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

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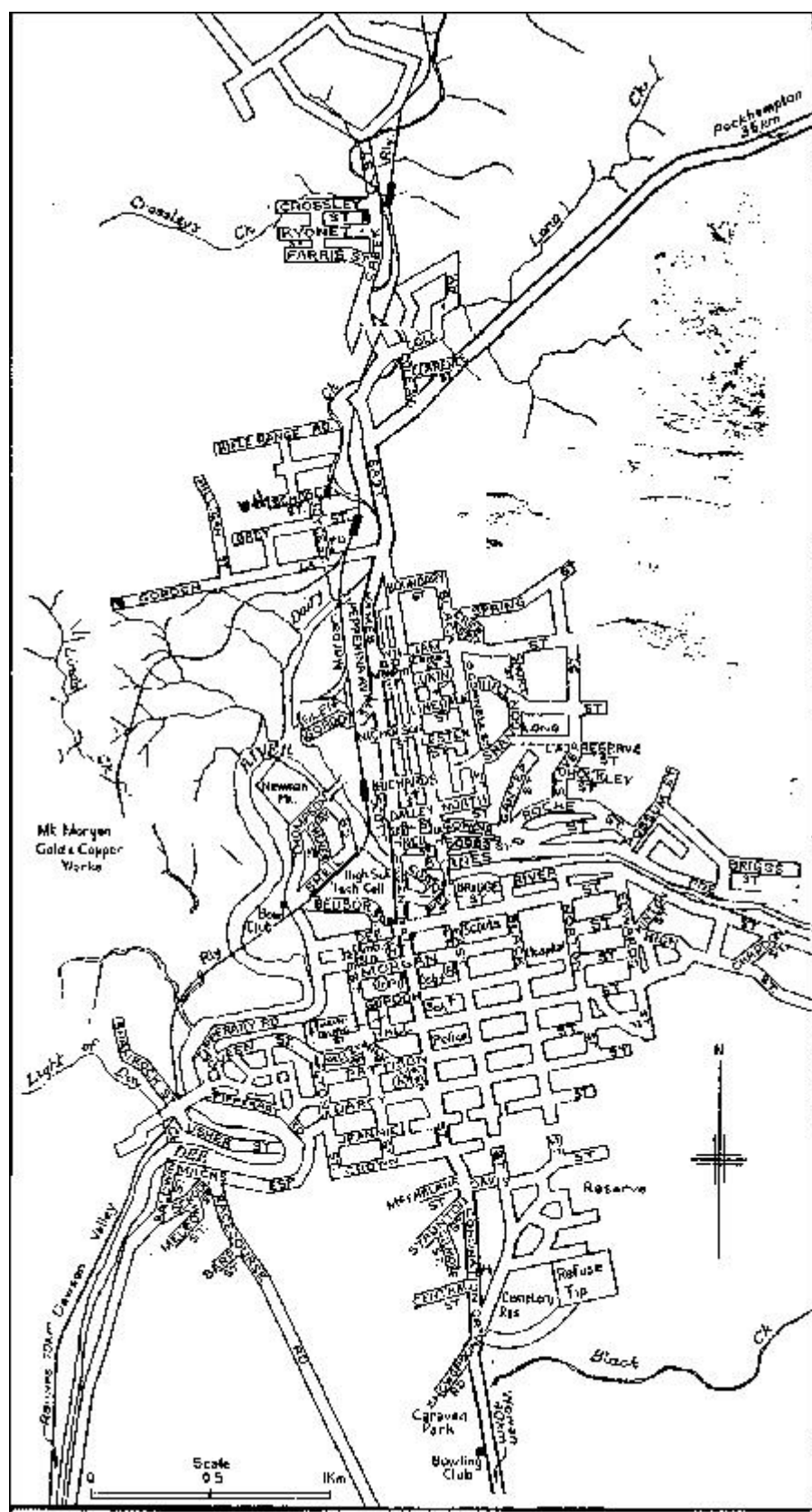
Map 1. Section of Mount Morgan street map, showing the separation of town and mine areas.
c. 1968.

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

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[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.

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[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

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[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

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[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 (neé 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 runs[20] 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

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[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

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[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 Dening suggests must 'belong to the stranger's eye' – culture[33] - 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.

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[33] Greg Dening, *Performances*, Melbourne, 1996, p. 57.
[34] See Map 2, p. 38.
[35] Council, Rate book, 1890, (MMSCA).
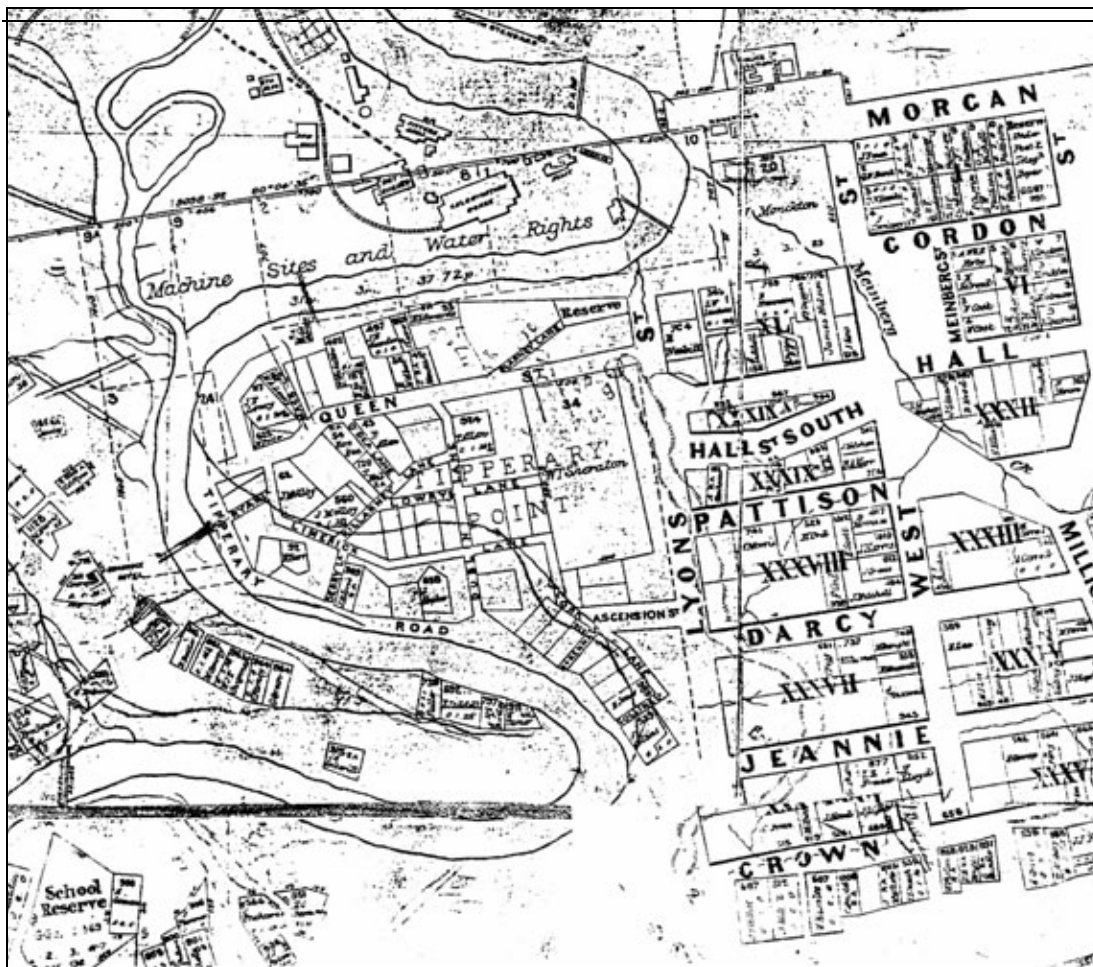
Map 2. Tipperary Point shows unsurveyed lots, lanes and Irish names. *Environs of Mount Morgan, Crocodile Creek Gold Field, Parish of Calliungal*, Brisbane, 1897.

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

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[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 Company[39] gradually moved through the hinterland to almost inaccessible locations in order to cut and haul timber.

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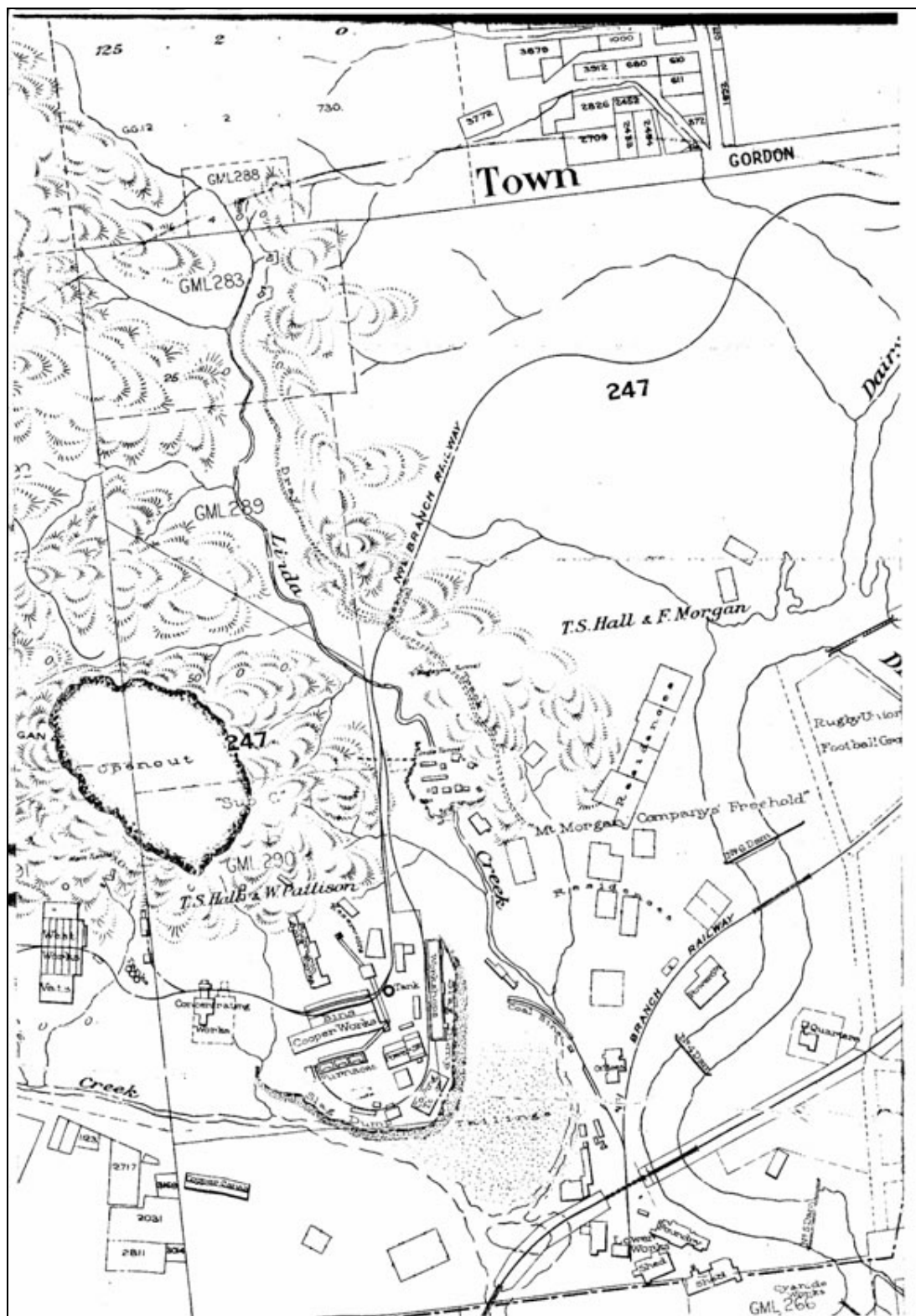
Map 3. Section shows the spread of tailings to Mundic Creek and Dee River, also three dams. Note Linda Tunnel on Linda Creek, also Company freehold with residences for management below the mine, and 'paddock' flat east of the river, showing staff quarters and sports ground.

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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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 flexibile 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.

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[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 1983, 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.

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[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

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65 MMGMC, Minutes, 18 December 1895, McDonald papers.
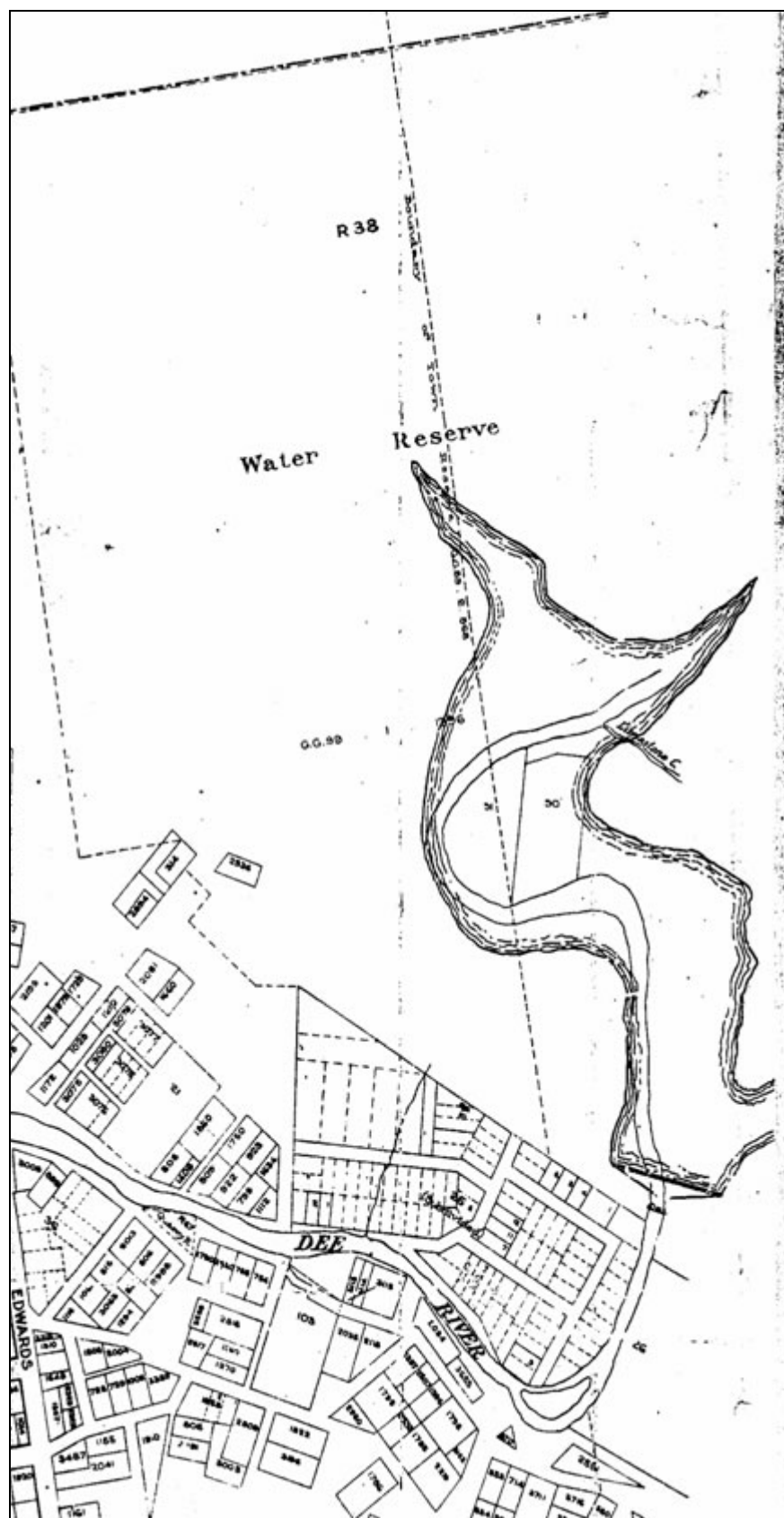
Map 4. This image (1914) shows No. 7 Dam completed by Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company in 1900. Location of the section of river and catchment area of the 'Big Dam', was within the east boundary of the town.

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

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[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

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[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.

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[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

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[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

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[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 engine[82] 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

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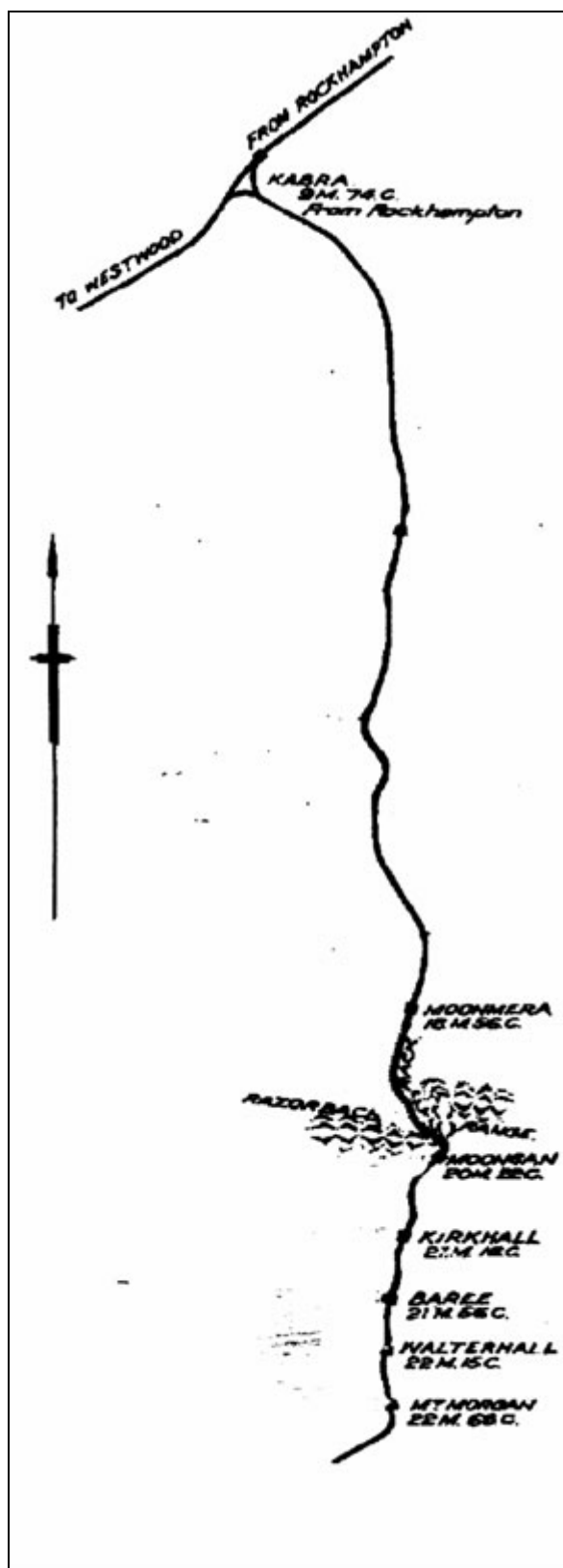
Map. 5 Kabra to Mount Morgan railway, opened 1898,
with stations at Moonmera and Moongan.

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

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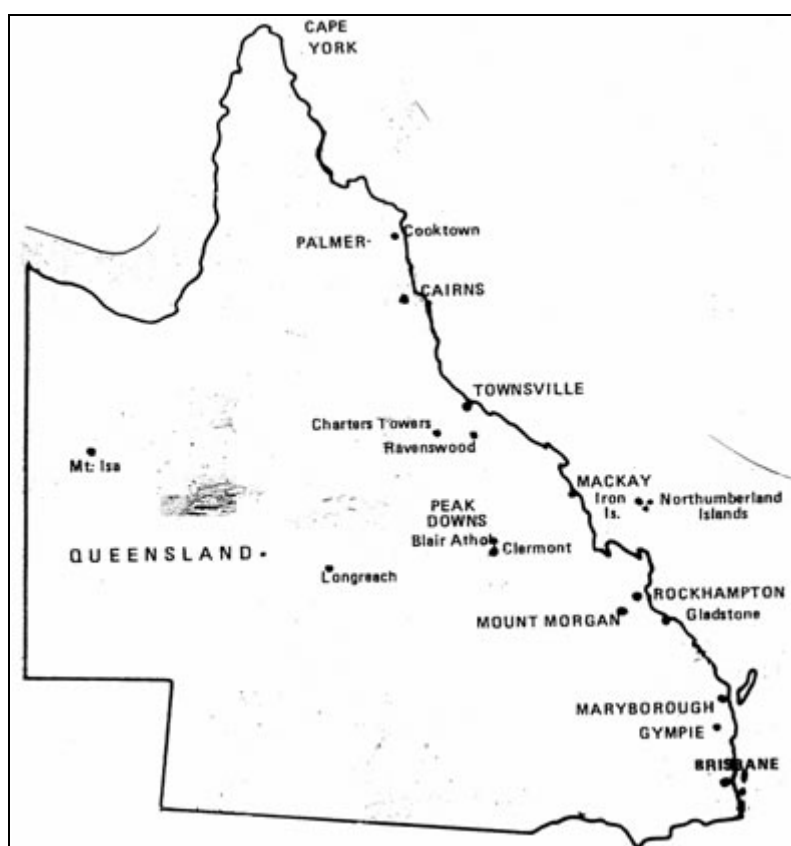
Map 6. Queensland outline shows major mining areas and the close proximity
of Mount Morgan to Rockhampton.

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'.

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