

## Chapter Two

### From mining camp to suburban neighbourhood: town development and local authority

The grass, the forerunner of life, has gone,  
But plants that spring in ruins and shards  
Attend until your dream is done;  
I have seen hemlock in your yards.<sup>1</sup>  
  'To ironfounders and others'  
  Gordon Bottomley.

As Mount Morgan town emerged, the locality reflected a physical landscape moulded to the economy of the people rather than their needs. Roads, buildings and gardens, public, private and commercial space characterised the relationship of people to their environment, while settlement size and urban scale were evident from town and suburban development. The abstract and concrete symbols of people and places that meshed with the challenges and change in local lifestyle provided the essence of Mount Morgan's urban biography.<sup>2</sup> Richard Rodger suggests this lively term for the history of place as a dynamic environment. In turn, urban biography reveals a town *mentalité*; an intangible but deeply rooted sense of identity that Michelle Vovelle suggests is 'the collective unconscious'.<sup>3</sup> The urban history of Mount Morgan provides major themes for this chapter that investigates attitudes in a population at once permanent and transient, also the influence of local authority and mine on town infrastructure, health and communications.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Caldwell, *The golden book of modern English poetry*, London, 1922, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Rodger, 'Urban history: prospect and retrospect', *Urban History*, vol. 19, part 2, 2 October 1992, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Michelle Vovelle, *Ideologies and mentalités*, Chicago, 1990, pp. 8, 9. *Mentalité*: 'in resistant memories the repository of a preserved identity, of intangible and deeply rooted structures, and the most authentic expression of collective temperaments - "in all of everything which is most valuable." In short, this is "the collective unconscious or imagination."'

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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'.<sup>6</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>6</sup> Diane Menghetti, *Charters Towers*, PhD thesis, James Cook University, 1984.

urban character, when 'service class'<sup>7</sup> 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'.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Mine management granted permission for a boarding house to be erected on mine land in 1885<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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

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<sup>7</sup> Mike Savage, 'Urban history and social class', p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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

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<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> Increased family size brought house extensions, usually to the rear elevation. Working-class owners customarily made the alterations with previously used material.<sup>15</sup>

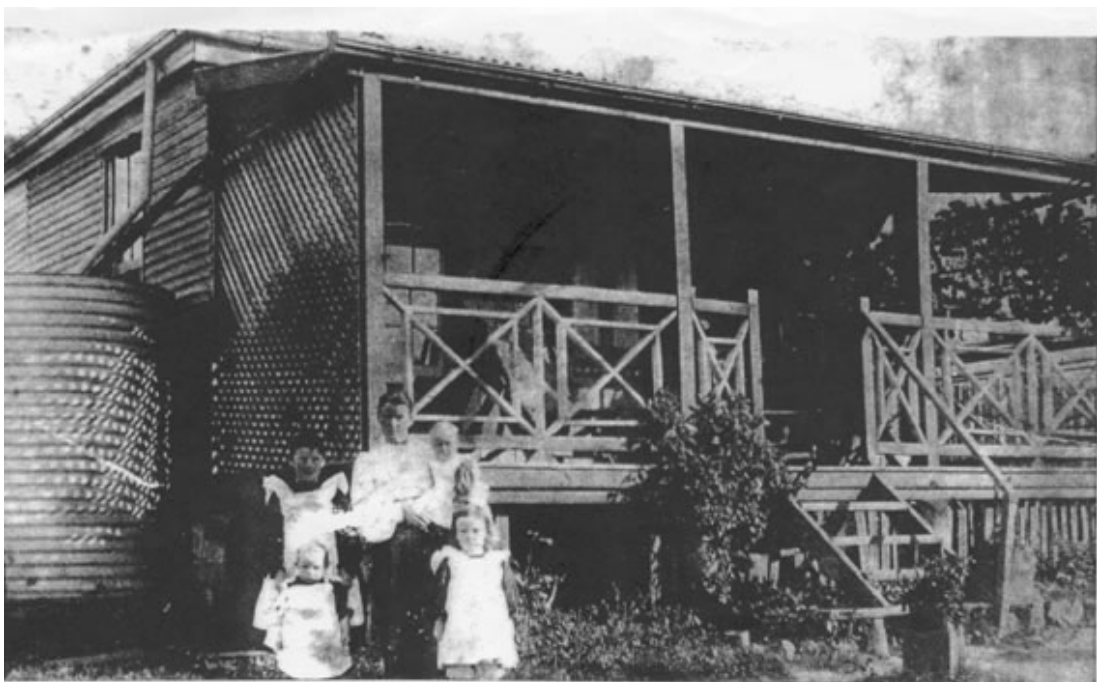


Fig. 3. Miner's family and cottage, note corrugated iron wall, lattice screen and in the ubiquitous style of the 1890s verandah railings of this design adorned houses, residences, hotels and the large office building at the mine.

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'.<sup>16</sup> Sale prices for houses varied more: a fenced, four

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

<sup>14</sup> 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.

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

<sup>16</sup> *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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.

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<sup>17</sup> *MMA*, 2 June 1900.

<sup>18</sup> *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 class<sup>19</sup> 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'.<sup>20</sup> 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-louved verandah of the residence was converted to a 'ballroom'.<sup>21</sup>

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

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<sup>19</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> Alec Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan*, Rockhampton, 1889, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *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'.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

However, members of senior staff and upper management at the mine were also employees and few were on high salaries.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> As such,

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

<sup>23</sup> Profiles of G.A. Richard and B. Magnus are included in chapter six.

<sup>24</sup> *MB*, 7 November 1908.

<sup>25</sup> Elaine Millers, interview with the author, 10 December 1992, MMOH.

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

<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup>

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 1878<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> However, the protocols of class dictated the enjoyment of comfort

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<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 404, 406.

<sup>30</sup> Carlton House, typescript, n.d., Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

<sup>31</sup> *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.<sup>32</sup>



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.<sup>33</sup> 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

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

<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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

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<sup>34</sup> Archer to Casey, 17 May 1912, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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 docket 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.<sup>37</sup>

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.

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

<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> Within the limited finances of Council, the Works Committee commanded the highest budget to construct and maintain 'roads' and bridges.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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-

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

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

<sup>40</sup> 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'.<sup>41</sup>



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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 149.

<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> *MB*, 36 May 1993.

<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

The prevalence of disease in any settlement, new or old, might be endemic. In Brisbane,<sup>48</sup> 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,<sup>49</sup> 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,<sup>50</sup> 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:

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<sup>46</sup> *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.

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

<sup>48</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 118.

<sup>49</sup> Davison, *Marvellous Melbourne*, p. 233.

<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup>

By comparison, Mount Morgan was a place where gold retrieved by a monopolist employer passed by and away from the town.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup> 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

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<sup>51</sup> Davitt, *Life and progression in Australia*, pp. 257, 258.

<sup>52</sup> McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 321.

<sup>53</sup> Davitt, *Life and progression in Australia*, pp. 266, 267.

<sup>54</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 122-124.

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

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.<sup>56</sup>

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.<sup>57</sup>

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

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<sup>55</sup> 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.

<sup>56</sup> Council, Works Department, Minutes, 22 February 1915, MMSCA.

<sup>57</sup> *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

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

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.<sup>61</sup> Fifteen Chinese stores and four market gardens operated to provide almost all the fruit and vegetables for the town and district,<sup>62</sup> 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

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<sup>58</sup> Council, S&HC, Minutes, 20 September 1917, 13 May 1924, MMSCA.

<sup>59</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and spoilers*, p. 63.

<sup>60</sup> *MB*, 14 July 1909; Council, S&HC, Minutes, 11 November 1913, MMSCA.

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

<sup>62</sup> *Slater's Almanac*, Brisbane, 1899.

admirably to draw off all the impurities from the premises' begged the question of pollution of surrounding areas.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> The xenophobia typical of Europeans<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> Connell and Irving suggest that municipal council elections reflected a working-class mobilisation that challenged commercial domination of local authority.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup> 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

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<sup>63</sup> S.J. Richard to Council, 23 April 1900, Inward correspondence, MMSCA.

<sup>64</sup> *Critic*, 23 September 1908.

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

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

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

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

from voting in the perceived interests of constituents.<sup>69</sup> 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 operations<sup>70</sup> 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 1894<sup>71</sup> 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'.<sup>72</sup> 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

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<sup>69</sup> *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 3 August 1917.

<sup>70</sup> Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland*, p. 166.

<sup>71</sup> *Queensland Government Gazette (QGG)*, 3 November 1894, p. 959.

<sup>72</sup> *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.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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

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<sup>73</sup> 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.

<sup>74</sup> *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'.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> 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

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

<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup> 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'.<sup>78</sup> Boyd declared he felt compelled to refuse as Council had abused the privilege, and he considered the connection unnecessary.<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup> 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'.<sup>82</sup> This indictment of the

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<sup>77</sup> Author emphasis.

<sup>78</sup> *MMC*, 28 August 1917.

<sup>79</sup> *MMC*, 14 September 1917.

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

<sup>81</sup> *MMC*, 4 September 1917.

<sup>82</sup> 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'.<sup>83</sup>

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.<sup>84</sup> 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,<sup>85</sup> 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.<sup>86</sup>

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

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<sup>83</sup> *MMA*, 3 August 1900.

<sup>84</sup> Council, S&HC, Minutes, 22 February 1915, *MMSCA*.

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

<sup>86</sup> *MB*, 10 July 1897.

that his dairy was a public nuisance and that he slaughtered cattle at the same premises.<sup>87</sup> 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'.<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup>

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,<sup>90</sup> 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

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<sup>87</sup> J. Long to Council, 16 April 1909, Inward Correspondence, MMSCA.

<sup>88</sup> S.J. Richard, Report to Council, 28 April 1911, Inward correspondence, MMSCA.

<sup>89</sup> *MMA*, 11 May, 8 June 1900.

<sup>90</sup> Council, S&HC, Minutes, 3 February 1914, MMSCA.

chemical to disinfect dwellings where victims died.<sup>91</sup> As a result of that epidemic, a Commonwealth Bacteriological Laboratory was established at Rockhampton in 1922.<sup>92</sup>

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.<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Council, S&HC, Minutes, 4 December 1917, MMSCA.

<sup>92</sup> Council, S&HC, Minutes, 19 December 1922, MMSCA.

<sup>93</sup> *Critic*, 26 July 1907.

<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup>

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.<sup>96</sup> 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'.<sup>97</sup>

The Company derived income from leasing unused sections of the mine freehold to others including Chinese market gardeners.<sup>98</sup> 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,

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

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

<sup>97</sup> *Critic*, 17 March 1913.

<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> 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.<sup>100</sup> 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.<sup>101</sup> 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.<sup>102</sup>

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.<sup>103</sup> 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

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

<sup>100</sup> Archer to Kelso King, 27 February 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

<sup>101</sup> Archer to Kelso King, 6 March 1911, Letter Book, K 1014, ML.

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

<sup>103</sup> *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.<sup>104</sup> 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

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

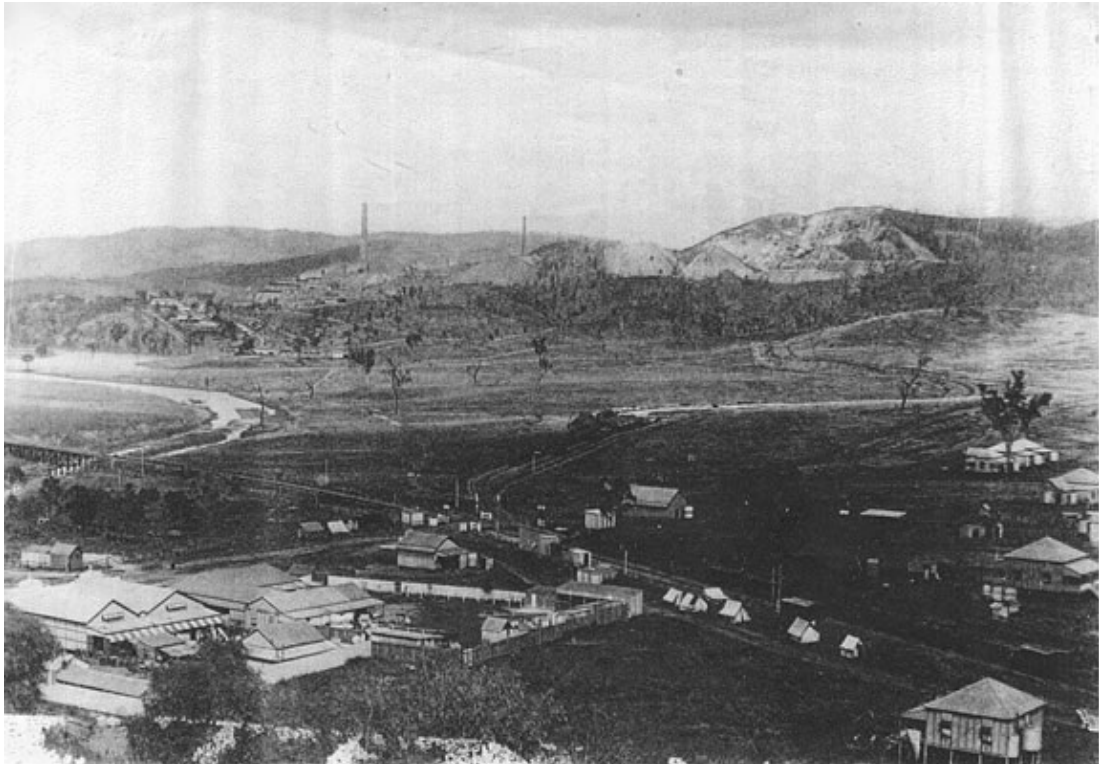


Fig. 8. Walterhall, railway bridge over Gordon Creek, Company residences, top left, c. 1905.

directors, Walter Russell Hall.<sup>105</sup> 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,<sup>106</sup> 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.<sup>107</sup>

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

<sup>105</sup> 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).

<sup>106</sup> *Critic*, 14 July 1911.

<sup>107</sup> *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'.<sup>108</sup>

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,

<sup>108</sup> 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.<sup>109</sup>

At the same time, many ratepayers of the Calliungal Shire Council requested rate concessions.<sup>110</sup> 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.<sup>111</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>111</sup> 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.<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup>

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.<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup> 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.

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

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

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

<sup>115</sup> 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.