vehicle while two mounted troopers rode in front and two at the rear. In the twelve years 1886 to 1898, an estimated 3.5m ounces of gold valued at almost £14m were escorted from Mount Morgan to Rockhampton. To the surprise of R.L. Dibdin, officer in charge of the Escort, they 'were never stuck up'. After 1898, the Escort comprised two officers who travelled with the gold by train from Mount Morgan to Rockhampton.⁴² Oddly, the Escort was never challenged, despite a journey during which slow descent of the Razorback by rack rail provided ample opportunity for interception.

A theme of constant law breaking at Mount Morgan emulated the Rockhampton circumstance. This was evident in the hegemony in working class culture that Connell and Irving suggest saw the rise of a sub-culture in the class based 'push'. The push indoctrinated members, while the strength of numbers and domination of space defined the power of one push to intimidate another.⁴³ By 1889, the *Daily Northern Argus* at Rockhampton published correspondence that deplored the 'growing nuisance of the larrikin class of youth' who promenaded in gangs of twelve to twenty at the lower end of East Street and whose language 'insulted the ears of respectable residents, particularly females'.⁴⁴ The correspondent criticised the Rockhampton police who confined their attention to the business area of the town and left residential areas to 'shift for themselves'. The *Central Queensland Times* took up the issue, claiming that several poorer areas of Rockhampton were similarly plagued and that all municipal ratepayers should have the benefit of lawful protection. Moreover, the leader and some

⁴² M.C. O'Dwyer, Notes on the discovery and early workings of the Mount Morgan mine 1882-1929, typescript, c.1970, pp. 3-4, MMHM.

⁴³ Connell and Irving, *Class Structure*, p. 415.

⁴⁴ *Daily Northern Argus*, (DNA), 30 September 1889.

members of the Rockhampton 'East Street push' and known to the press were sons of respectable families. The *Times* suggested increasing the severely inadequate local police numbers in order to 'suppress' larrikinism. Asserting that fear of gaol did not hold terror for the pushes whilst fines were paid by unfortunate parents, the *Times* suggested that:

two mounted men with stock whips visit the infested quarters of the town, obtain the names of the ringleaders and touch the rascals up 'on the raw' with the greenhide.⁴⁵

This outburst contrasts with Tindall's assertion that in the 1890s, police in the London village of Kentish Town did not enter notorious slum streets unless unavoidable.⁴⁶ Perhaps this was also a practice of police at Rockhampton.

Activities of push members were evident at Mount Morgan in 1893. The Company metallurgist, George Anderson Richard, JP, presided at the Court of Petty Sessions when James Fitzgerald, together with Patrick Currin, both known to the police, were before the Bench charged with assaulting Alfred Picking. Witness to the attack was H.L. Eastwood, proprietor of the *Mount Morgan Chronicle*, who provided a substantial deposition against the offenders who, although convicted, were fined only 10s. each - perhaps because both were labourers at the mine. Fitzgerald's police record revealed previous convictions and fines for fighting at Rockhampton. He was leader of the 'Fitzgerald' push at Lakes Creek,⁴⁷ location of the vast abattoir and meat processing plant of the Lakes Creek Meat Export Company, employers of a large labour force.

The activities of several larrikin pushes at Mount Morgan were indicative of the urban character of the town, and typically, pushes might frequent union gatherings or picnics.⁴⁸ The 'breaking of the Sabbath' took various forms at Mount Morgan; for some

⁴⁵ *Central Queensland Times (CQT)*, 5 October 1889.

⁴⁶ Gillian Tindall, *The fields beneath: the history of a London village*, London, 1985, p. 194.

⁴⁷ CPSMM, Deposition book, 2 December 1893, CPS 7B/P2, QSA.

⁴⁸ Connell and Irving, *Class Structure*, p. 416.

this was the playing of sport. Others created public nuisance and on Sunday match days for rugby union players in 1900,⁴⁹ a club report read:

Sacrilegious youths gave vent to their blasphemous epithets, although the Rugby Union did their utmost to suppress larrikinism and foul language at their matches and clear themselves of connection with the 'Sabbathbreakers'.⁵⁰

The 'Harries' push in 1898 had singular criminal significance in the town. Known to police and residents who lived at the Two Mile (named officially 'Baree') on the track north towards Rockhampton, the push included six young men, the leader Harries, also Smith, Knudson, Clements, Roberts alias Cruikshank alias 'Prawn', and another, a 'half Chinaman'. Harris formed the push after belonging to the weaker 'Horsey' push, and to the 'Mare and Foal' push. His father was a cordial manufacturer at the Two Mile, where young Harris, who did not live at home, worked at the factory, washing bottles, corking the horehound and making deliveries by cart. He was dissatisfied with the work and weekly wages of 15s., and faced an assault and robbery charge on his arrest in May 1898. Arresting constable Patrick Welch deposed that when Harris was not working, he was 'always about hotels when pays are on and is nearly always under the influence of drink. He certainly can't live cheaply'. Welch stated also that on the night of the arrest, he witnessed Harris' attempts to fight, first with one man and later, another. Harris' objective was to lure men out of a hotel into the rear yard in order to 'allow his mates the opportunity of picking them up'.⁵¹

Charles Smith was another charged with the assault and robbery. Police received regular complaints about Smith from hotels and railway works on the Rockhampton to Mount Morgan line, where he worked on the construction for a short time. He was known to police as having no lawful means of support, of being a suspected thief, associating with suspected thieves, and of 'knocking about places drinking and doing a

⁴⁹ Sabbatarianism is discussed in chapter five.

⁵⁰ *MMA*, 3 August 1900.

⁵¹ CPSMM, Deposition book, 2 June 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

bit of fighting'. William Bartlem was a baker and recent resident in the town who declared that on 18 April, he saw all the members of the Harris push 'except the Chinaman' at the remote Razorback Hotel.⁵² They were dancing and drinking until 10 p.m., when hotelier Mitchell closed the dining room.

Two drunken men, one named Morgans, were on the hotel verandah. Harris and Roberts threw the men's swags about and knocked Morgans down the stairs. The money in Morgans' pockets rattled, Harris called 'jingles' and, with Smith and Roberts carried the man to a place about 40 yards to the rear of the premises. While Smith and Roberts held Morgans, Harris robbed him of £8, after which Harris divided the money amongst the push, albeit unevenly, handing 3s. to Bartlem, saying 'that is your bloody share'. Smith took Morgans back to the hotel verandah and Knudson asked Bartlem, 'Are you going to put us away? It's no use putting us away, we are all Kenties'. Knudson's words were a thinly veiled threat that an informer might expect retribution from 'a mob of bad characters' - the feared Kent push in Rockhampton.⁵³ Ironically, a seeming lack of evidence caused dismissal of the charges, although some of the defendants were habitual offenders. For example, within six months, Smith was before the court once more. Charged with insufficient means of support and 'generally knocking about the streets and hotels and following up drunken bushmen', he was sentenced to two months in Rockhampton gaol.

The rise of labour associations and union activities in the 1900s saw pushes fade at Mount Morgan and Rockhampton as elsewhere.⁵⁴ At Mount Morgan, the outcome emphasised increasing working-class solidarity in the Company town. In 1908, a political argument that arose between drinkers on the verandah of the Leichhardt Hotel developed into a fight. The perpetrators were referred to as a push, but whilst the fight was stopped, they were not charged. At Rockhampton, with its diverse workplaces and

⁵² See Fig. 1, chapter one.

⁵³ CPSMM, Deposition book, 22 November 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁵⁴ Connell and Irving, *Class Structure*, p. 417.

communities, residents were aware that 'strong joints' continued to 'roll sleepers'. In an audacious daylight robbery, a group of 'young guns' attacked and robbed a man who was under the influence of liquor, the thieves making no attempt at concealment from passers-by in the busy main street.⁵⁵

Police records cited European names, whether spelt correctly or otherwise; but recording names of Chinese was at best haphazard. This suggests the ongoing problem of a language barrier and a sinophobic European attitude toward Chinese. Reference to a lone 'half Chinaman' of the Harris push is indicative of the lack of consequence European police accorded Chinese at Mount Morgan. On 19 October 1891 before B.F. Bunny, JP, and G.A. Richard, JP and Company chlorinator, a Chinese storekeeper and market gardener, Hop Kee, was charged at the Mount Morgan Police Court with murdering fruit hawker Lee Ying and committed for trial in April 1892 at the Rockhampton Supreme Court.⁵⁶ Seven Chinese were called as trial witnesses, each blowing out a match to indicate oath taking. Evidence revealed that about six weeks before the fatal attack, Lee Ying and Hop Kee were in Hoeng Kee's shop when Lee Ying accused Hop Kee of taking his fruit. Hop Kee countered with the assertion that Lee Ying robbed him of business by selling fruit at the place where Hop Kee sold his own produce.⁵⁷ The men fought, but were separated by other Chinese.

Lee Ying, who slept in a hut at Hoeng Kee's garden, suffered a fractured skull and injury to the brain and membranes from several blows to the head from a sharp instrument, suggested as the bloodied tomahawk found at the attack scene. The investigating constable forced Hop Kee to kneel in front of the dying Lee Ying, who the constable coerced into identifying Hop Kee as his assailant. Lee Ying died later in hospital. Although Chinese were sleeping in huts within three metres of the scene and others were watering the cabbages in Hop Kee's garden at the time of the attack, none

⁵⁵ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

⁵⁶ *DNA*, 21 October 1891.

⁵⁷ *MB*, 22 April 1892.

called as witnesses admitted to hearing any noise from the hut or noticing anyone in the vicinity. Despite a great deal of blood at scene, there were no signs of a struggle and no blood was found on Hop Kee or his clothes when the constable apprehended him shortly after the attack.

In summing up, Mr. Justice Lukin reminded the jury of the difficulty in gaining accurate evidence through an interpreter. He also emphasised the lack of incriminating evidence against Hop Kee, and laid the blame for this on the prosecuting constable as an 'unintelligent and most inaccurate witness'.⁵⁸ At the same time, Lukin charged the jury to consider a decision for murder or manslaughter. The twelve-man jury retired for one hour and brought a guilty verdict against Hop Kee, who was sentenced to hang.⁵⁹ Within two days, the detailed trial evidence was analysed through the columns of the *Daily Northern Argus* and the decision of the court declared untenable.⁶⁰ Subsequently, lack of incriminating evidence in the case resulted in the verdict being overturned and the sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

Subsequently, when Sergeant Michael O'Sullivan transferred to Mount Morgan he became interested in the case, prompted perhaps by a press report that suggested the court's injustice against Hop Kee. Mount Morgan merchants who knew him also questioned the validity of flimsy prosecution evidence. O'Sullivan moved to re-open the case and challenged the conviction on the evidence presented. He claimed that the Chinese witnesses were unfriendly towards Hop Kee who was from a different province in China to Lee Ying. Moreover, perhaps O'Sullivan became aware from court records that Hop Kee was not among the more than 30 Chinese brought before the local court between 1886-1892 on gambling, drug, liquor and moral charges.⁶¹ Not only that, O'Sullivan declared from subsequent evidence that other Chinese at Mount Morgan

⁵⁸ *MB*, 23 April 1892.

⁵⁹ *DNA*, 23 April 1892.

⁶⁰ *DNA*, 25 April 1892.

⁶¹ CPSMM, Bench book, 1887-1892, CPS 7B P1, QSA.

were aware Hop Kee did not kill Lee Ying, but lied deliberately to cover the guilt of one of their own clan.⁶² Hop Kee was released and no further action transpired in the case, despite evidence of intra-racial conflict revealed in depositions by Chinese in subsequent cases at Mount Morgan court in 1892. Hop Kee returned to his garden at Mount Morgan.

Whilst Chinese comprised about 0.75 per cent of the European population, charges of assault between Europeans and Chinese were less than between Chinese only. However, the anti-Chinese attitudes in Central Queensland (discussed in chapter three) heightened a fear that cultural practices by ethnic 'others' were suspect. Police pursued all law-breakers, but monitored Chinese for their very difference, perceived untrustworthiness and their cohabitation with fringe-dwelling Aborigines and others. One Chinese, Kin Lin, in his own defence against the charge of gambling, declared that just as Europeans gambled and fought amongst themselves, Chinese acted similarly.⁶³ Moreover, Chinese from geographical locations as close but diverse as Canton and Hong Kong confirmed the generic and cultural issues of kin and birthplace.⁶⁴

Chinese at Mount Morgan drank gin and brandy,⁶⁵ but cultural practices that many Europeans considered depraved included gambling and smoking opium.⁶⁶ A police raid on a Chinese store led to charges against Yang Kee for conducting an opium den and gambling table and selling liquor to other Chinese. His premises and garden were on land in the Company paddock. He paid rent to management for the garden area located at the river end of East Street near the Happy Valley bridge. The hut at the garden comprised three separate compartments; one was an opium room, another a bedroom that was also a gin store. A gambling table a metre high was in the centre of the third

⁶² A.E. Christmas, *History of the Chinese in Mount Morgan*, typescript, c.1990, pp. 6-7, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁶³ CPSMM, Deposition book, 24 January 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁶⁴ CPSMM, Deposition book, 21 January 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA; F.G. Clarke, *Australia: a concise political and social history*, Sydney, 1992, p. 139; MMA, 18 July 1901, 11 November 1901.

⁶⁵ CPSMM, Deposition book, 1 February 1892, CPS 7B/P2, QSA.

⁶⁶ F.G. Clarke, *Australia*, p. 137.

room, where some Chinese were 'lying around the walls' and about fourteen others were standing around the table where they were playing Fantan. The 'owner' of the room was the banker who held the wagers and kept a percentage of all winnings. He was Yang Kee, who was unlicensed but sold gin for 4/6d. per bottle.⁶⁷ Ten Chinese were charged with participation in illegal practices, but the court bench was cautious in accepting evidence, declaring that the oral depositions and court evidence of non-English speaking Chinese delivered through an interpreter were open to misunderstanding in translation. Notwithstanding, when the court considered the defence evidence of all the accused, the charges were substantiated and brought heavy fines of £16 in each case, comprising £10 for the offence and the remainder for professional, interpreter and court costs.⁶⁸ Probably for the reason that they would not be imprisoned with or cared for by Europeans, Chinese were not privy to the option of gaol that accompanied most convictions against Europeans in the Court of Petty Sessions. Moreover, in July 1901, six separate assault charges between Chinese were struck out but by November, six Chinese accused of grievous bodily harm against a seventh were convicted as charged.⁶⁹

Whether Chinese at Mount Morgan kept houses of prostitution is not known, but in 1903, an establishment reportedly operated in Alma Street, Rockhampton, a short distance from the centre of town. A woman and three young girls aged from eleven to sixteen years were in the house kept by Chinese. Some twenty-five Chinese lived in an adjacent dwelling.⁷⁰ At Mount Morgan, where prostitutes including some Aboriginal women worked the miners' camps, women who cohabited with Chinese were ostracised, threatened and named as prostitutes. Chinese gardener Louie Kee and his non-Chinese wife Laura Kee lived along the Upper Dee River. Their neighbours were mine furnace worker Alexander Salzman and his wife Helena, who charged Laura Kee with 'insulting words', claiming that when they were walking home Kee was on the verandah of the

⁶⁷ CPSMM, Bench book, 2 January 1892, CPS 7B/S1, QSA.

⁶⁸ CPSMM, Deposition book, 27 January 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁶⁹ CPSMM, Police Charge Bench book, 11 November 1901, 7B/S16, QSA.

⁷⁰ *Critic*, 3 June 1903.

Campion Hotel and castigated Alexander Salzman for his past relationship with her. At his response, 'Who are you talking to you bloody Chinese whore'? Laura Kee swore, threw a stone at Salzman and repeatedly referred to his wife as 'whore', and 'whore's child'. Salzman assaulted Laura Kee, was reported to police and fined for assault. The court dismissed her charge against him for obscene language and a similar charge against Laura Kee for verbal abuse of Helena Salzman.⁷¹

The law dealt carefully with aspects of European public behaviour categorised as sexually immoral. The matter of prostitution was a double-edged challenge to lawmakers and keepers of the peace. Their dilemma was whether to outlaw the enterprise simply for what it was, or to take token action against the practice to placate the sense of outrage that rose periodically above a generally unspoken public tolerance. Whilst the Protestant church cavilled and the courts denigrated women whose morals were perceived as less than pure, the press alerted readers to the threat of prostitution to young women and girls.⁷² Moreover, cases of verbal abuse that proceeded through the court demonstrated that name-calling was endemic in the public lexicon of the lower orders and many others at Mount Morgan. Alan Atkinson suggests that animal imagery prevailed in the language of loathing used in Britain at the time of New South Wales settlement;⁷³ but at Mount Morgan, the term 'whore' provided ultimate public denigration in terms of abusive language. Further, by the 1890s the demeaning term 'flash' alluded not only to larrikins, but also to prostitutes and other females who associated with push members.

Early locations of prostitution at Mount Morgan were typically near hotels and billiard saloons or 'boarding houses' adjacent to miner's tents and humpies. Miners' camps and shanty areas remained a part of the Mount Morgan landscape, where town

⁷¹ CPSMM, Bench book, 13 December 1898, CPS 7B/P2, QSA.

⁷² Raymond Evans, "'Soiled doves' prostitution in colonial Queensland", Kay Daniels (ed.), *So much hard work: women and prostitution in Australian history*, Sydney, 1981, p. 135.

⁷³ Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, pp. 121-123.

development and extension of settlement perimeters forced relocation of some camps. Charges including carnal knowledge and prostitution, and the non-gender specific 'assault' were laid against dwellers on the outskirts of town.⁷⁴ This occurred elsewhere; Janet McCalman suggests that respectable Shaftsbury Park Estate near London was 'ringed by unrespectable working-class life' in which drunkenness and prostitution flourished.⁷⁵ In the case of Mount Morgan, Court of Petty Sessions records revealed that within the sub-culture of the poor 'other' was a network of people who lived amid violence and abuse. For many, a lifestyle of close proximity, lack of privacy and poor conditions in mean habitations was an environment perceived to perpetuate generic misery and immoral practice. At miners' camps, the seemingly banal title of 'dining room' was a misnomer for tents and humpies where meals were available.

Much accommodation available at canvas, bark or timber 'boarding houses' was suspect when the proprietors were notorious in the area. For example, non-Europeans well known to police were Alice Carlon and Mary Ann Bray. Carlon's habitual drunkenness and bawdy behaviour caused male boarders to leave her establishment. Carlon denied this in court, when charging Aboriginal tent dweller, Annie Patten, wife of Albert Patten, with abusive language. Patten called her a 'drunken Indy' and accused her of 'walking the flags in Rockhampton'.⁷⁶ On an earlier occasion, Patten charged that Patrick Currin came to her tent and abused her for calling him names. Annie Patten ordered him away, but he said 'I'll not go out for a bloody black gin', at which they scuffled, Annie Patten knocked Currin down and ran off. Currin was convicted and fined 48s. and costs in default fourteen days in prison.⁷⁷ Mary Ann Bray charged or counter-charged men – and women – who used or abused her. For example, when Bray had a verbal altercation with John Warry, who accused her of 'raising [your] children by

⁷⁴ CPSMM, Deposition book, 12 December 1887, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

⁷⁵ Janet McCalman, 'Respectability and working-class politics in late Victorian London', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 74, April 1980, p. 116.

⁷⁶ CPSMM, Deposition book, 13 November 1889, CPS/7P1, QSA.

⁷⁷ CPSMM, Deposition book, 13 August 1888, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

prostitution' and 'living on the earnings of prostituted children', her response was 'you got your daughters married and you are living on their whoring'.⁷⁸

Catherine West was the licensee's wife at the Miners' Arms Hotel on Mundic Creek near the mine Works and was in charge of the hotel when her husband attended a camp of Queensland Volunteers at Emu Park in 1890. Mrs. West had a an obscenely verbal and violent altercation, including stone-throwing, with miner William Daniels who camped across the river and had meals at a tent kitchen nearby. Both accused the other of sexual depravity and immoral behaviour. The case at the local Court of Petty Sessions brought appearances of numerous witnesses including several public citizens. Each of the protagonists was fined £2 or seven days, suggesting that whilst some court judgements might be gender specific, fines were not.⁷⁹ Repetitive charges against women for drunkenness, abusive language or assault were amongst those struck out when the plaintiff or defendant or both did not attend the hearing, or if the Court refused to hear the case. Emily Peut, who figured in numerous charges, was wife and mother in a notorious family at North Calliungal. The Peuts held numerous blocks of land and were associates of Patrick Currin and possibly Fitzgerald, mentioned above. Between 1887 and 1905, numerous plaintiffs brought successful charges against all members of the Peut family for offences from damage to property, cruelty to and killing of domestic animals, drunkenness, obscene language and assault.⁸⁰ Charges against women at Mount Morgan for indecent exposure, whether at Burke's Flat or the Company 'paddock' or camps did not feature in the press. However, a Rockhampton journalist assumed the guardianship of public opinion and asserted that parents should monitor the activities of their daughters, otherwise it was the duty of police to curtail the:

⁷⁸ CPSMM, Deposition book, 2 February 1893, CPS 7B/P3, QSA.

⁷⁹ CPSMM, Deposition book, 14 April 1890, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

⁸⁰ CPSMM, Deposition book, 13 August 1888, 16 October 1890, CPS 7B/P1, QSA; CPSMM, Bench book, 7 June 1906, CPS 7B/S4, QSA.

bold and unashamed manner of girls between fifteen and seventeen years in Rockhampton who parade the streets and buttonhole youths and sometimes grown-up men.⁸¹

In citing the 'intolerable nuisance and eyesore and the singularly suggestive language of short-frockers' the press reflected a double standard in public moral attitudes and the function of the law. Prostitution might be denied or ignored, whether to protect men or their families, but it seems that Queensland magistrates of the era tended to dismiss rape charges without committal to trial.⁸² At Mount Morgan, charges of indecent assault against a female, perhaps as young as twelve or fourteen years, rarely passed the Bench. For example, in 1902, the court found a male offender guilty of the charge, but at the point of sentence, the presentation of alleged significant evidence – heard in closed session - brought dismissal of the case.⁸³

Women went to Mount Morgan in the 1880s and 1890s to work as prostitutes, and perhaps a second generation followed. It seems that prostitution was the purpose of the Misses Miller, O'Brien and Maher who arrived in the town in 1890. Their four month lease on a cottage in Gordon Street adjacent to the town hospital was at a weekly rent of 15s., twice the usual charge for a similar dwelling. The absentee owner lived at Gladstone. Charles Shannon was his attorney and John Lowry was Shannon's agent. Both men had convictions for acts of violence in the street and illegal liquor trading.⁸⁴ Immediately the cottage lease expired, the women left the town as quickly and quietly as they had arrived. If they were in the town for purposes of prostitution, their brief residence begs the question whether the town could or would accommodate a bordello.

At Mount Morgan the denigrating term 'whore' might destroy the reputation of another, given the imagery evoked in use of the word. Seemingly, use of the term

⁸¹ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

⁸² Gail Reekie, 'Women, region and the "Queensland difference"', Gail Reekie (ed.), *On the edge: women's experiences of Queensland*, St. Lucia, 1994, p. 20.

⁸³ *MMA*, 2 February 1902.

⁸⁴ CPSMM, Deposition book, 11 February 1891, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

became more widespread with Victorian social divisions of the later nineteenth century and early 1900s. The role for women of the rising middle-class was defined as 'respectable' - faithful to God and family, morally pure and caring of others. Similarly, many working-class women with pride in home, hearth and community values, perceived themselves on the periphery of the middle-class and much distanced from the lower orders. These issues will be discussed in chapter eight, but it is suggested here that social attitudes tended to perpetuate moral corruption within a 'respectability' that defied growing despair in sections of the public sphere. By 1909, the Catholic Church and Labor press declared:

The worst thieves in the community are the capitalists who pay their unfortunate female slaves so very little that they have to sell their womanhood to live.⁸⁵

Whilst urbanisation increased with population shifts to outer spaces of towns and cities, most places of prostitution remained in older inner urban locations, although 'houses' were not only the operations of 'an amoral criminal class'.⁸⁶ The seeming wealth of 'flash girls' tempted others who were led to prostitution as a panacea to poverty and harsh family life, while younger siblings of flash girls experienced *rites de passage* in the sex trade. Yet, as Chris McConville points out also, girls who succumbed were perceived as weak in mind and character.⁸⁷ At Rockhampton, the radical *Critic* tilted cynically at prostitution, deriding street activities in versified dialogue between a naïve stranger and a local:

Just one more question and I've done - the ladies in East Street
I see have mostly escorts when they promenade discreet,
But surely it is scarcely safe, and surely hardly right,
To let them go escortless when they promenade by night?
Our streets are safe, I murmured, rather puzzled, I must own,
And our nocturnal maidens are quite used to walk alone,
But should you deem it harmful, offer escort, and I guess
Some timid damsel may be found quite charmed to answer 'Yes'.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *Catholic Press*, n.d., cited in *Worker*, 30 May 1909.

⁸⁶ Chris McConville, 'The location of Melbourne's prostitutes 1870-1920', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, April 1980, p. 97.

⁸⁷ McConville, 'The location of Melbourne's prostitutes', p. 96.

⁸⁸ *Critic*, 2 May 1903.

At Mount Morgan, as elsewhere,⁸⁹ prostitution was an issue that simmered below the surface of moral rectitude. Girls who frequented soft drink bars in the early 1900s and spoke in loud voices became targets for press criticism that scarcely veiled the threatened stigma of immorality.⁹⁰ Flash women frequented particular streets and the vicinity of hotels in the poorer, disreputable areas.⁹¹ Whilst some hotels held licensed dances on their premises, the entrenched cultural stigma suffered by women or girls who frequented hotels or dances unescorted continued into the 1900s. Mount Morgan court records of the period suggest a percentage of these females were charged with immoral practice, although evidence suggests that unless known prostitutes disturbed the peace, police tended to ignore their activities, or simply caution offenders.⁹²

Places of prostitution were not identified and charges for licentious behaviour were limited to offences that occurred in public. For example, at the Company 'paddock', opposite the mine, 'common prostitutes' might be charged with indecent exposure.⁹³ As pointed out in chapter two, sporting bodies were granted use of section of the 'paddock' and other sections might be leased to respected traders. However, a portion of the paddock close to the mine and used periodically by itinerants and others led to notoriety of that space. Progressively, the court dealt more strictly with offenders; Ada Williams was charged as a 'common prostitute' in 1901 but was dismissed with a caution. By contrast, 'known prostitutes' Rachel Murphy and Rebecca Newton who frequented the 'paddock' and acted 'obscenely' were convicted as charged in 1907 and each fined £5 in default one month in the Rockhampton gaol.⁹⁴ Links between prostitution and larrikinism at Mount Morgan were evident, and illegal activity occurred in the town and remote places like the Razorback Hotel, as mentioned above.

⁸⁹ Davison, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*, pp. 236-238.

⁹⁰ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁹¹ McCalman, 'Respectability and working-class politics', p 14.

⁹² McConville, 'The location of Melbourne's prostitutes', p. 98.

⁹³ CPSMM: Deposition book, 1 March 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA; Deposition book, 12 September 1901, CPS 7B/P5, QSA; Bench book, 27 May 1907, CPS 7B/S4, QSA.

⁹⁴ CPSMM, Bench Book, 7 December 1908, CPS 7B/S4, QSA.

It is perceivable also that, rather than risk discovery of sexual association with local women, some Mount Morgan men might visit brothels at Rockhampton. One such 'house' was attacked vociferously as to its purpose by Rev. R. Smith, the incumbent of the Methodist Church at Rockhampton.⁹⁵ He expounded from the pulpit that, during a Leichhardt West Football Club social attended by about one hundred and twenty men, a number of cabs plied between the hall 'and a notorious French brothel' in the vicinity of the Methodist church and manse. The 'Paris Villa' was an establishment on the corner of Cambridge and Campbell Streets, where four 'registered women' operated: Emma Duvallet, who conducted the place and three other women who professed French names.⁹⁶ The Leichhardt Club publicly repudiated the accusation that was based on hearsay, while the Rockhampton press castigated Smith for his moralistic dogma and the attempt to denigrate the character of all who attended the sporting club social.⁹⁷ The matter faded, perhaps from bourgeois influence; but subsequently, the conviction of 'the keeper of a house of ill-fame' at an inner area of the town brought a fine of £20 and costs. The case triggered strident press demands for Rockhampton police action to close several 'joy-houses' in the interests of social improvement in the immediate neighbourhood.⁹⁸ Ambiguity in press moves for closure of 'several', rather than 'all' hints at selectivity, for example, the Paris Villa was located near the Range, the most prestigious suburb at Rockhampton.

Notwithstanding the various pockets of crime at Mount Morgan, 'respectable' residents attempted to perpetuate high moral reputation for their town. To this end, they harboured pride in their own space and social milieu, ignoring or denying awareness of locations that were reputed centres of unlawful activity and indifferent morals. Moreover, an individual might be at pains to hide any suspect activity from the law, and

⁹⁵ *Critic*, 27 April 1903.

⁹⁶ A. Douglas Graham, *The Queensland Law Journal*, 17 June, 5 August 1901, Brisbane, 1901, pp. 28-34.

⁹⁷ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

⁹⁸ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

also to protect a public persona. John B. Cleary, editor of the *Mount Morgan Argus* figured as the defendant in a police prosecution for dishonest dealings. He obtained money in Rockhampton under false pretences by forging and issuing several cheques, one for the amount of £2 passed to a jeweller for the purchase of a gold brooch. Cleary was refused bail, undefended in the Rockhampton Police Court, convicted and fined. The *Argus* was adamant that despite the 'certain painful occurrences', his dealings at Mount Morgan were honest and his position in the community honourable. Cleary severed his connection with the newspaper and Mount Morgan, declaring he could not return to a place where he had enjoyed the respect of the town. In fact, he had the newspaper a mere three months when charged.⁹⁹ Charles Briggs, mortgagee of the *Argus* repossessed the newspaper premises, sold the book debts and operated the press.

Briggs was charged in August 1908 with journalistic malpractice. In what seemed a flagrantly irresponsible action, he published a personal letter from Lucy Walsh to Edward Hempenstall, auctioneer, agent and accountant.¹⁰⁰ The case that followed was more complex than the charge predicated. As early as 1896, Hempenstall acted as Briggs' clerk, became a partner for a time and subsequently conducted his own auctioneering and accounting business in premises adjoining Briggs' offices.¹⁰¹ In 1905, and according to the *Licensing Act 1885*, Lucy Walsh obtained a prohibition order against her husband William for twelve months from 1905 to May 1906.¹⁰² Lucy Walsh took out a loan from Hempenstall and in 1908, wrote disputing his interest rate of *sixty* per cent. When the *Argus* published the letter, Hempenstall brought a defamation charge of £1 000 against Briggs and printer John Geddes Hay, partners in the newspaper.¹⁰³ Ambitious Rockhampton solicitor T.J. Ryan acted for the plaintiff when the case came before Justice Virgil Power in the Supreme Court in November 1908.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ *MMA*, 3 April 1900; 6 April 1900, 20 April 1900.

¹⁰⁰ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

¹⁰¹ *MB*, 21 November 1908.

¹⁰² *CPSMM*, Deposition book, 14 July 1905, CPS 7B /P6, QSA.

¹⁰³ *MB*, 26 June 1908.

¹⁰⁴ *MB*, 4 September 1908.

Conducted during the immediate aftermath of the second multiple, fatal accident at the mine in two months, the case might have been expected to receive diminished press attention. This did not occur. The public followed avidly every aspect of the case in which the law descended heavily upon Briggs. His fine was £250, but for Hay it was the token farthing. The public anticipated a verdict favouring the defendants, but after Justice Power summed up, the jury believed the defendants acted maliciously in publishing the letter and found for the plaintiff.¹⁰⁵ The case reflected the specifics of the law when the court declared Briggs the journalist guilty, rather than Briggs the auctioneer.

Justice was served, the press and public lost interest, but Lucy Walsh's reputation was ruined. This was evident during a subsequent court action at Rockhampton at a hearing of a case of fraudulent dealing. The prosecution caused derisive laughter in the court when a defence witness identified a person named Walsh in evidence. The prosecution challenged the identification with 'Not the famous Lucy Walsh?'¹⁰⁶ For his part, Briggs might have suffered financially, if briefly - he sold his Deeside Boarding House - yet his reputation seemed almost unscathed, as evidenced in his election to Council.¹⁰⁷ He built an impressive private residence near the Big Dam - which Briggs pretentiously termed 'the Lake' - and became a member of the Rockhampton Harbour Board by 1916. He retired from Mount Morgan, relocating his large residence to the Athelstane Range in Rockhampton, where he died in 1918.

A variance in misrepresentation was the matter of fraudulent practice in regard to consumer products. A suspect system of trading at Mount Morgan saw some traders practising short weight and adulteration of perishables. Official inspection of weights

¹⁰⁵ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

¹⁰⁶ *MB*, 27 November 1908.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Record (DR)*, 4 November 1908.

and measures operated at Rockhampton in 1908, but not at Mount Morgan.¹⁰⁸ Local inspection of meat for freshness and quality continued, but no official authority at Mount Morgan ensured that after inspection, the butcher sold uncontaminated meat and in legal weight, that the baker delivered quality and full weight in bread, and that the hotelier poured full strength and quality beer. Shop weighing of bulk products provided the opportunity for stores to sell short weight, including the staples of sugar and flour if not the more expensive commodity, tea. At the same time, and in an era before the commonality of refrigerated storage, no frequent and random inspection and sampling of milk occurred at places of sale.

Dilution of the 'morning milk' sold to unwitting customers was common practice at Mount Morgan, to the extent of dilution with 25 per cent water. A female milk-seller convicted of fraudulent practice was one of many others who faced similar charges and fines. Prosecutions touched only the periphery of the fraud problem,¹⁰⁹ but local apathy accepted trading injustices until fraud was so blatant that neither townspeople nor the law could disregard it. Mild local interest tended to subside quickly after convictions or fines for dishonest trading, and monitoring of business practice rested again, perhaps for years.¹¹⁰ This suggests that public interest in the details of local court action rather than concern for local victims of unfair trading. Moreover, seeming apathy might hide a certain fear of retribution for complaints against suppliers with connections to mine management.

In the interests of a regulated society, Council by-laws extended to every section of the community. In comparison to punitive action for moral offences, a civil function of the court was the licensing not only of enterprise, but also public and community activities. Licensing Justices Dr. S.J. Richard and Dr. G.L. Murray also issued compulsory licences for the conduct of private hospitals, and to associations and public

¹⁰⁸ *MB*, 10 September 1908.

¹⁰⁹ *Critic*, 10 September 1908.

¹¹⁰ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

functions irrespective of time, place or promotion, and whether for entertainment at a charity ball, saloon or pub.¹¹¹ Moreover, the court charged licence fees of more than £20 on occasion for the right to conduct liquor booths at race meetings and other sporting events. Such a figure, perhaps seven times the average weekly wage, suggests that, given the price of sixpence for a glass of beer, a vast amount of liquor must be sold to make a profit after defraying the cost of the licence.

The *Workers' Compensation Act 1905* introduced a new concept of economic survival for families who suffered the loss of a breadwinner by death or injury incurred at the workplace or on employment related work. Whilst the danger of mining and the alarming number of deaths by accident at Mount Morgan is addressed in chapter six, the legal settlement of some cases of worker's compensation is addressed here. Although the Company denied responsibility for accident or death of employees at the mine or outside, they were prepared to pay high fees for counsel who might defeat a claimant's case. The *Additional Compensation Regulations Act* introduced in August 1908 provided for the standard rate of £380 compensation for a breadwinner's death by accident. In November 1908, the police magistrate at the Mount Morgan Court of Petty Sessions apportioned monies awarded by the Company to the dependants of miners killed in the two underground accidents at that time. The several cases discussed here reflect the meagre sums of compensation and their possible consequences. In the case of a widow and son awarded £380, two-thirds of the compensation was for the benefit of the son of the deceased and was invested with the Commonwealth Bank in the name of the court registrar. The first interest instalment of 30s. was paid to the widow for the maintenance, education and benefit of her son. Similarly, another widow was paid a total of £1. 1s. 3d. per month for the benefit of four children, so each received weekly compensation of 1s. 4d. The widow received no compensation in her own right and the threat of poverty that confronted the family indicated that her gainful employment or

¹¹¹ CPSMM, Deposition book, 23 March 1898, CPS 7B /P4, QSA.

other income was essential. This would continue until the children were strong enough to work and complement the low wages a woman received for menial work.¹¹²

The Company could not afford to lose a case where a precedent would be set if they admitted responsibility in a claim for worker's compensation. Chairman Archer conferred with the board whether counsel was necessary regarding the case of an employee named Phillips who brought a compensation claim of £28 against the Company for copper poisoning at the mine. Archer was adamant that they should not take any risk, and suggested retaining a barrister from Brisbane. Dr. Cameron attended Phillips at the time he allegedly became ill, but Cameron left town and Dr. Richard, whose evidence might be counted 'in the Company's favour', attended Phillips three months later. Phillip's medical witness was Dr. O'Brien who, according to Archer, 'would swear to anything,' and his barrister was T.J. Ryan who acted in several blackmailing cases during the previous twelve months. Archer considered the Company needed a good advocate against Ryan who was 'a very able man and perfectly unscrupulous'.¹¹³ Edwin Lilley accepted the 'moderate' fee for representation at forty guineas per day, and went to Mount Morgan with Archer and Company solicitor Robert Gamble Brown to study the evidence, including the effects of smelter fumes. They returned after establishing that smelter fumes showed 'absolutely no copper', and that the dispenser at the Mount Morgan Hospital was prepared to prove that Phillips' records were dated a fortnight after the day his claim indicated he was poisoned.¹¹⁴ Ryan withdrew from the case after hearing the evidence against Phillips. In the event, the Company won the case and protected its paternalistic image by the payment of £20 to Phillips as 'an act of charity', some compensation perhaps, but paid without Company precedent.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Connell and Irving, *Class structure*, p. 107.

¹¹³ R.S. Archer to W.R. Hall, 16 February 1907, Letter Book 1904-1912, Archer Collection, K1014, Mitchell Library, (ML).

¹¹⁴ Archer to Hall, 1 March 1907, K1014, ML.

¹¹⁵ Archer to Hall, 12 March 1907, K1014, ML.

Andrew Burrowes claimed compensation for mashed fingers and the Company denied liability, but paid compensation of £1 11s. 8d. and required Burrowes' signature on a receipt 'in satisfaction and discharge'. His fingers recovered, but, after frequent medical treatment, they remained stiff, and he claimed for additional compensation. The Company refused, declaring that his signed receipt indemnified them from further claim. Indeed, they suggested in court that he was less than honest in claiming more. The press reported that Burrowes' barrister, F. McLaughlin, declared in court:

It is a remarkable thing that a concern like Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company should descend to making such a petty point against one of its workmen.¹¹⁶

Paradoxically, Burrowes continued at the mine, resuming work that required the use of a hammer for which his partially paralysed hand was a constant handicap.

The annual reports of the Company claimed that strikes were unknown and industrial unrest was not an issue at Mount Morgan. However, it will be seen in chapter six that workplace unrest was entrenched from 1908. Progressively, union cases against the Company relating to wages and conditions went to arbitration, and compensation claims for death or injury moved through the courts. A consequence of mine closure, whether for strike or lockout reflected a lack of solidarity between union and members, whereby the latter remained liable for the payment of union dues although they were not working. Moreover, union militancy against its own was manifested in legal action against non-working members who were on sustenance. The Australian Workers' Union at Mount Morgan had no compunction in charging defaulting members, mostly labourers, who did not renew their annual subscriptions, or could not afford to. During the 1921 closure of the mine, to be addressed in chapter six, thirteen charges laid in February 1921 were heard in the local Small Debts Court, where each union member defendant was fined £3 5s 6d. including court and professional costs, in default seven days imprisonment at Rockhampton goal.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *MMC*, 9 January 1914.

¹¹⁷ CPSMM, Bench book, 8 February 1921, CPS 7B/S10, QSA.

Matters of radical or illegal practice were endemic in a Company that nurtured a public image of wealth and paternalism whilst the town, whose only share in the Company was a name, found support and empathy in tradition and myth that surrounded the mine. A latent ideology that prompted strikes in the 1900s and the consequence of such action is discussed in chapter six, but police involvement in industrial confrontation at the mine is questioned here. It seems that police were either ineffective or perceived as superfluous at large gatherings of disgruntled mine workers. During the closure of the mine in 1925, in the midst of industrial unrest that erupted into a bitter argument for wages and conditions, the Company closed the mine, an act that the men asserted was a lockout. The press described miners' action as 'terrorism' when, on 9 September about one thousand union led mine workers marched to the Works, and in the manner of 'mob law' swarmed into the offices of the Company. The police provided a presence, but did not act when crowds of men marched to the residence on the mine site of general manager Adam Boyd and created a disturbance. While Boyd declared it would be a fight to the finish, the assistant manager was chased from his office by 'a howling mob', only evading his pursuers by running into a long tunnel.¹¹⁸ The men took control of Company property and ordered everyone off the site. The police stood by as observers. A 'mob' of striking mine workers threatened Company advocate R.E. Hartley as they prevented him from entering the mine site. If he resisted, they declared, 'that will be your last smoke'. Hartley retorted that he would prepare his case for the court, but an AWU representative named Dunstan said that Hartley 'need not bother about papers', adding that that the union claims would be withdrawn as:

¹¹⁸ MB, 10 September 1925.

It is war to the knife. Men can't get what they want from the court. They are going for direct action, so you need not bother, it is no good bothering.¹¹⁹

When fire broke out in the mine three days later, some mine workers who came to the site immediately to fight the blaze in the shafts were hampered by the actions of some unionists. The situation reached flashpoint, yet the low-key role of local police throughout demonstrations and threats of violence suggests that police were instructed to take a pragmatic approach to confrontation. In the succeeding years, the men and their town were left wanting as they watched the Company, whilst acting within the law, subside into liquidation.

Legal authority and government legislation implemented at the local level protected the rights of generations at urban Mount Morgan, a mining town where the majority lived within the law. Most were unaware or untouched by the vicissitudes of laws that were enforced, ignored, abused or manipulated. For this population, the influence of police and the courts, symbols for social order, simply blended into the backdrop to everyday life.

¹¹⁹ *DR*, 10 September 1925. QSA.

Chapter Five

Obedience or care: institutions, associations and ritual

A town might be described in a word, perhaps affluent, parochial, conservative, poor. Yet, to use a single term is to diminish the character of a place and its contribution to the historical process. Mount Morgan was a town created to serve a mine, which in turn served to accumulate wealth for shareholders. However, the working class residents had scant respect for management whose lack of economic support ensured that Mount Morgan was a Company town in name only. Rather, they exhibited pride in the reputation of *their* world famous gold mine. Thus, local attitudes reflected images created as barriers to the realities of town existence.

This chapter explores the tissue of early Mount Morgan life through the influences of time and the demands of the mine - the life-blood of the town. It is contended here that within a milieu of social stratification at Mount Morgan, the collective desire for esteem in the local and wider sphere fostered residents' self-respect, ameliorating the effect of poor social or economic status and the sense of inferiority engendered by mine management. Moreover, with the interflow of benefit societies, associations and fraternities in a quintessential male oriented society, the social mores of kinship, church and community in a working class culture lent balance to the complexities of Mount Morgan existence.¹

¹ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1991, p. 457.

Ian Thorpe suggests that about 51 per cent of the Queensland colonial labour force were working class.² At Mount Morgan, the vast labour force at the mine ensured the basis of a predominantly working-class population. Workplace attitudes prevailed in the mining town committed to sport and leisure, the use or misuse of educational opportunity, the comfort of religion, the secular faith of lodges and self-help societies and the stoicism of mining families who endured the consequences of workplace disease, maiming or death. Typical of a new town, Mount Morgan was a place of primitive conditions, but it was not a pioneering settlement. By comparison, the parameters of status and class were set firmly already at nearby Rockhampton. Perhaps for this reason gregarious Mount Morgan residents experienced some confusion in their personal status in a new and progressively changing community. An emergent culture claimed already that the town and its people were 'better than Rockhampton'³ a characteristic that compares with the Brisbane-Gympie relationship in the 1870s.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Mount Morgan might have been reminiscent of 'a pit-village emerging from semi-feudalism'⁴ but rather than the 'self-respecting artisan', the underground miner was accorded the highest status amongst his peers. However, the diverse population exhibited a working class consciousness and subservient attitude to the Company. The town was shackled to the mine, a place of dust and smoke, noise and fumes, creeping molten slag and engulfing mass of overburden. The place personified the danger of a workplace and the threat that lay below the surface for many who must go underground - the unwary, the careless or simply the luckless. The mine was a fabricated structure deep within a natural phenomenon that might be controlled but never tamed. Yet, in answering the challenge to go to the mine, miners were heroes in the eyes of many for whom the field beneath was a fearful mystery.

² Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society*, St. Lucia, 1996, p. 146.

³ F.W. Sykes, *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan*, Mount Morgan, 1888.

⁴ Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 457.

The self-help tradition of the friendly society, and the lodge ethic of social order, moral discipline and community purpose were entrenched in Australian colonies by the late nineteenth century. Nancy Renfree suggests that 'the colonial's inherent tendency to tempt fortune' explained the low membership of self-help institutions at the gold mining town of Castlemaine as elsewhere in Victoria in the 1850s.⁵ This suggests that initial optimism towards the problems of day to day living blanketed visions of the future. Friendly societies at Castlemaine included membership of those in commerce and trade, with the skilled and semi skilled – tradesmen, miners, carters and labourers topping the membership lists.⁶ As Mount Morgan mine flourished the mine hierarchy, municipal council, bank and larger enterprise, by the nature of their status, laid claim to local progress, but contributed to the town character only in terms of middle-class assumptions.

Traders and tradesmen, miners and others joined friendly societies that promoted self-help, solidarity of members and, significantly, sickness and burial benefits. These were associations reminiscent of the earliest societies in Britain where strict rules and a moral code set the parameters for membership.⁷ A society at Mount Morgan, as elsewhere, might refuse membership to a person of low social status or questionable character. Renfree observes that at Castlemaine, some Chinese rejected the opportunity to join societies, but at Mount Morgan thirty years later, Chinese and Aborigines suffered social exclusion as the 'other' and remained outside European considerations. Margaret Chapman, writing about freemasonry and community in Victoria, locates the friendly and benefit societies and the masonic lodge within two paradigms: the contributory organisations for health and burial benefits, and the ritual and secrecy of

⁵ Nancy S. Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference: English friendly societies in a Victorian goldfields town*, PhD. thesis, Latrobe University, 1983, p. 75.

⁶ Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, p. 118.

⁷ Shani D'Cruze and Jean Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family: Oddfellows lodges in Preston and Lancaster, c.1830-c.1890', *Urban History*, vol. 22, pt. 1, May 1995, p. 26.

freemasonry.⁸ By contrast, Renfree describes societies of the 1860s as 'lodges',⁹ the term used similarly at Mount Morgan in the 1890s.

Manchester Unity of Oddfellows
Independent Order of Oddfellows
Ancient Order of Foresters
Order of Lady Foresters
Protestant Alliance Society
Order of St. Andrew
Independent Order of Rechabites
Perseverance Masonic Lodge
Star of Ulster, Loyal Orange Lodge
Mount Morgan Masonic Lodge
Mount Morgan Grand Lodge
Hibernian (H.A.C.B.S.) ¹⁰

Table 5. Friendly societies and lodges at Mount Morgan, 1900.

Competition for membership between numerous associations reflected aspects of elitism and exclusion between Europeans that suggest some community fragmentation in the face of ethnic solidarity. For example, the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (H.A.C.B.S.) – Hibernians – of St. Michaels Branch number 222 at Mount Morgan included Catholic labourers, railway workers, police, publicans, timber getters and others. The Hibernian regalia of emerald green sashes and velvet collars epitomised Irishness and the Catholic connection ensured that members remained socially distanced from other associations.¹¹

Freemasonry was an institution of contradictions, espousing egalitarianism while practising selective membership. Given that Margaret Chapman confirms masonic philosophy and practice did not follow 'advocacy of extreme social experiment',¹² her

⁸ Margaret Chapman, *Freemasonry and community in nineteenth century Victoria*, M.Comm. thesis, Melbourne University, 1988, pp. 22, 23.

⁹ Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, pp. 59, 68.

¹⁰ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)*, 15 June 1900.

¹¹ Daphne McCabe (Sr. M. Felicitas, R.S.M.), interview with the author, 1 December 1998; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Kensington, 1987, p. 389.

¹² Chapman, *Freemasonry and community*, pp. 24, 25.

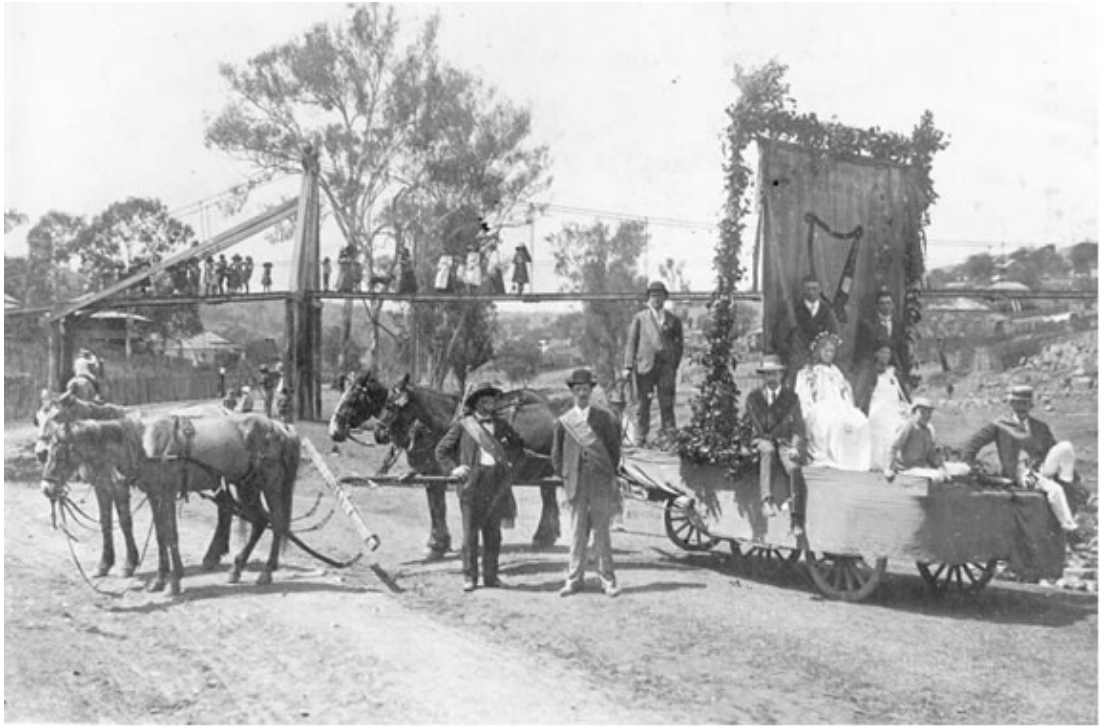


Fig. 18. 'God Save Ireland' inscription above the Harp of Erin motif adorns the Hibernians' banner on this decorated float, Tipperary Point c. 1903. Regalia of members includes sashes and green velvet collars. Girls wear pale dresses and hair wreaths; one wears a Children of Mary cloak. Spectators line suspension bridge over the dry bed of the Ed River during the Great Drought. Red Hill, r. background.



Fig. 19. 'Passing Protestant Hall' (built 1913). Hibernian Parade, summer, c. 1920, members wear regalia. The new banner, the most spectacular Hibernian emblem in Central Queensland, shows Celtic cross and Harp of Erin.

thesis also points out that the laws of freemasonry in Australia tempered the early lodge experience in England and later America. Freemasons in the colonies including Queensland tended to distance themselves from organisations that might align with strident religious dissent, cooperation above individualism, and emergent unionism. However, freemasonry did not function within the network of mutual benefit societies, and whilst rooted in democratic attitudes, claimed status over the lower, labouring orders, specifically Irish Catholics. To this end, the doctrine of freemasonry in Australia as elsewhere was a response to the perceived threat of Roman Catholic dominance, although the Star of Ulster Loyal Orange Lodge was formulated on Irish lodge rules and philosophy.¹³

The 'temple' meeting was a formal ceremony of secret proceedings that featured ritual, regalia and performance that was tantamount to closed circuit entertainment. All loyal members might take their rota term of office on the achievement of three 'craft degrees' that demonstrated commitment to the order, social and moral discipline and public duty.¹⁴ At the same time, an entrenched masonic ethic that work served the community, with progress derived through mental and physical effort, 'reinforced the skilled working man's self-ascription as middle-class'.¹⁵ The elitist atmosphere of freemasonry that served to heighten its mystery defied the rare public scrutiny of members in full regalia at street parades, funerals and national celebrations.¹⁶ At Mount Morgan as elsewhere in regional towns, freemasonry encompassed employers and tradesmen as members rather than aspiring to an elite group of artisans.¹⁷

¹³ A.G. Shanks, *Fifty years' history: Mount Morgan Lodge*, Brisbane, R.S. Hews, pamphlet, 1939.

¹⁴ Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing brotherhood: class, gender and fraternalism*, Princetown, New Jersey, 1989, p. 88, 121, 228.

¹⁵ Chapman, *Freemasonry and community*, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 7 November 1908.

¹⁷ *MB*, 9 November, 1908.



Fig. 20. Loyal Orange Lodge No. 63, Mount Morgan, 1913, 'Premier lodge of Queensland, 1911-1912'. See Star of Ulster banner, right; and centre front, symbolic memorabilia, banner across the floor and table with cushion, testament and crown.

The plethora of friendly societies at Mount Morgan was similar to the situation two generations earlier in other mining centres like Castlemaine in Victoria. Moreover, the popularity of Manchester Unity Oddfellows and Foresters Court¹⁸ featured at Mount Morgan. Whilst the similarity of associations saw some societies bracketed with church temperance groups, over time, public perception of the difference between orders at Mount Morgan seemed blurred. Trades dominated in society membership, but permanent resident members might be socially removed from transient mine workers who were also members.¹⁹ However, transfer of association membership accompanied worker mobility in terms of workplace relocation.

¹⁸ Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, pp. 51, 52.

¹⁹ Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, pp. 129-131.



Fig. 21. Lodge gathering, 1900, presumably Ancient Order of Foresters and Court Lady Franklin Foresters at Foresters Hall, 1900. Note regalia, sashes and ribboned medals. One of two banners on the anteroom wall reads 'Star of Hope' (Rechabites); two halberds are on stands in the foreground.

The Foresters built the first association hall in town by the 1890s, the place available also for hire as a public hall until independent benefit associations faded with the gradual introduction of state welfare. The hall became a cinema, but the masonic temple was for the exclusive use of the masonic fraternity. Hotels also continued to provide for some association gatherings to farewell members who moved on or in time, to apprentices who completed their training. However, Mount Morgan was not always the place for aspiring 'journeymen' as they moved through their *rites de passage* with appropriate ritual and celebration.²⁰ The Company provided apprenticeships at the mine and expected that on completion of their training, tradesmen would remain at the Works, rather than leave to gain outside experience. For example, members of lodges and societies were aware of general manager Richard's open antagonism towards such institutions. In the tradition of journeymen, however, apprentices of mine and town celebrated their final *rite* at a local hotel. At the same time, a new 'apprentice' might be

²⁰ DR, 11 September 1908.

indoctrinated into the 'club' for which blacklisting of outsiders was lore, and drinking was manly activity.²¹

Association fundraising was an ongoing necessity and by 1911, the 'lodge' band featured in public ceremony. The number of active associations at Mount Morgan might have challenged group solidarity, given that an attempt at affiliation failed. Despite establishment of an Amalgamated Friendly Societies Dispensary and the introduction of an annual picnic and sports event to celebrate 'Friendly Societies Day' - that included the Hibernians - societies at Mount Morgan came together only for social events.²² Twenty friendly societies and lodges functioned by 1917, and memberships of associations away from the workplace shored up links of male bondage.²³ A consequence of this was social contact between families that resulted on occasion in the marriage of sons and daughters of society members into member families of other associations. Therefore, the connection between friendly societies, lodges and Freemasonry was extended and perpetuated. Not only that, the scope of influence was apparent in securing employment. Charlie Shannon, an apprentice carpenter of Irish-Catholic parents, required a work transfer when the Company closed in 1927. Shannon recalled the response of a staff officer, 'a member of an influential lodge - the Masons – "Don't worry, I'll get you a job." He did, too.'²⁴

The Christian church preached spiritual freedom with Jesus Christ, refuting the attributes of associations and lodges, but in an ironic parallel, the praise of integrity saw spiritual and temporal faith as one. For many, this faith came to account with the rise of industrial conflict. Hypocrisy, perceived as a bourgeois characteristic, was lampooned frequently in the Mount Morgan press, suggesting that custom rather than inclination

²¹ Clawson, *Constructing brotherhood*, pp. 103, 156.

²² *Daily Record (DR)*, 11 September 1911.

²³ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 20 April 1917.

²⁴ C. Shannon, interview with the author, 10 September 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project (MMOH).

brought many people to church. Moreover, clergy observed that faces in the pews might reflect 'blank indifference'.²⁵ In 1908, a local journalist reporting on the court case of respected town agent Briggs, boomed 'Corruption is rife...one thing that strikes me forcibly is the regular way they attend church'. The cavil continued in verse:

On Monday, Tuesday Wednesday
Thursday Friday and Saturday,
They are robbing all they can,
But they go to Church on Sunday
Just to show they are honest men.²⁶

A high percentage of mostly English immigrant miners came to Mount Morgan in the establishment years. Occupations of paternal parents who remained in their country of origin were diverse, but included some miners and tradesmen. Immigrants might follow the trade of their fathers but employment at Mount Morgan did not ensure upward mobility.²⁷ Four religious denominations held services in the town in the 1880s: Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and the dissenting Primitive Methodists. These faiths preceded the Baptist and Congregational churches and the Salvation Army, their non-conformist fervour, fellowship in faith and appeal to the poor entrenched in Welsh and English mining communities.²⁸

Membership of the Anglican parish council and church committees at Mount Morgan reflected the association of mine hierarchy and management with the Rockhampton Diocese.²⁹ Holyoake Woodd[sic] was secretary of the Company and lay synodsmen for St. Mary's parish. The mine's major shareholders, William Knox D'Arcy, Thomas Skarratt Hall and his brother Walter Russell Hall also donated to the

²⁵ A.A. Fellows, *Full time*, Rockhampton, 1967, p. 32. The Venerable Arthur Fellows served the Rockhampton Anglican Diocese 1912-1954.

²⁶ *Critic*, 4 September 1908. This was the Briggs/Hempenstall case discussed in chapter four.

²⁷ Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, p. 145.

²⁸ Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Williamsburg, 1982, pp. 162-167; Mount Morgan Baptist Church, Deacon's Minutes, 1902, K8/963, CC/CQU.

²⁹ *Proceedings of the First Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1893. Dr. R.R. Ranking, Anglican synodsmen and police magistrate at Rockhampton, presided intermittently at the Court of Petty Sessions, Mount Morgan.

diocese.³⁰ By 1897, their contributions to the diocesan capital account amounted to £600, and diocesan capital investment in Mount Morgan was £634 by 1898-1899.³¹ However, the diocese was cognisant of the lack of financial support for Mount Morgan parish by shareholders in fabulously rich mine. The pastoral letter of 1899 addressed the issue:

The parochial district of Mount Morgan that suggests a prodigality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice is, alas, most inadequately supported. The working people who compose the congregation give freely and willingly; but from those who derive great wealth from the goldmine and who may reasonably be expected to take some interest in the moral and religious well-being of those whose labour they employ hardly any help is received. The most pressing needs are the building of a parsonage, and the erection of a mission church at Crocodile Creek. How easily one or two of the wealthier shareholders could provide these two wants. May this paragraph meet the eye and touch the conscience, and better still, reach the hearts of some who are well able to help.³²

By 1899 Anglicans built a fine brick church on a hill overlooking the town and mine. The local brickmaker was an Anglican whose son worked at the mine until succumbing to miner's phthisis. J. Wesley Hall, the first supervisor of the mine, contributed substantially to the cost of The Church of St. Mary of the Nativity³³ that provided an impressive architectural statement symbolising the established church and conservatism.

The majority of Anglican marriages conducted at Mount Morgan between 1889-1909 were between British, or native-born and British, 40 per cent of males and 33 per cent of females being British or European born. Mining was the occupation declared by 80 per cent of males³⁴ for whom Rockhampton was the port of entry for Mount Morgan,

³⁰ Endowment Fund Report, *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, December, 1897.

³¹ *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1898.

³² Pastoral letter delivered in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Rockhampton, 7 June 1899, *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1899.

³³ Fellows, *Full time*, pp. 43, 90.

³⁴ St. Mary's, Mount Morgan, Marriage Registers 1889-1897, 1898-1899, 1900-1909, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Rockhampton.

Price, Two Shillings.

BIRTH.

No 21212

1913
BIRTH in the District of Mount Morgan in the Colony of Queensland,
Registered by Richard Power District Registrar.

Marginal Notes (if any).	Column.	
	1 Number in Register	4645.
	CHILD.	
	2 When and where born	15 th August 1913, Moongan, Mount Morgan.
	3 Name, and whether present or not ..	Robert
	4 Sex	male.
	PARENTS.	
	Father—	
	5 1. Name and surname	1. Frank Henry Cole
	2. Rank or profession	2. Labourer.
	3/4. Age and birthplace	3. 27 years & Island Bay, Isle of Wight.
	6 1. When and where married	1. 27 th April 1912, Mount Morgan Queensland.
	2. Previous issue living	2.—Living years.
	3. Deceased	3. Deceased.
	Mother—	
	7 1. Name and maiden surname	1. Grace Gertrude formerly Schluter
	2/3. Age and birthplace	2. 25 years. 3. London, England.
	INFORMANT.	
	8 Signature, description, and residence of informant	Certified in writing by Frank Henry Cole, Father, Moongan near Mount Morgan.
	WITNESSES.	
	9 1. Medical attendant	1.
	2. Nurse	2. Nurse Anderson.
	3. Names of Witnesses	3.
	REGISTRAR.	
	10 1. Signature of District Registrar	1. R. Power.
	2/3. Date and where registered	2. 9 th September 1913. Mount Morgan.
	11 Name, if added after registration of birth	

I, Richard Power, District Registrar,
do hereby certify that the above is a true Copy of an Entry in a Register of Births kept in the District Registry Office,
at Mount Morgan, and I further certify that I am a person duly authorised
by law to issue such Certificate.

Extracted this Twenty third day of July 1928.

R. Power
District Registrar.

Fig. 22. Birth Certificate. Robert Cole, b. Moongan, Mount Morgan, 15 August 1913, the birth attended by a midwife.

probably their planned destination. For example, miner Frank Cole, born Totland Bay, Isle of Wight, son of a coast guard, and Grace Schleuter, born Middlesex, daughter of a London tobacconist, were betrothed when they emigrated to Queensland with Schleuter family relations. Their marriage was solemnised at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Mount Morgan in April 1912.³⁵ The Cole family left Mount Morgan in 1917, during the three week strike at the mine.

For Irish-Catholic immigrants, it is perceivable that Mount Morgan was simply a place to seek work. A majority of Irish were unskilled and were among those who worked at the mine as labourers, living in tents and huts until renting small cottages built by petite bourgeoisie or, on occasion, thrifty working class.³⁶ From the outset, a visiting Catholic priest travelled regularly to the mine to say Mass and celebrate the sacraments for men at their tents or gathering places. A parish was declared in 1885³⁷ benefited from Bishop Joseph Cane's purchase of eleven lots at the second land sale in 1887. The lots, confined to one section of the town grid and with frontage to three streets, became the Catholic precinct. The canvas and shingle Church of the Sacred Heart served also as a school under the care of lay-teachers. During school hours, a red curtain drawn in front of the tabernacle closed and protected the sanctuary.³⁸ By 1891, 80 enrolments at the school compared favourably to the more than 150 enrolled at the government primary school opened earlier in 1887. A convent, and a new school named St. Patrick's, were built by 1895 when a Congregation of Sisters of Mercy replaced lay teachers. Catholic children attending the government primary school across the road were 'urged to go to their own school' or were simply taken to the new school.

³⁵ Barbara Webster, information provided relating to the Cole family, Rockhampton, provided to the author 1999.

³⁶ Mount Morgan Municipal Council, Rate Book, 1890, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives (MMSCA).

³⁷ F. Golding, The Irish influence at Mount Morgan, n.d., typescript, J18/255, CC/CQU.

³⁸ Rockhampton Catholic Diocese, *The Review*, Rockhampton, May 1982, pp. 11, 12.

The greater percentage of Catholic pupils lived within the Tipperary Point, Red Hill, Cemetery Road and Jubilee Hill areas, but children of a police constable, bank manager, tailor, butcher, storekeeper, baker, carrier and others lived in town or in the more removed suburbs scattered along the hillsides and valleys to the north.³⁹ By 1913, when the school register showed 1 039 enrolments since the school opened, a large room was built as an infants' school. First enrolments numbered 22 boys and 25 girls, the register citing 49 per cent as children of miners. In this early period at Mount Morgan and before union inspired definitive separation of work categories, a majority of male parents declared their occupation as 'miner', in a ratio of 4:1 over labourers. The visiting Cardinal Moran blessed the new schoolroom that was known immediately as 'Cardinal's Hall', but was not seen as 'sacred space' *per se*, typically finding use for both honorary and remunerative purposes outside school hours, as a meeting and function venue for Catholics and others.

An additional Catholic primary school opened in 1913 at the predominantly labourers' suburb of Red Hill, adjacent to Tipperary Point, and which drew pupils from areas south to Horse Creek and Hamilton Creek. The school, an old shed used previously by a saddler, was painted inside and out and a calico ceiling was hung above desks and forms. The donation of an old organ, placement of a wooden cross on the roof and a sign proclaiming 'Our Lady of the Annunciation', saw the new school epitomise the separation of religious and secular education.⁴⁰ The 1919 register listed male parents as thirty labourers, two miners, two tradesmen and a publican.⁴¹

A Presbyterian circuit encompassed Mount Morgan town and district. The church incumbent held meetings and study sessions at the manse and in 1908, claimed more

³⁹ St. Patrick's Catholic School, Mount Morgan, Enrolment Register, 1902-1913, 1913-1948, Sisters of Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

⁴⁰ *The Catholic Review*, Rockhampton, November 1970, p. 10.

⁴¹ Red Hill Catholic School, Mount Morgan, Enrolment Register, 1913-1927, Sisters of Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

than two hundred visits to Presbyterian households in town and more than five hundred within the parish circuit. These official visiting figures suggest a phenomenal rate, given the difficulties of transport in the era. By 1909 also, 43 baptisms for the year prompted the introduction of a Church Cradle Roll and confirmed town population increase.

The Scottish ethic of teaching and learning⁴² saw twenty-one teachers trained in the Canadian Church study programme. Associated with the Queensland Sabbath School Union, the Mount Morgan Presbyterian Sabbath School in 1907 had 254 on the roll, including 97 boys and 157 girls, with average attendance of 120. The church library circulated widely and provided literature for Sabbath school, bible class and debating and literary club. Use of the library was critical to spiritual teaching and the committee waived the subscription fee after extension of the catalogue with the private donation of 62 books during three years. The Ladies Church Aid Society held welcome socials for newcomers and benefit socials for the widowed and destitute of the congregation, but ad hoc financial assistance was according to a stringent church budget that did not extend to social welfare.⁴³ Moreover, frequent appeals from the pulpit for contributions to the sustentation fund reflected scant response.⁴⁴

Competition between faiths was strong at Mount Morgan. Within a year of the Anglicans establishing at Baree, a Presbyterian church opened nearby. Built of hardwood and furnished with pews, lamps, harmonium and the customary reading table, the building accommodated 120. Whilst 34 young people attended the Sabbath School in a rented hall nearby, the church congregation at the opening service numbered more

⁴² Malcolm Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1987, p. 29.

⁴³ Renate Howe, 'Protestantism, social Christianity and the ecology of Melbourne, 1890-1900', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, April 1980, p. 72.

⁴⁴ Mount Morgan Presbyterian Church, *Annual Report*, 1907, 1908, 1909, Rockhampton, 285/M, Mitchell Library, (ML).

than one hundred to hear a hint of Sabbatarian rhetoric in the visiting State Moderator's sermon demanding spiritual obedience and temporal discipline:

The habit of non-church going [is] increasingly in our midst, the evident effects of which are desecration of the Lord's Day and lack of religious sincerity in our national life.⁴⁵

A simple rectangle of slab and shingle was the first church of the Primitive Methodists at Mount Morgan in the 1880s, more than a decade before amalgamation of the sect with Wesleyan and the Bible Christian Methodists at Rockhampton in 1898.⁴⁶ Subsequently, whilst austere buildings were the outward sign of Methodism, congregation numbers fluctuated according to the pulpit voice that espoused Sabbatarianism, unionism and charity within the tenet of spiritual faith. In the tradition of Wesleyan Sabbath Schools, untrained but zealous lay people provided Testament instruction for increasing numbers of Mount Morgan Methodist youth.

The voice of dissent echoed in the drumbeat of the non-gender specific Salvation Army band as 'soldiers' made their own spiritual and social impact in the town. Theirs was a unique ritual; resplendent in their uniforms, regimental caps and striking 'coal scuttle' bonnets, the 'Army' took Christian faith and the collection box into the public arena at Mount Morgan. Commitment of the faithful was evident; in the thirty enrolments in the 26 years to 1916, numerous addresses cited were in poorer areas south of the town. With street meetings on Sundays and weekday evenings, the Army welcomed all to their circle and collected from the givers in order to reach out to the disadvantaged. They framed a quintessential service for salvation in Scripture readings, prayer, homily and songs of praise raised to the rhythm of trumpet, timbrel and drum. The Army drew large crowds, albeit many gathered to hear music and song and to follow the 'first class band' of the Mount Morgan Corps, but few marched with the

⁴⁵ Alexander Hay, Right Reverend, Moderator of the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 18 July 1909, Mount Morgan Presbyterian Church, *Annual Report*, 1909.

⁴⁶ Jim Faull, *The Cornish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 14-18.

'B' - 'Backslider'
'T' - Transferred to another Corps
'G' - Promoted to Glory'
'R' - 'Removed'
'C' - 'Gone to Chapel'
'T' - 'Gone to Training Home' ⁴⁷

Table 6. Soldiers' Roll code, Salvation Army, Mount Morgan, 1916.

soldiers into the Gordon Street 'barracks' in the centre of town.⁴⁸ Adherents accepted the code of the Soldiers' Roll where the reference to 'backslider' and 'chapel' confirmed a similarity to the early Methodist system of categorising adherents.⁴⁹ By 1916, Mount Morgan levels of attendance and resident mobility were documented succinctly. Four were backsliders, eight transferred to another corps, one went to chapel and four went to Glory. The corps enrolment that increased by 51 in the decade following World War I suggests the influence of the Salvation Army's service and image.⁵⁰

Within a decade of the opening of the first Mount Morgan primary school in 1887, the typically small building soon became inadequate for its purpose. In response to the request of the school committee for additional buildings and extension to original classrooms,⁵¹ a representative from the Office of the Colonial Secretary met with a deputation at Mount Morgan in 1896. Reporting on the situation later, he declared that although 237 pupils had transferred to the Catholic school by 1896, the progress of the mine and rapid increase in town population resulted in overcrowding at the public school. In an era when gender separation at schools was an evolving ethos, Wilson deplored the:

⁴⁷ Mount Morgan Salvation Army, Soldiers' Roll, 1890-1949, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁴⁸ MMC, 11 May 1900.

⁴⁹ Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, pp. 388, 400.

⁵⁰ Salvation Army, Mount Morgan, North Queensland Division, Mount Morgan Corps file 1890-1949, Mount Morgan Historical Museum, (MMHM).

⁵¹ Rob Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life: a centenary magazine of the 100 years 1887-1987 for the State Schools of Mount Morgan Shire*, Rockhampton, 1987, p. 10.

mixing of the sexes producing grave abuses which might lead to serious results...There is no fence dividing off the girls and boys...unseemly conduct occurs when the Master's eye is not on them.⁵²

Lack of response by the Department of Public Instruction prompted Dr. S.J. Richard, government medical officer at Mount Morgan to demand immediate action to overcome the overcrowded conditions at the existing school. Less than 3½ square feet of space for each child was prejudicial to health and the problem of space prevented acceptance of more pupils.⁵³ A year later, two large classrooms and a separate school for girls and infants - to include boys of less than seven years - were constructed on the five acres of the reserve.

The girls' school accepted 180 enrolments, and the total attendance at the primary school on opening day was 591 pupils of a total enrolment of 789, where the staff of seven teachers and six pupil teachers taught an average pupil attendance of 71 per cent. This was evidence of the constant problem of school absenteeism, given problems of health, distance, parental attitude or juvenile obligation to family work. The Mount Morgan State School became the largest primary school in Queensland, in terms of pupil numbers and buildings. However, construction of additional large classrooms did not accommodate all the children in the town environs or district. The progression of state education saw a network of eight primary schools at Mount Morgan at a time when the Scholarship examination was the zenith of education for the majority of pupils in local – and Queensland – state schools.

Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Fahey suggest that in mining communities, few had extensive kin until the third generation, by which time, geographic mobility

⁵² H. Wilson to Chief Secretary D.H. Dalrymple, 22 June 1896, cited in Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life*, p. 17.

⁵³ S.G. Richard to Department of public Instruction, 19 February 1897, cited in Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life*, p. 15.

dispersed family networks that took so long to build up.⁵⁴ The circumstance of three generations occurred at Castlemaine mines.⁵⁵ This equates with the Mount Morgan experience in which numerous mining families assumed that sons would work at the mine. By the turn of the century, the first generation of native-born in the town included boys who joined a village tradition of working heritage that passed from father to son whereby generations worked at the mine, grandfather, father and son. If employees did not become tradesmen or miners, labouring work was an option always. The generation ethic was a matter of family pride: father and son might be employed at the same time, perhaps for similar work and on the same shift. The Heberlein family spent their lives at and around Mount Morgan, where four generations worked at the mine.⁵⁶

The business of town undertaker, customarily an adjunct to the enterprise of carpentry and furniture making, did not bring social mobility. Moreover, business depended on population and the level of settlement. For example, in the years before the proclamation of a town cemetery reserve at Mount Morgan in 1889, the resident undertaker complained that he dealt with 'barely one procession a month.'⁵⁷ This does not suggest the robust health of inhabitants; rather, that people buried their dead in the vast empty spaces in the town. If wooden tombstones marked burial places, these probably deteriorated or were removed over time, so the number and location of graves remains unknown. Mount Morgan folk lore locates few sites: at Jubilee Hill, the grave of an Irish storekeeper's daughter, and on high ground near the suburb of Walterhall, the graves of two Chinese.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Pat Grimshaw and Charles Fahey, 'Family and community in nineteenth century Castlemaine', *Australia 1888*, Bulletin no. 9, April 1982, p.113, cited in Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, p. 139.

⁵⁵ Renfree, *Migrants and cultural transference*, p. 121.

⁵⁶ Colin Heberlein, interview with the author, 21 October 1992, MMOH.

⁵⁷ Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Brisbane, 1888, p. 42.

⁵⁸ Information received from A. Christmas, curator, Mount Morgan Historical Museum, 1997, OH.

By 1890, a small group of ethnic 'other' who were not mine employees manifested their own culture and religious beliefs at Mount Morgan. On a large plot within the boundary of the town cemetery, local Chinese erected a Heung Lew (incense burner) shrine.⁵⁹ From a base about four feet square, the structure rose about six feet to a pyramidal top three feet high that had two small ornamentations at the top. The internal cavity of the Heung Lew was a brick lined furnace for the burning of prayer papers. Four vents were in the pyramid with one large vent at the base and an iron door



Fig. 23. Chinese Heung Lew (incense burner, shrine) constructed at Mount Morgan cemetery, c. 1890.

that sealed the opening to the shrine. Prayer papers and cash were offered in the shrine at funerals and days of religious observance, whilst at a burial, ducks, fowls and pigs were offered at the Heung Lew to speed the departed spirits of friends and family on

⁵⁹ *MB*, 6 April 1973.

their journey to the next world.⁶⁰ This cultural tradition compares to European funerals where spiritual celebration or secular service includes the offering of flowers at burials and the erection of memorials in cemeteries and other public spaces.

For some in the late nineteenth century and early 1900s, funerals assumed connotations of social events. Undertakers arranged for the printing of notices at the local newspaper office to advise of impending funerals, tacking the sheets to white painted 'funeral posts' located at busy street corners. One post was opposite the Leichhardt Hotel at the junction of Morgan and East Streets, a centrally situated and popular meeting place in the main shopping area.⁶¹ As only the notice was removed after a funeral - a local myth predicted bad luck to follow removal of the tacks - the studded posts remained urban memorials to the town dead.

With the gazettal of the cemetery reserve in 1889, burials assumed a status in terms of attendance and display, ceremony and ritual. More persistent than memory, the inscriptions on many monumental stones remained public historical profiles. The citation style on many headstones that honoured early immigrant miners and residents included the county and country of origin, 'Jarrow on Tyne'; 'Flintsane, Wales', whilst that of the first president of the Mount Morgan Hibernians included the caption '... of Galway, Ireland. Branch Secretary 1888-1907 St. Michaels Branch H.A.C.B. Society'. Headstones of native-born cited their colony or state of birth: 'b. Victoria' and on occasion, the headstone cited the suburb of residence of the deceased, '...who died at Baree', or 'Baree, Mount Morgan'.⁶²

Funeral assurance through friendly societies provided some financial support to members. However, in the era preceding worker's compensation or government

⁶⁰ A. Christmas, *History of the Chinese in Mount Morgan*, typescript, c. 1990, p. 7, MMHM.

⁶¹ Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 3 March 1998; Oral History (OH); N. Chardon, *Horses and funerals*, typescript, 1973, p. 1, MMHM.

⁶² Headstone epitaphs, Mount Morgan Cemetery, September 1996.

welfare, mining culture required that as a gesture of respect, 'the hat was passed around' for the widow and family of a deceased breadwinner. Moreover, a society or organisation, group of workmates or other associates of the deceased might raise a tombstone at the grave. For example, when 'Joe Hickman b. 'Jarrow-on-Tyne', died in 1896, he was a long serving member of the Mount Morgan Cemetery Trust and the organisation provided the headstone for his grave.⁶³

Charity functions were regular events, generally organised as a ball, concert, or social and dance held in the Mount Morgan School of Arts. With a local identity as Master of Ceremonies and with string band accompaniment for dancing, such events were the stuff of fund-raising for victims of mine accidents, for widowed families, or the Mount Morgan Hospital. The Hospital Ball set an early tradition in the town. By 1907, with the £100 raised at the annual function, establishment of a Children's Ward was possible as funds in hand drew the appropriate 2:1 government subsidy.⁶⁴ However, the need for ambulance facilities was critical in a town where the primary workplace was dangerous, yet Mount Morgan was without an ambulance service for 30 years. Representatives of local friendly societies met to discuss public subscription for the provision of a local service, but were aware of the Company's assertion that those who suffered accident or illness could receive immediate treatment at the Works by an honorary 'corps' of off duty miners.⁶⁵ However, some mine victims of accident or illness walked or were carried substantial distances to receive aid on the mine site.

In order to build an ambulance centre, a committee leased Company held land at nominal rent in 1912. The mine general manager, Benjamin Magnus, agreed that the new service would take over the mine 'corps' and that three mine staff members would assist the new brigade. Whilst the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust donated £125 towards a

⁶³ George H. Haswell, A Tyneside worthy, paper read at the Tyneside Club, Birmingham, England, 27 November 1897, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library (FL).

⁶⁴ *MMA*, 23 September 1908.

⁶⁵ Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

building with mechanical doors, equipment was limited to a mining stretcher, eight collapsible stretchers and an old litter. The Company donation of £200 was a seemingly generous action, but astute general manager Benjamin Magnus was aware that a town brigade would save the cost of an ambulance service at the mine. Moreover, although the Company had refused a Council request in 1903 to supply electricity to the town from the mine powerhouse, a decade later Magnus also supplied mine electricity to the new ambulance free of charge. Statistics for the first eleven months of operation proved the necessity for a brigade to serve town and mine: 383 cases were treated at the centre, 258 calls were received in and around the town and 365 cases involved travel.⁶⁶

An appointed Ladies Auxiliary moved into fund-raising, organising a 'Tag Day' in the streets⁶⁷, cricket match, social and fair, card evenings, charity film shows and the first Ambulance Ball. A charity carnival in the first year became an annual event, a part of the town scene and an event similar to the ambulance carnival at Rockhampton. Fundraising proceeds assisted costs of ambulance equipment, transport including a horse drawn rubber tyred wagon for patient comfort, and an Ashford litter and stretchers. Staff and assistants included a waged superintendent, permanent bearer and 19 honorary bearers. Margaret O'Brien's brother, 'a real mad ambulance too' was an honorary bearer for the corps from its inception.⁶⁸ However, Mount Morgan unions condemned the service years later with the claim that they, and other mine employees, were unaware that an ambulance vehicle was available at a building on the mine site:

A man had a head injury and had to come to the store - almost a mile - before he could receive attention ... everyone at the mine walked. The workers wanted an ambulance man on the spot where the men were. They fought for it and the Company said they had a first class ambulance on the lease.⁶⁹

The mine took its toll of life at Mount Morgan, confirming a perception of masculinity that required men to die nobly, if not in mortal combat, then against

⁶⁶ Queensland Ambulance Transport Board, *Annual report*, Rockhampton, 1913.

⁶⁷ An identifiable 'tag' with pin and worn on payment of a donation.

⁶⁸ Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

⁶⁹ Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

dangerous odds. For those at Mount Morgan who were not underground workers at the mine, the comprehension of death underground from falling rock or explosion in a tunnel or chamber was beyond imagining. Death underground brought posthumous enshrinement in local culture:

We shall never forget them, though they have lost their lives,
So let us pay attention to their children and their wives.
It simply is our duty now, and let us all beware,
Their fathers died a noble death and left them in our care.⁷⁰

Between September and November 1908, a total of twelve men were killed in two tunnel collapses at the mine, one fall at the 850 foot level on Saturday, 7 September at 5 p.m., when seven men were killed, the other at the 750 foot level about 3.30 p.m. on the afternoon of Wednesday, 4 November.⁷¹ Immediately the tragedies occurred the prolonged howl of the mine hooter sent the awful news through the town and suburbs, business came to a standstill and, according to mining culture, mineworkers ceased work until after an *en masse* funeral attendance some days latter.⁷² The tragedy brought shock, inconsolable grief and emotive news reportage to the town:

On Saturday night, as soon as the news became known, knots of willing men were rushing to the mine to assist and right up to the last body was recovered late on Sunday evening, the yard was full of men eager and ready to risk their lives to recover their mates' bodies. This is practically what it amounted to for the fall continued at intervals - of course in small quantities - all the time the men were being sought for.⁷³

Gympie was the home town of four of the seven men killed in the September accident, and coffins were brought from Rockhampton for the bodies to be taken by train to Gympie for interment. In funeral style, a large number of miners and others marched alongside and behind the lorry draped in black cloth that transported the

⁷⁰ A.L. Lloyd (comp), *Come all ye bold miners: ballads and songs of the coalfields*, London, 1978, p. 187.

⁷¹ Accidents at Mount Morgan, minutes of evidence and appendices, *Queensland Legislative Assembly*, Brisbane, 1908, pp. iv, v.

⁷² *MB*, 7 September 1908.

⁷³ *Critic*, 11 September 1908.

coffins from the town hospital to the station. Men stood silent to witness the departure and progress of the train and its awful freight.⁷⁴ The funeral train took the calamity of death to the wider sphere, from Mount Morgan through outer suburbs and villages along the line to Rockhampton, then by sea and rail to the stunned and disbelieving town of Gympie.

Don't you see that funeral train?
Don't you see that funeral train
Going down that lonesome valley?
It's the longest one I've seen.⁷⁵

Death underground heightened the fearsome significance⁷⁶ of a funeral. Moreover, the mass burial of the three Mount Morgan men killed in September 1908 was a collective experience for the thousands of town residents, whether they marched in the cortege that extended for almost a mile, or watched from streets and hillside. The procession that passed rows of houses where doors were closed and blinds drawn, shops shut and draped in black, and flags at half-mast brought the town and its organisations together as one. Leaving from the town hospital and led by two local mounted police, the procession moved to the continuous, slow beat of the Mount Morgan Brass Band playing the ubiquitous funeral dirge 'The Dead March from Saul', while the Mafeking Bell at the Council Chambers and the Catholic church bell tolled in sombre unison. One victim had been a member of The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society and members in regalia walked ahead of the three draped coffins on biers carried shoulder high by relays of miners for the full distance to the cemetery. Hundreds of miners,

⁷⁴ *MB*, 7 September 1908.

⁷⁵ Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin, 'Scofield mine disaster', *Heart songs: the old time country songs of Utah Phillips*, Massachusetts, 1997. After a mine disaster claimed many lives at Scofield, Utah in 1900, coffins were sent from Salt Lake. They were loaded on rail and townspeople watched as the train wound through the valley from Scofield.

⁷⁶ Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 458.



Fig. 24. Funeral procession for three of seven miners killed underground at Mount Morgan mine, 7 September 1908.

including members of the Fitzroy Miners Union, marched in lines eight across, followed by members of the public. Vehicles and horsemen brought up the rear. Two directors,



Fig. 25. Funeral procession at Mount Morgan for miners killed underground 4 November 1908, the second multiple fatality within two months.

the assistant general manager and senior staff attended also. At the cemetery gates, the cortege divided in two lines, one proceeding to an ecumenical graveside service for two of the victims, the second group to a service according to masonic ritual for the other victim.⁷⁷ The fall at the 750 foot level of the Linda Tunnel in November 1908 claimed

⁷⁷ MB, 8 September 1908.

the lives of five local miners. Fifteen men were working at an underground location and most were timbering. Of the five killed in an escape attempt, the only body recovered by midnight on 4 November was buried the following day. When the remaining four bodies were recovered, the funeral arrangements and procession for their multiple burial were more complex and representations by religious and secular associations more spectacular than the September burial.⁷⁸ The following year, a vast crowd gathered at the Mount Morgan cemetery for the dedication of a memorial erected to the memory of all men accidentally killed at the mine. Dominating the cemetery precinct, the obelisk



Fig. 26. Mount Morgan Cemetery, 1909. Dedication of the 'Linda Memorial' to 26 miners killed at Mount Morgan mine between 1894-1909. The shattered top of the obelisk denotes broken life. Foreground note: some women are veiled.

style 'Linda Memorial', was named for the Linda tunnel, scene of the 1908 tragedies. The memorial also named all miners accidentally killed at the mine and buried in the town cemetery and at Gympie.⁷⁹ Another death by mine accident had occurred since the

⁷⁸ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

⁷⁹ *MB*, 12 March 1974.

1908 tragedy and the name of the latest victim was included in 26 inscriptions for men who were killed at the mine between 1894 and 1909. Centred in a burial site 16 feet square that featured ornamental concrete surrounds, the memorial rose from a four feet square base. Rather than reaching a height of almost 20 feet, the last seven feet of the pillar were shattered, the broken top a ubiquitous gravestone symbol of a life cut short.

At the workplace and in town, miner nonchalance was manifested in a garrulousness⁸⁰ that suggests a deep, if natural fear. Between miner and family, the mental barrier of threat of accident or death at the workplace was a constant; given that despite the Company's claims to the contrary, accidents were frequent and over the years, single deaths occurred regularly.⁸¹ The crises of mine disasters and resultant multiple deaths that made heroes of victims and rescuers alike, bonded the town subsequently more than any other phenomenon. The mine precinct became the battlefield where the enemy - the mine - triumphed in making the abstract threat of death a concrete truth. For many weeks after the 1908 disasters, the social fabric of the town was severely crushed.⁸²

Threads of womens' activities at Mount Morgan entwined every aspect of Mount Morgan existence. Chapter seven will address issues facing working-class women, but it must be observed here that most women remained an unsung population. During the dreadful hours and days after underground accidents in September and November 1908, women seemed invisible. Whether, on hearing the sirens and the news of the tunnel collapses or during the searching hours, they simply took access to the mine site, waited at the gate, or were even to be seen is not known, nor were their actions or reactions reported. They might have followed the funeral biers in 1908, yet were mentioned in press reports only in the context of 'grieving families'. These were the mining women,

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1972, p. 267.

⁸¹ Discussion of findings by The Board of Inquiry into the accidents in 1908 is included in chapter six.

⁸² *Critic*, 8 September 1908.

not those of the mine hierarchy or petite bourgeoisie and who were applauded in the local press for charitable activities in guilds and auxiliaries. They were not the members of the Methodist sponsored and politically driven Women's Christian Temperance Union, or the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, the Catholic Womens' Association or other organisations at Mount Morgan that provided opportunities for social and moral action.⁸³ Church adherence and commitment to their faith did not ensure that many working-class women had time to spend outside the home. Moreover, the burdens of a large family and low income might be exacerbated by the ongoing illness of the breadwinner.

A badge of heroism was not the reward of a man who died from miner's phthisis, scourge of the industry. When Mount Morgan gold was pouring out of the town, down the Razorback and through Rockhampton to the south, the disease had been acknowledged three decades earlier as a significant cause of gold miners' death in Victoria and New South Wales.⁸⁴ Dust from the mines caused lung damage resulting in a disease that did not manifest itself for at least five years,⁸⁵ after which the victim's health deteriorated slowly until ultimately neither work nor exertion was possible. The sufferer was committed to a future confined to bed, invariably in a room at the rear of the house, the window traditionally closed, the fetid atmosphere adding not only to patient misery but also to contamination of the environment. A constant danger to others was the pulmonary tuberculosis associated with phthisis. The virulent infection spread from the mine victim's coughing and expectoration of 'black spit' and the sharing and handling of contaminated utensils.⁸⁶

⁸³ Roger C. Thompson, 'Women and the significance of religion in Australian history', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 78, no. 108, April 1997, p. 118.

⁸⁴ Walter Summons, *Miners' phthisis: report of an investigation at Bendigo into the prevalence, nature, causes and prevention of miners' phthisis*, Melbourne, 1906, pp. 8-13.

⁸⁵ Sandra Kippen, 'The social and political meaning of the silent epidemic of miners' phthisis, Bendigo 1860-1960', *Journal of Social Science Medicine*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1995, p.495.

⁸⁶ David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, 'Consumption, silicosis and the social construction of industrial disease', *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, no. 64, 1991, pp. 482, 483.

The future was bleak for sufferers and their dependents, yet miners tolerated this ghastly menace of the workplace and seemed to do little to help themselves. Their negative attitude to safety and health protection was endemic at Mount Morgan as throughout the mining industry.⁸⁷ Management provided gauze cloths to cover nose and mouth, known in mining as 'clean-alls' and colloquially at Mount Morgan as 'nose-rags', but many miners refused the protection of the masks, complaining they made breathing difficult. Perhaps also their attitude was contrary:

The old mine only gave you what was of benefit to them ...they gave us...a clean-all to put round our nose to stop the dust and fumes. The cloths were gauze...they were cut off a big roll...they put these round their face to keep the dust out...The cloths were not standard issue, but provided when necessary.⁸⁸

By 1919 the Westwood Sanatorium, located about 50 kilometres south west of Mount Morgan, operated as an institution initially for the treatment of miner's phthisis. The Labor government initiative was so significant to the region that even the conservative *Morning Bulletin* lauded the support for miners by Mount Morganite MLA, James Stopford, and his untiring efforts to secure the new sanatorium.⁸⁹ Men in the advanced stages of the disease were removed to Westwood until the terminal illness claimed them. Ironically, that many were buried at the sanatorium cemetery suggests the official death statistics of Mount Morgan after 1919 did not include deaths at Westwood.

For the family whose breadwinner died in a mine accident, the posthumous status of the deceased brought respect and pity but did little to secure their future. Fear did not cease; rather, the family might be engulfed in the immediate threat of pauperism. In an era before workers' compensation, the Company paid an amount to the stricken family immediately, not only to provide for their immediate needs, but also to extricate the

⁸⁷ Summons, *Miners' phthisis*, p. 64.

⁸⁸ Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

⁸⁹ *MB*, 8 September 1919.

mine from further financial responsibility. Families with friendly society insurance received a small lump sum and 10s. per week. The press notice that urged support for a benefit football match to aid the widow of Willie Simmonds promoted town pride as much as financial aid for a disadvantaged family, reading 'Keep up the Mount's rep[sic] in this direction and come right along'. Noticeably, Mrs. Simmonds was not identified in the press when the benefit was arranged for her family, but referred to simply as 'the widow of Willie Simmonds.'⁹⁰

The funereal celebration of burial, the presence of distraught families and other mourners brought the fact of death into the town milieu as Mount Morgan grieved publicly for residents who died in dreadful circumstances. By comparison, the death of a family member in war remained in the abstract, despite devastating shock when news



Fig. 27. Service at the Light, c. 1917. The Coronation Light, right centre, Union Jack unfurled, about fifteen men in military uniform, many others replacing their hats. Gathering includes mostly women and children. Services conducted at the Light preceded the customary march to churches for commemoration services. Note two banners: left, centre, the Methodist Sunday School, and Anglican at the edge of the crowd. Photographer stands on shop roof opposite.

⁹⁰ *Critic*, 12 July 1907.

was received and, for family and others, a lasting sense of loss. With World War I providing the first national day of commemoration in 1916, the Anzac Day service at Mount Morgan was celebrated at the Coronation Light, a great gas standard on the corner of Morgan and East Streets. A revered medical practitioner and Scot, Dr. A.C. MacKenzie donated the Light to the town to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII. Soaring high from a three-tiered base, the Light became a gathering place for public remembrance or celebration.⁹¹ Curiously, a funeral post stood at the street corner nearby. In later years, the Light and its space assumed a more democratic significance as a venue for political rallies and public debate.

The Mount Morgan experience was a drama of activity, accidents and attitudes in a town where every day at the mine meant confrontation with a workplace that coveted human life and limb. Conversely, for those in town, the outward normality of everyday existence masked an inward fear of the mine. Yet the spindle of society remained the family, protected - not by the Company - by the spiritual nourishment of obedient faith, church fellowship, the moral ethic and ritual of freemasonry and, most significantly, material 'care', however meagre, from associations and charity groups. Public pretence and language in defence of social survival did not mirror the real Mount Morgan, and whatever status the town possessed lay in the democratic rule of mateship that drove the collective attitude and actions of the men.

⁹¹ Nessie Chardon and F.L. Golding, *Centenary of the town of Mount Morgan 1882-1982*, Rockhampton, 1982, p. 44.

Chapter Six

Unity or disunity: perceptions of mateship and 'hip-pocket solidarity'

Mount Morgan was a place of divisions, whether between town and mine, or in the general workplace where every organisation reflected the influence of the mine as the cornerstone of enterprise and service. Yet, within the mine work force a further division was evident. Surface work had its own dangers, but underground mining threatened danger like no other. In this chapter, the focus is upon attitudes and reactions of the mine labour force toward work and management, and relates to the hostile, fabricated environment of the mine workplace. This contrasts with discussion in chapters two and three of town and hinterland place and space, where the total work force was greater than at the mine and gender divisions in employment were less rigid.

Central to this discourse are the complexities and consequences of mining practice and human error, especially in fatal, multiple accidents underground. It will be argued that, in times of mining disaster, the innately spontaneous move to escape from danger prevailed. Yet, at the same time, the concern of those on the surface to rescue men caught in a life-threatening situation surpassed any bonds of mateship, but when the shock of catastrophe and the spirit of valour subsided, men returned to the mine and their own mates.

Workplace bonds between underground men; surface workers and outside employees were typical of values that elevated mateship in 'the nomad tribe' of

Australian bushmen to the level of mythology.¹ At Mount Morgan, the mateship of underground men not only assumed the status of survival dependency emphasised in the bonding practice, but also, as mercenaries who faced the enemy beneath the surface, their mateship had a peculiarly material cohesion. This chapter also investigates the gradual, union inspired confidence of the men and their consistent demands for higher wages and improved conditions. Conversely, although an ideology of hip pocket solidarity intensified as miners sought a fair wage; ultimately, the primary concern of a majority of mine employees reverted to individual desire for economic survival.

Shiftwork dominated time for miners and punctuality was an act of obedience to the call to the underground at a scheduled hour. For those who worked below, the designated rings of electric bells heralded the movement of men and materials. Each level had a code: 'one ring, two, or three'. A cage accommodated eight, the four walls an enclosed box, an unlit place that in a matter of seconds plunged to the depths below: 'Whoosh - down...completely dark until it got to the level required'.² Once there, the men moved along the tunnel to the face. For the uninitiated who went underground, especially in their early years, the experience was unforgettable:

It was frightening ... and when I went down I expected to see dirt and stones similar to what is on the road, but it was altogether different. This was solid rock, very little timber, any amount of places where there was solid rock and there was no need for timber to hold it. There wasn't a lot of electricity down the mine; most workers, miners and horse drivers used candles.³

Fred Cole said the candleholder used – known familiarly as a 'spider' – was a small piece of steel sharpened at one end. The underground worker 'shoved it in the timber' and speared the candle on to the spike. Miners preferred candlelight, where visibility was limited to about a metre and a half at most. Cole declared miners insisted that any bright light in a stope must be extinguished because the cracks in the chamber where

¹ Russell Ward, *The Australian legend*, Melbourne, 1974, p. 106.

² Fred Cole, interview, 8 October 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

³ Fred Cole, 8 October 1992, MMOH.

they were working became visible; 'what they couldn't see, didn't worry them...they just worked by the candle'. Carpenters and timber workers were required to measure timber underground before it was cut, and 'with a candle you couldn't see...we had carbide lights also, that was our privilege...you fill them with water'.⁴ Charlie Shannon worked underground as an apprentice carpenter in the 1920s. He recalled that:

When the lights went out, we had no lights, no candles...we were supposed to carry candles...unless you've experienced it, you have no idea what darkness is like...you lose all sense of balance, everything. This first thing is, you don't move, you don't attempt to leave where you are...It's a terrible experience.⁵

To work underground alone was not only foolhardy but also forbidden in the workplace. Whether working in pairs or a group of four, miners, each with an assistant, moved through the confining shafts and tunnels, working the stopes at particular levels. Every man underground was responsible as far as possible for the safety of others: the miner at the face, the powder monkey in his 'exclusive' work, the shift boss at a particular level, and all who worked under their control. This applied also to others who worked underground, including unskilled truckers, rail line layers and timbermen. At the same time, carpenters, electricians, mechanics, and shift bosses who were generally promoted miners - worked underground, but not at the face. Large numbers of the labour force worked also on the surface at the vast complex of buildings, the chlorine shed, smelter, batteries, timber yard, brickworks and power station. They, too, were charged with observing the same law that demanded vigilance for the safety of their workmates.

The probability of a rock fall underground was a given and the prolonged howl of the hooter manifested a constant dread. Such a catastrophe might bring sudden entombment, death or maiming to mine workers for whom the eerie experience of

⁴ Fred Cole, 8 October 1992, MMOH.

⁵ Charlie Shannon, interview with the author, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

tunnelling below in near darkness perpetuated the fear, if unspoken, of working in an unnatural environment. Charlie Shannon recalled that:

They talked about the slide and the talking [the noises in the mine]...experienced miners, and they were good miners...they weren't fools, they were mature men, and I was young and said, 'What's that noise?' Old Jock said, 'Don't worry about that mate, you're safe when it's like that - it's talking...the mine is settling'. They called it 'talking'.⁶

It is probable the miners at the face were aware that on shift, they assumed the role of *dramatis personae* of the underground, their ritual performance of hewing the ore in dimly lit chambers the very stuff of mine mystique. Moreover, it is argued here that the enforced discipline and working class elitism of underground mining was synonymous with the performance, ritual or restraints of secret laws in town organisations.

For some, mateship remained a workplace trust, but for others, when the hooter sounded the end of shift, the power of mateship extended to the surface and away from the mine site. Many who spent their working days in dark tunnels and chambers did not adjust to a perceived mundane existence in domestic or community life. Whilst early shanties and hotels sold spirits, and three wine saloons operated at Tipperary Point, beer soon became more than a novelty in terms of consumption. Local folklore declares that at 'crib-time', the miners' meal-break, the shift boy might be sent to the nearest hotel for a 'cutter' of beer, from which each man of the particular surface shift drank his 'cut' during the break. The cutter was a miner's flask, long and narrow with handled lid that served as a cup.⁷ The practice defied a Company order that banned drinking liquor at the mine where, indeed, most miners outlawed the activity.⁸ Here was the paradox of the miner, to have concern for the safety of his workmates in time of crisis, but in

⁶ Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

⁷ Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 3 March 1998, OH. Local lore suggests that Malcolm Ellis, Queensland author, lecturer and historian, was a Mount Morgan lad who 'ran the cutter'; see Rob Ogilvie, *The best days of your life: a centenary magazine of the 100 years 1887-1987 for the state schools of Mt. Morgan Shire*, Rockhampton, 1987, p. 56.

⁸ A lasting monument to the image of the Mount Morgan miner, 'running the cutter' is depicted in a Morgan Street statue of the 1980s and re-enacted in a race of the same name run during the annual Mount Morgan festival.

characteristic larrikin style, to demonstrate an 'enhanced masculinity' in lack of workplace care and his own safety.⁹ June Stoodley and Diane Menghetti declare that carelessness caused many accidents.¹⁰ Whilst confirming that contention, it is argued here that on occasion, rather than overt neglect or inefficiency, a miner's familiarity with dangerous situations might cause momentary relaxation of workplace vigilance.



Fig. 28. 'Workmates', 1920. Surface shift, note boys, front row left, hats, crib tins, 'Gladstone' bag.

Drinking to excess was a universal pastime at Mount Morgan as elsewhere. With the practice entrenched in their mining town culture, here miners also drank billies of beer. It was a matter of pride for a good drinker to consume three billies, but half a billy 'would make some men freak'.¹¹ Men drank at hotels and had their 'cutters' filled with beer to drink at home. Some sent their sons or paid other boys to 'run the cutter' to and

⁹ Andrew Metcalfe, 'Sex and solidarity', Terry Irving (ed.), *Challenges to Labour history*, Sydney, 1994, pp. 93, 95.

¹⁰ June Stoodley, *The Queensland gold miner in the late 19th century: his influence and his interests*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1968, p. 178; Diane Menghetti, *Charters Towers*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1984, note no. 56, p. 135.

¹¹ Court of Petty Sessions Mount Morgan (CPSMM), Deposition Book, 20 December 1897, CPS 7B/P4, Queensland State Archives (QSA).

from a hotel.¹² Others drank elsewhere, perhaps in 'Cutter Lane' adjacent to a hotel near the mine.¹³ Press reports confirm that men employed in similar trades or on a particular shift not only drank together but also attended celebrations at hotels that were places for leisure and mateship, but were meeting places of early fraternal associations:

One of those little ceremonies which go a long way towards cementing those ties that terminate in the brotherhood of man, happened on Saturday night last, when the moulders of the fitting shop entertained a number of co-workers who made the trip from Rocky for the shivoo. These fraternal gatherings are excellent from a man's viewpoint. The wife of his bosom holds a different opinion. The function eventuated at the Central, and host Anderson earned golden opinions for his efforts put forth to give the party a right royal time. After a number of toasts, songs and recitations were rendered...a bosker night.¹⁴

Social involvement away from the mine included religious and secular commitment. This was quite separate from the small-scale financial security against death or injury that paid up membership of benefit societies and lodges provided in the non-welfare era. The possibility of cave-ins was not the only aspect of mine safety miners preferred to ignore. Men tolerated the ghastly menace of phthisis to work the mine, while surface workers at the smelter were on the lowest wages of mine employment and worked in an environment where they inhaled chemical vapours from copper extraction. With slow reconstruction of unions after decimation in the 1890s strikes, local complaints were few from men who laboured where jobs were available. By 1901, miners tolerated conditions outwardly, but a call to arms by the press reinforced union undercurrents:

Strikes are quite proper, only strike right,
Strike for some purpose, but not for a fight;
Strike a good blow, when the iron is hot;
Strike, and keep striking, till you hit the right spot.¹⁵

¹² Marcombe, 3 March 1998, OH.

¹³ *Critic*, 12 May 1911.

¹⁴ *Critic*, 14 July 1911.

¹⁵ *Critic*, 18 September 1901.

Five years later, the situation at Mount Morgan was unchanged. The Brisbane *Worker* took up the matter of working conditions, publishing an item that 'shows what white men will face in order to earn a crust':

Mount Morgan Gold mining Co. are, on the whole, good employers. So much is readily admitted. But what about the health of the men employed in and about the copper smelting works? Strong, healthy young fellows in a few months become emaciated and subject to various diseases. Many, indeed, practically sign their own death-warrant[sic] by taking on the work. Such a condition of things is serious. Lives are more precious than copper.¹⁶

By 1914, the conservative *Morning Bulletin* reported on the condition of the smelter chimney where a large, deteriorated section of the flue had been removed but not replaced. Therefore, fumes were closer to the men, many of who were so overcome they were relieved from work. The engineer who supervised construction of the chimney declared that replacement would be required within two years. This did not occur.¹⁷ Thus, the workplace was dangerous on three counts: the extent of the miner's safety in terms of the actions of his workmates, workplace practice, physical environment, and the threat to health from unsanitary conditions and inhalation of ore dust and other dangerous substances. Despite requirements of the 1911 Royal Commission for improved ventilation in underground mines, Charlie Shannon, an apprentice in 1925, recalled that at Mount Morgan 'conditions weren't so hot' underground. His unintended pun described the humid conditions, 'ventilation...they'd come out and you'd swear they had been in a pool of water'. Apart from the bathroom at the Linda Works, the rest of the mine had poor facilities. Shannon explained:

At the Lindy bathroom, it was good...they had a 'heater', a single brick room with pipes around and stools to stand on, with heaters underneath. They had racks like an iron mattress, you put your [work] clothes on that, and they'd pull them up. The other Works had showers but their conditions were pretty primitive.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Worker*, 22 September 1906.

¹⁷ *MB*, 30 January 1914.

¹⁸ Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH. As discussed in chapter three, the Linda ('Lindy') tunnel opened in 1906 and was upgraded to a state-of-the-art facility by 1912. See Map. 3.

Accidental deaths at the mine occurred regularly and stirred inherent town resentment against mine directors and their fortunes in gold that by-passed a less than affluent town. By comparison with such wealth, a man who lost two fingers of a hand in a machinery accident might receive less than £2 from the Company as full compensation.¹⁹ Such situations continued despite demands for safety in the workplace and improved conditions of ventilation and sanitation. The calls escalated with the rise of organised labour and development in the character of mining trade unionism. By May 1908, miners at Mount Morgan attended a meeting at a location on Cemetery Road south of the mine, already the venue for meetings away from the workplace. James Crawford, Secretary of the Fitzroy Miners Union and aspiring politician, reported on the 'splendid roll-up' and consecutive meetings were held south of the town and north to Baree, a 'stronghold of conservatism'.²⁰ At the same time, evening meetings held under the Coronation Light netted large gatherings of interested locals and union supporters.

A 'general workers union' formed for all workers other than miners complemented the Fitzroy Miners Union. The organiser of the Australian Labour Federation, Charles Collins, envisaged that 'the Big Hill' would soon be a power for unionism. He also warned that the system of contract whereby increasingly, men competed against each other for periods of eight weeks, would cause prices to decline and intensify the hard conditions of labour. Collins asserted that the dust problem from rock drilling in the mine placed men's lives at risk and that a mining inspector should be stationed at Mount Morgan. Within months, this last suggestion became a critical issue at the mine.²¹

The circumstances of two multiple, fatal accidents underground in the 'Linda' shaft in September and November 1908 brought not only shock and horror, but also exacerbated current issues relating to work method and safety practice. Three methods

¹⁹ F. Cunningham, Underground accidents and H.P. Seale, B.Eng, 1908, typescript, 26 January 1977, MMHM.

²⁰ *Worker* 23 May 1908.

²¹ *Worker*, 30 May 1908.

of mining operated at the mine. These included a large open-cut to the 350 foot level, where by 1903, waste material was used to fill the worked out underground chambers. Square set timbering was the method used from the 350-foot level to the 650-foot level. The ore bodies on the 750 foot and 850-foot levels were mined in large open chambers. Less timber was required for the 'pigstye' system than the square set system. This



Fig. 29. Underground chamber, pigstye system, at least 750-foot level, timber floor, and unsupported head above. Figures of miners shown in centre and right chambers.

brings into focus the contract system where the minimum time for maximum output was of the essence to gangs. Shift boss Thomas Teague's comment that pigstye timbering 'had the approval of the bosses...as a good system for the men', hinted at workers' frustration with close timbering used in square sets. Conversely, in the pigstye system, a chamber might have thirty feet between the dyke and timber. This meant that in the chamber, between the face and the back filling area a large head of ore above or a dyke along the side of the chamber might be unsupported.²² As the face advanced, space behind the drive allowed for back filling. Moreover, wedges used to strengthen pigstye timbers were tightened frequently but tended to work loose after firing of explosives, so

²² *Accidents at Mount Morgan: minutes of evidence and appendices*, Brisbane, December 1908, p. iv, D15/542.1, CC/CQU.

weakening the support from timbering in the chamber. By contrast, reinforcement with additional timbers was an option with in situ square set timbering.

Adoption of the pigstye system at the mine resulted from a visit to the United States in 1903 by general manager Richard and mine manager H.P (Percy) Seale, when they studied the best methods of working the ore at deeper levels.²³ In his report to shareholders, Richard recommended:

the abandonment of expensive square sets in favour of pigstyes of rough timber and filling...a more economical method.²⁴

Within three years of introducing the pigstye system, and just two years before the 1908 fatalities, the Company insured for indemnity against mine fatality and accident.²⁵ Ironically, Richard was absent from Mount Morgan when the first multiple fatal accident occurred in 1908 and within two weeks, Seale became suddenly ill and died. A Mine Warden's Inquiry in September and a later Board of Inquiry in November 1908 were raised to investigate the causes of the disasters and to make recommendations for mining practice that might prevent the recurrence of similar accidents.²⁶ Richard declared in evidence at the Board of Inquiry that the pigstye system was more suitable than square-sets and more generally followed in important mines in America. He added that the decision to introduce the pigstye system was not based on economics and that no risks were taken in order to save costs. This directly contradicted his declaration in 1903 on the comparative costs of timbering.²⁷ A further anomaly in the issue concerned J. Bowie Wilson, who at Richard's invitation came to Mount Morgan as a graduate of the University of New South Wales and was a manager involved with introduction of the pigstye system. With Richard's seeming memory lapse, Wilson no longer at the

²³ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited (MMGMC), *Annual Report*, no. 19, December 1904, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

²⁴ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, no. 18, 1903, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

²⁵ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, no. 21, 1907, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

²⁶ *Accidents at Mount Morgan*, p. iii, D15/542.1, CC/CQU.

²⁷ *MB*, 6 November 1908.

mine and Seale deceased, the Board of Inquiry was unable to 'obtain definite evidence as to the reasons why the chamber and pigstye system was introduced'.²⁸

James Crawford represented the Fitzroy Miners Union at the Mine Warden's Inquiry. Thomas Teague, mentioned earlier, who had twenty years of experience at Mount Morgan and in 1908 worked at the 850 foot level, said in evidence, 'if they [mine bosses] had the slightest idea that a place was at all dangerous, an eye was kept on it.'²⁹ Teague's statement seems cavalier in terms of miners whose lives might be at risk, suggesting also that in places where danger was 'not thought to exist', they did not pay the same attention to the timbering wedges, lack of action that hints at nonchalance born of familiarity. The location of the first accident did not appear dangerous, but the vast 'head' or 'dyke' of ore that was the cause was not visible before the fall. Shift boss James Forbes³⁰ claimed he referred his concerns to the mine manager that between thirty and forty pigstyes[sic] were under the ground that fell, suggesting that pigstyes were unsafe. However, Forbes declared he

could not say that he [the mine manager] knew the ground that fell was dangerous; but he did not think it was advisable for me to go under the place when firing was being done. This was on account of the flat dyke above.³¹

Immediately after the November accident, mine workers and others rushed to the shaft, their urge to rescue victims a typical response to disaster. However, the blasé attitude of miners to their own safety did not deter mining inspector Howard Warde from his assessment of a dangerous situation where the massive fall of rock left no doubt that all five victims were dead. Mine manager James White, miners and others were frustrated at the time lapse between the fall and recovery of the bodies. Until Warde was certain that any attempt to descend the shaft and access the tunnel would not endanger the living, he refused permission for a rescue attempt to commence. Although

²⁸ *Accidents at Mount Morgan*, p. viii, D/15.521.1, CC/CQU.

²⁹ *MB*, 20 November 1908.

³⁰ *MB*, 18 November 1908.

³¹ *Accidents at Mount Morgan*, p. vi, D15/542.1, CC/CQU.

White and Warde did not leave the scene for thirty-six hours, the angst of men prevented from going to the aid of their mates challenged Warde's caution.³²

Fresher men from the surface to replace them, and they're hauled up on top for a blow;
 When a life-and-death job is doing there's room only for workers below.
 Bare-armed and bare-chested and brawny, with a grim, meaning set of the jaw,
 The relay hurries off to the rescue, caring not for a danger a straw;
 Tis not toil but a battle they're called to, and like Trojans the miners respond,
 For a dead man lies crushed neath the timbers, or a live man is choking beyond.³³

The Rescue
 Edward Dyson

With the last body brought to the surface, James White addressed the rescuers gathered at the top of the shaft. He thanked the 'five hundred men' who had worked shifts underground in gangs of twenty. His appreciation was warm if in paternalistic, management tone:

James White: 'I have to thank you all, *my men*,³⁴ for your heroic and courageous help to me in this heavy task. Mr. Warde and myself had little differences today; but you know that Mr. Warde's suggestions were all to safeguard life. I want to thank you all for sticking to me right through.'
 A voice: 'We will always stick to you and follow you.' (Loud voices of assent.)
 Another voice: 'You are a hero yourself, Jim.'³⁵

White's expression of gratitude to those who risked their lives to bring the victims up from the disaster level was a trite, if ritualistic acknowledgment of the men's commitment to their mates. Yet, in collapsing time to understand the atmosphere of depression after the macabre and exhausting 'rescue' of the victims it seems the men acknowledged White's appreciation by displaying their confidence in his leadership and their loyalty to him alone.

The bravery of those who played their parts in the retrieval of the dead was acknowledged and applauded. However, between the second and third falls in the

³² *Daily Record*, (DR), 7 November 1908.

³³ Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, *Australian Bush Ballads*, Sydney, 1955, pp. 94, 95.

³⁴ Author emphasis.

³⁵ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

November disaster one miner, Jock Shields, risked his own life to descend in an ore shaft and lead out two trapped miners. He became the singular hero of the disasters, the press acclaiming his feat to overshadow all other efforts. This suggests the impact of individual heroism, whether in war or civilian life. His reward for bravery was the prestigious and rarely presented Edward Medal.³⁶ Counterpoint to the romantic significance of victim or hero, miners who collectively aspired to fair wages and conditions received scant notice in the press until industrial conflict erupted between men, management and unions.³⁷

The comments of mine workers regarding the method of timbering at the mine were not publicised in the press, but in union handbills distributed locally. Crawford also pursued the cause of safety in the workplace, advertising that:

A mass meeting of mine workers will be held at the corner of Cemetery-road and Crown Street at 5.30 pm. today (Saturday) when returning from the funeral. Business: to protest against the continuance of the pigsty [sic] system of mining. Wives and mothers should attend. J. Crawford, Secretary, F.M.U.³⁸

The rarity of a Mount Morgan advertisement that requested the attendance of women confirms the significance of the issue. Moreover, the reference to 'wives and mothers' in the *Morning Bulletin* indicates a union press release rather than Mount Morgan or Rockhampton journalism, which did not refer to mine women. The meeting framed a formal protest to management against the use of pigstye timbering in chambers, and a declaration that miners would not resume work until the system was abandoned. General manager Richard agreed to progressive change, so the men returned to work when mining inspector Warde and mine manager White considered the levels were safe.

³⁶ *Critic*, 18 November 1908.

³⁷ *Worker*, 9 January 1904.

³⁸ *MB*, 7 November 1908.

One of the men trapped in the November fall did not perish and relived his ghastly experience in evidence to the Board of Inquiry. He was Michael Lyons, a young married miner who was with his gang in a chamber where they were using brigsaw timber to construct pigstyes. A dangerous rock was pointed out in the centre of the stope and Louis Moore, who was an experienced practical miner and, according to a shift boss 'would have been alert for any danger', called to Lyons, 'Come over here'. They both listened and Lyons heard 'a bit of a rip not very much' and no more than he had heard many times before when pigstyes were used. Moore said, 'We had better get out' and men began to move away. A grinding and cracking noise 'talking' was the common warning but on this occasion, the noise immediately before the fall 'was like the rush of compressed air'.³⁹ Three men, Moore, Martin and Lyons were last, but suddenly everything seemed to collapse. Martin was ahead of Lyons, and was the first to be struck and killed. Lyons fell beside him 'after a clip on the head' and the fingers of his right hand became pinned beneath Martin's foot and fallen rock. He lay still for about ten minutes before managing to extricate himself from Martin's body. Moore died in the fall also but a witness at the Inquiry declared that at that level, he, like Louis Moore 'would not have hurried out'.⁴⁰ The Board of Inquiry in November 1908 heard the evidence of 55 witnesses including 34 miners, but 'did not find any party or parties guilty of wrongdoing or neglect'. However, the Inquiry stressed that in view of the evidence and their personal inspection of the mine:

The increasing frequency of the dykes...their erratic course...so much more apparent by the last accident, as well as the presence of flaws and heads disclosed as work proceeded...drastic modification of the system of mining is necessary in certain parts of the ore body,...this should have earlier engaged the attention of the Management...⁴¹

³⁹ *MB*, 5 November 1908.

⁴⁰ *Accidents at Mount Morgan*, p. vii, D15/542.1, CC/CQU.

⁴¹ *Accidents at Mount Morgan*, p. viii, D15/542.1, CC/CQU.

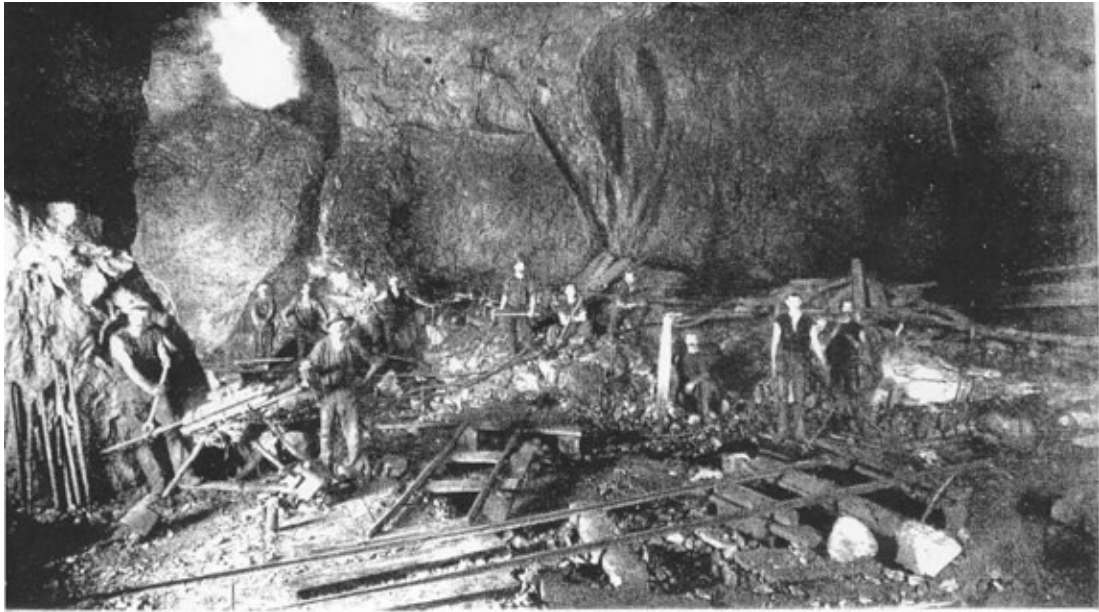


Fig. 30. Mount Morgan mine, 850-foot level, c. 1909. Preparing a copper chamber for square sets.

The Inquiry recommended abandonment of the pigstye system in favour of the square set system and that more attention should be paid to mullocking and closer filling of depleted stopes rather than relying on timber supports. The Inquiry did not consider that the use of brigalow timber should cease – it was available in the local district and thus cheaper than hardwood in terms of cutting and transport to the mine. Thus the use of brigalow continued despite the opposition of underground men and the mining inspector.⁴² Management insistence on the use of brigalow for timbering became a hallmark of dispute during industrial unrest, although safety issues did not diminish the importance of wages and conditions.

Comprehensive reportage of each disaster and its aftermath continued in the conservative *Morning Bulletin*⁴³ contrasted with succinct reports in the non-conservative *Critic* of union efforts to increase local membership:

Our town is still in the throes of the mine disaster, and nothing else, with the exception of the Union, is spoken about. The latter has come right to the front in one jump as it were.⁴⁴

⁴² *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 2 January 1914.

⁴³ *MB*, 17 September 1908.

⁴⁴ *Critic*, 13 November 1908.

In the immediate period of post-accident trauma, a 'novel gathering' was a 'smoke concert for "Old Timers"' held at the School of Arts.⁴⁵ Three hundred attended the event, including the general manager of the mine, George Anderson Richard and local member Henry Cowap, MLA, (Fitzroy, 1902-1909).⁴⁶ A traditional mining title, 'Captain' was accorded to Richard when the board appointed him general manager. However, he assumed the title earlier when as a member of the Queensland Volunteers he was appointed 'Acting Captain' before proceeding to Barcaldine during the 1891 shearers' strike. Richard did not see active Volunteer service, nor was he a mine 'Captain' *per se*. He did not go underground, declaring that he was 'not a miner and did not like poking about in another man's work'. The title remained the mark of his public persona, and used by senior staff and Company hierarchy, but miners and shift bosses addressed him as 'Skipper'.⁴⁷ For his part, Labor member Henri Cowap was a miner, member of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the first Mount Morgan candidate to be elected to the Queensland government.⁴⁸ The smoke concert was the scene of many toasts and speeches as past mine employees were honoured, whilst the hyperbole and rhetoric asserted high regard for upper management and the mine's benefits to the town. Richard was self-deprecating in his response, assuring the old-timers he was one of them.

The connotations of the smoke concert might seem bizarre in terms of the time it was held: within a fortnight of two multiple, fatal disasters at the mine. However, whilst the accidents were not mentioned officially at the concert, perhaps the old miners present preferred that the mourning remained an inward grief. Yet they probably expected that danger and death at the mine would continue. As speakers at the concert

⁴⁵ *MB*, 23 November 1908.

⁴⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Handbook*, Brisbane, 1983, p. 236.

⁴⁷ *Queensland Government Gazette*, no. 10, vol. LIV, November 1891, p. 1104; *MB*, 23 November 1908.

⁴⁸ D.B. Waterson and John Arnold, *Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament 1930-1980, with outline atlas of Queensland electorates, 1859-1980*, Canberra, 1982.

looked to the past rather than the present; one swore his loyalty to the mine and that he knew men 'still working for the Company who did not find one fault with it'.⁴⁹

The town moved to overcome unsafe work practices and to increase technical expertise at the mine. The School of Arts⁵⁰ committee promoted an institutional ethic of self-improvement and requested Company support for a scheme to establish a School of Mines in town. The contrary Richard refuted the suggestion, declaring that classes at such an institution would not provide technical instruction appropriate to mining. Yet, Richard's family history suggests that he attended the Ballarat School of Mines.⁵¹ Undaunted, the Mount Morgan committee arranged for some trades instruction at the School of Arts; but classes were necessarily sporadic as they depended upon the availability and expertise of local tradesmen as instructors. By 1909, the committee demanded a state technical school for the town. Richard supported the move and the Mount Morgan Technical College opened in 1909 with mine staff providing technical instruction to prepare students for trades training at the Works.⁵²

Those for whom technical education was possible bonded later with their apprenticeship peers. Some aspired to promotion in the trades or to staff, which would separate them from the majority of mine workers, particularly surface men who were unskilled and worked under the guidance and authority of tradesmen. Some trades were required underground but the qualifications for miners at the face were hard work, courage, perhaps fatalism, and an elitism that guarded against penetration of their ranks.

⁴⁹ MB, 21 November 1908.

⁵⁰ Philip Candy, 'The light of heaven itself: the contribution of the institutes to Australian cultural history', P.C. Candy and J. Laurent, *Pioneering culture: Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia*, Adelaide, 1994, pp. 2, 3.

⁵¹ Stephen Little, interview with the author, 17 September 1999, OH.

⁵² Norman F. White, speech at Mount Morgan Technical College, 1909, M14/1563.3, CC/CQU.



Fig. 31. Science and trades rooms at Mount Morgan Technical College, 1918.

The expansion of male bonding in the workplace and the unionism that emerged rapidly at Mount Morgan in the early 1900s predicated union surges at the mine following the fatal disasters in 1908.⁵³ The march of unionism contradicts the comments of general manager Richard who visited Sydney in July 1910, his comments to the press suggesting that top management preferred to ignore unionism, or adopt a 'wait and see' attitude to any evidence of worker solidarity. The press reported Richard's statement that in all departments at the mine, 'they live in peace and contentment, eschewing unionism,' whilst he was also quoted directly:

We have never had a strike there. We never let our men get discontented. The employer can meet the demand for higher wages which now exists by higher efficiency. You cannot make more money by taking it from the men or browbeating them. The proper way is to get more out of your concern by raising the standard of efficiency. All our departments at Mount Morgan are highly organised, nothing being wasted.⁵⁴

Richard also espoused the introduction of a scheme for miners who were ageing and approaching the time when they would be unfit for mining. The Company planned to 'put them on the land' where ample agricultural land was available in the Rockhampton region. The Queensland government originated the scheme and management negotiated for special conditions whereby miners need not reside on their holdings for five years. Under the policy, they would have time to prepare the land before ceasing work at the mine. With farming the antithesis of mining, management also suggested the availability of expert agricultural assistance to the new landholders. Whether the Company anticipated 'expert assistance' from the State Experimental Farm at Warren near Kabra is not known.⁵⁵ Mark Kelly was a shift boss at the Mundic Works who left the mine in July 1911 to take up farming in the Malchi district near Gracemere,

⁵³ Edward Stokes, *United we stand: impressions of Broken Hill 1909-1910: recollections and photographs from the period*, Canterbury, 1983, p. 4. The strike at Broken Hill in 1909 was a profound example of solidarity in unionism.

⁵⁴ *MB*, 30 July 1910.

⁵⁵ Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton: a history of city and district*, St. Lucia, 1981, p. 69; Centenary of Stanwell State School 1876-1976, typescript, 1976, held privately.

between Kabra and Rockhampton. His entire shift accorded him a rousing farewell and presentation at the Grand Hotel.⁵⁶

Progressively, the widespread industrial conflict spurred by increasing union influence brought relations between workers and employers to a turning point in 1911. Within months of Richard's declaration of satisfaction with relations between mine and men, a local branch of the Amalgamated Worker's Association held its first meeting in December 1910. Labor member E. (Ted) Theodore represented Mount Morgan at a Townsville conference where a large attendance gave majority support for union amalgamation.⁵⁷ The Amalgamated Workers' Association made such rapid strides at Mount Morgan in one month that the association was declared the key to 'emancipation, financial position, numerical strength and ever increasing power of members.'⁵⁸ Increasing 'by hundreds' in Central Queensland, the Association urged waverers to vote 'yes' on the approaching federal referendum on arbitration.⁵⁹ In counterpoint to this, the local press published under their 'Union Matters' header the reactionary writings of 'Miner' that warned of the growing politicising of the Amalgamated Workers Association and calling for a:

Non-political mine and works employees association. Meeting of miners and other employees of Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company. At the Masonic Hall, Friday 31 March 1911, to form the above association - a purely sectional union.⁶⁰

Union organiser Jack Moir issued a challenge through the press for public debate on the issue of a 'Sectional Union' that he declared would jeopardise miners' interests and 'be dubbed a scab union'.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *Critic*, 21 July 1911.

⁵⁷ *Worker*, 10 December 1910.

⁵⁸ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁵⁹ *Critic*, 24 March, 14 July 1911

⁶⁰ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁶¹ *Critic*, 30 March 1911.

Coincidentally, the strike by sugar workers deepened to such a level by July 1911 that Mount Morgan held a benefit for strikers. The event at the Olympia picture theatre saw the manager donate half the proceeds 'to the battlers of the sugar fields'.⁶² Three weeks later, the sugar strike was over, but a strike at Tasmania's Mt. Lyell mine where some Mount Morgan shareholders also held shares reflected an attack on unionism.⁶³ Strike action was avoided at Mount Morgan in 1911, but mutterings swelled among the ranks in bitter condemnation of the wealth of gold yield that made scant impact on the town or, essentially, on miners' pockets. This was borne out early in 1912 by a strident union demand:

All workers at the copper works are requested to attend a meeting at the AWA Hall on Sunday, the 27 August at 11 o'clock. Business important.⁶⁴

With a protest for increased wages and conditions organised at the meeting, the smelter men – mostly unskilled labourers who were union members - ceased work and immediately, non-unionists from the mine's limestone quarry at Marmor volunteered to assist in continuing work at Mount Morgan. For its part, management 'gained experience in combatting such an outbreak' when they monitored the loyalty of the men and the strength of the unions. Archer wrote:

Strike matters are very quiet at Mount Morgan, notwithstanding the strike camp, hoisting of the Red Flag and the usual speechifying. The only new feature is the number of fights – our men are tired of being called scabs and are taking the law into their own hands in a forcible manner.⁶⁵

Union representatives suggested a conference with Richard who, according to Archer:

was politely ignoring them and is at his best in tactfully managing a situation such as the present...the strong personal influence of Captain Richard was very marked. Nearly all the trouble arose from the younger element, the so called 'twenty oners'.⁶⁶

⁶² *Critic*, 18 August 1911.

⁶³ Geoffrey Blainey, *The peaks of Lyell*, Carlton, 1967; *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁶⁴ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

⁶⁵ R.S. Archer to R.G. Casey, 24 February 1912, Letter Book 1904-1912, K 1014, Archer Collection, Mitchell Library (ML).

⁶⁶ Archer to Casey, 11 February 1912, K1014, ML.

The board of directors wired Richard to 'sit tight' on negotiations, and 'keep the unions at more than arm's length'.⁶⁷ Richard ignored the directive, met with representatives of union and men, and as a result, the men resumed work pending a decision on establishment of a regional wages board. Richard realised such a move would deplete Company bargaining power, but, as he advised the directors, he could see no other solution. Now Archer scoffed that Richard was a general manager nervous of offending the men and 'getting the Company blacklisted'. However, the men returned to work, loyal employees receiving preference and others were reinstated in order of application.⁶⁸ From that time, Richard's position was under threat. The board directed him to close the 'unprofitable' Mundic Works and put off three hundred and forty men; but he persevered with the operation after limiting dismissals to forty employees. Archer was appointed managing director in April 1912 and his first task was to dispense with Richard, who the board insisted must resign or face dismissal. The acrimonious circumstances of his reluctant resignation to Archer in May 1912 were not made public⁶⁹ and the first local information that Richard was to leave the mine fell 'like a bomb' among the townspeople:

Captain Richard, like most men, had many faults. To an enemy he was merciless, but there are many men today who owe their present positions, not to their ability, but to the goodwill of the Captain...at no time did he advocate a reduction in wages...sooner or later the pruning knife will be applied and dozens who loll in cosy, fat, sleek billets will be asked to work, or leave.⁷⁰

The new general manager was Benjamin Magnus, (1912-1914) an American who visited the mine as a smelter expert in 1907, when he was entertained by Richard and family. Magnus was the initial manager of the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company of Australia Limited (ER&S) that opened at Newcastle in 1909, but the operation that became a national icon of ore treatment was Richard's brain-child of 1904

⁶⁷ G. Westacott, 'Mount Morgan in Richard's Day', *MB*, 24 July 1950.

⁶⁸ Archer to Casey, 18 March 1912, K1014, ML.

⁶⁹ Archer to Kelso King, 12 May 1912, K1014, ML.

⁷⁰ *Critic*, 10 May 1912.

to 1906.⁷¹ The reputedly arrogant Magnus moved immediately to cut labour and production costs. During his first week at the mine, four staff 'who were being kept on with practically nothing to do at a cost of £700 odd per annum' were dismissed and more significantly, 78 men from the Top Works were 'let go'. Within two weeks, 140 men were dismissed, the town stunned at the ruthless manner in which they were 'sent down the hill'. Archer wrote to director R.G. Casey:

fifty per cent of them were practically pensioners, being sent up there when unfit from eye infirmities for underground work. They too must have been unprofitable to us for some time.⁷²

The cause of infirmities was of no interest to management and Archer advised director Kelso King that it seemed resettlement by the Company of those who could no longer work 'in the front line' came too late. The 'eye infirmities' to which Archer referred suggest the condition of nystagmus, a flickering of the eye that hampered vision. By 1924, *The Queensland Government Mining Journal* reported that the infirmity resulted from working in poor light and in a crouched position.⁷³ A later issue of the *Journal* reported that medical research suggested the complaint might be psychological and caused by fear of the environment and confined spaces.⁷⁴

Mine workers and Works staff perceived Magnus as the enemy, his actions the subject of town angst and denigrating journalism. He was the butt of cynical jokes and nicknames coined in the local press while erudite prose told the situation:

The hand of Magnus is over all things in Mount Morgan. On Saturday last I saw a file of men, old in the service of the Company that has turned out millionaires, file down from the mountain top. They who had built up the divvys, who in many cases had given their lives in return for a miserable wage, passed out, probably - nay, most likely - never to return.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, (MMGMC), *Annual Report*, no. 19, November 1904; *Annual Report*, no. 21, December 1906, D15/271.1, CC/CQU.

⁷² Archer to Casey, 14 May 1912, K 1014, ML.

⁷³ *Queensland Government Mining Journal (QGMJ)*, 15 February 1924, pp. 59, 60.

⁷⁴ *QGMJ*, 15 March 1924, pp. 76, 77, 15 August 1924, pp. 290.

⁷⁵ *Critic*, 24 May, 31 May 1912.

that he had served his purpose. His leaving was orchestrated in a manner similar to that used against every Company officer who in the past had charge of the mine and management, whatever his title: superintendent, manager, managing director, director, or general manager, and irrespective of his skills. Magnus' abrasive attitude was a natural character flaw that alienated him from business associates, whether the Rockhampton Harbour Board, or Mrs. Rockwell, a respected Mount Morgan identity and housekeeper at his mine residence. Although the spectre of the Magnus experience remained after his ignominious departure, the extent of his authority seems uncertain. His control was not autonomous; orders for the sackings that devastated a workforce and town were initiated by the board and delivered to Magnus by Archer.⁸⁰ Moreover, changes Magnus introduced that included demolition and rebuilding at the Works were the orders that Richard refused to implement. During a period of flux that saw two general managers and one managing director pass through top management, the board planned a permanent appointment. This occurred with the arrival from Broken Hill in 1913 of Scottish engineer Adam Alexander Boyd, a quietly efficient but strong mine manager. He was groomed for higher authority, appointed acting general manager in July 1915 and general manager six months later.⁸¹

Industrial unrest festered from 1911, through the shortlived strike of 1912 during Magnus' management when unionists at the mine, the Company's coal operations at Many Peaks, and limestone quarry at Marmor supported the widespread railway strike. Further problems of manpower arose with the enlistment in 1914 of 420 from the Mount Morgan mine and its satellite operations, Many Peaks, Marmor and Iron Island.⁸² Industrial discontent erupted again in September 1915, when a representative group rejected management's proposed wages agreement as 'not good enough' and, according to managing director Archer, intended to demand proposals 'until they got one soft

⁸⁰ Archer to Casey, 27 May 1912, Letter Book, K1014, ML.

⁸¹ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, no. 30, vol. 2, 1915, D15/271.2, CC/CQU.

⁸² MMGMC, *Annual Report*, no. 31, vol. 2, 1916, D15/271.2, CC/CQU.

enough to suit them'.⁸³ Boyd, with experience as mine manager at Broken Hill during the strike of 1909, stood firm against the demands. The men held a mass meeting and talked 'strike', but decided to postpone further action until after the unsuccessful Industrial Peace Court award was rescinded.⁸⁴

Dissension simmered until erupting again in 1917 when, in fulfilment of a promise made at the beginning of World War 1, Boyd employed returned soldiers, whether or not they were union members.⁸⁵ By mid-1916, eighteen returned men, ten of whom were wounded and eight others who were not former employees, were engaged at the mine.⁸⁶ For example, H.A. Foster, unionist in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers wrote through the press that he was an electrical apprentice at the mine when he enlisted. He served for eighteen months until blinded in one eye when on active duty. Returning later to the mine, he worked at full tradesman's wages as an armature winder. The shift boss asked him on several occasions if the work was suitable and Foster admitted finally that his sight impairment was a problem. He transferred to a better position at a wage increase of one shilling per day. Foster contacted a number of 'comrades' who had returned from active service, and all expressed satisfaction with their re-employment at the mine.⁸⁷

In the days following Easter 1917, the day shift of miners refused to go into the mine. Moreover, afternoon and night shifts did not appear at the site. However, the union declared that furnace workers must work shift to close down the furnaces safely. They ceased work the following day. The men were unable to 'pick management's attitude' but the union advised strikers that Boyd would give preference to unionists, but

⁸³ Archer to W.G. Thompson, 24 September 1915, K1015, ML.

⁸⁴ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, vol. 2, no. 30, 1915, D15/271.2, CC/CQU.

⁸⁵ *MB*, 16 April 1917.

⁸⁶ MMGMC, The Mount Morgan dispute, April-May 1917, D15/311.3, CC/CQU.

⁸⁷ *MB*, 26 April 1917.

would stand firm on re-engaging men who had enlisted, on the premise that *that* was the only matter in dispute⁸⁸

The stoppage had immediate effect on the town. The streets were quiet. The Rockhampton press reported:

The moulders were sent home yesterday afternoon, there being no further work for them to do without the assistance of labourers. Today is an ordinary pay day, but the town is remarkably quiet. It is a 'short' pay owing to the plant having been closed for four days at Easter. While the present number of men are out of work, the pay cheque will be reduced by one thousand pounds. Only a small proportion of the men who are not at work have any time in for the next pay.⁸⁹

James Lovell, branch president of the Australian Workers' Union at Mount Morgan, declared that by disregarding award provisions whereby miners received preference over non-unionists, management caused a lockout. For its part, the non-Labor press also berated the union that:

The chairman Lovell is inconsistent. In one breath, he champions the cause of those non-unionists who were refused work last year and in the next breath he denies any interest in the Industrial Workers of the World members or its cause.⁹⁰

During the dispute, two sons of union member W. Gregory were refused renewal of union tickets when they failed to present their 1916 tickets. A further attempt failed, the reason unstated but described as 'piffling'. The Gregorys challenged the union constitution that claimed no unreasonable conditions were to be imposed upon the continuance of membership, and would not subject members to tyranny or oppression. The Gregorys went to the local press who questioned why the issue of union tickets ceased when the industrial conflict surfaced in Mount Morgan on 16 April. In fact, the books closed with the stoppage that the men called a lockout.⁹¹ Moreover, a meeting on 26 April saw members who wanted to speak howled down or drowned out by traditional

⁸⁸ MB, 28 April 1917.

⁸⁹ MB, 20 April 1917.

⁹⁰ MB, 30 April 1917.

⁹¹ MB, 27 April 1917.

foot stamping of a section of the meeting that a union official termed 'this hooliganism'.

The Rockhampton non-Labor press condemned the stoppage and the union:

When a member of an organisation 400 strong cannot get a fair deal at a meeting, or be allowed a few minutes to explain his views (whatever they may be) he must find the next best way he can be heard, and not be insulted by a mob of hooligans. No better place exists than the press.⁹²

A week after the first cease work, more than 1 400 members of the Australian Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Progressive Carpenters' Union and the Federated Clerks' Union attended a meeting at and outside the School of Arts on the night of 24 April 1917, the eve of the second Anzac Day celebration. A strike was declared later that evening at a local industrial council meeting held at St. Mary's Institute, made available for the use of unions during the conflict.⁹³ The local secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, acting under instruction from the Brisbane executive, advised the men to strike, for which voting was allegedly by a show of hands⁹⁴ although later, the Brisbane executive contradicted the allegation.

The Engine Drivers' Association and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers that included electricians, fitters and turners, were not allied with the Australian Workers' Union but, unless miners, labourers and timbermen produced ore, work for other unionists ceased. The ore stockpile at the mine was sufficient only for the immediate needs of the furnaces and when stocks were exhausted, the converters closed down. The 20 members of the Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association who continued at the Works kept the mine clear of water but within days, went out after a union ballot among members showed 89 in favour of strike to 41 against. At the same time, the strike committee declared the mine and works 'black'.⁹⁵

⁹² *MB*, 26 April 1917.

⁹³ *MB*, 24 April 1917.

⁹⁴ *Brisbane Courier Mail*, (BC), 30 April 1917.

⁹⁵ *MB*, 2 May 1917.

By 6 May 1917, the unions involved in the strike and the Company were summoned to a conference at the Mount Morgan Court House on 7 May 1917 before Mr. Justice McCawley, President of the Arbitration Court. On the day of the conference, union pickets at the mine gate intercepted Company officials on the way to the mine and declared that was the last occasion when anyone would be allowed to go to or leave the works, irrespective of who they were. The action contravened strike committee orders and the union executive instructed pickets that the officials must not be confronted for any reason.

The conference could not reach a compromise. Mr. Justice McCawley adjourned the matter to the court for the next day, when evidence was taken before a public gallery. The President declared that any non-unionists who required a hearing had the opportunity of stating their case and cross-examining witnesses. However, non-unionists did not appear before the court. Amid extensive submissions and evidence, a main contention for preference was unionists' refusal to bear upkeep of non-unionists under awards secured to which non-unionists had not contributed, but in which they shared. Conversely, general manager Boyd gave evidence that management was only interested in securing the best men for the mine and did not discriminate between unionists and non-unionists. Boyd added that preference would cause many mineworkers to leave town rather than become unionists. Subsequently, McCawley brought down his decision to award preference to unionists, whereby returned non-unionists already employed remained employed and the Company might employ other returned soldiers so long as *all* employees became union members. The strike was declared off and work resumed immediately.⁹⁶

The first evidence of possible permanent closure of the mine was in 1921 when employees were asked to accept a 20 per cent reduction in wages. Boyd sent an open

⁹⁶ MB, 8, 9 April 1917.

letter to union representatives, declaring the purpose of the request was to counteract the costs of production including wages, fluxes, fuels and general stores that had escalated since 1915.⁹⁷ Analysis of the officially declared costs reveals that, over the period 1914-1920, the average rate of wages per shift for a miner increased by 60 per cent, and for truckers, shovellers and others, by 48 per cent.⁹⁸ Compared to this, sales of production had decreased so markedly that the mine was not viable. Moreover, expectations of future improvement in the copper market were barely marginal, and the gold price continued to decline. The strategist Boyd was careful to point out that 54 per cent of labour production costs was wages for employees in other areas of Queensland: timbergetters, coal miners, coke burners, railway men, seamen and lumpers. The balance of 46 per cent production cost comprised the wages of Mount Morgan mine employees.

Unionists at the mine were mostly members of the Australian Workers Union and included miners, labourers, sawyers, platelayers, storemen, truckers, furnacemen, horse drivers, watchmen, tablemen, vessel liners and bracemen.⁹⁹ Notwithstanding Boyd's rationale, the men were 'looking for wages...wanting more money'.¹⁰⁰ The dispute went to arbitration in May 1921, when Mr. Justice McCawley advised the men to accept Boyd's offer.¹⁰¹ The unions urged the casting of a 'No' vote when a mass meeting of employees attended a poll at the Mount Morgan Court House on 4 May. A 70 per cent negative vote won the private ballot, yet indicated that not every member complied with union demands. By rejecting Boyd's proposal, the men found the mine remained closed for 362 days from February 1921 until February 1922.

⁹⁷ MMGMC, A.A. Boyd to mine employees: Why we suggested 20% reduction of Wages, 18 April 1921, Hartley papers, 1921, D/15 281, CC/CQU.

⁹⁸ MMGMC, Average earnings of contractors per shift 1914-1920, 19 February 1921, Hartley papers, D15/281, CC/CQU.

⁹⁹ MMGMC, Correspondence - shut-down period, 1921-22, D/15 278.5, CC/CQU.

¹⁰⁰ MMGMC, Boyd letter, D15/281, CC/CQU.

¹⁰¹ MMGMC, *Annual Report*, no.36, vol. 2, 1921, D15/289, CC/CQU.

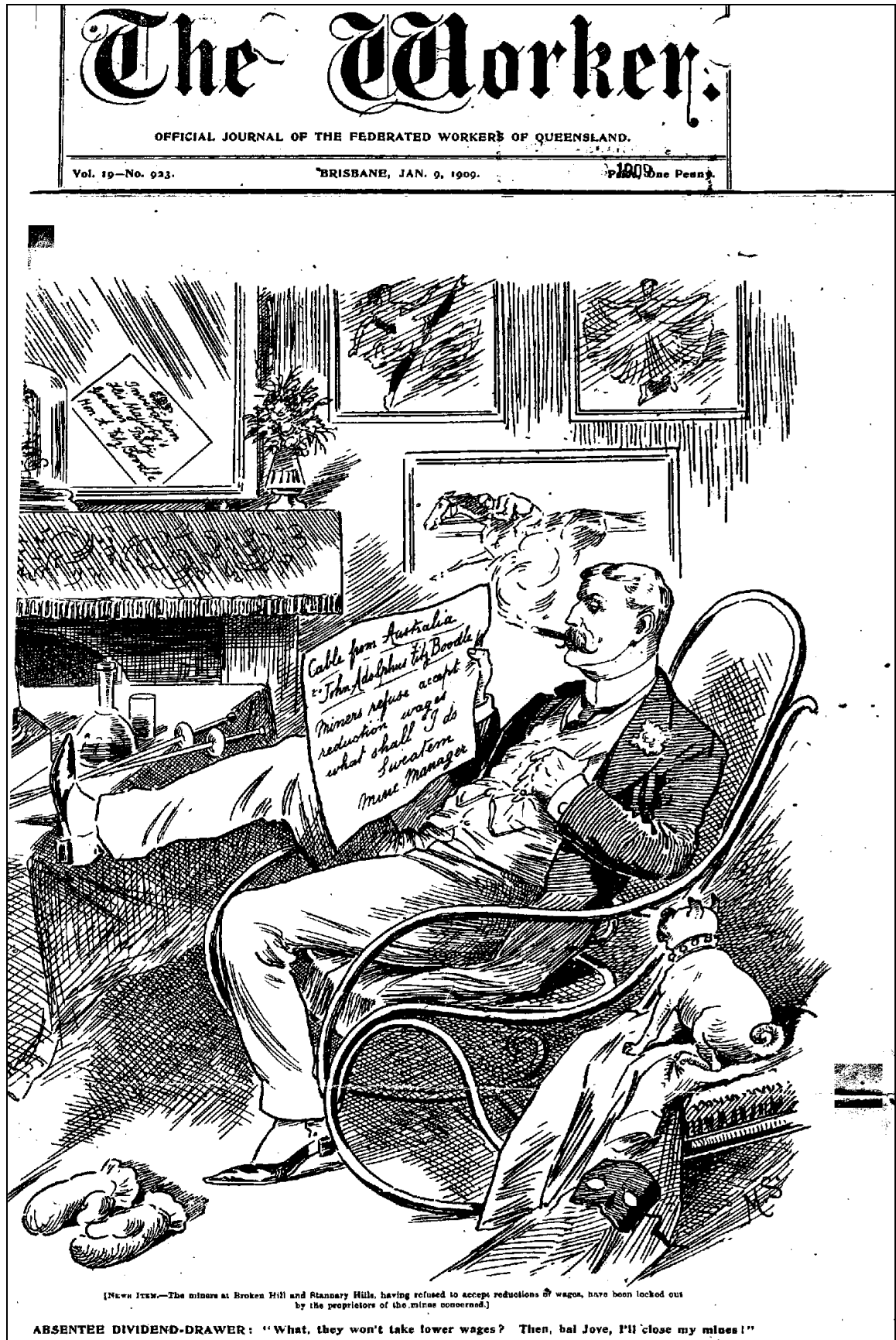


Fig. 32. Broken Hill 1909 revisited: déjà vu in industrial relations during the Mount Morgan 'lockout', 1921.

As arbitration dealt progressively with industrial unrest the Amalgamated Engineers' Union Division 1 was concerned that the wages set by the Arbitration Court were so low that they would not attract fitters or other trades to the central district. By January 1924, the organising delegate, Robert Lyle secured several tradesmen fitters for the mine through his Rockhampton office, but three were not retained at Mount Morgan and barely earned their expenses to and from the town. Two months later,¹⁰² management advertised openly for turners. The union acted immediately non-tradesmen were paid at tradesmen's rates to do the work of fitters. Lyle met with the mine chief engineer, who promised to put fitters back on the job 'when available'.

Employment and wages issues did not arise only within private enterprise. The Mount Morgan railway workshop foreman employed a labourer for fitter's work on a Sunday, but oddly, Lyle merely warned the railways of 'serious consequences' should the situation occur again. However, the private employer's attitude of non-compliance with awards and union demands was common practice. For example, management's long-standing business associate, Burns and Twigg, Rockhampton, fabricated heavy machinery and other equipment for the mine. They paid gazetted rates only after regular union pressure from Lyle and in 1924, defaulted on payment of six days annual leave for employees. Lyle intervened also for mine apprentices who were not paid for gazetted holidays during leave time; but management declared that as the apprentices were already on leave, gazetted holidays during the period did not cause them to lose time!¹⁰³ Union membership was optional for apprentices, but Henry Stock, an early apprentice fitter and turner at the mine joined the apprenticeship section of the union so he was eligible for sick pay. Stock declared that 'in those days, the unions were not as tough as they are now'.¹⁰⁴ Many members were not interested in their unions, but

¹⁰² Robert M. Lyle, *Amalgamated Engineers Union Monthly Report (AEU)*, Brisbane, March 1924, p. 17.

¹⁰³ MMGMC, Apprenticeship register, 1921-1927, D15/288.8, CC/CQU. Henry Stock, interview with Carol Gistitin, July 1989, OH, CC/CQU.

¹⁰⁴ *MB*, 27 May 1925.

attended meetings because, as a labourer recalled, 'they would have fined me otherwise'.¹⁰⁵

On 24 September 1924, disgruntled men marched to their scene of conflict - the mine –to demand wage claims. A seeming victory was brief and, in the aftermath of a wordy exchange, the 'army' of strikers disbanded in disarray. Three months later, trades work was an urgent issue when Lyle represented Mount Morgan members in their bid to change methods of shift working. Hitherto, and without reference to the employees concerned, management designated shift work methods. As counterpoint to this, the union arranged a secret ballot for mine tradesmen to decide shiftwork at the mine. Management refused the miners' decisions and the men refused a Company proposal for directors, representative employees and union officials to meet in Sydney, with all transport and accommodation costs at the Company's expense. The men demanded the meeting be held at Mount Morgan. This did not eventuate and the mine 'ceased operations temporarily', an action influenced by the existing widespread railway strike. Despite the mine stoppage, the apprentices went to work the following day, as according to an apprenticeship regulation, they were not involved in strike action. The fact that their tradesmen instructors and supervisors were on strike suggests that for apprentices to present themselves at work was pointless.

A thousand stalwart miners marched,
The red flag freely fluttered,
The gallant leaders (?)^[sic] urged them on
With chosen words they uttered.
None dare divert them from their course,
'they'd find a road or make it'.
They made a road, it led to want,
And they're compelled to take it.¹⁰⁶

The town was dismayed to learn in January 1925 that a maximum of 350 men would comprise the mine labour force for years to come, compared to 1 500 men

¹⁰⁵ Fred Cole, 8 October 1992, MMOH.

¹⁰⁶ *Critic*, 16 January 1925.

employed prior to the shut-down. More than 700 men had been on the basic wage and the others, mostly miners, earned an average of 32s 6d. per shift. The Company closed the Baralaba coal mine, a staggering blow to those employees who had built in the area. Similarly, the quarry at Marmor and all outside work for the Company ceased.

Speculation surrounded the cause of the fire at the idle mine in 1925, as accusations of arson conflicted with suggestions of an explosion from lack of ventilation because the fires were drawn. However, such disaster brought unity by necessity:

The fire broke the strike. They couldn't get back quick enough to put the fire out. We'd look down the open cut and could see the fumes coming out...even afterwards, when they covered it with water, if they uncovered it, it could break out again, which it did. They kept an eye on it then, tried to get around it and work it out. There was some underground work going on even in those years. Twenty-five men had to be kept on at the mine and I was one of them.¹⁰⁷

In the event, mateship, unionism, or town influence did not prompt the unity of the men. The rush to save the mine was in the name of economic survival of individual miners and their families. Press reports declared that unionists demanded 'Let it burn', but neither the percentage who declared this nor their place in the union schema is known. At the same time, however, unions demanded that unionists who were to fight the fire until it was out should be paid £2 for an 8 hour shift, including Sundays and holidays, and thereafter, £1 per shift.¹⁰⁸

In the absence of an official inquiry or charges laid, the circumstances of the fire remained unresolved. After the strike, 15 of the 26 remaining members of the Amalgamated Engineers' Union at Mount Morgan were not eligible for benefits, having defaulted on union fees until contacted and counselled by Lyle. In 1926, members demanded representative action to cancel the Company's 1921 award, and inclusion of

¹⁰⁷ Stock, 29 August 1989, OH.

¹⁰⁸ MB, 14 April 1927.

the union in the Mechanical Engineering Award.¹⁰⁹ At this time also, Lyle's emotive report on the plight of Mount Morgan mine families was an entreaty to each of the several thousand Queensland members for 6d. per month to 'place bread in the mouths of many a half-nourished child'.¹¹⁰

Whatever the state of their finances, 'mates' of different shifts or departments at the Works held the traditional farewells at hotels for foremen and shift bosses leaving town.¹¹¹ This suggests that tradesmen and those who had some authority had the chance of work elsewhere. Many others could not afford to leave. Director-shareholders Kelso King and H.G. Niall who were also the liquidators closed the Company on 13 December 1927, when all operations ceased and mine employees were paid off. Those remaining included senior management, watchmen, and the staff at the co-operative store where stock was to be sold off before the store closed down.

This chapter has argued that mateship was evident in everyday shifts, underground or at the Works, and that when disaster struck, men dashed to the mine to rescue the victims, whether known or unknown to the rescuers. However, mateship was tempered by the challenge for daily work. Despite an awareness that solidarity brought bargaining power, the nexus of unionism and industrial conflict that became the driving force of a mining ethos set some against others in the name of work and wages. Miners 'hip-pocket' solidarity prevailed above all else:

There was a more friendly attitude in the town in the old days...a good feeling between the men, although you'll always find people who don't worry about their mates...and some people who can't get their own way condemn the boss for the situation.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ MMGMC, Applications by unions to cancel the MMGMC Employees Award, Industrial relations papers, 1926, M14/1394A.2-3, CC/CQU.

¹¹⁰ *AEU Report*, March 1926, p. 13.

¹¹¹ *Critic*, 3 December 1927.

¹¹² Stock interview, 29 August 1989, OH, CC/CQU.

Ultimately, with the ethic of trust between miners in the workplace subsumed in the need for economic survival, a chill of cynicism penetrated quintessential mateship.

Chapter Seven

Mining town politics and the power of the press

Establishment of a press had the potential to influence physical development of a town and the attitudes of its residents.¹ The power of press journalism varied in cities and regional towns. However, mining settlements provided fertile ground for the growth of discontent with the mining experience in terms of land, law, miners, capitalists and mining politics. Historiography of the Queensland press that embraces the relationship between colonial press and politics includes the mining experience and profiles personalities and ethics of the Fourth Estate.²

The operation of a newspaper in a mining town as elsewhere was a phenomenon that demonstrated freedom of opinion and political attitudes that ranged from conservative to liberal, democratic and anti-conservative. At Mount Morgan, a town that existed in a perpetual state of flux, local news, press editorials, political discussion and even social commentaries were directed to a male readership. The press ethic of reporting current news to the public at large included journalism of government and local affairs. However, some press, for example, the *Mount Morgan Argus* and more particularly, the later tabloid, *Critic*, walked a fine line between pragmatism that might be interpreted as covert bias and, on occasion, scurrilous reporting that aroused the angst of a reading public as much as those targeted. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, it was essential to separate factual news from sensationalist journalism. Such analysis sustained

¹ Rod Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to no master: a history of the provincial press in Queensland to 1930*, Toowoomba, 1984, p. 7.

² Denis Cryle, *Disreputable profession: journalists and journalism in colonial Australia*, Rockhampton, 1997, pp. 131, 139.

research for this chapter that deals with the tension between Mount Morgan press and politics at local and government level, and Rockhampton press attitudes toward Mount Morgan.

The perpetual and most widely distributed press in Central Queensland was the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*. Despite changes of ownership and management that published pragmatic or profound journalism, the newspaper tended always towards 'a sedate conservative organ'.³ The *Central Queensland Times* published in Rockhampton in 1889 folded after circulation for fifteen months. Political support for the Rockhampton press was changing at this time also, but reversal of loyalties did little to appease press conflict. The *Daily Northern Argus* was purchased in 1895 by Stewart Hartley, in partnership with his father-in-law, Charles Hardie Buzacott, of Rockhampton's founding press family. The *Argus* became the *Daily Record* in 1897 and was a radical if Liberal press, acquired later by T.J. Ryan as a medium for Labor political propaganda to challenge the conservative *Morning Bulletin*. By 1922, the *Daily Record* changed again to become the *Evening News*, its Labor press continuing until purchased by capitalist interests in 1929 for the *Morning Bulletin*.⁴

By 1884, news of the Mount Morgan mining syndicate appeared in the daily *Morning Bulletin* at Rockhampton, the *Daily Northern Argus* and the weekly *Capricornian*. Their reportage preceded the operation of four newspapers at Mount Morgan between 1887-1900, where the original and longest surviving press was the conservative *Mount Morgan Chronicle and Mining Gazette* founded by E.H.L. Eastwood. This was joined by the *Mount Morgan Truth* and the *Mount Morgan Herald*, both newspapers that rose and fell in the 1890s.⁵ By 1900, a second Eastwood venture was the more liberal organ, the *Mount Morgan Argus*.

³ Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton: a history of city and district*, St Lucia, 1981, p. 463.

⁴ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 464.

⁵ The hard copies of *Mount Morgan Truth* held at John Oxley Library and the Mitchell Library were not on microfilm. Holdings on the Mitchell Library index were declared missing and similar copy at John Oxley Library was withdrawn from use.



Fig. 33. *Mount Morgan Chronicle*, c. 1900. Left: James G. Hay, printer and later, newspaper owner, see Fig. 31.

The local press did not equate with newspapers in other mining towns, for example, the *Northern Miner* at Charters Towers or the *Gympie Truth*. Moreover, Rod Kirkpatrick declares that the *Gympie Truth*, established in 1896 on a proposal by Andrew Fisher as an organ of 'the common herd', was a politically motivated newspaper for which the election to government of erstwhile mine engine driver Fisher was a triumph.⁶ That press at Mount Morgan had no similar driving force suggests the significance of time in town and mine development. Gympie and Charters Towers, founded in earlier years, were centres where the press was a medium of support for individual or group diggings on miner's claims and later miners' rights. At Charters Towers, two decades of mining passed before mining companies dominated.⁷ Thus, neither place offered a development paradigm for the emergent Mount Morgan, where the conservative hierarchy of the Company that retained powerful influence over the existence of the single company town also preferred no contact with the press.

⁶ Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to no master*, p. 141.

⁷ Diane Menghetti, 'Property and power on the mining frontier', *Journal of Australian studies*, no. 49, 1996, pp. 49, 66. Cryle, *Disreputable profession*, p. 109. In the 1870s, the 'eccentric' liberal Thadeus O'Kane of the *Northern Miner* trenchantly espoused racist attitudes to Chinese and, when mining companies developed at Charters Towers in the 1880s, advocated opposition to 'the big mill and company owners'.

The *Mount Morgan Truth* commenced publication by the 1890s but in 1900, although not closed, much of the equipment was purchased by Eastwood for the espoused democratic *Mount Morgan Argus*. Local photographer, newsagent, journalist and aspiring politician Jens Lundager managed and edited the *Argus* until that time.⁸ He worked with James Geddes Hay, a printer of wide experience who served his apprenticeship in Scotland. As Graeme Griffin points out, Lundager's shop and residence in Morgan Street was the clandestine meeting place for Labor sympathisers to organise local support for the Queensland shearers' strike.⁹

James Benedict Cleary came to the *Mount Morgan Argus* in 1900, and exposition of his new management appeared in an *Argus* column under a traditional take-over header, 'Ourselves'.¹⁰ Cleary reassured readers that the newspaper would pursue a long and useful career in its self-appointed role as guardian of the public voice. To this end, the *Argus* would direct special attention to the mining industry to which, Cleary asserted, Mount Morgan press 'had not done full duty'.¹¹ Moreover, he declared, the *Argus* had no intention of 'prostituting' the freedom of the press by descending to the '*Dead Bird* level' of the *Mount Morgan Truth*.¹² The *Argus* was adamant it had not replaced the *Truth*, merely purchased the premises and some items of plant. Moreover, the *Argus* was not connected with *Truth*, which was 'pro-Boer, pro-British, pro-anything in fact that will pay'.¹³

⁸ Graeme Griffin, *Photographs of old Mount Morgan and its mine: a study of the historical and cultural context of a photographic archive*, vol. 1, MA thesis (Literature and Communications), Murdoch University, 1987, p. 64.

⁹ Griffin, *Photographs of old Mount Morgan*, p. 65.

¹⁰ *MMA*, 12 April 1900.

¹¹ *Capricornian*, 12 December 1896.

¹² *MMA*, 2 February 1900. In 1889, the New South Wales postmaster general prohibited passage through the mail of the weekly sporting paper *The Dead Bird*. Criticism of the new press in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly led to notification of police that the character of the newspaper was suspect. *Central Queensland Times*, 14 September 1889.

¹³ *MMA*, 2 April 1900.

Within two months, Cleary faced Rockhampton court on charges that brought his conviction for false pretences.¹⁴ The *Mount Morgan Argus* reverted to Eastwood, but over time, the newspaper experienced further and spasmodic changes of ownership and management. Hay was a partner in the *Argus* with local agent Charles Briggs from 1900; but after their conviction in a 1908 libel suit discussed in chapter four, Hay conducted his own printery until he took over and retained the *Mount Morgan Chronicle*.¹⁵

Whilst conservative or anti-conservative press dominated in several of the permanent newspapers, local and regional journalism at times reflected a certain ambivalence. However, this suggests that a change in political and social attitudes of a press reflected a change in ownership or management. The common influence of the mine in financial, economic, and social interests linked Rockhampton and Mount Morgan inexorably, but the local press might present a strong voice in its town of publication. Mount Morgan editorials and leaders carped regularly at the Rockhampton press, but Central Queensland journalism of the late nineteenth century was not a benchmark for vitriolic journalism. Denis Cryle points out that for journalist George Lang in the 1860s, 'politics, like journalism, was akin to a blood sport',¹⁶ the metaphor suggesting that protagonists in press or politics destroy the reputation of opponents by ruthless use of language, innuendo and accusation. It will be seen in this chapter that by the 1890s, the politics and press of the Mount Morgan experience revealed that such 'sport' during open discussion in the House included personal denigration. Moreover, some press 'drew

¹⁴ The Cleary case is discussed in chapter four.

¹⁵ *MB*, 25 September 1934. The Hempenstall versus Briggs and Hay case is discussed in chapter four.

¹⁶ D. Cryle, *Disreputable profession*, p. 86.



Fig. 34. Staff of *Mount Morgan Argus*, c. 1908 during ownership by Charles Briggs and James G. Hay (far right).

blood' in denunciation of politicians perceived as recalcitrant and others who aspired to politics.

The 1890s have been associated historically with severe economic depression, but unemployment throughout much of Central Queensland was endemic by 1888. Moreover, primary production in the region and further west was decimated by drought, causing depletion of the Lakes Creek Meat Works labour force at Rockhampton and decline of work on the river wharves. In the local sphere, the topic of unemployment was the most emotive topic for politicians and newspapers alike. A response to a local press call for unemployment relief on behalf of male workers was a public meeting staged at the Rockhampton School of Arts in August 1889.¹⁷ The event had the trappings of dramatic performance: James Stewart, owner-editor of the shortlived, Labor driven *People's Newspaper* at Rockhampton declared to the 400 strong meeting that the local level of unemployment was extremely high. To dispel a non-Labor (unidentified) press comment that the number of unemployed was less than claimed, a show of hands at the

¹⁷ *CQT*, 10 August 1889.

meeting confirmed that one hundred and fifty in the audience were out of work. Stewart referred also to a statement in the *Daily Northern Argus* that those who attended a previous, similar meeting were 'nothing more or less than a lot of drunken loafers'. For his part, Stewart asserted that drunken men 'should have been relegated to the back seats', but he stopped short of declaring they should have been ejected from the meeting. Applauded for representing the 'working man...including those with wives and families', Stewart declared that to provide employment in the district, the government must proceed with public works. However, he received no response to his admonishment that the colonial practice of applying to the government for work was 'not a healthy thing'.¹⁸

Given the magnitude of the Central Queensland meeting at Rockhampton, the unemployment situation was in marked comparison to a seemingly consolidated labour force at the Mount Morgan mine, located well within the 'boundaries' of the region. Moreover, mine management was aware public works neared completion in other areas of the Colony. In the event, more labourers would come to the Central District in the hope that, as discussed in chapter one, construction of the railway extension to the new mining town would finally proceed.

Stewart was convinced that construction must proceed on the Mount Morgan railway, dredging work on the Fitzroy River, and the railway to the deep water port at Port Alma. He demanded that Rockhampton members, William Pattison MLA, and Archibald Archer MLA, must fulfil their election promises to obtain £100 000 for the work. Pattison conducted the Rockhampton Boiling Down Works among other enterprises and was a major shareholder in the mine. Archer, a squatter of Gracemere station near Rockhampton employed a substantial pastoral and dairying workforce.¹⁹

¹⁸ *CQT*, 10 August 1889. Stewart, a Scottish labourer, came to Rockhampton in 1888. He was secretary of the Lakes Creek Labourers' Union and Butchers' Union, member of the Rockhampton Council of Australian Labor Federation and ultimately MLA, North Rockhampton.

¹⁹ D.B. Waterson, *A biographical register of the Queensland Parliament 1860-1929*, Canberra, 1972, p. 118; June Stoodley, *The Queensland gold-miner in the late nineteenth century*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1964, Chapter II, pp. 82-102. Stoodley presents a case study of Pattison's membership of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, 1888-1890 with discussion of the financial influence that

Pattison's bullish approach to government had been evident already in his determination to push through a portion of the 1888 Loan Estimates for the proposed Mount Morgan Railway. He moved to benefit the Company in a demand for £40 000 for the construction²⁰ but the Railways Commissioner's *Report* stated that the Mount Morgan line would cost closer to £140 000 excluding land and rolling stock.²¹ Further, profit from the railway would depend on the continued support of Mount Morgan gold.

During the meeting at Rockhampton, Stewart asserted also that the unemployment problem cease with the termination of large-scale immigration to the Colony, especially to Rockhampton as a port of entry. Other speakers supported the view and indeed would have been aware that the R.M.S. *Quetta* arrived at Keppel Bay in May 1889 with 74 immigrants, including 33 single men, 17 single women, and nine married couples with children.²² Coincidentally, a dismal article in the Rockhampton press informed readers that the Court of Petty Sessions at Muttaborra in Western Queensland stated that already, hundreds of men were unemployed in that region, so to seek work there would be futile.²³

In his democratic and gratis *Central Queensland Times*, Edgar Gostelow reported in verse on the meeting, lampooning those present from mayor and political members to the unemployed in the working-class audience. Whilst 'freedom of the press' reflected the contribution of journalists and outside writers to reader knowledge and understanding of events and issues, news that might be accurate, if derogatory, was presented at times as journalism in the genre of verse and parody that would otherwise constitute libel:

A meeting of the *great unwashed*,
Mayor Williams did convene;
The *great unwashed* attended,

brought him to the Assembly and his political influence that led resigning premier McIlwraith to coin the term 'Mount Morganism'.

²⁰ *QPD*, LXI, 1890, 18 November 1889, 16 September 1890, pp. 545, 549, 518, 520, 546, also see Stoodley, *The Queensland gold-miner*, pp. 95.

²¹ Stoodley, *The Queensland gold miner*, p. 99.

²² *CQT*, 4 May 1889.

²³ *CQT*, 11 May 1889.

But they looked uncommon *clean*.

On Monday night the School of Arts
Was crammed from floor to ceiling,
With working men, who wished to test
The state of public feeling.

The object of the meeting was
To pass some resolutions;
To ask the Legislature for
Relief work institutions.

A workman named James Stewart, then
Proposed a resolution
To forward to the members of
The Central Constitution.

The proposal which he made
He hoped they'd not decline.
It was the immediate starting of
The Mount Morgan railway line.

Another move alas, he
Moved without trepidation;
To put a temporary stop
To all free immigration.²⁴

Influential Rockhampton merchant and member of the Stock Exchange, George Barnsley Shaw declared at the meeting that considerable delay would occur between seeking benefit from the government and action by the government. He followed this with the old standard that the unemployed should go out into the bush and dig for gold, to which was heard the typical response, 'How can a man go out prospecting without money to buy rations?' Curtis referred to 'the habit of the working classes' to frequent hotels and the chairman also observed drily that 'for an assemblage of men out of work, they all looked extremely well'.²⁵

Pattison and Archer replied by telegraph to the requests made at the meeting of unemployed. The Central railway proposal would proceed, but the delay in a railway to Mount Morgan would be ongoing until the passing of appropriate legislation.²⁶ Despite Pattison's conviction that the line would be viable, the case for Mount Morgan failed

²⁴ *CQT*, 10 August 1889.

²⁵ *CQT*, 10 August 1889.

²⁶ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates (QPD)*, vol. LXI, 1889, p. 550.

when the House quashed the railway Bill, replacing it with an Enabling Bill providing for private enterprise to construct the line.²⁷ Significantly, perhaps, Pattison's term as government minister was closing; he cited demands of personal business as reasons for resigning the Treasury portfolio in December 1889.²⁸ Denying the charge of 'Mount Morganism' made against him by premier McIlwraith in absentia, Pattison declared that he could no longer serve in the Cabinet. However, he was careful not to resign his seat.²⁹ At a Rockhampton 'banquet' honouring local members of the Legislative Assembly, *The Central Queensland Times* presented in rhyme what was unacceptable in prose. Titled 'Monday's Banquet', the verse read, in part:

Mr. Kelly said the next toast
Was the Ministry which he
Had much pleasure in proposing,
And which he desired to be
Coupled with Mr. Pattison's name
In whom he had great faith
Though he much deplored the absence
Of Sir Thomas McIlwraith.

Musical honours followed;
The Hon. Pattison replied
That too much work had been his lot
Could scarcely be denied.
Of his colleagues he'd say one thing,
Whence he never could depart,
Every worker had the interests
Of the Colony at heart.³⁰

The Liberals deplored Company mining monopoly and inferred that Pattison entered parliament to represent Mount Morgan interests.³¹ Further, suspicions were not confined to opponents; conservatives outside the sphere of mining pointed to the financial

²⁷ *CQT*, 5 October 1889. Chapter one suggests that, as a result of this political non-event, Mount Morgan townspeople, mine, Company, and southern hinterland waited a further decade for the extension that brought rail transport and traffic to the doorsteps of mine and town.

²⁸ *QPD*, LXI, 16 October 1889, p. 222.

²⁹ Stoodley, *The Queensland gold-miner*, p. 84.

³⁰ *CQT*, 9 November 1889; James Manion, 'History of newspapers in North Queensland', The Clem Lack Memorial Oration delivered on 24 March 1983, *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1983, p. 144.

³¹ Stoodley, *The Queensland gold-miner*, p. 92. Pattison declared his reluctance to take office, but offered to counsel the Ministry. He was not required to attend Cabinet or Executive Council meetings unless convenient, but agreed to stand in temporarily for Ministers who were absent.

influence of Pattison in his bid for the Rockhampton seat.³² He was aware that commercial enterprise and gold speculation strengthened his representative status, and that to cultivate the vote of squatters and the goodwill of scattered shareholders of a wealthy mining Company was politically advantageous. Notwithstanding his diverse connections, the fact that the bumptious Pattison did not engender respect or trust in the Central District fuelled perception of his financial power.³³ Moreover, he was chairman of the Company and held one of the largest share holdings in the mine, but did not publicise his commitment and financial investment during his parliamentary terms.³⁴

Pithy criticism in local press greeted Pattison's appointment as Treasurer during Premier McIlwraith's absence in 1889.³⁵ For his part, McIlwraith neither declared to the House that he purchased shares at a good price from Pattison prior to the 1888 election,³⁶ nor did he sell the shares after denouncing what he termed the 'Mount Morganism' in government.³⁷ Thus, his own leader vilified Pattison. Before the 1888 election, Pattison attempted to manipulate the price of Mount Morgan shares by purchasing continuously, although the other major shareholders were selling. While he bought and sold, Pattison encouraged outsiders, including politicians, to buy in. Finally, when the fantastic price of Mount Morgan shares fell, he held more scrip than he had at the outset of his market speculation. He lost heavily and the suspect trading destroyed his remaining credibility. Such consequences were the 'demands of his personal business' for which he relinquished the Queensland Treasury portfolio in the Legislative Assembly. It is suggested here that to investigate the financial failure and collapse of an individual engaged in sharp practice is not to inflict idle comment on the past but to consider the effect on society of the

³² *Brisbane Telegraph (BT)*, 13, 14 June 1888, cited in Stoodley, *The Queensland gold miner*, p 90.

³³ *Brisbane Courier (BC)*, 18 September 1890.

³⁴ *BC*, 14 June 1885; *MB*, 18 December 1888. The same was not said of Pattison's predecessor in the House, John Ferguson, MLA, (Rockhampton), who made no secret of his investment in the mine and sold his one tenth share in the original Mount Morgan syndicate to Albert James Callan (later MLA), for a rumoured £26 000.

³⁵ *DNA*, 29 July 1890.

³⁶ *QPD*, LXI, 6 August 1890, pp. 521-2.

³⁷ *QPD*, LXI, 6 August 1890, p. 541. Pattison's election influence was reflected in his appointment to Treasury. This hints at a peculiar hold over McIlwraith and thus, the Colony.

universal and timeless character of greed. Pattison's activities were his own, uniquely locked into his era, yet loss of a financial base and the ultimate downfall of any individual suggests that, in concert with personal intent, causality predicates a sequence of events that bring tragic consequences.³⁸

Other shareholders in the mine entered politics, their efforts seemingly in the interests of Mount Morgan town at times, but the local press derided their conservatism and affinity with the Company hierarchy. Shareholder and director Albert James Callan (see footnote no. 34 above), won the seat of Fitzroy in the place of Robert Lyons, resigned. A conservative to perpetuate a Company voice in government on behalf of the Company,³⁹ Callan won the seat by a 100 per cent majority vote, in which 287 votes polled included Rockhampton 20, and Mount Morgan 222. By comparison, the opposition totalled 141 votes including Rockhampton at 34 and Mount Morgan 84. The Company's coercion of voters ensured a result that showed Mount Morgan provided 80 per cent of the votes that brought the conservative victory.⁴⁰ However, support for conservatives proved inadequate when Labor was on the march in the late 1890s. Bookseller William Kidston became the member for Rockhampton⁴¹ and James Charles Stewart, the stalwart Labor voice at the 1889 meeting for the unemployed, was elected to North Rockhampton.⁴²

At Mount Morgan, the psychological fear of unemployment ensured worker loyalty to the Company in a period of decline in industrial and economic progress from widespread strikes, depression and drought. Voter numbers at Mount Morgan were

³⁸ Member of the 'ephemeral' nationalists, the youthful Robert Lyons MLA, (Fitzroy), solicitor and successful criminal lawyer, resigned his seat before the 1889 elections. He had bought Mount Morgan shares from Pattison at a high price but the share crash meant failed investment and indebtedness to Pattison that resulted in insolvency for Lyons, who suffered declining health for three years and died at forty-three in 1892. *MB*, 9 April, 1892.

³⁹ *Queensland parliamentary handbook*, Brisbane, 1983, p. 347.

⁴⁰ *CQT*, 17 August 1889.

⁴¹ Ross Fitzgerald, *Seven Days to Remember, the world's first Labor government, Queensland, 1-7 December 1899*, UQP, St. Lucia, 1999, p. 39ff.

⁴² *Queensland parliamentary handbook*, p. 363.

limited and employee miners, while not threatened with dismissal on political grounds, had no doubt of the Company's political conservatism and were aware that management expected support for the conservative vote. However, gradual industrial disharmony spawned organisations that moved towards determined union development⁴³ and thus, the political mobilisation of labour at Mount Morgan was significant to government in the wider sphere. Yet, as will be discussed later in this chapter, central leadership and emergent militancy in unionism that spearheaded control of local working-class politics at the mine was not secure until 1915.

Emergent democratic leanings of politicians and public by the end of the nineteenth century did not impinge on an imperialist spirit and empathy in much of Australian culture. British militaristic fervour was evident by the 1850s in the increasing membership of citizen military forces, local rifle clubs and cadet corps. In the euphoria that followed the 1897 Jubilee of Queen Victoria, Empire Day in Queensland celebrated imperial loyalty and heroic wartime achievement.⁴⁴ By 1900, as the conflict in the Transvaal deepened, militarism escalated and press reports from South Africa were increasingly graphic.⁴⁵ The public indentified with victory or defeat as reported in large tracts of press in the Rockhampton *Daily Record* and *Mount Morgan Argus*. The waste of war came close to home with reports of the first Australian troopers killed in action. One was Private Victor Stanley Jones, native of Mount Morgan and an employee at the pay office at the mine. Jones left Australia in October 1899 to the accolades of local press as 'one of the few patriotic young men of Rockhampton who responded promptly to the call of duty'. Jones' death, reported in the *Daily Record* on 4 January 1900, preceded 'the contingent of thousands rather than a few' raised in a force of mounted bushmen suggested to be 'the best antidote to the Boer raiders'.⁴⁶ Earlier, the press had

⁴³ R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History: poverty and progress*, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 130, 131.

⁴⁴ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront 1914-1918*, Sydney, 1987, p.18.

⁴⁵ Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Citizen Army 1889-1914*, PhD thesis, Australian National University, November 1993.

⁴⁶ *DR*, 4 January 1900.

democratically published letters of criticism regarding the war, but with Jones' death, an unidentified letter published through the correspondence columns of the *Daily Record* and advocating 'toasting the Boers' shocked readers. The writer remained unidentified, at least by the press. However, confronting journalism in the *Record* warned those who 'talked pro-Boer' and used terms of reproach to the Australian Contingent that such 'so-called freedom of speech' was unacceptable.⁴⁷

Until 1900, the raising of patriotic funds was the extent of Mount Morgan involvement in the South African conflict. To this end, Mount Morgan Brass Band supported the Patriotic Fund in 1900, drawing large crowds to street concerts held at the Leichhardt Hotel corner in Morgan Street.⁴⁸ More significantly, the women of the Mount Morgan Work Guild, their secretary Alice Richard, wife of the chief metallurgist at the mine, played a different role in fundraising. The *Mount Morgan Argus* praised the labours of the Guild who, 'without ostentation or public meetings', collected more than £42 for the Fund, plus books, magazines and woollen scarves for the sick and wounded. The loyalty of the Mount Morgan people to Empire seemed a matter of pride, as described in press hyperbole when patriotic funds exceeded £400, with £300 'cabled home' to the Lord Mayor of London.⁴⁹

The turning point for local patriotism was at a public recruiting meeting when the reading of telegrams from the first Bushmen's Contingent to the Queensland Premier prompted a response to the call for volunteers. A Mount Morgan committee was convinced that men from the mining town were more likely to have a bush background than city dwellers. The committee raised the funds rapidly to recruit and equip a detachment of thirteen volunteers to be included in the next Bushmen's Contingent.⁵⁰ The local recruits were equipped by 1 June 1900, the cost in excess of £280, or more than

⁴⁷ *DR*, 5 January 1900.

⁴⁸ *MMA*, 4 May 1900.

⁴⁹ *MMA*, 16 February 1900.

⁵⁰ *Critic*, 16 February 1900.

£21 per man. However, the contributed amount exceeded this total and the local committee spent so much time in discussion of 'what to do' with the excess balance of some £25 that frequent local press relating to the unresolved issue seemed to diminish the significance of the town's true offering - the volunteers.⁵¹

W.C. Chamberlain suggests that during the South Africa War a general profile of the Australian in the Contingent was a volunteer in his twenties, single, Protestant and more urban than bushman. Given that in a Contingent raised by public subscription, 42 per cent of recruits were in rural occupations, the Contingent was seen as having men who could ride – a distinct advantage in the veldt. Accorded the status of 'adventurers' eager to enrol, they were:

of this class for whom the rigours of the veldt are no greater than their own outback jobs as boundary riders, stockmen and drovers.⁵²

The skills of Australian bushmen meshed with those of immigrants and native-born of urban or mining background. The several Bushmen's Contingents raised, each identified by number, perpetuated the myth of the name. During tests of health, weaponry and riding during training before embarkation, many failed the riding component. The *Daily Record* published a letter to a town resident from a member of the second Queensland Contingent.

There are some rough and ready fellows...out of the first 26 we brought down four have been rejected. Although there are many members of mounted infantry companies, still they have to learn the mounted work. The examination is of the strictest character. You have first of all to pass the doctor, then there is the shooting test and finally the riding test. Many men have been rejected after passing the two former, and been the cause of infinite amusement to the spectators. Many of the rifles have been condemned as faulty, I am myself now shooting with my third one. The horses also are inferior although there are some good beasts. Several of our men have sent to Rockhampton and even Clermont for mounts.⁵³

⁵¹ *Critic*, 1 June 1900.

⁵² W.M. Chamberlain, 'The characteristics of Australia's Boer War Volunteers', *Historical Studies*, vol. 20, no. 78, April 1982, pp. 48-50.

⁵³ *DR*, 8 January 1900.

The public demanded contact with troops, news of the conflict and geographical information of South Africa. To this end, working class patriots paid substantial prices - at 2s. per word - to send cable messages from Mount Morgan to South Africa. The content required an address with the military number and regiment of the addressee, the sender's name and state of origin, text, and a signature of at least two words. At the same time, at Lundager's newsagency next door to the Mount Morgan post office, up to date maps of the Transvaal issued by the *London Daily Mail* were available at 1s. 4d. each.⁵⁴

Rockhampton telegraphed news of the Relief of Mafeking to Mount Morgan on 25 May 1900. Within minutes, the mine whistles sounded, not in the prolonged blast of disaster or the sharp blasts for fire, but in a series of blasts. At 8 p.m., an impromptu torchlight procession brought dense crowds to the main intersection of East and Morgan streets where the town band rendered patriotic airs and local orators delivered stirring speeches from the balcony of the Calliungal Hotel.⁵⁵ Fervour for the imperialist cause was evident in a patriotic demonstration arranged the following week by the 'lower furnace men' of the mine. An enthusiastic crowd followed the march of mineworkers and the town Brass Band from the Town Hall through town streets to the Company paddock. At a huge bonfire, effigies of Boer leaders Kruger and Steyn were burnt to drum beat, chanting crowd and roar of artillery – this last on loan from 'the private arsenal' of aspiring Labor politician, Henri Cowap.⁵⁶ In collapsing time to comprehend the significance of the press in the call to arms for the South African conflict, is to find malevolent journalism that incited hatred for the Boer in the same manner as the press fuelled racism against non-Europeans.⁵⁷ However, the press also served to ignite latent nationalist fervour and youthful enthusiasm in contingents that served under the British flag and deferred always to British command.

⁵⁴ *MMA*, 11 May 1900, 8 June 1900.

⁵⁵ *MMA*, 25 May 1900.

⁵⁶ *MMA*, 15 June 1900.

⁵⁷ *Critic*, 30 October, 1903.

As the war in South Africa dragged on towards an ignominious end, meetings and lectures held at Mount Morgan presented a different option of allegiance. The establishment of the Mount Morgan Wage Earners' Society was espoused as unique in Queensland, albeit formed on similar lines to the slate clubs of England and shop clubs of Victoria and New south Wales. Adamant that it was neither a political association nor a trade union, the society claimed at Mount Morgan to be purely an accident and general benefit society. The society targeted miners for membership and numbers grew rapidly to more than one hundred. Weekly meetings held at Sam Lee's Caxton Chambers were open to the public. Lectures and debates supposedly excluded topics of politics and religion, but almost immediately, the new society included political, racist driven rhetoric. A lecture titled 'The war and the wage earner' derided the South African conflict, caused by 'commercial rivalry' on the part of the British. At the same time the audience heard that colonisation was essential 'where there are inferior races who cannot properly use the soil in their possession'. Moreover, the lecturer continued, the wage earner suffered from war and must have 'the right to vote to exclude other races' to maintain equal opportunity in his society. At the same time, 'arbitration and justice' must prevail.⁵⁸ The society neither acknowledged women as wage earners nor eligible for membership of the new association. As discussed in chapter two, members of the mine hierarchy and town bourgeoisie chaired and conducted early Councils. However, the local rise of Labor and unionism saw mine or town employees, skilled workers and artisans elected as local

⁵⁸ *MMA*, 20 July 1900.



Fig. 35. Caxton Chambers accommodated the Associated Friendly Societies' Dispensary, Sam Lee, (owner) stationer and musical emporium, and Rockhampton solicitor W. Swanwick. By 1903, the chambers were also the meeting place for association and political gatherings.

aldermen and by the 1900s, locals aspired to seats of state government. In 1902, Henri Cowap, the first Labor candidate to be elected, served until 1909. He was a miner who later became a freemason and shops and factories inspector.⁵⁹ His pragmatic politics

⁵⁹ *Queensland Parliamentary handbook*, 1983, p. 347.

seemed more Liberal than Labor, and in the House, his silences that were attributed to poor articulation and lack of education prompted a perception that he was a weak politician.

For some press, biting criticism of competitors was a tradition, with verbal conflict between editors as aggressive in terms of political journalism as comment on social issues within or between towns. For example, the tone of the *Critic*, a latecomer in Central Queensland press, was strident, racist and non-conservative. The newspaper was launched in 1903 by J.S. Kerr and William 'Lofty' Anderson who had been with the *Patriot*, a Bundaberg weekly.⁶⁰ They were at pains to contradict a rumour that it was a branch or office of another 'unnamed' newspaper. The *Critic* was independent, a leader declared, to stand or fall, win or lose by its press, its credo was to 'bear the brunt', and creditable press in the *Critic* would be its own. Ostensibly an organ for both Rockhampton and Mount Morgan, the *Critic* avowed an apolitical stance in its devotion 'to sport and critical comment'.⁶¹ From the outset however, radical journalism and verse written presumably by Anderson under the pseudonym 'Biff' were *Critic* characteristics. The new press castigated the *Daily Record* and *Morning Bulletin* for 'their neglect of duty to the public', asserting that their journalism was too cowardly to state the truth 'in all its hideousness' for fear of offending a 'few conservative advertisers'. Moreover, *The Critic*, in its first year of publication, denounced the journalism and staunch conservatism of John Blair, editor of the *Morning Bulletin*, exploding:

Blair is anything by turns and nothing for long. At the last general election he supported labour candidates in Rockhampton...[but] opposed them in Fitzroy...and yet all were fighting on the same platform and for the same principles. Now he supports Murray, the most inept of an effete Ministry for Capricornia. The name of 'Mr. Bulletin Blair' in Rockhampton is synonymous with political twisting and treachery.⁶²

The change in ownership or management of a newspaper reflected change in political and social journalism, a circumstance that prevailed in the *Critic*, its aggressive

⁶⁰ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 488, 489.

⁶¹ *Critic*, 2 May 1903, 15 May 1903.

⁶² *Critic*, 29 May 1903.

journalism tempered somewhat when a member of the Rockhampton family who bought and operated the tabloid became editor.

Gail Reekie asserts that Queensland's tropical climate, rural orientation and isolation from centres of national power produce a distinctively insular, conservative and politically authoritarian culture.⁶³ This confirms a suggestion herein that men who aspired to Queensland politics were initially resentful of the move for female suffrage. However, at a meeting of the Democratic League of Central Queensland in December 1903, males were eager to gain female support at the ballot box, with voting rights for women claimed as the stuff of political success for male candidates.⁶⁴ The regional press ensured that women were informed of conditions and wages in other centres and other states; Mount Morgan women were privy to a local press article that the Women's Political and Social League in Sydney declared that wages for female Europeans were lower than for male Chinese. Urging women to become 'socialistic', the Mount Morgan press featured propaganda journalism that proclaimed the benefits of socialism to women in the workforce. A racist postscript to one article read 'It is better to be born a Chinaman than a working woman'.⁶⁵

By arrangement with the various branches of the Workers Political Organisation in Queensland, socialistic organiser Miss H.F. Powell toured the central and western districts of Queensland from July until mid-September 1903, delivering numerous addresses to widespread communities.

The WPO meeting on Tuesday had good attendance, including Miss Powell, the lady Socialist Organiser, who was warmly welcomed. a fair and fluent democrat, Miss Powell paid a visit to the town and made a good impression with townspeople. Her western tour has started a wave of enthusiasm for the Socialist cause.⁶⁶

⁶³ Gail Reekie, 'Women, region and the "Queensland difference"', Gail Reekie (ed.), *On the edge: women's experiences in Queensland*, St. Lucia, 1994, pp. 9-12.

⁶⁴ *MMA*, 20 January 1903.

⁶⁵ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

⁶⁶ *Critic*, 9 October 1903.

Powell's visit to the region was well timed; politics had slowed and the Ministry was in the hands of James Blair, Liberal MLA (Brisbane). With the interest of workers depending on the strength of their elected parliamentarians, September 1903 saw the 'falling away from grace' of Labor members, with a large percentage of workers questioning the strength of the party. It seemed that Powell stirred flagged interest in the Labor cause more than the alleged efforts of sitting members.⁶⁷ The main thrust of her lectures in at least six towns in Central Queensland concerned 'Socialism - What, Why and How', these sandwiched between social gatherings with music and dancing. Female members received unusual inclusion in press reports during her tour: in a single day, for example, the women of the Mount Perry community apparently conveyed a keen sense of cordial good-fellowship and comradeship. In fact, every Queensland centre visited exhibited welcome and hospitality to Powell, who promised longer return visits to a number of centres. More important perhaps were the standard of responses to her meetings, intelligent hearings and searching questions. Women who attended, declared Powell, became more aware of their own welfare and of the necessity to 'extend true democracy by using a living, breathing, thinking intelligent vote'. She applauded the Australian Workers' Institute and the Workers' Political Organisation at Blackall, particularly the open support from Queensland Catholic clergy and others, who:

applied their Christianity in a true and practical manner. The number of clergy of different denominations advocating Socialism in Queensland struck a chord of pleasure to my solian harp of life.⁶⁸

The press asserted that when women realised that 'the flag of democracy was planted on a rock impregnable to the wiles and flattery of the liberals', the 'artful' James Blair would not receive the vote of Mount Morgan women.⁶⁹ Women were called on to 'agitate, organise, educate and vote Labor'. They were urged to acknowledge that their

⁶⁷ *Critic*, 4 September 1903.

⁶⁸ *BC*, 23 September 1903.

⁶⁹ *Critic*, 6 November 1903.

female suffrage was the result of Labor's consistent fight for justice for twelve years - doubtless a reminder of the 1891 shearers' strike.⁷⁰

Despite current Labor rhetoric, scant interest surrounded a plebiscite to select a candidate to contest the federal seat of Capricornia that included Mount Morgan.⁷¹ Rockhampton press denigrated as untrustworthy candidates G.S. Curtis and 'a briefless barrister-schoolmaster' T.J. Ryan, pragmatic friend of conservatives and Labor sympathiser.⁷² They were ostracised as 'going through the motions' of politicking during the lead up to the election.⁷³ The irascible *Critic* declared an interpretation of political philosophies:

Communism	every man according to his needs
Socialism	every man according to his deeds
Individualism	every man according to his greeds. ⁷⁴

Lobbying accelerated at Mount Morgan, with a National Liberal Union address and a meeting of the Democratic League in November 1903.⁷⁵ At the same time, Labor candidates in Central Queensland held meetings at railway villages from Gladstone to Rockhampton. The meeting at Mount Morgan drew a strong public response, spurred by the presence of Labor leader Peter Airey, past teacher at the Mount Morgan Central School, and town resident. Airey spoke as to old friends and acquaintances, claiming that local associations crossed workplace interests and social boundaries. Central Queensland local member Henri Cowap MLA was buoyed by Airey's presence, despite the *Critic* calling vociferously for 'more Aireys in Labor politics...this Cowap represented constituency is as dead as Pharaoh'.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ *Critic*, 20 November 1903.

⁷¹ *Critic*, 25 September 1903.

⁷² *MMC*, 30 November 1903.

⁷³ *Critic*, 20 November 1903.

⁷⁴ *Critic*, 4 December 1903.

⁷⁵ *Critic*, 13, 16 November 1903.

⁷⁶ *Critic*, 11 December 1903. Peter Airey, MLA, retained his forthright attitude in politics, refusing in 1909 to greet host William Kidston at a dinner on the government launch *Lucinda* to honour Prime Minister Andrew Fisher. Kidston ordered Airey off the launch, to 'a great deal of talk and not a little regret' by other guests. *MB*, 12 January 1909.

Jens Lundager campaigned for election to the Senate in 1906, but he was voted sixth of seven candidates.⁷⁷ Not one to be silenced by defeat at the polls, he perpetuated the public voice through the columns of the *Chronicle* and as Council alderman. Local authority politics were soon at odds with state government when an appeal for an extended loan period was unexpectedly rebuffed by astute premier William Kidston, MLA, Rockhampton. The bookseller and later 'autocratic democrat' of Central Queensland politics, Kidston was a 'careful' Scot who did not distribute public funds freely through government - unless for 'government' purposes.⁷⁸ The Council deputation suffered not only the refusal of the Premier, but the press reduced the efforts of the over confident committee to parody:

The deputation doffed its Sunday idle
And waded in to show the premier how
They run the business in Mt. Morgan now
At which the Premier smiled a knowing smile.
They pointed out that they were just about
To liquidate the hoary ancient debt,
But asked for time, they hadn't had time yet-
The Premier interrupted with a shout.
He lectured them in awful angry tone
And said the Council were a set of louts,
Who ought to be in ---- or thereabouts,
And the deputation sadly wandered home.⁷⁹

Organs of the regional press permitted degrees of verbal abuse to appear in their columns. A probable Labor sympathiser writing to the *Critic* under the pseudonym 'Southern Cross' declared that to gain its ends, the *Morning Bulletin* excelled in 'wire-pulling, intriguing and hitting below the belt' and that it lacked respect for institutions or political organisations, whether in parliamentary contests or manipulation of school committees. In reply, without declaring facts or names, but with innuendo and inference, the *Morning Bulletin* condemned anti-conservative journalism.⁸⁰ Such haranguing appeared in the press as Mount Morgan was reeling from the shock of the tragic mine accident on 7 September 1908. This begs the question whether press conflict was more

⁷⁷ *Worker*, 22 December 1906.

⁷⁸ K.J. Wanka, 'William Kidston a tenacious reformer', D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce, Colin A Hughes, *Prelude to power: the rise of the Labor Party in Queensland*, Brisbane, 1970, pp. 202, 203; D. J. Murphy, R. B. Boyce (eds.), *Queensland Political Portraits*, St. Lucia, 1978, p. 223.

⁷⁹ *Critic*, 18 August 1907.

⁸⁰ *Critic*, 11 September 1908.

newsworthy at any time than catastrophe in local society that was seemingly workday press material rather than a moment of human devastation.

Coincidentally, a political upset in the election of representatives to the Rockhampton Harbour Board dominated Central Queensland news. Robert Stubbs Archer, shareholder, director and doyen of political manipulation for the Company in enterprise and local authority was also the long serving chairman of the Harbour Board. He was concerned that unloading cargo for the mine by using their own Company employees at the remote, tidal wharf at Broadmount near the mouth of the Fitzroy River would lead to action by the Wharf Labourers' Union. He wrote to general manager G.A. Richard at Mount Morgan:

I would not trouble you, but Blair [John Blair, *Morning Bulletin*] is making a personal issue of it and if the ships can be brought up the river without extra expense to the Company I think it would be politic[sic] to bring them up. Blair is an excellent man to have on your side in dealing with government and local affairs. He always reciprocates in these matters.⁸¹

Collusion between the Company and local and state politics continued. In 1911, Walter Russell Hall, major shareholder, sent a cheque for £100 to Archer for the conservative electioneering fund. On forwarding the secret political contribution to James Blair, who toured Queensland on the hustings, Archer repeated Hall's private instruction: 'It must be distinctly understood that my name shall not be made public in connection with this'.⁸² Working class electors at Baree raised the issue with 'slippery James Blair' that workers on the northern railway were paid 9s. per day compared to 8s. 6d. paid to Mount Morgan men working on the new Dawson Valley line south of Mount Morgan. This predicated of the decision of the Railways Commissioner to set a low rate to railway workers, in turn providing the private employer an opportunity to cut wages. The Labor oriented Mount Morgan press trumpeted aims to increase wages but to achieve power through reform, promising, in a direct challenge to mine management and other enterprise, to 'clear out

⁸¹ R.S. Archer to G.A. Richard, 18 October 1908, Letter book, 1904-1912, Archer Papers, K1014, Mitchell Library (ML).

⁸² Archer to John Blair, Rockhampton, 15 January 1908, Letter book, K1014, ML.

the fraudulent practices' in conservative trade that cared nothing about 'defrauding' the worker.⁸³

The confidence of working class Mount Morgan was destroyed when Labor 'battlers' were defeated in an unequal contest in which true politics seemed scarcely apparent. James Stopford - born at Rockhampton and educated at Mount Morgan - was a miner who worked his way up to engine driver. He became a union organiser and Mount Morgan Labor candidate for the Legislative Assembly in the 1912 elections.⁸⁴ During the campaign, letters through the local press disapproved of Stopford's work as a doorman at the local Olympia Theatre to supplement his income.⁸⁵ Critics were not opposed to his political leanings, but argued that he had not 'earned' three years as a member of government. He was vilified publicly to derisive jibes of 'He's merely after the money....Fancy him in Parliament'.⁸⁶ This belittling campaign against 'the local man who always suffers', was neither a personal vendetta nor indicative of local political apathy,⁸⁷ rather, a covert working-class snobbery that envied increased status, whatever the source.

In supporting Stopford, the *Critic* declared pithily 'He would never rat on his party'. This press was an obvious slur directed at Clermont candidate for Fitzroy, James Crawford, who defected from Labor to the Nationals before the election. Labor declared as fallacious the press report that Crawford was expelled from the Party because he voted for introduction of the Bible in State Schools.⁸⁸ Crawford studied law and entered a practice at Clermont as barrister and solicitor before winning the Fitzroy seat for Labor in 1909 and contesting Mount Morgan as a Liberal in the 1912 election. Crawford's credibility with Mount Morgan was lost after the one term when he resigned the Mount Morgan seat to contest Fitzroy. Oddly, the only other individual Mount Morgan knew to

⁸³ *Critic*, 11 December 1911.

⁸⁴ *MB*, 11 February 1936.

⁸⁵ *Critic*, 2 December 1911.

⁸⁶ *Critic*, 11 August 1911.

⁸⁷ *Critic*, 11 December 1911.

⁸⁸ *Critic*, 11 December 1911. As discussed in chapter five, a 1911 referendum saw the voting public refute the sectarian issue of 'Use of the Bible in state schools'.

be a possible candidate for Fitzroy was agent Charles Briggs, who was in New Zealand at the time applications for candidature closed. Perhaps Briggs was concerned that his dented reputation at Mount Morgan after court conviction for libel in 1908 would deem him unacceptable as a member of government.

The non-Catholic Crawford was a formidable political opponent in campaign method, which reflected Company support, sectarianism and manipulation of class hatred. Labor 'lost' the election before the polls. Elements were in play against which Stopford, his Labor and union supporters were quite powerless. They were completely outdone by the juggernaut of Company politics that coerced mine workers fearful of their jobs, to vote for Crawford. Moreover, the Company that dominated the mine workforce had no real interest in the town that was 'a flat, stale business proposition'.⁸⁹ After the poll, press at Mount Morgan dubbed Crawford a 'champion somersaulter' in turncoat politics. Expounding the details of a sorry campaign, the *Critic* lamented that:

Jimmy Stopford is not a very devout Catholic, but the fact that he was a fifth-rate Papist served to bring all the forces of the Opposition against him.⁹⁰

Unequivocal in its criticism, the press not only deplored the method that brought the anti-Labor party to victory; but also blamed the miners who were intimidated into foregoing allegiance to Stopford and voting for Crawford. Ironically, the tenor of public opinion that reflected the power of sectarianism and the defection of Labor voters was so vicious that after the polls, and in an attitude of medieval reaction to the incomprehensible, Mount Morgan residents burnt Stopford's effigy. The event suggests that Stopford was the scapegoat for town angst at realisation of their guilt at Labor's loss. Moreover, the press was adamant that even conservatives did not support the 'vile' act.⁹¹ Accusing the voters of stupidity in silencing the Labor voice at Mount Morgan, the press urged the faithful to retrieve lost voters and regroup over the next three years. On this

⁸⁹ *Critic*, 3 May 1912.

⁹⁰ *Critic*, 3 May 1912.

⁹¹ *Critic*, 3 May 1912.

occasion, even the *Critic* tempered its words when the resident poet devoted solemn and lengthy verse to defeated Labor candidates:

Here's to the men who lose!
 If triumph's easy smile our struggles greet,
 Courage is easy, then;
 The kind is he who after fierce defeat
 Can up, and fight again.
 Here's to the men who lose!
 The ready plaudits of a fawning world
 Ring sweet in victors' ears;
 The vanquished's banners never are unfurled;
 For them there sound no cheers.

Here's to the men who lose!
 The touchstone of true worth is not success;
 There is a greater test-
 Though fate may darkly frown, onward to press,
 And bravely do one's best.⁹²

Crawford's election triumph prompted town contrariness against political outsiders whose support was the Company middle-class hierarchy. This was fuelled by the press mistakenly suggesting that Crawford was a stranger to Mount Morgan and that his election heralded a bad experience for the town.⁹³ In fact, Crawford was not a stranger, he arrived in Queensland from Otago in 1906 and became secretary of the Fitzroy Miners Union at Rockhampton. He canvassed for membership in the surrounding region and declared in March 1908:

a strong and hearty union was formed at Mount Morgan where great interest in the movement exists also outside the ranks of the mineworkers.⁹⁴

As pointed out in chapter four, Richard applauded union representative Crawford's 'straightforward and manly' handling of the daunting days that followed the underground accidents in 1908. Local newspapers at that time were in rare accord in their praise of Crawford,⁹⁵ who also took the opportunity in the dark days after the accidents to call union meetings with full attendance of members to discuss safety issues at the mine.

⁹² *Critic*, 3 May 1912.

⁹³ *Critic*, 11 December 1911.

⁹⁴ *Worker*, 28 March 1908.

⁹⁵ *Critic*, 18 November 1908.

Company support for Crawford's election to Fitzroy was primarily in the name of immediate completion of the Dawson Valley line from Mount Morgan. For years, completion of the Dawson Valley railway was expected to overcome declining prosperity at Mount Morgan and its hinterland. Completion of the first and most costly section of the line confirmed that the purpose of the extension was defeated until all sections were laid.⁹⁶ However, work on the line ceased *despite* Company backing of Crawford. His weak support and later silence in the House regarding the issue suggests the reason for his refusal to visit the Mount Morgan electorate after his re-election. His absence confirmed constituents' perception that he had no voice in government.⁹⁷

Redistribution of federal electoral seats brought outright change to the voting face of Mount Morgan. Until 1911, the vast Normanby electorate extended from St. Lawrence in the north to Westwood, southwest of Mount Morgan. The eastern boundary extended across the Razorback Range to the outskirts of the town where the electorate included the suburbs of Baree and Walterhall. By 1912, the radical change in the mine labour force with the dismissals when Benjamin Magnus became the general manager affected voting changes at Baree and Walterhall. Alterations to the *Electoral Act* also resulted in difficulties when workers applied for inclusion on the electoral roll. For example, if a married couple from New South Wales came to Mount Morgan, they must complete residency of one year before applying for voting rights. With delays that included the intermittent sittings of electoral courts to deal with voting rights, inclusion on the electoral roll might wait 16 months. Moreover, residents who moved from Mount Morgan proper to the suburbs of Baree or Walterhall were not permitted to vote for one month. Failure to comply with the new conditions of the *Act*, ignorance of the law or the inaction of 'putting it off' did not alleviate forfeiture of voting rights in a pending election.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *MMC*, 23 January 1914.

⁹⁷ *MMC*, 23 January 1914.

⁹⁸ *MMC*, 27 February 1914.

George Fox held the seat of Normanby from 1901 until his death in 1914.⁹⁹ He was an early pioneer of Central Queensland, a stock and abattoir owner, carrier and political rationalist. Always unbeaten at the polls, and with the rural vote firmly in his grasp, Fox gained the Mount Morgan vote through the Company's influence. He had wealthy, conservative support at a time when male suffrage was not universal, and such was the long-standing representation of Fox that he was returned to office despite the efforts of radical Mount Morgan press to dent his political reputation. During his later years as an elected member, Fox did not attempt to tour the electorate or contact distant voters, especially the increasing but ever-changing Mount Morgan population in his constituency. Perhaps he realised that his opposing candidate for Normanby in 1912, one Martens, was not local or a known candidate, canvassed the rural electorate rarely, and never visited Mount Morgan.

Labor saw Mount Morgan as 'one of the blackest spots in Central Queensland' for the Normanby vote. The result for Baree and nearby Walterhall gave a conservative majority of 82 in contiguous communities of mostly Labor wage earners. Yet, only 590 votes of a possible 1 314 were cast in Baree and Walterhall, with 336 of these against Labor and, cavilled the press, if voters there had done their duty, Fox would not have been returned.¹⁰⁰

	<u>Baree</u>	<u>Walterhall</u>
Fox (conservative)	159	177
Martens (Labor)	114	140 ¹⁰¹

Table 7. Voting results, Normanby electorate, Queensland Legislative Assembly, 1912.

⁹⁹ *MMC*, 27 February 1914.

¹⁰⁰ *Critic*, 24 May 1912.

¹⁰¹ *Critic*, 24 May 1912.

James Stopford won the seat of Mount Morgan seat in 1915 and joined the new Labor Ministry perceived to harass the Upper House and 'legislate as ordered by the AWU'. By 1917, Lundager expressed concern in the *Chronicle* that elected members Stopford, (Mount Morgan), James Larcombe (Keppel) and Harold Hartley (Fitzroy) ignored the Labor platform conveniently. His letter read, in part:

Those who frame the platforms nowadays by no means possess the mental abilities of the men of 1890s. This is to be expected when the majority consists of union organisers, union secretaries and other union officials, whose minds are trained in one groove, without deviation. Narrow minds, narrow actions, and a one-sided platform is the result.¹⁰²

As pointed out in chapter six, Stopford championed the miners during the Mount Morgan strike in 1917 for preference against returned soldiers and non-unionists. When the industrial ferment at Mount Morgan erupted, Stopford and the union executive were conferring at Cairns and Brisbane on the current sugar dispute. Stopford also missed the conference Mr. Justice McCawley called for attendance by general manager of the mine, Adam Boyd, the industrial advocate, and representatives of the Australian Workers' Union. However, when Stopford did address the Mount Morgan conflict, he observed that it seemed more than coincidence that the moment he was absent, the men at Mount Morgan 'went out by the time he reached Gladstone'.¹⁰³

During the strike, management applied for exemption of tax on their mining leases. They also arranged with government to waive demurrage on 32 railway trucks loaded on rail but unable under strike conditions to proceed to Mount Morgan. Stopford supported the government, he said, but there should be no favouritism on either side. In 'speaking straight' he demanded that management must be charged for the delay in availability of government rail trucks for outside transport. He also declared that the union would fight with the gloves off and that by demanding rail charges, he 'got his first punch in' before he left Brisbane. Stopford was adamant that every constitutional method was employed to

¹⁰² MMC, 1 June 1917.

¹⁰³ MB, 3 May 1917.

settle the strike and that the union executive in Brisbane did not criticise the local branch for holding open ballot on the vote to strike. Conversely, he stated his own opinion that the method was open to corruption.¹⁰⁴

As Minister for Mines, Stopford supported the men in 1921 when the mine closed for a year, a devastating time of industrial turmoil between unions and recalcitrant management in lost markets, stoppage, lockout, demands and refusals. Robert Archer, always in a position to report on any Mount Morgan dispute, advised directors in the south that strikers brandished the Red Flag at gatherings, but showed little interest in the Workers' Education Association.¹⁰⁵ Moreover Mount Morgan was:

a depressing place to visit at present, when one thinks of the great industry being held up by the machinations of a few extremists and the serious effect of the hold up on the prosperity of Australia.¹⁰⁶

Archer's concern for the Company was dramatically opposed to the plea for social justice for residents by the Rev. William B. Charles, rector at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Mount Morgan. In the monthly *Church Gazette*, and without fear or favour in his comments, Charles described in high moral tone the consequences to the town of the continuing loss of residents who must move on in the search for work, and the hopelessness of those who remained.¹⁰⁷ As the mine closure extended, Charles' sense of outrage deepened at the stalemate situation between management and men.¹⁰⁸ The rector implored both sides to reach a common sense solution to the debacle, compassion tempering his bleak description of family suffering for those trapped in a town that was unable to mark time financially.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ *MB*, 30 April 1917.

¹⁰⁵ Archer to King, 16 August 1921, Letter book, K1015, ML.

¹⁰⁶ Archer to King, 28 September 1921, Letter book, K1015, ML.

¹⁰⁷ *The Church Gazette*, Rockhampton, May 1921, p. 160.

¹⁰⁸ *The Church Gazette*, June 1921, pp. 186, 187; July 1921, p. 221.

¹⁰⁹ *The Church Gazette*, December 1921, p. 396.

Union politics continually gained momentum as organisers urged Mount Morgan labourers and others into the AWU arena. By 1925, a strike in 1925 for wages, the underground fire, subsequent flooding to save the mine, and impending permanent closure of the Works exacerbated the directors' disquiet at:

not knowing to what lengths some of these ruffians would go - worked up as they were by those paid agitators and self-confessed communists, Fred Patterson [Rhodes Scholar,] and Gordon Crane [Rockhampton Trades Hall].¹¹⁰

The reversal of local progress became a topic too difficult for the press. In their creed of presenting news of the day, journalists had meagre space for repetitious press of a town in despair. The habitually conservative *Morning Bulletin* presented news of the Mount Morgan closure until it was news no more. By September 1926, Home Secretary Stopford, MLA, defended to the last the miners he declared to be 'the worst paid men in Australia' and who awaited management's advice of intentions so the men knew what to do.¹¹¹ Moreover, Stopford sent a telegram to the AWU that the government would pay 'all locked out men' a sustenance allowance.¹¹² Coincidentally, in Brisbane, and as mentioned in chapter six, the press reported alleged 'terrorism' at Mount Morgan when strikers blockaded the mine and threatened those at the site, including female office workers, the industrial advocate for management and the general manager.

The statement of mine closure in 1927 provided the southern press with more headlines. The town press went into decline, its raison d'etre lost in a crippled town that was a place suffering economic stagnation. Local advertisers cancelled contracts, the press was reduced to one organ only and ultimately, as the Mount Morgan mine closed and town progress ceased, the heartbeat of a town slowed and news of a lost lifestyle became public eulogy. Now the regional press blamed the men who, by perpetually demanding higher wages despite the international decline in copper markets, ensured the

¹¹⁰ Archer to King, 14 October 1925, Letter Book, K1015, ML.

¹¹¹ *BC*, 14 April 1927.

¹¹² *BC*, 14 April 1927. Chairman Robert Archer died on 29 December 1926 after thirty years as a director and shareholder of the Company. From that time, the Board did not include any Rockhampton members.

mine was no longer viable. The Brisbane press also deplored the plight of a poverty-stricken constituency in which disenchanted voters had lost faith in the means of livelihood, in government, and the future. Yet still the press addressed male 'voters' and were silent about the distress of women and families caught in the spiral of decline.

The prolonged debacle of Mount Morgan that was a microcosm of international industrial turmoil seemed to foretell general national collapse. Ironically, perhaps, at Mount Morgan, where conservative influence over voting had long since ceased, staunch local member James Stopford, MLA, retained his seat when the long serving Queensland Labor government was cast out in 1929, at a time already greyed by the cloud of general economic depression.

Chapter Eight

'T'll say it was good': Mount Morgan women, their place and space

A traditional male work ethic predominated in the Mount Morgan not only in patriarchal authority within the domestic sphere but also the driving oppression of the Company.¹ Thus, generations of working-class women were unheard in the public arena, most seemingly marginalised by the demands of housework and family care.² However, they were women of a time, their activities dictated by work and economic survival within a domestic paradigm that, by their very presence, women helped to form. In such a social framework, a single phenomenon set apart the many women living in the psychological shadow of the mine and who waited for men to return after shift. For these women, the demands of toil and responsibility paled before a spectre that haunted their days: the unspoken fear of disaster at the mine.³

Death of a breadwinner could reduce a family to abject poverty.⁴ Male survivors of major or minor accidents were maimed perhaps for life, losing limbs, fingers, toes or perhaps ears. With each accident case assessed according to the severity of injury, the victim received minimal cash payout if his subsequent condition prevented him from undertaking mine work.⁵ However, the future of the family was even darker should the

¹ Shani D'Cruze and Jean Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family: Odd fellows' lodges in Preston and Lancaster, c.1830-c.1890', *Urban History*, vol. 22, pt. 1, May 1995, p. 33.

² Penny Russell, 'In search of woman's place: an historical survey of gender and space in nineteenth century Australia', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, no. 11, 1993, p. 28.

³ Winifred Mitchell, 'Women in mining communities', Elizabeth Windschuttle (ed.), *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Melbourne, 1980, p.157.

⁴ *Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 5 November 1908. The consequences of calamities were discussed in chapters two and four.

⁵ Sr. Joanne Molloy, R.S.M, interview with the author, 4 September 1998, Oral History, (OH).

breadwinner suffer a slow demise from miner's phthisis. In this situation, the financial relief paid until death was so low as to reduce any family to destitution whatever their previous economic level. Many women were the survivors who worked constantly to rear large families until boys as young as twelve left school and went to work, a necessity for some until the leaving age was raised to fourteen years in 1912.

In the interests of poor relief, some Mount Morgan women were active on committees for charity. Most were the spouses or family members of clergy, petite bourgeoisie, professionals, mine senior staff or upper management. The intermittent press reports of charitable and church events related only to women who, depending on their domestic commitment and social status were of the 'service' class who saw a duty to assist in the welfare of others.⁶ Whilst such service on church committees and other organisations might bolster the standing of the institutions, a question remains whether charity work was in the spirit of care or a perceived social obligation to the lower orders.

Circumstance and women's own limitations influenced their expectations. Most girls and young women worked at home, some caring for siblings and perhaps a widowed father. Within their domestic milieu, young women experienced the vicissitudes of low family income, shiftwork routine and mateship.⁷ Most local girls received no more than primary level education to the ages mentioned above. Some simply 'stayed at home' until marriage, an expectation and a hope.⁸ However, in 1912, the first state secondary school in Queensland, the Mount Morgan High School, opened in the technical college and provided secondary education for boys and girls eligible to

⁶ Mike Savage, 'Urban history and social class: two paradigms', *Urban History*, vol 20, pt. 1, April 1993, p. 70.

⁷ Vera Hayes interview with the author, 4 November 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

⁸ Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 3 March 1998, OH.



Fig. 36. Mount Morgan Technical and High School, c. 1920. Girls' Instruction Rooms.

enrol after primary school. Girls might also attend classes for cookery, dressmaking and the 'Commercial' subjects at the college. Fee-paying or scholarship students continued to private boarding schools at Rockhampton, the only institutions that provided secondary education until 1919.

Bill Thorpe suggests that the female workforce in late nineteenth century Queensland increased by only one per cent over three decades to 1901. At Mount Morgan, by World War I the proportion of women working outside the home influenced marginally a culture that placed domesticity before employment.⁹ Domestic work was available at the town hospital and lying-in hospitals, boarding houses, hotels and some private residences, particularly those of mine management on the 'Range'. Domestics were also at Carlton House and the single staff barracks. However, the work carried no status, which perhaps explains why respondents recalling the period were adamant that very few local girls and women took outside domestic work.¹⁰ Notwithstanding, females were engaged in outside domestic work, although the percentage who 'lived-in' at Mount Morgan is not known. The size of residences suggests that few households would provide accommodation for a servant and suggests that domestic work at Mount Morgan involved menial labour rather than the staggered hours of cooking and serving meals. The hazard of male residents' sexual abuse of female domestic servants existed at Mount Morgan as elsewhere, leading perhaps to the loss of employment and destitution of a girl or woman.

Bill Thorpe suggests that 'women shop assistants' and 'female domestic servants' in Queensland were paid 10s. per week in 1893.¹¹ However, the disparity between occupations saw employers of domestics demand 40 per cent more hours per week at

⁹ Gail Reekie, 'Decently dressed?: sexualised consumerism and the working woman's wardrobe 1918-1923', *Labour History*, no. 61, 1991, pp. 42, 43.

¹⁰ Marcombe, 3 March 1998, OH.

¹¹ Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society*, St. Lucia, 1996, pp. 177, 178.

the same rate. For example, the local press at Mount Morgan reported that hotel domestics at Charters Towers worked eleven hours per day for 8s. per week.¹² Moreover, some female wage rates - particularly those for casual employment in the regional sector at least - remained static for decades. Thorpe declares also that 'washerwomen were paid 5s. a day for casual work in 1897'.¹³ On a property at Mount Morgan half a century later, Violet Daniels paid the same casual rate to a woman who laundered one day per week for the family of eleven.¹⁴

Queensland demographic statistics of female employment at Mount Morgan were not available until 1908. At that time, comparison of female employment with Rockhampton showed a ratio of 5:1 in favour of the port city. This difference applied to almost every comparison with Rockhampton, except the population ratio which, with Mount Morgan population at 13 400, was less than 3:1. Whilst chapter three points out that almost 50 per cent of the Mount Morgan town workers in 1911 were female it is suggested here that of these, 50 per cent were engaged in domestic service, some at rates less than half the adult female Drapery and Tailoring Classification of 26s. per week.¹⁵

By 1917, the Australian Workers' Union had 17 female members at Mount Morgan, in occupations ranging from domestic, housemaid, waitress, laundress, cook, shop assistant, tailoress, drapery assistant and nursemaid.¹⁶ However, expanding work categories did not suggest that female employees at Mount Morgan were agents in their own right or involved in local union action. Increasingly, Mount Morgan traders employed female shop assistants, the 1920s reflecting the 'general emigration' of the

¹² *Charters Towers Eagle*, cited in *Critic*, 25 September 1903.

¹³ Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 179.

¹⁴ Violet Daniels, interview with the author, 19 September 1992, MMOH.

¹⁵ 'Statistics of the State of Queensland 1910, Appendix B, p. 86, *Queensland Votes & Proceedings*, Brisbane, 1911.

¹⁶ Australian Workers' Union, Membership lists, Southern District 1917-1920, Bundaberg, Australian Workers' Union Archives.

female domestic servant to town and office work. By the 1920s, Duffy's large emporium employed 20 females and 7 males. Some young women 'apprenticed' to tailoring worked

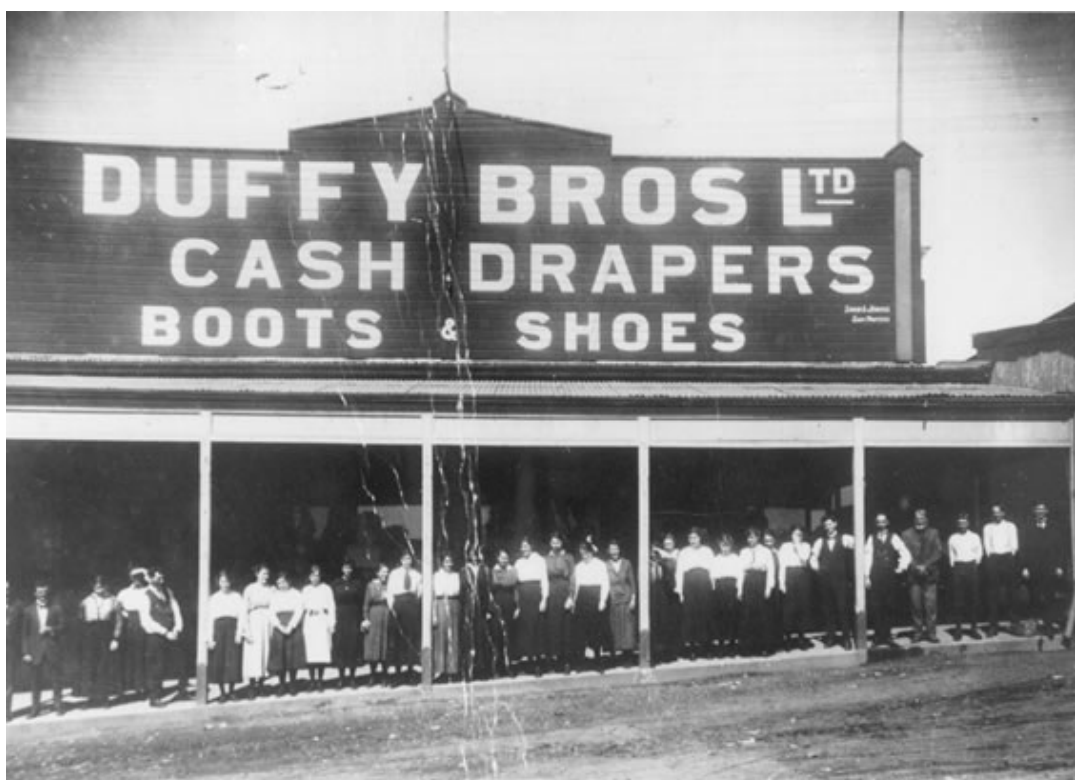


Fig. 37. Duffy Bros., c. 1920. The 29 staff and assistants included 21 females.

a four-year course before commanding higher wages than some other workroom employees. Ironically, the apprenticeship course devised by a Mount Morgan tailor was not recognised elsewhere.¹⁷ This reflected a gender difference whereby male apprenticeships at the mine earned gazetted qualifications.

Female teachers in Queensland outnumbered male teachers in 1901, but did not receive equal salary or status.¹⁸ Women were on staff at every school in Mount Morgan, but with the exception of the Catholic school conducted independently by the

¹⁷ Jim Leigh, interview with the author, 15 September 1992, MMOH.

¹⁸ Katie Spearritt, "'Toil and privation': European women's labour in colonial Queensland", *Labour History*, no. 61, 1991, p. 141

Sisters of Mercy, outside male teachers held the senior appointments until the 1900s. Local students advanced through the pupil teaching system to attain the required qualification.¹⁹ Others completed senior studies at Rockhampton colleges before moving to teaching or continuing to university, usually on government scholarship.²⁰

The long-established nursing profession that gained social respectability in the late nineteenth century remained a demanding, thankless vocation. On the long hill east of the town and facing the mine was the privately funded Mount Morgan Hospital, where entrenched traditions of the Nightingale nursing system, authoritarian seniority and discipline permeated an institutional work ethic.²¹ Established in 1890, the hospital boasted a twenty strong medical staff by the 1920s, including a resident doctor, matron, four trained sisters, second and third year nurses and probationers. Female domestics and some male employees complemented medical staff. The hospital became a teaching institution that drew nursing enrolments from the Central Queensland region, particularly the Dawson Valley south of Mount Morgan. Familial relationship or social acquaintance was as much a criterion for nursing enrolment as educational standard.²² Despite this influence, the probationer – also known as a 'dirty nurse' - learnt her profession from the lowliest level of ward work, washing soiled linen in an old bathtub, cleaning up and cleaning the wards, serving staff meals and washing dishes.

¹⁹ Marcombe, 3 March 1998, OH.

²⁰ Sr. Felicitas McCabe R.S.M., interview with the author, 10 September 1998, OH; Betty Cosgrove, *The Spirit of the Range: a social history of the Convent School of Our Lady of Good Counsel*, Rockhampton, 1990; *The Wider View: a social history of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School*, Rockhampton, 1992. Other students won government scholarships to university entrance level. Scholarship student at the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School, Hilda Cleminson of Mount Morgan gained her B.Sc. (Hon.) in 1915 and after returning to Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School as mathematics and science mistress, gained her M.Sc. in 1916.

²¹ Charlie Fox, *Working Australia*, Sydney, 1991, p. 90.

²² Lorna Moulds, interview with the author, 29 July 1992, MMOH.

Nursing staff of the Mount Morgan hospital became a separate social group. They lived in, working long hours that often led to double shifts, and spent their irregular and infrequent leisure together. They attended the 'great social events' in the town, the Ambulance Ball, and Hospital Ball, also dances and sporting fixtures, but did not mix

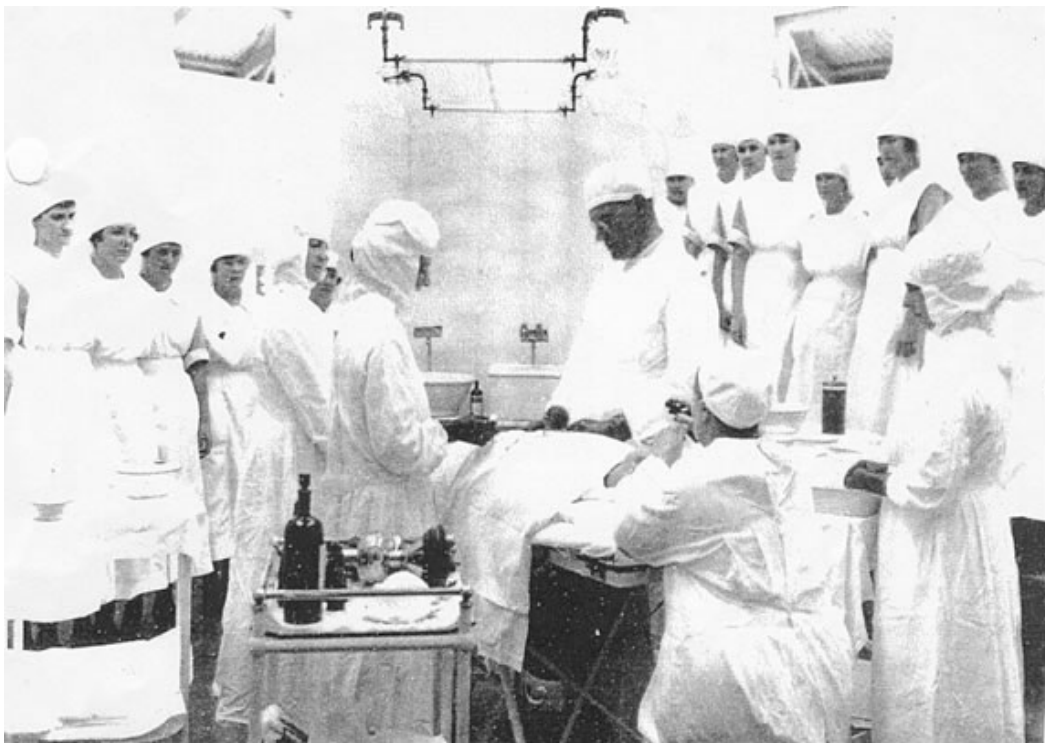


Fig. 38. Dr. T.T. Luddy, theatre staff and observers at Mount Morgan Hospital, c. 1924.

with their local peers.²³ Not only were most nurses from other districts, but also, their compulsory, regulated and boarder lifestyle and the challenges of their profession prompted boisterous social conduct at times. Thus, at Mount Morgan as elsewhere, those outside the sphere of hospital duty, ward experience and the close-knit camaraderie of the quarters tended to perceive nurses as 'different' and as such, socially threatening.

²³ Daniels, 19 September 1992, MMOH.

Most independent midwives in the late nineteenth century were unqualified operatives but many gained the respect of the women they attended.²⁴ Conversely, qualified medical practitioners in Queensland saw midwives as a threat to the integrity – and economics – of the medical profession:

The certified midwife is a by no means insignificant poacher upon the medical domain. Armed with a certificate obtained after a few months' residence at a lying-in hospital, she boldly launches forth as an experienced accoucheuse, and attends confinements without a doctor being present, and handing over the patient when confined to the care of a relative or neighbour, carries out her daily round of visits like a medical practitioner.²⁵

The Albert private hospital held the status of the main provider of maternity nursing care at Mount Morgan. At Rockhampton, a similar sense of place attached to those who knew they were born at Nurse Berrill's private hospital in Denham Street. These establishments operated through the 1920s, until the period that Glenda Strachan suggests saw the transition from outside midwives to hospital care and attendance of a medical practitioner at childbirth.²⁶ Numerous midwives operated in Mount Morgan; one who rode sidesaddle to confinements was an icon of local maternity care. Others, including a midwife of Tipperary Point whose husband was an underground miner, simply walked to cases:

The husband would come for my mother, sometimes through the night and Mum used to go straight away. She had a little bag with her instruments. She had the breast pumps and all that sort of thing, enema, thermometer, cotton wool and things for dressings...we wouldn't see her till the next day...she'd be there with a lady a long time in labour. Of course Mum would have to send for a doctor and did the cleaning up after the confinement...if there were little ones and no one to attend to them, my Mum used to do it...every day until the mother was ready to get out of bed...she charged three guineas...she only charged for the confinement.²⁷

²⁴ Charlie Fox, *Working Australia*, pp. 121, 122; Hayes, 4 November 1992, MMOH.

²⁵ W.F. Taylor, 'The position of the medical profession, with special relation to the State of Queensland', *Australasian Medical Gazette*, 20 December 1901.

²⁶ Glenda Strachan, 'The reproduction of labour power: the work of midwives and 'handywomen' in rural New South Wales, 1850-1888', *Sixth Biennial National Labour History Conference, Labour and Community*, Wollongong, 1-4 October 1999, typescript, p. 170.

²⁷ Hayes, 4 November 1992, MMOH.

The same midwife opened a lying-in hospital about 1918, in large premises in Dee Street conducted previously as a boarding house. At a distance from the mine, the place was a double-storey structure rather than 'built in' at ground level after original elevated construction on high stumps. As a lying-in hospital, the use of space on the ground floor included kitchen, spare room, dining room and verandahs. An outside staircase and landing led to the upper verandah and five rooms, where every bed featured 'a mosquito net...white honeycomb quilt...and blankets for the winter'. An interior staircase led down to the kitchen from the largest room, used previously as a dining room. The lying-in hospital catered mostly for out of town women, mainly from the Dawson Valley. Some stayed for long periods, arriving perhaps a month before their birthing date, and remaining some weeks later. The pregnant women were not confined to bed, but remained in the hospital, during which time the midwife's young daughter shopped on their behalf for toiletries, magazines and embroidery materials. For bathing, women used a large tub in the spare room downstairs with water brought from a copper over the 'washing fire' in the yard. After the birth, a woman rested in bed for ten days, sponged and cared for in her room.²⁸

By 1900, the activities of women whose social contribution to the town was more than duty defied the misogynist, unidentified verse in the *Mount Morgan Argus*:

The Young Woman of Today

She warbled the soprano with dramatic sensibility
 And dallied with the organ when the organist was sick;
 She got up for variety a brand new church society,
 And spoke with great facility about the new church brick.
 For true, unvarnished culture she betrayed a great propensity;
 Her Tuesday talks were famous and her Friday chats were great;
 She grasped at electricity with mental elasticity
 And lectured with intensity about the marriage state.
 And while she dwelt on density, or space and its immensity
 With such refined audacity, her mother darned the socks.²⁹

²⁸ Hayes, 4 November 1992, MMOH.

²⁹ *Mount Morgan Argus* (MMA), 1 June 1900.

The role of the housewife escaped such criticism. She was secure in her domestic sphere, the place where she lived, worked and administered the family unit with the finances the breadwinner made available. But behind the external facade of domestic buildings were the spaces and structures that either aided or hindered the housewife. It is probable that, from the late nineteenth century, the domestic work for city women diversified more rapidly than the urban lifestyle at Mount Morgan. Peter Bell has suggested that houses of any era resulted from changing sexual and economic relations and reflected the ideas and values which shaped them: domesticity, femininity, masculinity, respectability, order and cleanliness.³⁰ At Mount Morgan, the constant, critical factor of a polluted and dirty environment affected every aspect of existence. This was typical of slum areas of old cities like Kentish Town, London, where inhabitants lived cheek by jowl with the enveloping pollution of their locality.³¹

In mining towns, many women tended to leave the grime outside and concentrate on maintaining a clean household interior. In the coal-mining town of Throckley in Northumberland, only the housewife dedicated to hard work might attain a standard of domestic cleanliness - even to public display in 'lines of white washing' - that marked her self-respect and personal dignity.³² At Mount Morgan, housewives toiled to keep domestic interiors and laundry clean from the copper coloured dust that shrouded the town. Most houses were unpainted, testament to the sense of impermanence the mine engendered, and to the constant fall-out from the crushers.

Despite the levelling aspect of copper hued houses, large or small, family location and reputation were critical. Working class women tended to spend their time in the immediate neighbourhood. Social support networks were vital to many household

³⁰ Peter Bell, *Timber and iron: houses in North Queensland mining settlements 1861-1920*, St Lucia, 1984, p. 199.

³¹ Gillian Tindall, *The fields beneath: the history of a London village*, London, 1985, p. 144.

³² Bill Williamson, *Class, culture and community: a biographical study of social change in mining*, London, 1982, p. 126.

'survival strategies', and sharing, borrowing and lending were essential for managing low and unstable working class incomes. At Mount Morgan,

Everyone knew one another; if you had trouble, they were all in to help you...they'd take a turn around, [to] help, that's how they'd do it...the people probably only put in a shilling, but it was a lot of money those days...we got over it.³³

The 'clustering of kin' at Mount Morgan embraced working-class households where family and finances reflected close occupational relationships.³⁴ Rising living standards in some societies might diminish the necessity for women's survival networks,³⁵ but at Mount Morgan, familial support prevailed. For example, Margaret, born in 1897, was an eighteen-year-old dressmaker when she married a mine labourer in 1915. Her miner brother married her husband's sister, and the parents of both couples lived nearby. Margaret moved to a rented house as a bride:

It wasn't far from where my parents lived...we got furniture from the furniture people, a chest of drawers, a washstand and a basin, a bed and a centre table for the sitting room, and four chairs and two little gypsy tables...that's what we had for our front room. My husband never drank...he earned good money...we built our house [later] it was wooden, on high blocks on a corner. It was very steep, high at the front and then it fell away...we were at the bottom of the hill.³⁶

The inclusion of a domestic bathroom reflected the era, town circumstance, and household economics. As discussed in chapter two, the town was without reticulated water, and several standpipes from the main pipe to the mine were available to residents. However, only those who had a well or tanks had water at hand, whatever its quality. The home of a surface boss might have a bathroom 'under the house', but an early tradition in the town saw a 'back' bedroom used for female bathing. This confirms the advantage to men who showered at the mine, although early ablution rooms used cold water; but, as pointed out in chapter six, the Linda Works provided hot showers, so all

³³ Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

³⁴ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

³⁵ D'Cruze and Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family', p. 41.

³⁶ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

miners had access to bathroom facilities at the workplace to ensure cleanliness and removal of toxic residues and infectious matter. Margaret recalled that:

You didn't have a bathroom then...it was a back bedroom, you had to shut the door...and take a bucket of water, heated on the stove and put it in a tub and that was our bath...some [baths] were downstairs...there wasn't such a lot of high houses.³⁷

Few dwellings 'wasted' space on a central passage. The front door opened to a living room, where doors led to bedrooms and to kitchen and laundry areas at the rear. In early structures, these were detached from the main dwelling or spaces in the yard. At the end of the nineteenth century, kitchen and laundry areas might be semi-detached or located in a skillion-roofed lean-to at the rear of the house. Men's working hours narrowed ultimately to an eight-hour day, but women's domestic labour escalated as families increased and dwelling extensions meant additional cleaning.³⁸ Most women at Mount Morgan boiled clothes in kerosene tins on the stove, or used a copper in the yard. Mine clothes were boiled separately in Borilla Soap or Bolderman's [Rockhampton] Kerosene soap and rinsed in large tubs, perhaps on a bench in the yard. After boiling, house laundry was hand wrung or put into a drainer box with a tub underneath to save the water for the next washing. A woman might have three tubs³⁹ - 'it depended on how wealthy you were' - which suggests that in a time and at a town where laundry remained extreme drudgery, women saw status in terms of household amenities.

Exceptions to the water problem occurred in some domestic environments. One example was at the home of William Tuesley, surface boss at the mine. He owned the family residence along the Dee River toward the 'Big Dam'. The property had a well near the river and a windmill to pump water for the house. He grew vegetables, fruit and flowers and was proud of his rose garden. The family kept fowls, but not a cow. The

³⁷ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

³⁸ Marilyn Lake, 'Historical homes', in John Rickard and Peter Spearritt, *Packaging the past*, Melbourne, 1991, pp. 47, 50.

³⁹ Violet Heberlein, interview with the author, 21 October 1992, MMOH.

children had a pony, and Tuesley's walk-in aviary extended the full length of one side to the house. Wide verandahs were at the front and off the kitchen at the rear. A daughter of the family recalled her childhood home:

It had low steps and a big verandah at the front...lattice halfway, from the railings up. When you walked off the verandah, you walked into the sitting-room - not a lounge in those days. I know there were beds on the back verandah, with a screen or something...nineteen steps at the back...the back went down to the river.⁴⁰

In time, Tuesley bought the larger, more impressive residence across the road, where he developed an extensive garden and continued to indulge his love of birds.

Jennifer Craik⁴¹ and Gillian Whitlock⁴² suggest that the image of the verandah is of social and community space. Verandahs at Mount Morgan provided shade and weather protection, in a sub-tropical climate, but in terms of spatial significance, they became central to the division between public and private areas.⁴³ From the external barriers of fence, gate and front steps, the verandah to a miners' dwelling and other residences in the town offered a domestic corridor between interior, private space and the outside world. Thus, verandah use, even as social space, remained the domain of the residents. By the late nineteenth century, verandahs might be used exclusively by family as utilitarian sleeping areas. Depending on the degree of privacy required, the verandahs were 'closed in' with timber lattice, otherwise they remained open to take advantage of prevailing breezes.⁴⁴

The McCabes of Pattison Street reared a family of three sons and seven daughters, the youngest born in 1914. Their home was a three-bedroom dwelling with a wide, front verandah. The 'front room' and parents' bedroom were on either side of a short passage

⁴⁰ Marcombe, 3 March 1998, OH.

⁴¹ Jennifer Craik, 'Verandahs & Frangipani: women in the Queensland house', in Reekie, *On the edge*, p. 147.

⁴² Gillian Whitlock, 'Speaking from the warm zone', in Reekie, *On the Edge*, p. 175.

⁴³ Bell, *Timber and iron*: p. 91.

⁴⁴ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

from the front door to a large kitchen that extended the width of the house. Two bedrooms were to the rear off this main room. Boys slept in one room, and in the other, up to four girls slept to a double bed. Older children slept on the verandah. The family ate all meals in the kitchen, where a large wood stove was at one end and at the other, a table to seat ten. A bench along one wall and behind the table supplemented kitchen chairs. A dresser was against the opposite wall. The kitchen had two kerosene lamps, one on the table, another near the stove. For many years, the girls' bedroom was used as a bathroom where all family members took turns to 'sponge all over' in a large tub filled with tins of water heated on the stove. McCabe senior considered that drawing water from a Council well was men's work and whenever possible, he used a shoulder yoke with a kerosene tin at each end to carry water to the house. The McCabe bathing space changed with construction of a bathroom at the rear of the house, but water for domestic use was still carried from the Council well.⁴⁵

Not all dwellings were roomy or comfortable. A 'Baree' man named Charlie Stratford lived at the back of the clay pits and said his parents had spent their lives there. The family dwelling was a low set cottage of four rooms and front and rear verandahs. The 'walls' of the small rooms were sewn sackbags whitewashed with a mixture of lime, laundry 'blue' and prickly pear juice. In the drying process, the composition stiffened the sacking. Charlie and his siblings went to the bush to get wood for the one fire stove and for his mother's backyard washing fire.⁴⁶

Craik suggests that the verandah was male space and the kitchen female space, both circumstances affecting cultural and sexual politics in the domestic sphere.⁴⁷ At Mount Morgan, the breadwinner did not entertain his friends in domestic space - the socially unacceptable back area of the premises where a skillion roof secluded a

⁴⁵ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

⁴⁶ Charlie Stratford, interview with the author, 10 July 1992, MMOH.

⁴⁷ Craik, 'Verandahs and frangipani', p. 147.

bedroom-bathroom, kitchen and perhaps washhouse. Similarly, housewives preferred to receive visitors in the 'dining-room' or 'front room',⁴⁸ so called as the nineteenth century term 'parlour' faded with the rising vernacular of the town's first generation of native-born. The Tuesley family ate breakfast in the kitchen and had other meals in the dining room. Gertrude was adamant that her mother entertained friends in the dining room, its French doors open to the breeze and screened by long curtains. On a large easel by the window was a large portrait of William Tuesley.

A difference in domestic arrangements between the Tuesley and McCabe households indicates levels of social stratification. Tuesley was a surface boss who on occasion went to Brisbane on behalf of management. He also managed to retain a certain after hours independence from the mine by refusing to have a telephone connection. McCabe was a shift boss at the smelters and a typical victim of mine accident. A serious leg and foot injury occurred when a bucket of molten slag tipped over and fiery waste poured into his boot, burning and crippling his foot. His impaired mobility limited opportunities for further advancement. For their part, Mrs. Tuesley and Mrs. McCabe demonstrated social stratification. Mrs. Tuesley was a member of the successful pioneer family Cross of Gracemere and at Mount Morgan, her social interests and aspirations were different to those of Mrs. McCabe. This paper contends that, quite apart from the work status of the breadwinner, early cultural experience of the women influenced social mores in their Mount Morgan life. Moreover, Tuesley was a lapsed Catholic, Mrs. Tuesley a non-Catholic, so none of the family attended Mass, although Gertrude and siblings attended the Catholic School where Gertrude became a pupil teacher for a time. Mrs. McCabe took at least one child to Mass every morning and on Sunday, the entire family, including McCabe senior, a marriage 'convert', sat in 'the McCabe pew'.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Marcombe, 4 March 1998, OH.

⁴⁹ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

Many women lived their religious faith. For some, it was a panacea to the trials of their lot. The celebration of service and the responsibility of church administration remained firmly under the control of male clerics, priests, elders or a committee, but women were 'religion's most able and effective agents'.⁵⁰ Sustained by prayer or the temporal fellowship they found at church, the women who predominated in the pews were mostly mothers from whom the culture of family life evolved and whose faith impacted on their children.⁵¹ For many Catholics at Mount Morgan, the Mass offered not only spiritual peace and eternal salvation, but also, on a temporal level, a sense of euphoria for many whose economic circumstances ensured their homes were poor and unadorned. In an atmosphere so far removed from their own space, the church environment and mysteries of Latin incantation, incense, candlelight and icons, statuary and stillness, emotive music and lyric held many in thrall.

Pam Hourani suggests that middle-class women might pursue male driven ideologies and so isolate themselves from generally acceptable social interaction with other women.⁵² At Mount Morgan, upward mobility that depended on appropriate income defined social stratification. Some women, if not aloof, were reserved and independent of others.⁵³ For example, whether residents of the 'Range', or preferred suburbs, women might remain at a distance from some sections of the community. This neither argues the existence of a paradigm for social interaction, clannishness, or involvement in the wider community. Residents from the Upper Dee River area were not necessarily social companions of people at Baree or Walterhall, both villages on the railway line north of the town. Gertrude's mother socialised with women in her

⁵⁰ Anne O'Brien, 'Sins of omission? Women in the history of Australian religion and religion in the history of Australian women. A reply to Roger Thompson', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 28, no. 108, April 1997, pp. 127, 128.

⁵¹ Marion Stratford, 10 July 1992, MMOH.

⁵² Pam Hourani, 'Spatial organisation and the status of women in nineteenth century Australia', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, no. 8, 1990, p. 74.

⁵³ Marcombe, 4 March 1998, OH.

locality along the Dee River, but not with those at Baree, her action simply exercising an individual right to choose her associates. Press advertisements that promised well-organised festivals encouraged community activity, but patronage reflected social preference, family commitment or domestic economy. This selective approach and interaction within separate communities suggests echoes of early village life in which residents had limited contact with those at a neighbouring village.

Social distinction between suburban locations existed at Mount Morgan. Female respondents declared that they did not go to either Tipperary Point or the adjacent Red Hill and did not know the residents.⁵⁴ Gertrude Marcombe (nee Tuesley) lived in the town until adulthood but had 'never been to Red Hill', where her husband spent his youth, and less than two kilometres from her childhood home. However, Gertrude said that although she could not recall the Tipperary Point environment, she had visited the home of a Catholic classmate, where they 'did fancywork'.

Sunday School teachers included women who might be employed in town, home duties, or as day-school teachers. Whatever their secular work, faith was integral to and empowered their influence on the young to whom they offered religious instruction. By comparison, a Congregation of Religious, the Order of the Sisters of Mercy, came to Mount Morgan in 1895,⁵⁵ lived outside male reference and had a measure of control in the community at large. They were women whose authority extended to the lower members of their Order, generations of Catholic children, and parents who were obliged to contribute to the cost of education.⁵⁶ Over decades, the sisters brought spiritual influence in secular education to more than 3 000 pupils at Mount Morgan.⁵⁷ The nuns emerged infrequently outside their consecrated space, their archaic, flowing black

⁵⁴ See Map 2, p. 38.

⁵⁵ W.J. Long, *Catholic history of the Mount Morgan parish*, Rockhampton, 1958, p. 22.

⁵⁶ Anne O'Brien, 'Sins of omission', pp. 128, 129.

⁵⁷ St. Mary's Anglican Parish Council, Mount Morgan, Minutes, 1919, Rockhampton Anglican Diocesan Archives (RADA).

habits only relieved by snowy coifs seeming to challenge an image of shadowy figures who shunned public display. Yet, within their aura of discipline, service, and constant if impersonal presence, nuns were a strong force in the intellectual culture of the town.⁵⁸

The Presbyterian Church encouraged congregations to practice personal thrift in the knowledge that the church could not finance social welfare 'which has not been the forte of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland'.⁵⁹ This is not to say that the laity failed to provide aid in kind to the needy in their church community. Despite limited numbers, the Presbyterian Ladies Church Aid Society was an active association. A branch at Mount Morgan, with a total membership of 15 and an average meeting attendance of nine raised funds and marked the needs of widows and orphans as charitable causes.⁶⁰

Middle class Anglican women worshipped at St. Mary's Church where religious furniture and icons were memorials donated to honour man's contribution to the church, society, or a nation at war.⁶¹ Costar suggests that Anglicans did not have a strong tradition of church giving; they considered adherence to the 'established church' exempted them from that fiscal necessity.⁶² Notwithstanding, and albeit women had no seat at Synod, the charitable mission of the Anglican Ladies' Guild at Mount Morgan, as elsewhere, included fund-raising events and fetes to provide support in kind for widows and families.⁶³

⁵⁸ Hayes, 4 November 1992, OH.

⁵⁹ Brian Costar, 'Christianity in crisis: Queensland churches during the Great Depression', *Journal of Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol. 13, no. 6, May 1988, pp. 205.

⁶⁰ Mount Morgan Presbyterian Church, *Annual Report*, Rockhampton, 1907, 285/M, Mitchell Library.

⁶¹ F. Golding, N. Chardon, *Centenary History of Mount Morgan*, Rockhampton, 1982, p. 39.

⁶² Costar, 'Christianity in crisis,' pp. 201-203.

⁶³ St. Mary's Anglican Church, Minutes, 1919, RADA.

Many desired everyday assistance as much as the promise of spiritual redemption. Until the limited benefit of pension or workers' compensation, the future for disadvantaged mining families could be bleak. Nancy Renfree observes that for some native-born or immigrant families the experience or fear of absolute poverty prompted membership of benefit societies. Lodges were specific interest groups, espousing ideologies to influence local members. However, a lodge also supported family members, taking the role of concerned 'guardian' for the payment of money to widows and orphans. Depending on the merits of the case, this might extend to shouldering the patriarchal duties of a deceased member who, at the time of his death, was either suspended from the lodge or unfinancial in terms of membership dues.⁶⁴

The Mount Morgan Branch of the Benevolent Society, established in 1900, was a lifeline to financial relief for many. This was not a social society, but an organisation that raised contributions for female members to arrange the purchase and delivery of goods as relief in kind for the needy. Males controlled meetings of the Society and were expected to contribute to relief funds. To provide sustenance orders, the committee appointed different local tradesmen each month, a baker, a butcher and two grocers, perhaps one in the town and another at Tipperary Point. It is not known if the allocation of trade changed due to quality of service and price, or whether the Society shared purchases between town traders. By 1908, 34 adults and 37 children, three widows of 'advanced years', and seven aged people received assistance in kind. They included recipients of relief not only for an entire year, but also permanently from the Society's year of formation. For families receiving relief over the entire year, goods included blankets and flannel during winter and double rations at Christmas. The 'orders' provided at a cost of 4s. each might include kerosene, candles, rolled oats, soap,

⁶⁴ D'Cruze and Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family', pp. 39, 40.

golden syrup and flour, but scant funds remained for meat or dairy products. The total of 733 orders for 1908 reflects the extent of sustenance at any time during that year.⁶⁵

Widows and other women in need might attempt to survive financially by keeping a cow, fowls and goats. Many of the 18 women included on the register of licensed 'cowkeepers and milksellers' at Mount Morgan between 1898 and 1904 held licences renewed over the years. The annual price of a cowkeeper's licence was 20s. per annum whether for one cow or a herd, and brings the cost into question for those in straitened circumstances.⁶⁶ However, the matter of a keeping a cow for family purposes or business did not mean women lived outside the town. One woman conducted the St. Elmo boarding house, another was the licensee of the Imperial Hotel, another had the Arctic Saloon in East Street and one was a shopkeeper. Goatkeeping was not licensed, and many women kept these animals, probably for milk and meat, whilst numerous children used goat carts to carry goods and firewood. A woman charged two men in 1905 with stoning five of her goats, but as they were probably culled from a plethora of feral goats in the bush, the magistrate simply dismissed the action as a misdemeanour.⁶⁷ By 1911, a local by-law declared goats a public nuisance and animals caught unrestrained within town limits were incinerated at the sanitary depot.⁶⁸

Many women at Mount Morgan were not involved in social activities reported and applauded in the local press. It is questionable also whether the Methodist driven Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Tent of the Independent Order of Rechabites, the moralistic Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union or the Catholic Women's Association provided adequate opportunities for social interaction to women

⁶⁵ *MB*, 10 September 1908.

⁶⁶ Mount Morgan Court of Petty Sessions (MMCPS), Register of Cowkeepers and Milksellers 1897-1904, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁶⁷ MMCPS, Deposition Book, 2 June 1905, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁶⁸ Mount Morgan Town Council Sanitary and Health Committee (S&HC), Minutes, 2 May 1911, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives, (MMSC).

who had few outlets for leisure.⁶⁹ Organisations that inculcated the 'bonds of sisterhood' included the Lady Foresters Branch and St. Mary's Branch of the Hibernians.⁷⁰ The small number of female Rechabite activists might be seen but rarely heard by most men,⁷¹ many of whom frequented hotels but were not confronted by the women.

The most 'socially influential' of women's groups was the Women's Christian Temperance Union, its causes prohibition and women's suffrage and its credo family relief from poverty and violence resulting from alcohol abuse.⁷² Membership was more active in cities than in regional areas, where promotion of the Union depended primarily on the executive support of the wife of an incumbent cleric who was perhaps the leader of the local Temperance branch.⁷³ Paradoxically, a political and religious male elite dominated the Queensland Temperance Union that was the controlling body of the WCTU. Mrs. J. Williams, a senior officer in the Brisbane Branch of the WCTU, transferred to Rockhampton with her Methodist minister husband. As foundation president of the WCTU Rockhampton Branch from 1903, Mrs. Williams remained in office until her husband transferred to the Toowoomba circuit. The Mount Morgan branch was a powerful influence in pursuing teetotalism rather than temperance, but was applauded for its efforts only rarely.⁷⁴ The 1911 *Queensland Licensing Act* limited employment of barmaids to the hours of 9 am to 9 pm. The *Act* was attributable in no

⁶⁹ Roger C. Thompson, 'Women and the significance of religion in Australian history', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 78, no. 108, April 1997, p. 118.

⁷⁰ Return of registered benefit friendly societies, Statistics of Queensland 1910, Table B, *QV&P*, Brisbane, 1911 pp. 23-26.

⁷¹ By comparison, at the permanent coal-village of Throckley, Durham, a Tent of the Independent Order of Rechabites was the main temperance body and boasted 588 members. Williamson, *Class, culture and community*, p. 63.

⁷² Roger Thompson, 'Women and the significance of religion', 1997, p. 121; Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing brotherhood: class, gender and fraternalism*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1989, p. 179.

⁷³ Noeline J. Kyle, "'Give us the franchise...we will show how we will use it!': The story of Euphemia Allen Bowes, a leading "older citizen", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)*, vol. 84, part 1, 1998, pp. 57, 58.

⁷⁴ A.E. Lather, *A glorious heritage 1885-1965: history of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Queensland*, Brisbane, 1966, p. 25, Coll. 14/B/1, Fryer Memorial Library, (FL), University of Queensland.

small part to the prolonged moral crusade of the Temperance Union, including the WCTU at Mount Morgan.⁷⁵ By 1912, the Rockhampton Branch was in recess, and although the Mount Morgan sub-branch persevered, membership and meetings declined in consequence of the pervasive influence of liquor legislation to control hotel hours, liquor sales, and employee wages and conditions.⁷⁶

Women employed at hotels were ridiculed, endured low status and a heightened risk of sexual abuse in the workplace. Conversely, for the female licensee, the standard of the hotel reflected the quality of service, the dining room, and the status of customers. The highest profile hotel employee was the barmaid, who operated behind the high counter of her workplace barricade. Her wages exceeded domestic rates, but she was scorned by town women. It is argued here that their attitude was not towards bar keeping *per se*, but that the barmaid communicated with customers, albeit within their male reserve. The 1911 *Act* prompted a local journalist to write under his press header 'Ourselves':

'Lament of the Boys'

The hopper with the tealeaves in his hair-
Who wanders round, bent on a royal spree,
Will miss the Hebe; surely 'tis not fair,
To remove the honey from the bee.
She's off the map, the one with golden hair,
And pearly teeth that gleamed beneath the gas-
The girl we worshipped when out on a tear,
Stamping ourselves a blithering, blighted ass.⁷⁷

Mount Morgan was a typical town in its response to national need, but the high rate of local contribution during World War I contrasted starkly to the customary, if fragmented style of charity work and donation. Contribution to wartime funds seemed

⁷⁵ Ian Tyrrell, 'The anti-tobacco reform and the temperance movement in Australia: connections and differences', *JRAHS*, vol. 84, part 1, 1998, p. 11; Lather, *A glorious heritage*, p. 9, FL.

⁷⁶ Lather, *A glorious heritage*, p. 16, FL.

⁷⁷ *Critic*, 25 August 1911. Legislation for hours of work at hotels might be implemented in Queensland, but the state refused 'six o'clock closing' legislation passed in the southern states by 1916. See also Walter Phillips, "'Six o'clock swill': the introduction of early closing of hotel bars in Australia", *Historical Studies*, no. 75, vol. 19, October 1980, pp. 263, 264.

a contradiction in terms in a town where charity was such a daily need. The Women's Sewing Guild branch of the War Committee despatched nine consignments of goods comprising in total almost 6 000 articles to the Red Cross, the Soldiers Comforts and other organisations. Similarly, the women of the Sock and Comfort Committee, Mount Morgan Branch, also sent 'many hundreds of socks and other comforts' during the period. Mount Morgan branches included 65 women and 400 children, evidence that they were drawn from all sections of town society and a far cry from the less than the barely double figure attendances at meetings of church societies and associations to raise funds for poor relief.⁷⁸

The development of a town culture reflected differences in lifestyle between suburbs at Mount Morgan to embrace traditional celebrations of birth, marriage and death. Social mores emanated from immigrant culture, modified or modernised through succeeding generations. Interestingly, Margaret Maynard suggests that 'regional factors, especially the climate, shaped women's approaches to dress'.⁷⁹ However, clothing style and quality in the mining town indicated the workplace and social status, but climate and geography did not determine clothing characteristics at Mount Morgan until the early 1900s. Cost and availability of ready-made clothes dictated style, and local tailoring and dressmaking reflected town trade, but home sewing was a staple of the family wardrobe. Some self-taught women sewed at home for various reasons, but primarily for economy. Margaret, who left school to commence work immediately in a dress-making workroom, saved to pay the cost of the best seamstress in town to make her wedding gown. Margaret sewed when her husband was on late shift, 'There was nothing else to do'. Perhaps busying herself dulled fear for her husband's safety.⁸⁰ She took outside sewing - 'made money at it, too' - and charged

⁷⁸ *Just the Link between*, 1916, pamphlet, Rockhampton, p. 41.

⁷⁹ Margaret Maynard, "'A great deal too good for the bush': women and the experience of dress in Queensland", Reekie, *On the edge*, p. 52.

⁸⁰ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH; Hayes, 4 November 1992, MMOH; McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

2s. 6d. to sew a dress in the simpler styles of 1920s, cutting garments to registered paper patterns available through the local newsagent. A selection of monthly magazines for women offered patterns, and dressmaker Miss McBryde ordered patterns from *Weldon's Journal* at 1s., *Weldon's Dressmaker* at 9d. and *Australian Home Journal* at 1s. 6d. However, for the use of dressmaking students, the technical college chose the English *Children's Fashion* at 1s. 6d. and the American quarterly *Butterick* pattern book at 2s. 3d. In an era of selection 'on approval' before charge or payment, newsagents delivered knitting books, crochet patterns and embroidery transfers to certified town customers.⁸¹

Mining housewives with large families were obliged to sew. If Margaret sewed for pleasure and therapeutic satisfaction, Mrs. McCabe sewed from necessity, making clothes for her ten children. By comparison, Mrs. Tuesley sewed for her four children, but a local dressmaker made her own 'better dresses' at rates lower than town workroom charges or retail prices. Fashion was in the public eye at any time and reflected the influence of dress and appearance on social status in the town. Some women bought clothes at Rockhampton. Gertrude's parents boarded out their family at Mount Morgan in order to spend a week at Rockhampton for the June 'Carnival season' that included the annual agricultural show. Stores provided vast stocks in this main season of the year when women shopped for clothes, piece goods and household items.⁸² Rockhampton ready-made fashion followed southern styles, but Brisbane's image as a country town in the far north did not provide the flair of Sydney and Melbourne. However, Rockhampton press published overseas articles describing in detail the passing parade of couture. Commercial paper patterns that home dressmakers used tended towards basic design, but it is probable that the five town dressmakers at Mount

⁸¹ Newspaper Account Book 1926-1927 Sundry Debtors, Mount Morgan Newsagency, Mount Morgan Historical Museum.

⁸² Marcombe, 23 March 1998, OH; McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

Morgan drafted patterns, however successfully. Furthermore, by 1920, larger stores and general drapers featured showrooms and workroom fashion.⁸³

The material celebrations of marriage were diverse. Many early marriages were celebrated in private homes, and the wedding breakfast might be served at a large house, possibly that of a relative or family friend. The main social gathering to precede a marriage included the ubiquitous 'kitchen tea' arranged to provide gifts of household necessities. The traditional, formal wedding received detailed coverage in the local conservative press and one such read, in part:

A pretty wedding was celebrated at the Roman Catholic church when the bride, Mollie O'Brien, was given away by her brother. She was handsomely attired in a gown of costly white silk, made and designed in the latest fashion by D.D. O'Connell's, with embroidered veil and wreath of orange blossom and carried a shower bouquet of white roses and asparagus fern. Her two bridesmaids were dressed in Japanese silk with hats to match.⁸⁴

Not every wedding was elaborate, for whatever reason. A generation and a world war later, fashion was lighter, shorter and simpler. Vera was married at the Catholic church and recalled: 'I wasn't a bride, my sister came to town with me and we bought a nice frock and little hat and white shoes'.⁸⁵

Separation from the family milieu after marriage was problematic for some women. Margaret, who lived with her parents at Cemetery Road south of the mine, said, 'I was with Mum all the time', but after her marriage a sense of isolation developed:

⁸³ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

⁸³ *Pugh's Queensland Almanac and Directory*, Brisbane, 1921, pp. 502, 503.

⁸⁴ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

⁸⁵ Hayes, 4 November 1992, MMOH.



Fig. 39. Mount Morgan wedding, c 1913. Vehicles dressed with white curtains, fringes and bows, the bridal buggy, centre, drawn by two greys. The wedding group are probably at Lundager's photographic studio that was at his newsagency, Morgan Street. The Caledonian pipe band (centre) arrives to entertain onlookers.

It was lonely...when the baby came, I was lonely, but we could manage it; the world was different...I don't know how, but they were...my mother didn't live far away and my sisters...they had to pass our place to go to town, so it was not so bad.⁸⁶

Most town residents had limited expectation of social life or upward mobility: 'Mount Morgan was a good place to live...every year they [the Company] put on the mine picnic, at Bell Park, Emu Park'.⁸⁷ Whilst the significance of leisure and sporting pursuits at Mount Morgan is addressed in chapter nine, it should be mentioned here that for many women, the picnic was their main social outing for the year. Yet, it was not a relaxing event. Responsibility for family care was relocated for a day, confirming the ongoing role of victim played by working-class women on their everyday stage.

Doubtless, most Mount Morgan males experienced a compulsory mateship away from the domestic scene. The thundering mine bonded men as they worked in pairs or small gangs, they drank together at hotels and played sport together. Most family

⁸⁶ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

⁸⁷ Marion Stratford, 10 July 1992, MMOH.

women had little time to spend with church or charity groups, a mainstay of female involvement outside the domestic sphere. At her home in Pattison Street, Mrs. McCabe was surrounded by family and friends. A devotee of cards, she enjoyed regular Euchre evenings with visitors and older daughters. They played at an oval table in the 'front room' lit by a double-burner lamp, and sat on the round-backed 'good' chairs of superior quality to seats in the kitchen.⁸⁸

Shiftwork caused domestic routine to extend over many hours and cast upon women the additional responsibility of caring alone for children during night shift periods. Staggered work hours influenced every resident, mineworker, tradesman, senior staff, merchants, wives and children:

He took his lunch box...he worked shift work...I used to hate shift work...it was at night...it was lonely. He would have a little sleep...at 11 o'clock he would start work...and then I'd go to bed.⁸⁹

The effects of shiftwork on family and social life never changed. Half a century later, a woman recalled,

I hated it, it interfered with everything. Afternoon shift, you couldn't get anything done until they had gone to work. They started at four, they left here about half past three...they'd come home at midnight, you'd get woken up again.⁹⁰

As pointed out in chapter three, Mount Morgan offered few benefits to the housewife in terms of town infrastructure, but town enterprise provided a widespread service that extended throughout the town and suburbs of valleys and hills. In comparison to neglect from the public purse, the delivery of household orders was typical of the era: groceries, bread, milk, meat, and other domestic requirements were brought to the door.⁹¹ Adult males delivered wood and ice to households, and

⁸⁸ McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH.

⁸⁹ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

⁹⁰ Kath Lamb, interview with the author, 30 October 1992, MMOH.

⁹¹ Eric Eklund, 'The "Anxious class"?: Storekeepers and the working-class in Australia, 1880-1940', Robert Hood and Ray Markey (eds.), *Labour and community: Proceedings of the sixth*

generations of boys of school leaving age were 'basket boys' who rode horses to make deliveries during the week for grocers and butchers, and fishmongers on Fridays. The convenience of home delivery also afforded women the opportunity for social contact in town during shopping visits.

Politics did not enthuse all at Mount Morgan, particularly women enmeshed in a female domain of child bearing and rearing, domestic organisation, budgetary problems and health care against infection and disease in an unhealthy town. It is argued here that involvement in family and domestic matters mitigated active interest at least in politics, although many women were of union families. The daily round in a woman's domestic space continued until the breadwinner returned from work and the place reverted to a male domain, but it is not known whether political discussion occurred between male family members. Yet, not all domestic life was a mix of the humdrum and hard work. Issues of law and order discussed in chapter four reveal that in most cases involving women, either deserted, disadvantaged, abused or unpaid for outside work, decisions in the Court of Petty Sessions at Mount Morgan found for the female claimant.⁹² Conversely, the chapter also suggests that charges against women tended to reflect names and offences that appeared repeatedly in the Bench books and Deposition Books of the local court.

The entire town of Mount Morgan reacted to the mine hooter that indicated the change of shift at different times of the day. However, social divisions between the workplace and the town were more significant than they might have been in a rural centre. Circumstances historically true of mining towns probably accounted for the presence of prostitutes at Mount Morgan, where the number of unattached males suggests an opportunity for the sex industry to flourish. In the American west, the

national conference of the Australian society for the study of Labour history, Wollongong, 1999, p. 79.

⁹² MMA, 6 April 1900; MMCPS, Bench Book, 29 May, 12 July, 1906, CPS 7B/S4, QSA.

women might be self-employed and work out of a saloon or dance hall.⁹³ In Australian towns they might also work the street near a hotel or boarding house, usually in the poorest working-class area where over time, the location carried the stigma of their enterprise.⁹⁴ Moreover, Rockhampton was a regional centre and port of entry that suggests arrival at the immigration depot of members of the 'tainted sisterhood', who either remained in the well populated city or moved on to the nearby mining town.⁹⁵

Camps existed at Mount Morgan throughout the period under study and beyond. As many Europeans and Aboriginal fringe-dwellers were at these camps as Chinese at their market gardens.⁹⁶ Whilst camp dwellers might be victims of circumstance, townspeople ignored or ridiculed women of the camps, where the anti-social behaviour or illegal activity of some caused camps *per se* to be suspect.⁹⁷ From the earliest years, prostitution, unspecified as it might have been socially or in local court records, was a thread of Mount Morgan culture. Furthermore, in depositions to police, both males and females used substitute expressions of verbal abuse for the term 'prostitute'.⁹⁸ As pointed out in chapter four, girls and young women convicted of moral misconduct or 'neglect' were incarcerated in Brisbane for perhaps five years.⁹⁹ Adult women charged and convicted of 'vagrancy' might be found guilty of unsound mind. They were committed to the Rockhampton Reception House and Lock Hospital for medical examination, assessment, and treatment for one month before transfer to the Insane

⁹³ Alexy Simmons, 'Red light ladies in the American west: entrepreneurs and companions', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, no. 2, 1989, p. 61.

⁹⁴ Chris McConville, 'The location of Melbourne's prostitutes 1870-1920', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, April 1980, pp. 92, 93.

⁹⁵ Raymond Evans, "'Soiled doves': prostitution in colonial Queensland", Kay Daniels (ed.), *So much hard work*, Sydney, 1981, p. 133; McConville, 'The location of Melbourne's prostitutes', see footnote no. 65, p. 96: McConville observes that a married male suburbanite was implicated in prostitution: 'Scraps of evidence...occasional letters reached police from suburban addresses asking for discreet inquiries regarding lost personal property'. See also *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

⁹⁶ William Toby, interview with the author, May 1993, MMOH.

⁹⁷ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 13 December 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁹⁸ MMCPs, Bench Book, 16 January 1905, CPS 7B/S4, QSA.

⁹⁹ MMCPs, Bench record and summons book for children's court cases 3 December 1908-15 August 1911, 25 February, 9 September 1908, CPS 7B/S3(b), QSA.

Asylum at Goodna.¹⁰⁰ Some were sent to the Magdalen Home in Brisbane, one of an international chain of asylums for prostitutes, unwed mothers and others, that provided institutionalised care, treatment, and practical training in domestic and laundry work.¹⁰¹

The Mount Morgan press reported on young females who attended spectator sports and were acquaintances or friends of males known to local journalists. However, the press derided as unseemly and morally dangerous the behaviour, strident voices and garish clothing of some other young females.¹⁰² Within the prevailing strictures of public behaviour before World War 1, the street at night was not a place for respectable females. The press alerted readers that roaming teenage girls were at moral risk:

If the parents of these street-paraders are too thoughtless of the well being of their daughters, it is up to the police to put a check on their giddy gadding and singularly suggestive language.¹⁰³

The local desire for the town's public image to be known as healthy and wholesome led townspeople to ignore environmental and moral evils. Dense smoke and dust visible by day reflected a haze through acetylene street lamps at night. For Margaret O'Brien, who saw beauty in a fearsome workplace, the lights at the mine shed a 'shiny glow':

And then at night, it was a lovely sight, it was lit up like a city...I would often stand on the verandah and watch the mine...we had a full view of it...I used to stand gazing, and he used to say, 'come inside', and I said, 'the mine, it's lovely'...It was too.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ MMCPS, Deposition Book, December 1897-7 July 1898, CPS 7B/P4, QSA; J.T.S. Bird, *The early history of Rockhampton, Rockhampton*, 1904. The Rockhampton Reception House and Lock Hospital was an early institution at Rockhampton, located by the 1860s near the Fitzroy River wharf. It later became known as the Immigration depot. See also Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee, *Constructing a culture, a people's history since 1788*, Melbourne, 1988, for discussion of Lock hospitals, Magdalen asylums and refuges, pp. 44-49.

¹⁰¹ Paul W. Werth, 'Through the prism of prostitution: state, society and power', *Social history*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 6; Russell, 'In search of woman's place', p. 29.

¹⁰² *Critic*, 12 May 1911.

¹⁰³ *Critic*, 27 November 1908.

¹⁰⁴ O'Brien, 9 July 1992 MMOH.

While Margaret admired the lights, men were working underground, but her husband no longer worked. He suffered already from miner's phthisis: 'It took him...it killed him.' Margaret's bittersweet recollections of an era of mining culture seemed to challenge her pragmatic assessment of Mount Morgan life: 'I'll say it was good!'¹⁰⁵

In seeking to collapse time to interpret life chances as perceived by the mostly 'unheard and unseen' women of Mount Morgan, this chapter has presented working class women of the town and mine families, disadvantaged women and a sub-culture of women who lived outside the law. The themes addressed relate to the significance of their place and space within a milieu of comfort or poverty, community care or enterprise, spiritual faith and temporal fear. Each theme that sought to 'find' the women revealed threads of their quintessential need: economic stability within an entrenched social system. Working class women worked, enjoyed and endured an era that reflected its own social change, but an image of busy housewives and working women veiled the commonality of their concern - a constant fear for the lives of miners and the continuity of the mine itself was. Thus, as women reflected dependence or independence within their own space, resilience and self-reliance were nurtured threads of a survival *mentalité*.

¹⁰⁵ O'Brien, 9 July 1992 MMOH.

Chapter Nine

Leisure and Entertainment: aspects of popular culture at Mount Morgan

Working-class leisure and entertainment assumed the status of ideology at a mining town as elsewhere. Popular leisure pursuits were universal, but the unique stamp of location, rules, method and patronage in a town prevailed. At Mount Morgan, the fine edge of high culture in the intellectual appeal of the lecture, theatre and music barely tempered the predominant interest in sport and outdoor pursuits. At the same time, the discipline of the workplace, economic conditions, geographic location and population mobility dictated leisure - and its cost. Thus, the essence of Mount Morgan leisure lay in individual or group choice and according to shift rosters and extra staff hours, whilst in terms of inter-town competition, the roots of social antagonism between the town and Rockhampton were manifested in deep-seated rivalry on stage and sports field.

In profiling Mount Morgan leisure in the late nineteenth century through the 1920s, this chapter reveals generic plebeian interests of the population. Many at Mount Morgan saw no permanent future for the town and so used their leisure time 'vigorously and frivolously' as occurred in other mining centres, from the coal pits of Throckley, Durham¹ to the gold mines of Charters Towers. Moreover, men who lived singly at Mount Morgan participated in pastimes that did not include community or domestic commitment. By comparison, permanent residents spent leisure in both public and private spheres, whether for rest and relaxation, sporting competition and entertainment,

¹ Bill Williamson, *Class culture and community: a biographical study of social change in mining*, London, 1982, p. 116.

hobbies or social interaction. Individual choice was also evident in time away from the workplace used for financial reward derived from a pastime or casual employment. This thesis also suggests a gendered leisure at Mount Morgan during the period studied. Typically perhaps, outdoor sport was an almost exclusively male domain, as music was for females, and some gender balance was evident in non-sporting cultural pursuits.

Most residents, apart from sporting teams and supporters, spent their leisure in the town. Visits to Rockhampton were relatively infrequent; this reinforced the insular attitude entrenched in the town *mentalité*. Local parochialism seemed a panacea to any suggestion of social isolation.

There were too many of us, and you had to catch the train there and back...no buses. There was nothing to take us to Rocky; we had everything at Mount Morgan.²

A single building, rather than the institution it served, was the place in town for a vast range of entertainment and activities. The School of Arts, built on government reserved land gazetted in 1895,³ provided space and facilities for the 'mental and moral improvement' of the middle classes.⁴ This was the philosophy of Schools of Arts, but at Mount Morgan as elsewhere, their institution developed according to the community it served. The significance of the School of Arts in the cultural mapping of Mount Morgan reflected the efforts of a committee of petite bourgeoisie to import the intellectual stimulus of the lecture and the cultural performance of drama and classical music. To this end, the first hall seldom had a larger audience than that which welcomed Scottish lecturer, Rev. Father Lane and a small group in 1897. Caledonians and others gathered in what the *Capricornian*, a weekly conservative tabloid of Central Queensland, declared was an audience of the 'most representative residents in the town'.⁵ Lane presented 'The Bard of Scotland'; an historical profile of Robert Burns, the programme interspersed with

² Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

³ *Queensland Government Gazette*, January 1895.

⁴ *Queensland Post Office Directory*, Brisbane, 1896.

⁵ *Capricornian*, 29 May 1897.

seventeen musical items and recitations illustrated with coloured slides of Scottish scenes. A decade later, a plethora of books, current newspapers and journals available in the library and reading room complemented the presentations of visiting lecturers. The Caledonian spirit prevailed as 'two hundred' gathered at a new School of Arts building to hear Rev. Allan McKillop present an illustrated lecture, 'Bonnie Scotland' an evening of entertainment as much as intellectual interest.⁶ These events suggest the spatial significance of buildings for public use, for example, within the Catholic precinct of church, convent and school, the large Cardinal's Hall was used after school hours as a gathering place for Catholic performance and entertainment, meetings and political discussion.

The spectrum of School of Arts usage varied from the rhythm of dances and balls, popular musicals and drama to the rallying force of political meetings. Mount Morgan was included in Maggie Moore's 1894 Queensland tour with the musical *Struck Oil*,⁷ the name chosen later for a mining settlement northeast of Mount Morgan. Political candidates organised meetings, held at first in open space and from 1903 at the Coronation Light, until such events joined the flow of intellectual and popular entertainment through the School of Arts. Fire destroyed the 1909 building that was replaced in 1923 with the third School of Arts that, with its capacity of 400, remained the major centre for indoor gatherings.

Barbara Webster contends that the brass band tradition of British working-class life was brought to Australia in the cultural baggage of immigrants and became integral to union meetings and celebrations.⁸ Moreover, Duncan Blythell interprets the brass band 'movement' as a 'novel spectator sport' –perhaps at a price - at any fund-raising

⁶ *Daily Record*, (DR) 8 September 1908.

⁷ Richard Waterhouse, *From minstrel show to vaudeville: the Australian popular stage 1788-1914*, Kensington, 1993, p. 30.

⁸ Barbara Webster, *Fighting in the grand cause: a history of the union movement in Rockhampton 1907-1957*, PhD thesis, Central Queensland University, 1999, p. 378.

event.⁹ At Mount Morgan, the town brass band was featured at most public celebrations. Moreover, the band marketed their services to the organisers of forthcoming activities. Numerous local associations formed their own bands, including the Foresters, Hibernians and the Caledonian Thistle Band, these complementing rather than taking precedence over the town band in terms of public performance.



Fig. 40. Children on parade, c.1912. Bandsmen wear slouch hats, left brim turned up, girls in the cart wear wreaths of flowers, another group marches behind.

Private music tuition became an early cultural tradition; this complemented from 1895 by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy who established music tuition at the Catholic school. They became synonymous with town music as they taught piano, violin and singing, despite much slow payment of the fees necessary to their domestic budget. Within years, a steady stream of music teachers and performers emerged through the convent music rooms.¹⁰ By comparison, Geoffrey Bolton suggests that Welsh miners

⁹ Duncan Blythell, 'Class, community, and culture – the case of the brass band in Newcastle', *Labour History*, no.67, 1997, p. 145.

¹⁰ Sisters of Mercy, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Mount Morgan, *Report*, 1913, Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

were the source of musical heritage at Charters Towers.¹¹ However, when Mount Morgan was established in the 1880s, musical tuition and performance was already entrenched at nearby Rockhampton, and probably influenced an emergent musical culture at the mining town. Moreover, the talents and accomplishments of immigrants were reflected in the experience of Joseph Hickman, 'an ordinary man' and immigrant who worked at the mine. His passion for musical expression brought him to notice at Mount Morgan where the family became integral to the local music scene by 1895. Hickman's daughters studied music also, his elder daughter becoming a performer and teacher, the other studying with impresario Herr Ludwig L'Hage at Rockhampton. Hickman conducted an instrumental group at Mount Morgan and advertised locally:

Joseph Hickman, M.T.S.F. College, London. Professor of Music, Teacher of Singing, Violin, Violincello, and Organ. Miss Henrietta Hickman, Piano and Theory, Concerts and Balls attended.¹²

Hickman died in 1896, but Henrietta continued teaching and performing as accompanist at local functions. Entrenched interest in music and encouragement of local artists were witness to three sell-out sessions for the first Eisteddföd in Central Queensland held at Mount Morgan in April 1900.¹³ Subsequently, the Mount Morgan Glee Club and the Mount Morgan Musical Union were established. Perhaps more significant to the region was Rockhampton's encouragement of local musicians to compete in the Eisteddföd. To this end, public concerts featuring aspiring Rockhampton artists raised funds to pay competitors' travelling expenses to the 1903 Mount Morgan Eisteddfod. However, the mountain town dominated the results in that year.¹⁴

¹¹ Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1972, p. 268.

¹² Joseph Hickman to George Haswell, 9 March 1896, cited in George H. Haswell, A Tyneside worthy, paper read at the Tyneside Club, Birmingham, England, 27 November, 1897, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library, (FL).

¹³ *MMA*, 13 April 1900.

¹⁴ *Critic*, 24 July, 28 October and 6 November 1903.

The nurturing of musical talent that led to success in the wider society became a paramount force for local pride. Public commitment and contribution to the overseas study of music for promising students saw the town support the talents of little Alma Moodie, by 1904 a child prodigy at the age of six.¹⁵ After years of study in Europe, Moodie was a renowned violinist and thereafter, the town claimed a little of her reflected glory and that of other local performers who benefited from town support in their early years of professional training.

Coincidentally with imported musicals and drama, the Mount Morgan Musical Union Vaudeville Company and the Mount Morgan Dramatic Society promoted local talent and provided fund-raising entertainments for 'deserving causes'.¹⁶ The choral concert was a charity mainstay, ensuring at the same time performance experience for the musicians that the Sisters of Mercy and seven other music teachers fostered. However, theatrical productions had limited life by 1907. Theatre drama captured town interest for a time, but offerings by local amateur thespians soon tended to be ignored, whilst audiences became apathetic also towards the frequency of local variety concerts. Moreover, the challenge of entertainments of wider appeal for general audiences in a limited population caused the annual Mount Morgan Eisteddfod to fade, although enthusiasm for occasional instrumental and choral presentations remained. Depending on content and participation rather than professional entertainment, these local musical productions played to full houses, where audiences applauded the public performances of family members. By 1913, a choir of 200 Catholic children practised in Cardinal's Hall to present the popular musical *Princess Ju-Ju*.¹⁷

¹⁵ Alma Moodie studied violin at Mount Morgan. Taught by her mother, a music teacher who was a past student of the Sisters of Mercy, Alma Moodie studied later with Herr Ludwig D'Hage, violinist, orchestra maestro and teacher at Rockhampton. Alma appeared as a violinist at public recitals in Rockhampton from the age of six and by 1907, gained a scholarship to Brussels Conservatoire. Moodie was acclaimed the finest interpreter of the Brahms compositions for violin. She never returned to Mount Morgan and died at Cologne in 1943.

¹⁶ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 20 August 1907.

¹⁷ *Critic*, April 1900, 6 November 1903; Sisters of Mercy Mount Morgan, *Report*, 1913, Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

Almost 40 Mount Morgan students of piano passed the prestigious London Trinity College of Music examinations in 1919, and echoes of earlier Mount Morgan Eisteddfödaau were the forerunners of the first Rockhampton Eisteddföd held in 1923, a competition that became an annual, week long cultural festival of music, drama and song.



Fig. 41. Lyric Orchestra, 1912. The orchestra of 39 musicians includes 15 children.

Through the late nineteenth century, the advance of stage and dance hall music that extended throughout Britain to the provinces and overseas brought the decline of the music hall tradition.¹⁸ By 1911, companies touring with a single presentation prioritised show locations. Imported theatre played Rockhampton prior to visiting Mount Morgan; The Merry Widow Opera Company opened a season in Rockhampton with *The Waltz Dream*, following this later in the week with *The Merry Widow* and concluding with *The Cuban Girl*. Four days later, the company presented the same programme at Mount Morgan.¹⁹ Patronage was reasonably constant at the mining town, but variety and some melodrama predominated, confirming that if imported theatre

¹⁸ Williamson, *Class, culture and community*, p. 168; Waterhouse, *From minstrel show to vaudeville*, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Critic*, 18 August 1911.

reflected social change in the wider sphere,²⁰ local preference dictated the popularity of entertainment. In addition to music hall delights, enthusiastic Mount Morgan audiences flocked to amusements in the style of early nineteenth century English mining villages - waxworks, and a perennial favourite, fireworks displays. The outspoken *Critic* complained:

If ever Sarah Bernhardt visits the Mount and a waxworks show is on, the divine one will freeze while the other show will play to packed houses.²¹

Mount Morgan was on the circuit for occasional imported presentations of performing small animals including monkeys and dogs. The town might have provided an ideal audience for the all-American Wirth's Circus that featured large, exotic animals; but such a show was not for the mountain town, probably for logistical reasons. Local circus patrons travelled to Rockhampton which, with Wagga Wagga in New South Wales, was one of the two Australian regional centres visited most frequently by large circus companies.²²

Some imported shows failed. For example, after a short season at Rockhampton, the film *Living Paris* in combination with the 'genial humorist' Leslie Harris played to 'bumper' houses at Mount Morgan, but Reginald Wickham and his 'talented Company' opened in Mount Morgan to a poor audience. A disgusted *Critic* raged:

The average Mountainite's idea of good stuff may be gathered from a perfectly true story. One patron visited Sydney and was asked later what he preferred in the theatrical line. He said, "'Our Miss Gibbs" was rotten, but this 'ere "Jack and the Beanstalk" was a bosker thing'.²³

²⁰ Waterhouse, *Private pleasures, public leisure: a history of Australian popular culture since 1788*, South Melbourne, 1995, pp.67-69.

²¹ *Critic*, 11 January 1907.

²² Mark St. Leon, 'The circus in the context of Australia's regional, social and cultural history', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 72, part 3, December 1986, p. 205.

²³ *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

Entertainment at the Mount Morgan School of Arts followed a popular culture, but the Rockhampton press delivered a withering attack on an audience whose poor patronage of an imported classical concert was perceived as lack of intellectual appreciation:

Mount Morgan has emerged from a state of coma to a 'dam the expense style', with balls, concerts and entertainments of such frequency and variety...the boom has the appearance of becoming chronic.²⁴

Benefit shows and events were the stuff of fund raising for friendly societies, mine accident victims and widowed families. With music by a string band and a local identity as Master of Ceremonies, charity dances mirrored a town *mentalité* that demanded entertainment as value for money in return for donations to causes. Non-fund raising functions included those arranged by mine groups and shifts; the well patronised Smelters' Ball seemingly as clannish as the colourful and prestigious Military Social. The latter filled the original School of Arts, where even the stage was crowded with onlookers.²⁵ The press report of the function exaggerated the attendance - '400' - a number far exceeding the capacity of the hall. Functions also varied in style, music, catering and decorum. A dance held at the Baree School of Arts where a sole pianist provided the music for 'a good crowd' that included parents was a strictly controlled affair and prohibited liquor. Patrons observed traditional dance etiquette; if a dancer left the line and moved to a position opposite another dancer, the move was an insult to the first partner. The offender was reprimanded on the floor and warned against repeating the move.²⁶

Social freedoms for women increased at Mount Morgan as local mores changed. In 1891, a man charged with breach of promise declared in his defence at the local court that he had abandoned and refused to marry a woman who attended a public dance

²⁴ *MB*, 3 May 1912.

²⁵ *MMA*, 18 August 1907.

²⁶ *Critic*, 1 December 1911.

unescorted.²⁷ By World War I, the social atmosphere of local dances sealed the future of many couples. In the 1920s, with the introduction of optional card playing at public dances, some women attended, unescorted, to dance and play cards. Margaret and her best friend married brothers, had families and lived a street from each other. For the friends, card playing at the School of Arts – not at home – was a regular outing without their husbands. The young women walked arm in arm to the hall where the Saturday night programme included:

Euchre and Dance...you had to have two or three dances and then it would be 'all Euchre players, under the School of Arts'.²⁸

The image of public entertainment at Mount Morgan changed with introduction of the cinema. The Olympia Theatre in East Street was the major cinema that provided different programmes every Wednesday and Saturday at 8.pm. Originally the Foresters Hall, the place changed hands several times to become the Olympia in the era of silent films, where entrance prices started at 6d.²⁹ In 1911, the Irish theatre manager A.M. Welch promoted 'the show with the largest public audience' and indeed, the Olympia not only had the largest floor space in town, but also, the theatre was frequently filled to 'standing room only'. The Welch management was a family affair, and to ensure a vocal segment during sessions, Mrs. Welch engaged singers, including a young ten-year old girl whose voice thrilled patrons. Welch did not limit his entrepreneurial skills to advertising, the provision of comfortable seats and entertaining films shown to the 'superb' playing of the cinema pianist. He had a commanding voice and rendered appropriate vocal items to complement the current film; for example, he sang 'An Irishman's toast' before showing *The lad from old Ireland*. At the 'Olympia Hall', so named when shows other than films were presented, variety entertainment including the Valdares trick cyclist troupe played to a full house. The following night, a complete

²⁷ Mount Morgan Clerk of Petty Sessions (MMCPs), 28 February 1892, Deposition book 14 November 1887-7 June 1893, CPS 7B/P4, Queensland State Archives (QSA).

²⁸ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

²⁹ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

change of programme was a charity concert organised by the Australian Workers Union to aid striking sugar workers.³⁰

Vacating the Olympia Theatre to a St. Patrick's celebration, Welch and his wife presented 'King's Pictures' in an open-air setting at the Rugby Union ground where a large audience sat near the screen and filled the grandstand. At this showing, Welch presented the programme described above including his own vocal item, whilst his wife and assistants dispensed 'cool and refreshing wet stuff' as a fillip to the entertainment. Meanwhile, at the Olympia Hall, the St. Patrick's concert and dance was a highlight of the Hibernian year and an occasion when women and men attended in equal numbers. The hall was crowded for the 'lavish entertainment' at the end of the day's parade and sport.³¹

In opposition to the Olympia, the Red Hill Moving Picture Show catered for patrons south of the town and mine, including Tipperary Point, Red Hill and Horse Creek. The minuscule report of the cinema by the local press - three lines of news, compared to two by one-third column reports on other theatres and shows under Welch's management - suggests that Red Hill had scant credence in the town. Moreover, when *A domestic upheaval* showed, the press sneered that the scenes of 'flying furniture and bad language', were apt entertainment for a suburb with the social character of Red Hill.³²

Picnics in the bush were popular mixed gatherings which, apart from family gatherings, were arranged by any section of the labour force, association or religious group. However, the Mount Morgan 'mine picnic' to Emu Park was the major annual event for most, and for mothers, the day began before dawn and ended perhaps at

³⁰ *Critic*, 12 May 1911.

³¹ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

³² *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

midnight, when some families returning on the last train from the coast. The event organised by the mine had particular support from the 'Linda men' of the Linda shaft and Works. Few mine families missed the trip to Emu Park in 1904, when three 'packed' trains took some 2 500 picnickers on the third annual picnic.³³ The rail journey to Rockhampton and change to the Emu Park train was more than two hours, but travel was not a deterrent for most. The annual picnic moved into the town ethos as the most memorable event. Most walked to the Mount Morgan station in the early morning, carrying bags of food, drinking mugs, and billies in which to make tea with hot water purchased on the beach for threepence. Few would have stopped for morning tea at establishments such as Mrs. Presley's new two-storeyed Grand View House, opposite the Railway Lower Gates at Yeppoon where meals were available for visitors on arrival by Sunday trains and afternoon tea before departure.³⁴ With one accord, it seems, Mount Morganites went to the beach:

There's sister Sue with her beau attached,
Looking her very best,
There's Mum and Dad, with all their batch
Rushing along with the rest.
We're off once more in the picnic train
That is loaded with humans and beer;
Off to the seaside - hip hooray!
Cheers for our well-earned holiday-
That comes but once a year.³⁵

The press agitated for a Saturday to Monday holiday for the Linda picnic, the rationale for this the long, hot train ride to the seaside. Moreover, the station at Yeppoon was more than one kilometre from the beach, having been sited for the convenience of local agricultural producers rather than holidaymakers. Once at the shore, and with only a brief interval 'to sniff the briny and get a full cargo of lunch on board' many picnickers who wanted to secure a seat on the first return train trudged back to the station in the heat of the afternoon. The Company also ignored a press

³³ R.S. Archer to Kelso King, 26 November 1904, Archer Letter Book 1904-1912, K1014, ML.

³⁴ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

³⁵ *Critic*, 18 October 1911.

suggestion for the loan of tarpaulins and tents sufficient to shelter the women and children at the seaside overnight.³⁶ Some Mount Morgan residents managed unpaid holidays at the 'seaside' over the Christmas - New Year period when the Company closed the mine for two weeks.³⁷ Campers, who took 'everything' on the train, from tents and stretchers to cutlery and crockery, were confronted with a long trek to camping spaces in the sand dunes fronting the shore.

This thesis has discussed in chapter four the ubiquitous existence of hotels at Mount Morgan. With drinking to excess a normal activity for many, the sale of liquor influenced the town culture of work and domestic life, law, politics and leisure. The endemic practice of gambling was also allied with hotels, with some establishments advertising 'the latest sporting info' with their offerings of meals, accommodation and best liquors. For example, when John Tucker took over the Calliungal Hotel in Morgan Street from the highly respected Morrisons, he offered the 'first' sporting news. Yet most patrons would be aware that the sporting results, as with other 'intelligence' was available to those who went direct to the nearby telegraph office.

For a majority of Mount Morgan males, the town became and remained a centre for sport, providing relief from the confinement of workplaces and specifically, the underground mine. A working-class culture at Mount Morgan as elsewhere saw fighting, boxing and footrunning linked intrinsically with pubs, hotels and drinking. However, it will be seen that the practice of 'work together and relax together' was not the preserve of miners only; workers and others of any class who tended to spend leisure in groups or teams included many who worked together. The emergent working class culture at Mount Morgan in the late nineteenth century included British traditions of a century earlier entrenched in early villages and districts until transported to the

³⁶ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

³⁷ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH. A railway branch line to Yeppoon from the Rockhampton to Emu Park railway opened in 1909.

urban sphere. Sports imposed by immigrant adherents of boxing and footrunning³⁸ were not only connected intrinsically with gambling and drinking, but also reflected class lines. This might have included the blood sport of cockfighting, for male only patronage.

It's into the pub to take a sup,
The cock-fight it was soon made up.
For twenty pound these cocks will play,
The charcoal black and the bonny grey.³⁹

Whether cockfighting occurred at Mount Morgan is uncertain, but by the 1900s, strident argument relating to the cruel sport was heard between late night drinkers in laneways and unsavoury places.⁴⁰

Licensed billiard saloons - usually attached or adjacent to hotel premises - operated freely. Despite the population difference between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton as discussed in chapter three, six saloons operated in each town by 1900.⁴¹ Working class men patronised billiard halls where regular intra-town competitions flourished. Class lines in patronage⁴² were apparent; at Rockhampton, some more affluent petite bourgeoisie played billiards at private residences, at the School of Arts or The Rockhampton Club. At Mount Morgan, Carlton House featured a billiard room, as described in chapter two, while G.A. Richard, an obsessive player, had a billiard room included in a large semi-detached addition to his Company

³⁸ Waterhouse, *Private pleasures, public leisure*, p. 37.

³⁹ A. L. Lloyd (comp.), *Come all ye bold miners: ballads and songs of the coalfields*, London, 1978, p. 228. Cockfighting, outlawed in Britain by 1849, was not illegal in New South Wales in the later nineteenth century, but was confined to areas remote from public or residential locations. It was a clandestine event, perhaps 'out behind a hotel yard' where the licensee was doubtless aware of the proceedings. Cockfighting was scarcely sport, given that a long steel spur fitted to a claw enabled a bird to kill another, perhaps in seconds. See also Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures*, USA, Harper Collins, 1973, pp.422, 426.

⁴⁰ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 17 August 1897-7 March 1899, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁴¹ *Queensland Government Gazette*, 1900.

⁴² *Critic*, 23 August 1907.

residence on the mine Range.⁴³ It is probable that Richard, as 'Captain' of the Gordon Club, was instrumental in the installation of the club billiard room.

Miners brought boxing to Mount Morgan, in an era of physical settlement of social disputes, but the code became a spectator sport for male patrons drawn to witness the prowess of imported pugilists and local challengers. The promoters required a permit from police to stage a boxing match in a hotel yard or a hall, depending on the status of the protagonists.⁴⁴ Professional bouts at Mount Morgan were intermittent, but boxing retained its following. The Australian Natives Association, prompted perhaps by the large complement of local Irish youth, conducted sparring classes by 1907, reporting a strong membership of learners at a gymnasium the association constructed for the purpose.⁴⁵ Such an adjunct to public leisure and performance prompted the comment that Mount Morgan had 'at last awoken from its lethargy and started to amuse itself in various ways instead of drinking beer'.⁴⁶ Ironically, the new facility highlighted the long-standing need in the town for 'a workers' club', a desire that remained an unrealised hope. Conversely, the Carlton Club functioned from the early 1900s, with a seemingly elite membership of younger men on mine staff, in management, and local business.⁴⁷ The social events of the club, included picnics and dances that the press reported in detail, citing the names of female participants, and on occasion, describing their attire. This reportage was the antithesis of generally brief reports of local wedding celebrations, as cited in chapter eight, including of a local miner's wedding for which reportage barely mentioned the bride. Such press was usual, so cannot be attributed only to individual journalism.

⁴³ H.P. Seale to N.F. White, 17 September 1901, Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited (MMGMC), MS82.12, CQU/CC.

⁴⁴ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 20 December 1897, CPS 7B/ P4, QSA.

⁴⁵ *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

⁴⁶ *Critic*, 18 August 1907.

⁴⁷ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

Sports that provided major competition in the late nineteenth century continued in the 1900s when events were held at the Rugby Union ground where footrunning (pedestrianism) was a standard feature for benefit association picnics. The Australian Natives Association also promoted leisure pursuits through sporting picnics, large scale annual events that included footrunning, cycling, football placing, throwing cricket bat, the traditional egg and spoon race, high jump and 'old buffers race'. The goat race was an event identified already with Central Queensland. The inclusion of a hurling match demonstrated the bond between Irish-Australians and the Australian Natives Association.⁴⁸ Substantial prizes were the rewards for all events, with footrunning and cycling the most important and titled the Commonwealth Handicap and Australian Natives Association Handicap.⁴⁹

By 1906, the Mount Morgan Athletic League held its first meeting at the Calliungal Hotel, where publican J. Lowry was secretary for the executive that adopted the rules of the Queensland Athletic League.⁵⁰ Two years later, the New Year's Day Sports of the Rugby Union Club held footrunning races including the traditional Ladies' Bracelet, seventy five yards sprint and quarter mile handicap.⁵¹ However, this sport of 'peds' - was derided loudly by 1911, in a reaction to results posted for the local Grand Handicap in which, after a disputed result, the runner placed second received the purse. Backers were left to take up the matter with the Rugby Union Club who arranged the sporting event on their ground. However, personal rivalry that fragmented the success of club interaction did not detract from the social significance of footrunning events on any sports day programme.

Individuals generated town interest in horseracing, a sport that the first general manager of the Company, J. Wesley Hall supported, both competitively and financially.

⁴⁸ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)* 25 May 1900.

⁴⁹ *Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 19 May 1906.

⁵⁰ *MB*, 25 May 1906.

⁵¹ *Capricornian*, 3 January 1908.

He raced his own bloodstock on the rough racecourse south of the town and donated £20 per year to turf club funds. Within a decade of settlement, such paternalism by the Company hierarchy was not only accepted but also expected by townspeople. Hastened perhaps by the onset of the Great Drought, horseracing faded in the town after the death of Wesley Hall in 1901. R.G. Casey replaced him as elected director of the Company and, indeed, horseracing enthusiast who, during his visit to Mount Morgan in 1903, ignored the press suggestion that he was 'just the sort' to support the almost defunct local Jockey Club.⁵² Walter Russell Hall, director and major shareholder of the Company was also keenly interested in horseracing and the press speculated that:

If the Turf Club could be roused from its dormant state during the cold weather and applied for assistance, Casey and Hall would give substantial prizes and more than once a year.⁵³

However, such a request would involve a personal contribution from Hall and Casey rather than in the name of or at the expense of the Company, so the turf club declined to act. The Australian Natives' Association also formed a Jockey Club, but organisation of meetings was amateurish and dismissed publicly as 'cronk', although perhaps typifying bush race meetings. Local demand for regular monthly meetings for small stakes was unsuccessful; owners refused to travel horses for minor purses that drew small fields and indifferent horses to race on a course that was very rough at best.⁵⁴ Ultimately, meetings declined to an occasional event held by a town association, and the annual, official meeting on New Year's Day - at the height of the Wet season. The day of traditionally diverse social events was challenging in terms of the gate and takings for a club that held its only meet when races were 'attractions at every little town and bush public house'.⁵⁵ Mount Morgan was aware that whilst their track and the horses that raced were poor, Rockhampton raced bloodstock at professionally organised meetings on a track that was

⁵² *MMA*, September 1903; R.G. Casey was reported as owning the favourite for the 1903 Grand National Steeplechase in Victoria.

⁵³ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

⁵⁴ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

⁵⁵ *Critic*, 11 November 1903.

'one of the most raced on courses in Australia'.⁵⁶ Although the Mount Morgan Turf Club confined their next meeting to the winter period, the local press scoffed at the event:

Same old racecourse,
Same old ground,
Same old horses
Running 'round.
Same old grandstand,
Same old crowd.
Same old home stretch
Same old luck,
Same old favourite
In the ruck.
Same old thirst
O dear Ochone!
Same old way of
Walking home.⁵⁷

In the early 1900s, the Jockey Club anticipated a boost to meetings with progress on the extension of the railway from Mount Morgan to the Dawson Valley. Funds swelled by 50 per cent when the club lobbied locally for donations to increase prize monies. With an improved track, enthusiasm for local meetings of the 'prads' revived from 1909-1912, together with a significant increase in the number of women who attended as spectators and punters. However, the brief racing resurgence faded, suggesting that meetings continued only until the flow of contributions ceased.

An equestrian sport of a different style and implanted from an immigrant culture emerged at Mount Morgan in the late 1890s. Despite the urban character of the town, polo tested the horsemanship of local and district riders. Not a sport for the faint-hearted, and shortlived at the mountain town, polo was vigorous and demanding as players competed in a section of the Company 'paddock' near the mine. Mounts were not polo ponies *per se*, but local horses that were ridden hard on a ground that ensured chukkas were exciting if dangerous. Where the original scrub had been cut for the mine, many remaining stumps were sharpened almost to points, probably 'by small boys

⁵⁶ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 364; *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

⁵⁷ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

with the family axe collecting firewood in their billy-goat carts'.⁵⁸ The polo club disappeared under the increasing difficulties of an unsuitable climate, the need for a safe ground, regular team practice, and care of mounts.⁵⁹

Although pedestrianism dominated at Mount Morgan, many who lived in outlying suburbs or districts rode horses to and from the town for work and leisure. Robert Cole recalled that his father rode from Moongan at the top of the Razorback to the mine and grazed his horse in the Company paddock during shift.⁶⁰ Horse-trading was a sound enterprise at Mount Morgan as at Rockhampton and, given the rugged terrain and tracks at the mountain town, transport, racing, driving and riding had strong elements of danger. Infrequent track racing at Mount Morgan was no deterrent to outside racing. This explains a 'course' on a section of the rough main road near Moongan on the way out of town. The location provided popular, if surreptitious sport for riders and gamblers. Races were dangerous for horses, riders and horse vehicles driven under illegal conditions: a cart with three horses, the third outside the shafts and hitched to a swingle bar, might be raced at a fast pace after dark and without lights.⁶¹ Police were not stationed at Moongan, or Moonmera over the Razorback, so they were limited to acting upon reports from complainants who travelled to Mount Morgan, sometimes on foot. It seems that many local riders, particularly the native-born, overcame the racing challenge with an innate sense of horsemanship and riding style that suggests a devil-may-care attitude consistent with an entrenched larrikin image.

Less physically challenging than riding in the remote areas of the town was rifle shooting, an activity entrenched in the Volunteer ethos. Before the Boer War dragged

⁵⁸ MMA, 28 September 1900; B. G. Patterson, Notes on sport at Mount Morgan, p. 2, c. 1950, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁵⁹ Polo was popular briefly in Central Queensland, with rural clubs including the Yaamba and Kunwarara districts north of Rockhampton, but the sport there was also shortlived. Kevin Geddes, interview with the author, 3 January 1999, Oral History, (OH); Leo Carpenter, *Livingstone, a history of the Shire of Livingstone*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 236.

⁶⁰ Barbara Webster provided information from her father, Robert Cole, 1999.

⁶¹ MMC, 7 September 1917.

to its ignominious close, the demands of Queenslanders interested in rifle shooting prompted applications to government from 70 districts for the formation of state rifle clubs.⁶² The Mount Morgan Rifle Club formed in March 1900 preceded the 'Gordon' Club, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and named perhaps for the Gordon family, landholders in the 1870s of the later Mount Morgan mine area.⁶³ Riflemen practised for the Federal Flag competition, for which teams of eleven men fired traditional distances of



Fig. 42. Mount Morgan Rifle Club 'A' team, 1912.

200, 600 and 800 yards. Practice was rewarded in the superiority of Mount Morgan riflemen who tended to defeat both Rockhampton and Gladstone by large percentages when the towns met in regular, representative competition.⁶⁴ In addition to rifle clubs, young state school cadets underwent regular training and firing practice and participated in junior competition. At Mount Morgan by 1903, 'Captain' Richard was the

⁶² *MMA*, 1 June 1900.

⁶³ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 290, 291.

⁶⁴ *MB*, 17 November 1905.

commanding officer of the senior corps members who instructed cadets. Such training of youth begs a question of the place for rifle shooting in the schema of 'sport' or 'leisure'.

McEwen contends that organisations in the Newcastle coal district were devoted to organised leisure but discriminated against women.⁶⁵ As stated earlier, sport was gender specific at Mount Morgan, and press coverage of a sporting event in the 1890s might include a seemingly token comment:

The most noticeable features during the match were the large number of ladies, the vociferous barracking, the rough play and the good nature of the players.⁶⁶

Brief press references to women's sport by 1906 confirms that women were not excluded from sport, but their efforts did not receive detailed comment. In comparison, coverage of local Rugby Union games - a sport discussed later in this chapter - commanded columns in a single issue. By 1911, reference to female spectators at commercial sporting events was a regular item in the social column of the conservative *Morning Bulletin* or a single sentence in non-conservative press.⁶⁷ Public sporting events included women in the 1900s; for example, the committee for the Friendly Societies Picnic Sports Day in 1908 encouraged male competition and commented patronisingly on prizes to be offered for the ladies' cricket match, boys' and girls' races, and the 'married women's race'.⁶⁸ This opportunity for public sporting participation by women, however banal, confirms social change in less than decade. Moreover, social events connected with sport were no longer exclusively male affairs. After a Rugby Union match against the Charters Towers team, the local club entertained the visitors at a dance held in the School of Arts. Women played their role as caterers for the function

⁶⁵ Eileen McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district of New South Wales 1860-1900*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1979, pp. 209, 210. Team sport, the pub and gambling sports were male preserves at Newcastle, where women who visited public houses were ostracised. Members of brass bands, Volunteers and most friendly societies were male.

⁶⁶ *MB*, 21 July 1897.

⁶⁷ *MMA*, 13 May 1911.

⁶⁸ *DR*, 11 September 1908.

while onlookers filled the stage and the floor was 'uncomfortably crowded with dancers until music and refreshments ceased at 2.a.m.'⁶⁹

Climate or dress did not affect the popularity of energetic entertainments. Roller-skating at the Royal Rink was popular by 1903 and became a sport for anyone. The rink opened from May through the winter season until November and the return of brass band recitals, variety shows and ultimately, films. At no other Mount Morgan venue was the



Fig. 43. Skating and fancy dress in the open-air, Royal Rink, c.1918. Spectators crowd the skaters on the floor; others line the high side fence to Morgan Street.

diversity of amusements so marked as at the Royal Rink. By 1917, 'Rinking' was so popular that large crowds attended day and night sessions, where sports events included a mile handicap, beginner's race, barrel and wheelbarrow races for men, relay and potato races for women. A 'masquerade ball' featured masks available at the door and prizes for the best costume,⁷⁰ whilst a charity skating carnival held in June 1917 raised

⁶⁹ *MMA*, 30 July 1900.

⁷⁰ *MMC*, 12 May 1911.

funds towards the repatriation of returned soldiers. Competition was critical to the sport and male team players competed for selection in a 'roller-skating hockey team' for the first inter-town match against Rockhampton. The event was more successful than the first Central Queensland football match on skates played in the 1890s between two Rockhampton clubs at their Columbia Rink.⁷¹

From the outset, mine management influenced the popularity of some sports.⁷² Ronald Lawson has pointed out the class based appeal of recreation in Brisbane in the 1890s, and McEwen confirms a similar situation at Newcastle.⁷³ A self-styled elitism at Mount Morgan in the late 1880s - in essence still a canvas and bark town - saw the formation of the Mount Morgan Lawn Tennis Club. The court was near the river and within the section of the Company paddock that in later years, became the town sports ground.⁷⁴ However, animosity in a membership of *ten* caused 'the club's senile decay, if it was not become moribund' and for this reason, some merchants and a medical practitioner built courts at their residences.

By 1905, a self-appointed committee that moved for revival of the lawn tennis club included a police magistrate, the mine manager and a senior staff member, who formulated stringent rules for the harmony and progress of the association. Alice Richard, wife of the Company general manager donated a bench for spectators when women were among the twenty-three club members;⁷⁵ but research did not reveal whether women were members of the club, or, indeed, whether they were players. If so, press reports of tennis fixtures and competition did not refer to females.⁷⁶ In comparison, lawn tennis was the most popular sport at The Rockhampton Girls'

⁷¹ *MMC*, 6 July, 13 July, 3 August 1917.

⁷² Fred Cole, interview with the author 8 October 1992, MMOH; *MB*, 23 May 1935.

⁷³ Ronald L. Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s: a study of Australian urban society*, St. Lucia, 1973, pp. 194-206, cited in McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district*, p. 214.

⁷⁴ See Map no. 1, chapter 1. The area (centre left) of 'Newman Park' was the earliest recreation and sports location, initially named 'Playground', later 'Sportsground'.

⁷⁵ *MMA*, 20 July 1900.

⁷⁶ *MB*, 11 July 1909.

Grammar School by 1897.⁷⁷ At Mount Morgan, it was the forte of tennis club associates to organise fund raising social functions, for which their highly successful efforts were praised in the press.

The activity of manned glider flying highlighted status divisions while it emphasised the diversity of interests outside the workplace at the urban mining town. An aviation enthusiast who visited the Company in 1909 'infected' a group of engineering graduates with the desire to fly. They formed a gliding club and obtained a glider – a fabric covered wooden framework in which the 'underbody' comprised the lower limbs of the 'pilot'. He ran within the structure while the other club members ran ahead as fast as possible and towed the glider up-wind. Once the craft was off the ground - short flights achieved about 100 metres – the man within controlled elevation by moving his body backwards and forwards. Steering was impossible as the glider flew only against the wind. When staff changes at the mine dispersed members, the club collapsed and the glider hung, 'cobwebbed and rotting', beneath the mine staff quarters until demolition of the building in 1930. Meanwhile, a legacy of the gliding club encouraged interested Mount Morgan boys to make model aeroplanes. Prizes were awarded, and amongst the winners was the keenest model maker, Roderick Stanley Dallas, the son of an underground shift boss at the mine. Young Dallas made models and studied all the literature he could acquire through Jens Lundager, local bookseller and newspaperman.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Betty Cosgrove, *The wider view: a social history of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar school*, Brisbane, 1992, p. 219.

⁷⁸ B.G. Patterson, Mount Morgan gliding club, typescript, c. 1950, p. 2, MMHM.

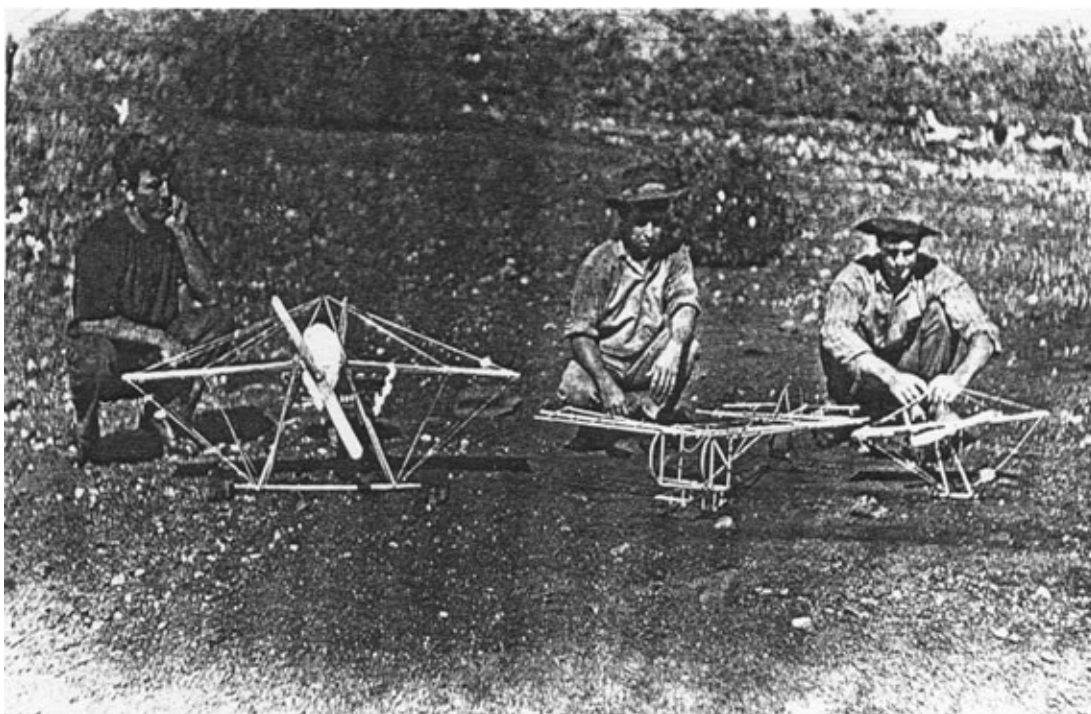


Fig. 44. Stephen Dallas and others with model aircraft at Mount Morgan quarry, Iron Island, Shoalwater Bay, Central Queensland, c.1915.

Dallas studied chemistry and mechanical drawing at the technical college and followed his father to work at the mine. However, Stanley Dallas joined the staff at the assay office, and subsequently went to the Company's ironstone quarry operation on Iron

Island in Shoalwater Bay, north of Rockhampton, where he continued to make flying models and to study aeronautics. His opportunity to fly came when recruits were sought for the Royal Air Force formed in Britain during World War I. Dallas paid his own travel cost to England, applied to join the new force and was accepted. The career of Flight Commander Stanley Dallas, DSO and Bar, DSC and Croix de Guerre ended with his death in an air battle over a foreign field in June 1918.⁷⁹ However, rather than dedication to King and country, his chosen life path suggests an obsession with flying, for which he was prepared to go to war. Whilst his name and exploits moved into Australian service history, they became part of the Mount Morgan collage of deeds that became local legend. At the Mount Morgan state primary school, generations of pupils

⁷⁹ Rob Ogilvie, *The best days of your life: a centenary magazine for the state schools of Mt. Morgan Shire*, Rockhampton, 1987, pp. 47, 48.

learned of Stanley Dallas, pilot and national hero, his name etched in gold leaf on the school's WWI honour board.

The threat to Mount Morgan life included catastrophe in leisure pursuits. The number of adults and children who drowned at Mount Morgan as elsewhere emphasised the hazards of local watercourses and dams. Dressing sheds constructed at a mine dam on the Dee River in the 1890s were destroyed by flood within a few years, but Council constructed concrete swimming baths in 1905 near the site of the destroyed sheds.⁸⁰ The baths were filled only after prolonged negotiation with mine management for the provision of water from the Big Dam. Dependence on the mine for assistance with leisure facilities confirmed Company paternalism but, as pointed out in chapter two, such paternalism was as selective as it was infrequent. Women swam at the Mount Morgan Amateur Swim Club Baths, a complex enclosed within a high iron fence and where small dressing cubicles surrounded the pool.⁸¹ Comparative privacy at the pool encouraged women to use the facility and join the Ladies' Swimming Club. At a carnival in the first year of operation, women's swimming races provided prizes of 10s. 6d. per event, a substantial amount that exceeded the weekly wage of a shop assistant. On that occasion, the all-male committee, led by Mayor Jens Lundager, insisted that in the interests of unbiased results, the judge should be a Rockhampton male, but it is not known if official integrity was perpetual.

The local baths remained popular but the Big Dam was the place for picnics and gatherings and was the local resort in the long, hot summers. A vast water storage for the mine, but presenting the fresh, cool beauty of a lake, the Dam was suited to supervised boating, but some races were arranged privately and in a spirit of derring-do, for example, one was advertised as an:

Aquatic Event Extraordinary

⁸⁰ *MB*, 14 November 1905.

⁸¹ *MB*, 26 October 1905.

At the Big Dam on Saturday night next, at eight sharp, moon permitting, pair-oared with cox race, catch boats: the 'Barnacle' Crew, versus the 'Deadbeat' crew, straight course if possible, 250 yards, for a case of wet stuff, one to win. Betting: 6 to 4 on 'Deadbeat'.⁸²

If the public image of the Big Dam environment was one of tranquil beauty and space for leisure pursuits, a dark side to the place was ever present. Accidental drowning was a constant hazard and at least one phthisis sufferer suicided from the bank. Moreover,



Fig. 45. No. 7 Dam, 1905, J.H. Lundager photo, series 4. Posed figures, children above the Dam. Others near the boat sit on the wall, some stand at the base.

swirling currents at the wall of the Dam were so strong that small boats might be swamped. If the water level of the Dam was below the wall, the occupants might drown, or if the Dam was full, they might be swept over the wall to the rocks below. Mishaps also occurred on waterways anywhere, whether at favoured places for picnics

⁸² *Critic*, 15 September 1911.

and swimming, like Black Snake Falls, or waterholes in the creeks of the town hinterland.

Some cycled to the Big Dam, other places of interest and to work. A mode of transport that proliferated in outer London in the later nineteenth century, cycling was popularised at Mount Morgan by 1903 when the Rockhampton Red Bird Riders visited the mountain town. Their ride was a feat characteristic of its time, but a test of endurance rather than cycling expertise, considering the track and the Razorback.⁸³ The



Fig. 46. Black Snake Falls, Mount Morgan, 1919.

event prompted formation of a cycling club in the mining town, but the Mount Morgan terrain was not conducive to a large scale cycling, sales enterprise or, indeed, the extended life of a bicycle. Whilst Rockhampton, in its location on the wide flats of the Fitzroy River, became and remained a bicycle town, cycling enthusiasts at Mount Morgan competed at sporting carnivals held at the Union grounds on the riverbank.

⁸³ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

McEwen suggests that for the Newcastle working class, cricket and Rugby were the mainstay sports.⁸⁴ Their universal appeal also ensured they became and remained the major sports at Mount Morgan. Doubtless, the hundreds of players involved included many miners, underground and surface workers, town employees and players from the emergent mining settlement of Mount Usher that was to the east across the Dee Range. The suburb of Baree, its character reminiscent of the clannish community of a British village,⁸⁵ fielded teams independent of the town.

At least eleven cricket teams played at Mount Morgan, while representative teams of seniors and juniors provided constant challenges to Rockhampton and other centres. One oval did not suffice for the multiplicity of teams, and many played where space was available. The earliest and best cricket pitch was on Burke's Flat, a location described in chapter one, and which was absorbed by the 1900s into the mine tailings area. Land on

<u>Senior</u>
Roman Catholic Young Men
Lower Works and Town
Linda
Mundic and West Works
Baree
Mount Usher
<u>Junior</u>
Mundic Works
Lower Works and Town
Mountain Top
Mundic West and Copper
Lower Works and Town
Mount Morgan
Rechabites
Roman Catholic Young Men ⁸⁶

Table 8. Cricket Teams, Mount Morgan and district, 1905.

⁸⁴ McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district*, pp. 216-218. The amateur game 'Rugby', played in New South Wales by 1829, was known as 'Union' from 1874. The game of Rugby 'League' for paid players emerged in 1908, but was not played in Mount Morgan before 1911.

⁸⁵ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1991, p. 448.

⁸⁶ *MB*, 14 November 1905.

the river flat at the north end of the Company paddock became the main pitch, but a further difficulty arose with the survey for the proposed Dawson Valley railway from the town. The Mount Morgan Cricket Association wrote the Railways Department, urging that the railway should use the Company siding into the Lower Yard and join the line at Mundic Creek.⁸⁷ The Railways response was polite if pithy, pointing out to the cricketers that the deviation they suggested would completely spoil the new rail line.

From the outset, Rugby dominated Mount Morgan contact sport. Numerous teams of mineworkers played in matches arranged between different departments and Works. Typically also, teams including Wests, Easts, Mine, Town, Central and Baree fielded senior, junior and minor grades. The number of teams and the range of age categories typified family involvement,

Dad was not very big, but very quick. He was a great footballer, he was of a great football family, all the nine boys in the family played football, and all played in different teams.⁸⁸

The demanding and irregular lifestyle of mine shiftwork was a major hindrance to sporting participation for many in various sections of the mine, especially for underground workers. Some tradesmen were required to work night shift also, and might do so throughout their working life.⁸⁹ Shift workers' hours decreed that they were unavailable for regular training sessions or selection for club or representative teams. To overcome a sense of exclusion, workers on particular shifts formed teams. When members were available, they played against shift teams from other sections of the Works. They were not involved in local Union fixtures, but matches between shift teams were closely fought and included 'Flamanck's Shift versus Dibdin's Mundic Works shift', and W. Franklin's Shift versus P. Dallas' shift. Teams, also selected from groups of 'Possibles' and 'Probables', were played for a trophy of fifteen gallons of beer

⁸⁷ Patterson, 'Notes on sport at Mount Morgan', p. 4.

⁸⁸ Elaine Millers, interview with the author, 10 December 1992, MMOH.

⁸⁹ James Leigh, interview with the author, 15 September 1992, MMOH.

and three dozen soft drinks.⁹⁰ The camaraderie of underground workers who had slight opportunity to play sport with other than workmates confirmed a compulsory insularity. Their games benefited players at the physical level rather than social interaction with and against players from outside the immediate workplace, or indeed, other towns.

Dissension between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton was traditional in their sporting competition. The Rockhampton press criticised the Mount Morgan Rugby Union for seeking permission from Brisbane Rugby authorities to send a team to Brisbane 'on their little own' for the Country Week Competition instead of a Central District representative team. The indignant response of the Mount Morgan Rugby Union and criticism in a flow of letters through the press were reflected in a typical statement: 'infernally cheek...adds insult to injury and only goes to show the extent of hatred and bias' that reflected the simmering animosity between the clubs:

Why two towns, distant only twenty six miles from each other, are not on friendly sporting relations is a mystery to us...This is a matter that requires probing to the very core. Friendly rivalry between sister towns is always conducive to the progress of any sport, but when one town has the other 'set', as has been represented to us, then the sooner those responsible for such a state of affairs are brought to their senses the better.⁹¹

The open antagonism evident in 1903 remained unsettled and the towns' entrenched rivalry marred representative games.⁹² Fights and abuse between spectators and also between players occurred at almost every inter-town match until by 1907, although Mount Morgan won almost every game that year, few supporters travelled to Rockhampton with the team.⁹³

In addition to the proliferation of competition in town and against Rockhampton, challenges between Central Queensland teams and other centres as far distant as

⁹⁰ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

⁹¹ *Critic*, 2 May 1903.

⁹² *MMC*, 8 June 1906.

⁹³ *Critic*, 26 July 1907.

Brisbane, Toowoomba and Charters Towers were seasonal events. The Rockhampton Rugby Union arranged a match in 1906 against Toowoomba - a team flushed with a recent victory over New South Wales. Mount Morgan players were selected also and the local press claimed that the Central Queensland combined team was expected to 'cause the good old paying public to look up and take more notice'. However, the Rockhampton press declared tartly that a purely Rockhampton side could 'put the acid' on Toowoomba. The south Queensland visitors came to Mount Morgan subsequently, arriving to an official reception at the Calliungal Hotel, where Mayor Jens Lundager chaired the function. The press named local bourgeoisie who were present, but the players received no press coverage.⁹⁴

A Mount Morgan by-law prohibited Rugby matches on the 'dreadful "Victorian" Sabbath' but at Baree, 'only a bracing walk from the Mount' the Union game that was played in 1911 on the Sunday after Christmas drew a spectator crowd of about 800.⁹⁵ Significantly, since the 1909 changes to town boundaries, Baree was just within the boundary of the Calliungal Shire, where football was played on Sundays. The shire itself was predominantly rural with scattered populations and small settlements to which municipal by-laws were not applied. However, whilst the authority of a Mount Morgan by-law was skirted on occasion, it seems fielding of rugby teams at the height of the sub-tropical summer drew no comment or criticism.

Social interaction occurred in leisure gatherings and general sport. Programmes varied to accommodate patrons expected to attend a particular celebration. For example, at the Friendly Societies Sports Day at the Big Dam, six lodges fielded rugby teams to play matches of ten minutes each way, while twenty-five other field and water

⁹⁴ *MMC*, 8 June 1906.

⁹⁵ *Critic*, 12 July 1907, 28 December 1911.

Sports Carnival!

UNION GROUNDS, MT. MORGAN,
Monday, May 4th, 1925.

DAY AND NIGHT.

£120 Pedestrian and Cycling Events £120

PEDESTRIAN EVENTS:

1. **LABOUR DAY HANDICAP, £40, 130 yards.**
First prize, £30; second prize, £7; third prize, £3. Nomination, 8/-; Acceptance, 4/-
 2. **MOUNT MORGAN HANDICAP, £15, 100 yards.**
First prize, £10; second prize, £3; third prize, £2. Nomination, 3/6; Acceptance, 2/-
 3. **UNION HANDICAP, £10, 220 yards.**
First prize, £7; second prize, £2; third prize, £1. Nomination, 2/6; Acceptance, 1/6
 4. **SPRINT HANDICAP, £10, 75 yards.**
First prize, £7; second prize, £2; third prize, £1. Nomination, 2/6; Acceptance, 1/6
 5. **NOVICE HANDICAP, £5, 75 yards.**
First prize, £3; second prize, £1/10/-; third prize, 10/-. Nomination, 1/6; Acceptance, 1/6
- Peds. may nominate for all Events for 15/- and accept for 7/6**

CYCLING EVENTS (Amateur):

6. **MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £20.**
First prize, trophy value £15; second, trophy value £4; third, trophy value £1. Nomination, 10/-
 7. **ONE AND A-HALF MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £12.**
First prize, trophy value £8; second, trophy value £3; third, trophy £1. Nomination, 6/-
 8. **HALF-MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £8.**
First prize, trophy value £5; second, trophy value £2; third, trophy £1. Nomination, 4/-
- Cyclists may nominate for all Events for 17/6.**

NOTE.—The Cycling Track has been banked and put in first-class racing order.

Affiliated with Central Queensland Athletic League.

NOMINATIONS for Pedestrian Events close on SATURDAY, 18th APRIL, with E. J. Chick, G. A. Thomas, S. Phillips, W. Currin, C. Bull, and the Secretaries. Handicaps declared 22nd April; Acceptances close MONDAY, 27th April.

Nominations for Cycling Events close on SATURDAY, 25th April, with R. Semple, Rockhampton, T. Sunner, Mount Morgan, and the Secretaries.

The Committee reserve the right to postpone the Carnival in the event of wet weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR!

Minor Events Quoit Handicap Field Games Dancing Events

DANCING ON THE GREEN SIDE SHOWS CONFETTI BATTLE

PUBLICAN'S BOOTH REFRESHMENT STALLS LUNCHEON ON GROUND

Grounds Lighted by Electricity at Night. Special Trains to and from Baralaba and Rockhampton

BRASS BAND IN ATTENDANCE C. HEISER'S ORCHESTRA

Procession leaves Girls' School at 9 a.m. Sports start at 10.30 a.m.

ADMISSION—Day Session, 1/1; Night Session, 1/1 (inc. tax); Grandstand, 1/- extra. Children, Half-price

[SEE OTHER SIDE FOR
ENTRY FORM.]

A. ROWLEY, } Joint Hon. Secretaries,
ROY SELLARS, } Mount Morgan.

Mount Morgan Chronicle Print

Fig. 47. Advertising leaflet for Labour Day Sports at Mount Morgan, 1925.

events on the programme included running, swimming, sailing, boating and diving. In high moral tone, the societies' organising committee asserted that the sports were not

devised for the 'boldest and the strongest' but for participants to exercise 'judgment and sagacity'.⁹⁶ Hints of earlier influence of benefit societies and lodges in Labor ideology was evident in the disciplined organisation of the Eight-Hour Day Union sports, stipulating all nominations must be lodged on the due date, on forms provided and with appropriate fees. Pedestrian events were to Mount Morgan Athletic League Rules, 'naval and military' events to 'decided' rules, and the local sports committee directed school, horse, and wood chopping events.⁹⁷

The politicising of sport saw the Labor Day carnival in May 1925 conducted at a time when local industrial relations were abysmal. The town upheld the traditions of the wider society where celebrations continued irrespective of circumstances. On the Mount Morgan stage where 'life must go on', many *would* afford the carnival, not only for fun, but to also participate in events in the hope of prize monies more than in the name of sport. Thus, the celebrations preserved a local image that defied the reality of escalating poverty.

By 1927, the Company in liquidation left a town almost devoid of employment and in mental anguish for which a panacea of sorts was enforced leisure. The press declared that the closed doors of failed enterprises confirmed the suggestion that traders had gone 'possum shooting.' Perhaps this activity was for financial gain rather than leisure. Theatres closed until only the Olympia remained, and the dwindling population organised social gatherings and functions at the School of Arts, albeit with much reduced patronage or financial support.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *DR*, 11 September 1908.

⁹⁷ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁹⁸ *DR*, 22 October 1927.

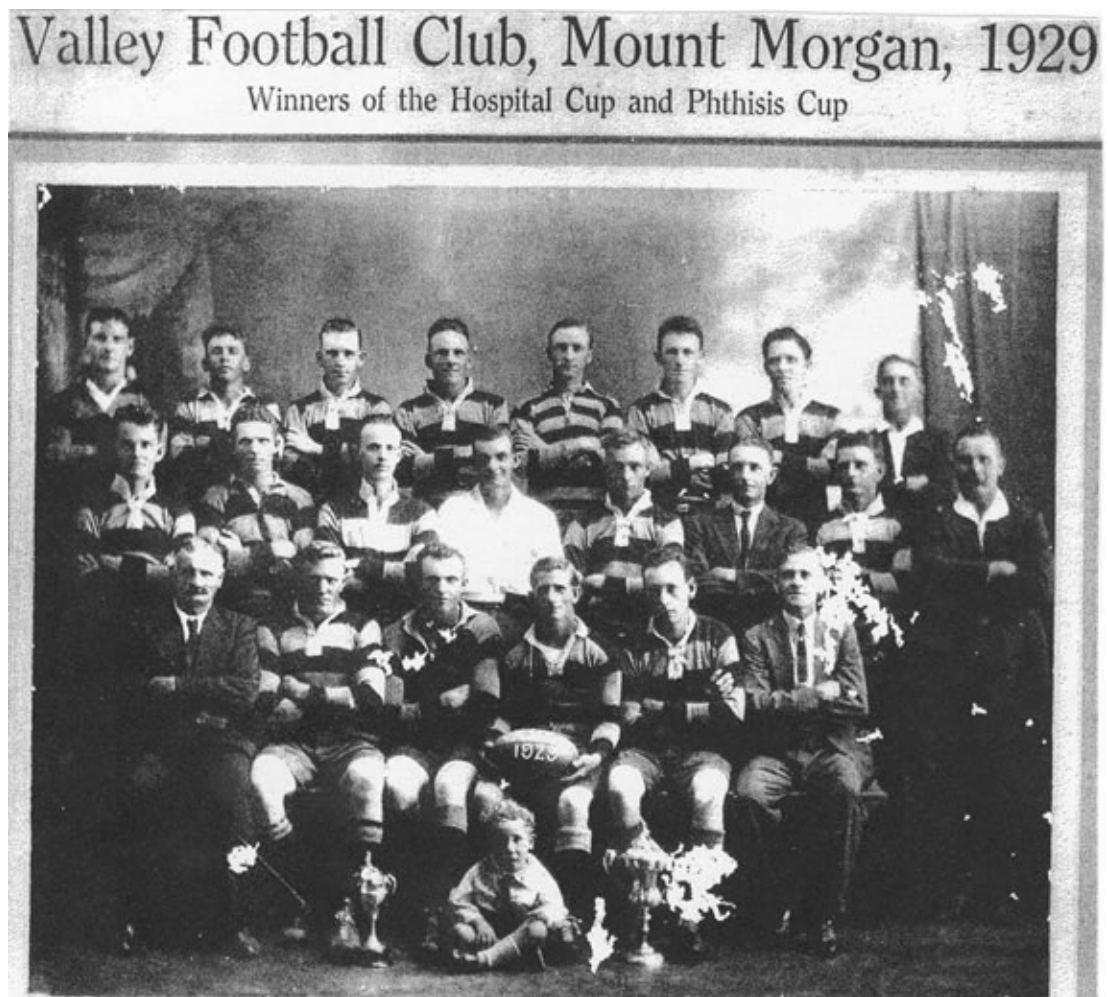


Fig. 48. Mount Morgan, 1929. The Hospital Cup and The Phthisis Cup, 1929.

Whilst organised sporting events were fewer now, local Rugby teams vied for the Hospital Cup and The Phthisis Cup, the trophies ironic memorials to workers sacrificed in an occupation devised by capitalism. Similarly, in this once vigorous 'man's town', the social support systems of those who remained perpetuated the slowed heartbeat of a place that hoped for material resurrection of a once omnipresent mine.

Conclusion

In exploring the dichotomies of life at Mount Morgan this thesis has sought to discover the local blanketing of realities that created an attractive image of the town. Such investigation required an attempt to comprehend an innate local pride in place and community rather than in the space that was an ugly townscape. Mount Morgan was not simply an area of used land, or necessarily a resident's birthplace. It was a place of human endeavour and survival, the comfort of mateship, social and familial bondage in networks of association or kin, and the reassurance of natural and fabricated landmarks, memorials and a definitive local lore.

The background to this work reveals a profile of Aboriginal habitation and dispossession in the area studied. The thesis includes a brief discussion of indigenous settlement from the late nineteenth century in the hinterland south of Mount Morgan, where at least than six families at Crows Nest, Box Flat, Wura and Walmul shared a mixed heritage of Aboriginal and European or Malay.

The thesis argues that Mount Morgan was not a 'typical' mining town. Some mining towns were 'different' rather than 'typical'; perhaps distinctly urban places and supporting many individual mines, others became company towns, but Mount Morgan was a town established for a single company mine. An instant mining population provided the seeds of an urban, working-class town character. Over years, native-born and European immigrants imprinted their culture on emergent Mount Morgan tradition and mores, and through employment, domestic and social hegemony, nurtured an essence of their former place. Moreover, in newspapers and mail from the south or

'Home', native-born and immigrants retained a cultural dependence on their own heritage.¹

Most significant to the thesis was an attempt to collapse time to understand the attitudes, action and dialogue and at times, denouement in the play of Mount Morgan life. The people of Mount Morgan were at once actors and victims, whether their stage was the mine, the town centre, or village-suburbs. Disparate characters provided the cast for a holistic schema set against the perennial backdrop of a devastated environment. Timbercutting and pollution of waterways at Mount Morgan was rampant by 1900, transforming a landscape where a few decades earlier, Aboriginal campsites of the Gangulu and Balili might locate near territorial boundaries on the Dee River.²

Within thirty years, pollution of the river and its tributaries was a fact of Mount Morgan life. Unsanitary conditions were similar in any urban development of the 1880s, but for each place, the problem was singularly critical. At Mount Morgan, the real problems of hygiene and disease and consequential detriment to health in a place deprived of reticulated water challenged an outside image of the Company - implanted by the board and management - that amenities were provided for the town. The high incidence of infectious disease in town was inexorably linked to the devastation of natural waterways, a problem that assumed psychological significance for many residents. In comparison with settlements that had poor natural water; this town was settled on the banks of the river. Residents were aware that the Company's numerous dams limited water flow, and that less than two kilometres north-east of the town and up-river from the mine, the huge No. 7. Dam across the Dee had the proportions of a vast, freshwater lake set in a natural environment. Yet, management provided several small diameter standpipes in the town as a mere token water supply. Other mining

¹ George Haswell, *A Tyneside worthy*, 1896, typescript, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library.

² William Toby, interview, 9 May 1993, Mount Morgan Oral History (MMOH).

towns suffered similarly in receiving only slight benefit from capitalist operations, but at Mount Morgan, the cavalier attitude rather than the paternalism claimed by management towards miners and their well being caused simmering if guarded town resentment.

The bourgeois materialism of the mine directors, management and outsiders ignored the lack-lustre existence of the mining town. Board, shareholders and management promoted the golden image of Mount Morgan, while hundreds of miners were as ants toiling in and out great underground chambers to dig vast tonnages of ore amid the dust, grime and smoke that polluted and obscured the town. However neither miners nor town received financial benefit from the wealth in ingots transported under escort directly from the mine to the port of Rockhampton and beyond. As the largest regional centre outside Brisbane, Rockhampton was also in close proximity to Mount Morgan, with the resultant if typical social dissension between the towns.

The physical facade of Mount Morgan was not of iron walled cottages, the prolonged use of bark dwellings, miners' dugouts or stone terraces. Mount Morgan became a timber town and progressively, boasted miners' cottages of varying sizes, and later, the 'high-set' dwelling.³ This was not to be confused with the larger verandahed Queenslander, some examples of which at Mount Morgan survive or remain sharp in memory. For this working class town, polarisation of housing style reflected urban characteristics. Petty bourgeoisie at Mount Morgan perceived their living standards as superior to working class and many denied knowledge of or contact with the original settlement area of Tipperary Point, a location seen as the social equivalent to the remnant of any early settlement. Thus, Mount Morgan was a microcosm of the large urban city.⁴

³ Peter Bell, *Timber and iron, houses in North Queensland mining settlements*, St. Lucia, 1984, p. 113.

⁴ Graeme Davison, *The rise and fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne'*, Melbourne, 1978, pp. 238, 239.

Near the centre of town was the capitalist icon Carlton House, a Company mansion that proclaimed wealth and power in its quality architecture and lavish functions provided for visiting dignitaries from vice-regal personages to Anglican bishops and shareholders. The town was excluded from the place, but locals assumed status from its prestigious image. Company residences constructed on the mine range across the river and in town were for upper management and some senior staff. As a group apart from miners and townspeople, management from the general manager to lower staff occupied residences at moderate rents and on a scale of size and quality that defined status in the Company. These circumstances that shaped existence and occurred in the shadow of the mine engendered staff obligation, while the board that perceived a limited life for the mine had no interest in the future of the town or its people. By 1927, the Company in liquidation offered for sale no less than 17 houses previously occupied by staff⁵, while the town lost claim to an image of vice-regal patronage when Carlton House was sold and removed.

Women maintained social morality and were the spindle of family life. The division of labour was as marked as elsewhere, and women had a measure of control within the 'cult of domesticity'. In suburban communities, or perhaps streets, social networks of local women monitored the conduct of neighbourhood residents.⁶ Suspect attitudes and behaviour challenged moral standards and reputations suffered in the name of respectability. Although women engaged in outside work as waged employees who included a limited number of mine office employees by the 1920s few local women were unionists or politically active.⁷ Those who were union members were domestics and hotel workers, shop assistants and clothing workroom employees.⁸ Women engaged in private enterprise from preference or necessity, but their efforts did not bring upward mobility, a situation this thesis contends was exacerbated by the

⁵ Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, Liquidation list, 1929, R.F. Boyle private papers.

⁶ Shani D'Cruze and Jean Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family: Oddfellows' lodges in Preston and Lancaster c.1830-c.1890', *Urban History*, vol. 22, pt, 1, May 1995 p. 41.

⁷ *MB*, 31 October 1905.

⁸ Australian Workers' Union, Membership Rolls, Southern District, 1916-1928, Australian Workers' Union Archives, Bundaberg.

town's masculine 'presence'. Successful male traders and professionals took office on committees, community associations and in local authority. If, in the event, they acquired bourgeois status, this extended to their families.

Mount Morgan was a town for the thrill of contact sport, membership of fraternal and benefit associations, and the outpouring of spiritual faith. Moreover, residents existed to the regular timing of mine whistles and hooter blast, yet, on occasion, the sound that crossed every barrier - music - instrumental and choral, sacred or profane, drowned the thump of stampers and the scream of saws. Local lodges and societies that provided some relief in cash or kind in a pre-welfare era were a panacea for the fear of poverty, death or injury. The seeming anchor of membership might offer subsistence, but was a step higher than the destitution that threatened until legislation for unemployed workers' insurance and workers compensation provided a degree of financial relief. In terms of congregations, the Christian churches were typically polarised. The Anglican parish was substantial and Catholic obedience to the Mass complemented a sense of Irishness so strong that 'outsiders' avoided Tipperary Point on St. Patrick's Day.⁹ Whilst Methodist and Presbyterian churches maintained their influence and promoted Sabbath Schools, some Protestant churches struggled to increase traditionally small congregations whose zeal was undiminished by limited numbers.

Local government, the court of petty sessions, police and schools at Mount Morgan controlled, disciplined, and educated the town. Most residents lived within the boundaries of law and order, settling verbal argument by legal or court action. In the late nineteenth century, misdemeanour and crime relating to alcohol, physical violence and abuse, petty larceny and offences of moral turpitude demonstrated larrikin style. However, law enforcement typified a generally urban environment and most saw lawbreakers as the poor or under class, and the 'other' as including Chinese. Many

⁹ Ray Boyle, Interview 7 May 1993, MMOH.

Chinese were the town's market gardeners, their cultural difference prompting discrimination and their activities targeted frequently under law until the early 1900s. Oral reminiscences confirmed the notoriety of place where small dwellings and stores on small unsurveyed lots fronted narrow lanes where dwellings and stores were adjacent to saloons and hotels.¹⁰ Legal contracts and licensing provided court revenue, but this thesis suggests that in the 1890s, the ethics of some judgements within the walls of the court were lost to public comprehension. From the outset, charges of murder, embezzlement and moral crime heard initially at the Mount Morgan Court of Petty Sessions were decided by the higher authority of the Rockhampton District, Supreme and Circuit Courts, a system that aggravated inter-town dissension. Gold theft was a common crime in early Central Queensland, but from the 1890s, theft of gold at Mount Morgan mine was thwarted or generally overcome. Offenders were dealt with through the legal and economic power of a Company that assiduously avoided contact with the press, particularly in relation to any negative detail of the mine. At late as 1925, whilst some striking miners watched from their backyards as fire destroyed the underground workings, speculation abounded as to the source of the blaze. However, no official inquiry occurred, and no charges were laid.

Unlawful activity and crime at Mount Morgan did not abate through the early 1900s; rather, law legislation became more powerful and complex. The press was a monitor of town action and attitudes, at times adopting a high moral tone in assumption of a social guardianship role. Conversely, local journalism was litigious on occasion. Such assumed license in reportage against the under class and ethnic 'other' seemed to pass scrutiny, but astute town professionals had no compunction in challenging the press. Politicians and the press served the Company and their own interests. The general manager's public declaration in 1910 that the mine did not experience strikes or industrial conflict was misleading. The union movement gained strength at the mine

¹⁰ Gertrude Marcombe, interview, 4 March 1998, OH; Daphne McCabe, 10 September 1998, OH; *Queensland Government Gazette*, 2 January 1900, no. 1, vol. LXXIII, p. 109; Clerk of Petty Sessions Mount Morgan, Deposition Book, CPS 7B/P1, QSA.

from 1908, and a strike in 1912 was the forerunner of intermittent stoppages and union militancy that led to strikes. Management manipulation of the mine labour force to vote conservative was successful in some Queensland elections until 1915, when Labor won government and retained office for the remaining life of the Company. A local union organiser who gained the Mount Morgan seat for Labor, served the working class town through more than a decade of industrial conflict and unresolved bitterness.

The thesis acknowledges that with poor living conditions in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the 1900s, the loss of a breadwinner might spell disaster for any family. However, the high rate of death and injury from mine accident at Mount Morgan was an extreme occupational hazard. Multiple death from underground disaster shattered and halted the town and closed the mine. Quaint funeral posts that bore advertisements of forthcoming interments heralded the emotive theatre of the mass funeral and communal grief that unified town and mine.

For miners, the mateship that crossed social boundaries was intrinsic to their lifestyle until the threat to their economic base was realised each time the mine closed. The men did not proclaim their mateship, neither did they announce their hidden fears: of mine accident, or the slow, awful death from miner's phthisis, the insidious and terminal disease that hastened slowly. Although this malady was seemingly metamorphosed in the lingering demise of the Company, the nonchalant attitude of miners to safety and health issues was for many their own undoing. Yet, the threat of fatal accident that struck without warning was intrinsic to mining life, and, to all intents, 'they lived with it.'

I entered the cage for the Number Nine,
 A trucker paused at the brace to say,
 As he left the depths of the gloomy mine,
 'A man was killed in the mine today.'
 There is clatter and crash in the dusty stopes,
 As the rock drills dash at the good grey ore.
 There is labour and sweat, for the company hopes
 For a quote in the share-list of one point more.
 There is wealth to grasp: there are divs. to pay;

And what is a labourer more or less?
 'Mid the din and the clamour now who would guess
 That a man was killed in the mine today!¹¹
 'A man was killed at the mine today', 12 May 1907

Ironically, the men were instrumental in ultimate closure of the mine, many treating the industrial situation with larrikin confidence, a notion framed probably from years of management threat to close the mine. In the 1920s, the Company struggled to retain a dominant image, but increasingly, union led miners demonstrated solidarity and militancy. Now the actions of the men were the source of threat at the mine, which ultimately closed, leaving the labour force unemployed and unemployable locally:

Between the steps of the swinging bridge and the railway bridge, there was an acacia tree with an elevated rock nearby where men from the area gathered and played cards for matches. They had no money; a round cardboard box of wax matches then was one penny. And in the evening after sundown...in the late 1920s...men sat on either side of the bridge and told yarns.¹²

From the earliest years, the leisure experience embraced the town ethos, from the pivotal pastime of drinking alcohol to the intellectual stimulation of music, a plebian taste in theatre hall and film entertainment, and an obsession with outdoor sport. All these helped to ameliorate the soulless appearance of the place. Closure of the Company left the town services far below the customary disadvantages. Infrastructure became minimal with town post office, one bank, closure of most primary schools - and several churches. Many women found spiritual comfort in religion, fellowship in church societies, and some found social contact in a duty of care for charity and benefit associations. By 1927, unemployed females joined the domestic ranks of unseen family women, for whom daily work barely diminished. As mine women faced the closure of town stores, the end of gainful employment of the breadwinner that brought the threat of hunger for those without funds replaced the fear of mine accident. Yet, residents who

¹¹ Tom 'Crosscut' Wilson, *The Boulder and other verses*, Sorrento, WA, Hovea Press, 1997, p. 11.

¹² Colin Heberlein, interview, 21 October 1992, MMOH.

remained in the town of diminishing numbers clung with parochial fervour to an image of normality, a panacea of sorts for a town's misery.

The town would impress a visiting stranger as being at the height of prosperity. But quiet investigation - a talk to the grocer, baker, landlord - would reveal the supposed prosperity as a myth.¹³

Sport, local events at the School of Arts, one cinema and surviving hotels continued to provide outlets for enforced leisure as:

Balls, concerts, evenings, pictures, art unions, and trying to 'pick 'em' shows no sign of abatement at Mount Morgan, a town thought by the outside world to be on its deathbed.¹⁴

Spectacular scenes in the town included concerts, parades, funerals, bonfires and effigy burning, or perhaps carnivals at the Big Dam. However, no display compared with the phenomenon of a mine that never slept. For decades, people who used unlit roads and tracks at night moved to the incessant noise and rhythm of the mills, aware that across the river, miners were working deep underground. Moreover, the heaving mass of production in the name of wealth and progress provided Central Queensland's most dramatic display that was free to all: the lights of the mine and the fiery slag dumped perpetually at the end of a vast, ever expanding plateau of overburden which, when cold, set as a concrete symbol of a capitalist ethic:

The copper works at night were worth seeing, the dancing, leaping, rainbow-hued flames enough to thrill the heart. We loved to watch the red-hot molten slag being dumped. The little slag train would be silhouetted against the sky, moving slowly towards the slag heap, which had gradually extended far out from the slope down which the original slag had been tipped. The train would stop on the very edge and in a few moments, with a swishing, crackling noise, down would flow the slag making a hill of fire and lighting up the whole scene with a lurid glare. For a few seconds it was a wonderful, picturesque sight, then gradually the light would fade and back would go the little train for the next load.¹⁵

¹³ *Critic*, 1 November 1927.

¹⁴ *Critic*, 22 October 1927.

¹⁵ *Evening News*, 15 June 1927.

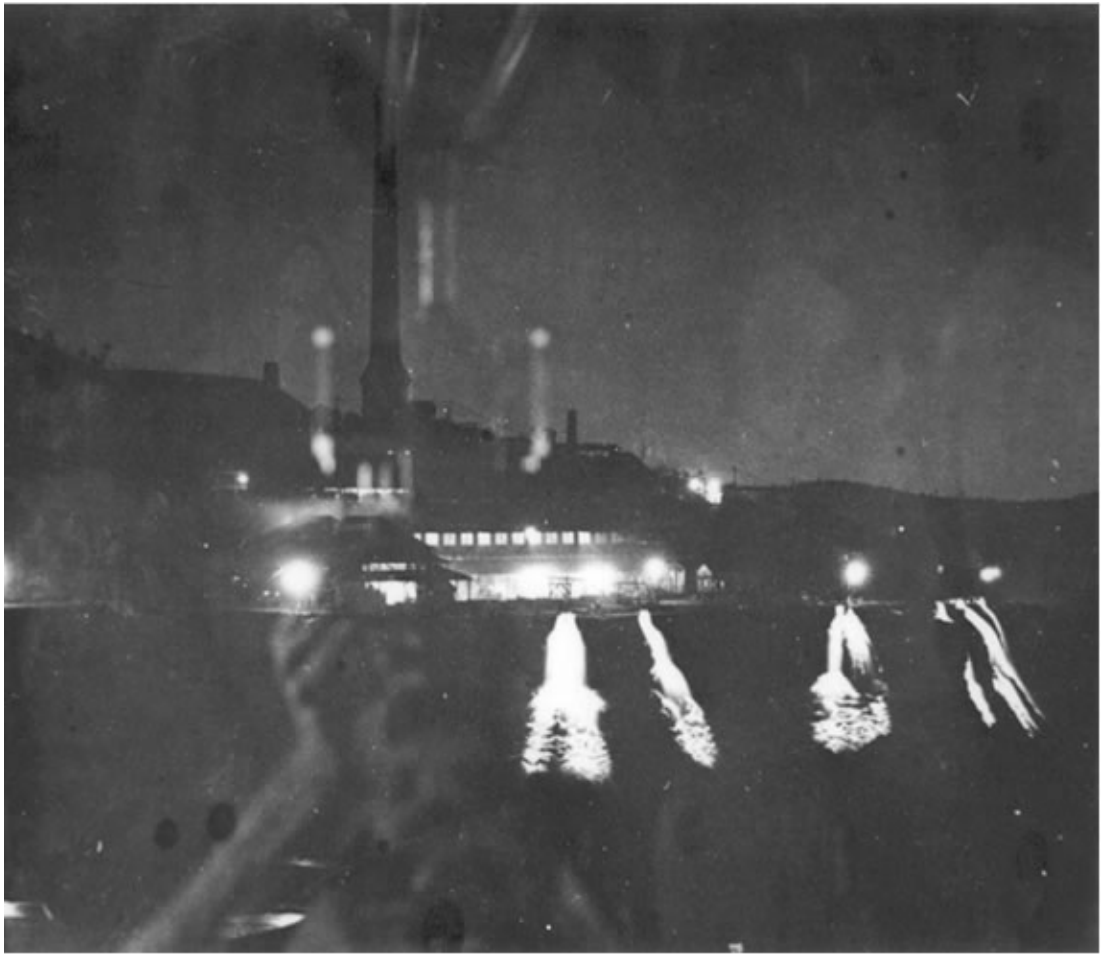


Fig. 49. Mount Morgan mine by moonlight, looking northwest from the town c. 1920. Molten slag pours over the edge of the vast dump.

In a metaphor of the dynamics of town life at Mount Morgan where public glare sank into the reality of grim oblivion, many preferred to remember the mine as the 'light' of an entire town, until the fires were drawn, the smelter closed, and the guttering flame of Mount Morgan, once a blaze of gold that turned copper red, was extinguished.

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Name	Date	
Location		
Arthur Barnham	24 April 1993	
Ray F. Boyle	September 1993	
Fred Cole	13 October 1992	
George Cunningham	10 December 1998	Author
Violet Daniels	4 November 1992	
Kevin Geddes	3 January 1999	Author
Vera Hayes	4 November 1992	
Colin Heberlein	21 October 1992	

Violet Heberlein	21 October 1992	
Kath Lamb	30 October 1992	
James Leigh	15 September 1992	
Stephen Little	17 September 1999	Author
Gertrude Marcombe	4 March 1998	Author
Daphne McCabe, (Sr.M.Felicitas R.S.M).	10 September 1998	Author
Elaine Millers	10 December 1992	
Lorna Moulds	29 July 1992	
Margaret O'Brien,	9 September 1992	
Albert Rowe	16 October 1992	
Charles Shannon	8 October 1992	
Charles and Marion Stratford	10 July 1992	
William Toby	9 May 1993	

Occasional Informants, not taped

Arthur Christmas, (curator, Mount Morgan Historical Museum)	1996, 1997	Author
Joanne Molloy, (Sr. Joanne, R.S.M.)	1999, 2000	Author
Barbara Webster	1999, 2000	Author

Interviews conducted by Carol Gistitin,
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Taffy Badham,	25 August 1992
Henry Stock	28 July 1989

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