# Chapter Five

## Obedience or care: institutions, associations and ritual

A town might be described in a word, perhaps affluent, parochial, conservative, poor. Yet, to use a single term is to diminish the character of a place and its contribution to the historical process. Mount Morgan was a town created to serve a mine, which in turn served to accumulate wealth for shareholders. However, the working class residents had scant respect for management whose lack of economic support ensured that Mount Morgan was a Company town in name only. Rather, they exhibited pride in the reputation of *their* world famous gold mine. Thus, local attitudes reflected images created as barriers to the realities of town existence.

This chapter explores the tissue of early Mount Morgan life through the influences of time and the demands of the mine - the life-blood of the town. It is contended here that within a milieu of social stratification at Mount Morgan, the collective desire for esteem in the local and wider sphere fostered residents' self-respect, ameliorating the effect of poor social or economic status and the sense of inferiority engendered by mine management. Moreover, with the interflow of benefit societies, associations and fraternities in a quintessential male oriented society, the social mores of kinship, church and community in a working class culture lent balance to the complexities of Mount Morgan existence.[1]

---

[1] E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1991, p. 457.

Ian Thorpe suggests that about 51 per cent of the Queensland colonial labour force were working class.[2] At Mount Morgan, the vast labour force at the mine ensured the basis of a predominantly working-class population. Workplace attitudes prevailed in the mining town committed to sport and leisure, the use or misuse of educational opportunity, the comfort of religion, the secular faith of lodges and self-help societies and the stoicism of mining families who endured the consequences of workplace disease, maiming or death. Typical of a new town, Mount Morgan was a place of primitive conditions, but it was not a pioneering settlement. By comparison, the parameters of status and class were set firmly already at nearby Rockhampton. Perhaps for this reason gregarious Mount Morgan residents experienced some confusion in their personal status in a new and progressively changing community. An emergent culture claimed already that the town and its people were 'better than Rockhampton'[3] a characteristic that compares with the Brisbane-Gympie relationship in the 1870s.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Mount Morgan might have been reminiscent of 'a pit-village emerging from semi-feudalism'[4] but rather than the 'self-respecting artisan', the underground miner was accorded the highest status amongst his peers. However, the diverse population exhibited a working class consciousness and subservient attitude to the Company. The town was shackled to the mine, a place of dust and smoke, noise and fumes, creeping molten slag and engulfing mass of overburden. The place personified the danger of a workplace and the threat that lay below the surface for many who must go underground - the unwary, the careless or simply the luckless. The mine was a fabricated structure deep within a natural phenomenon that might be controlled but never tamed. Yet, in answering the challenge to go to the mine, miners were heroes in the eyes of many for whom the field beneath was a fearful mystery.

[2]   Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society*, St. Lucia, 1996, p. 146.
[3]   F.W. Sykes, *A practical treatise on Mount Morgan*, Mount Morgan, 1888.
[4]   Thompson, *The making of the English working class,* p. 457.

The self-help tradition of the friendly society, and the lodge ethic of social order, moral discipline and community purpose were entrenched in Australian colonies by the late nineteenth century. Nancy Renfree suggests that 'the colonial's inherent tendency to tempt fortune' explained the low membership of self-help institutions at the gold mining town of Castlemaine as elsewhere in Victoria in the 1850s.[5] This suggests that initial optimism towards the problems of day to day living blanketed visions of the future. Friendly societies at Castlemaine included membership of those in commerce and trade, with the skilled and semi skilled – tradesmen, miners, carters and labourers topping the membership lists.[6] As Mount Morgan mine flourished the mine hierarchy, municipal council, bank and larger enterprise, by the nature of their status, laid claim to local progress, but contributed to the town character only in terms of middle-class assumptions.

Traders and tradesmen, miners and others joined friendly societies that promoted self-help, solidarity of members and, significantly, sickness and burial benefits. These were associations reminiscent of the earliest societies in Britain where strict rules and a moral code set the parameters for membership.[7] A society at Mount Morgan, as elsewhere, might refuse membership to a person of low social status or questionable character. Renfree observes that at Castlemaine, some Chinese rejected the opportunity to join societies, but at Mount Morgan thirty years later, Chinese and Aborigines suffered social exclusion as the 'other' and remained outside European considerations. Margaret Chapman, writing about freemasonry and community in Victoria, locates the friendly and benefit societies and the masonic lodge within two paradigms: the contributory organisations for health and burial benefits, and the ritual and secrecy of

---

[5] Nancy S. Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference: English friendly societies in a Victorian goldfields town, PhD. thesis, Latrobe University, 1983, p. 75.

[6] Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, p. 118.

[7] Shani D'Cruze and Jean Turnbull, 'Fellowship and family: Oddfellows lodges in Preston and Lancaster, c.1830-c.1890', *Urban History*, vol. 22, pt. 1, May 1995, p. 26.

freemasonry.[8]  By contrast, Renfree describes societies of the 1860s as 'lodges',[9] the term used similarly at Mount Morgan in the 1890s.

> Manchester Unity of Oddfellows
> Independent Order of Oddfellows
> Ancient Order of Foresters
> Order of Lady Foresters
> Protestant Alliance Society
> Order of St. Andrew
> Independent Order of Rechabites
> Perseverance Masonic Lodge
> Star of Ulster, Loyal Orange Lodge
> Mount Morgan Masonic Lodge
> Mount Morgan Grand Lodge
> Hibernian (H.A.C.B.S)[10]

Table 5.  Friendly societies and lodges at Mount Morgan, 1900.

Competition for membership between numerous associations reflected aspects of elitism and exclusion between Europeans that suggest some community fragmentation in the face of ethnic solidarity.  For example, the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (H.A.C.B.S.) – Hibernians – of St. Michaels Branch number 222 at Mount Morgan included Catholic labourers, railway workers, police, publicans, timber getters and others.  The Hibernian regalia of emerald green sashes and velvet collars epitomised Irishness and the Catholic connection ensured that members remained socially distanced from other associations.[11]

Freemasonry was an institution of contradictions, espousing egalitarianism while practising selective membership.  Given that Margaret Chapman confirms masonic philosophy and practice did not follow 'advocacy of extreme social experiment',[12] her

---

[8]   Margaret Chapman, Freemasonry and community in nineteenth century Victoria, M.Comm. thesis, Melbourne University, 1988, pp. 22, 23.

[9]   Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, pp. 59, 68.

[10]   *Mount Morgan Argus* (*MMA*), 15 June 1900.

[11]   Daphne McCabe (Sr. M. Felicitas, R.S.M.), interview with the author, 1 December 1998;  Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Kensington, 1987, p. 389.

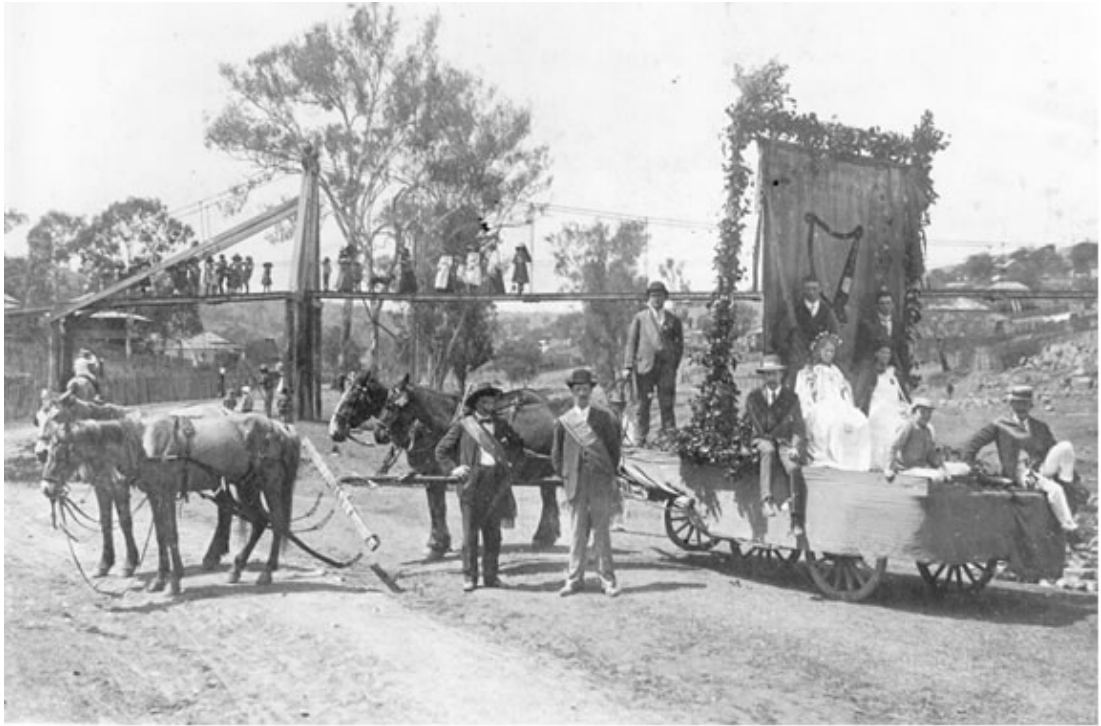[12]   Chapman, Freemasonry and community, pp. 24, 25.

Fig. 18. 'God Save Ireland' inscription above the Harp of Erin motif adorns the Hibernians' banner on this decorated float, Tipperary Point c. 1903. Regalia of members includes sashes and green velvet collars. Girls wear pale dresses and hair wreaths; one wears a Children of Mary cloak. Spectators line suspension bridge over the dry bed of the Ed River during the Great Drought. Red Hill, r. background.



Fig. 19. 'Passing Protestant Hall' (built 1913). Hibernian Parade, summer, c. 1920, members wear regalia. The new banner, the most spectacular Hibernian emblem in Central Queensland, shows Celtic cross and Harp of Erin.

thesis also points out that the laws of freemasonry in Australia tempered the early lodge experience in England and later America. Freemasons in the colonies including Queensland tended to distance themselves from organisations that might align with strident religious dissent, cooperation above individualism, and emergent unionism. However, freemasonry did not function within the network of mutual benefit societies, and whilst rooted in democratic attitudes, claimed status over the lower, labouring orders, specifically Irish Catholics. To this end, the doctrine of freemasonry in Australia as elsewhere was a response to the perceived threat of Roman Catholic dominance, although the Star of Ulster Loyal Orange Lodge was formulated on Irish lodge rules and philosophy.[13]

The 'temple' meeting was a formal ceremony of secret proceedings that featured ritual, regalia and performance that was tantamount to closed circuit entertainment. All loyal members might take their rota term of office on the achievement of three 'craft degrees' that demonstrated commitment to the order, social and moral discipline and public duty.[14] At the same time, an entrenched masonic ethic that work served the community, with progress derived through mental and physical effort, 'reinforced the skilled working man's self-ascription as middle-class'.[15] The elitist atmosphere of freemasonry that served to heighten its mystery defied the rare public scrutiny of members in full regalia at street parades, funerals and national celebrations.[16] At Mount Morgan as elsewhere in regional towns, freemasonry encompassed employers and tradesmen as members rather than aspiring to an elite group of artisans.[17]

---

[13] A.G. Shanks, *Fifty years' history: Mount Morgan Lodge,* Brisbane, R.S. Hews, pamphlet, 1939.
[14] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing brotherhood*: *class, gender and fraternalism*, Princetown, New Jersey, 1989, p. 88, 121, 228.
[15] Chapman, Freemasonry and community, p. 19.
[16] *Morning Bulletin* (*MB*), 7 November 1908.
[17] *MB*, 9 November, 1908.

Fig. 20. Loyal Orange Lodge No. 63, Mount Morgan, 1913, 'Premier lodge of Queensland, 1911-1912'. See Star of Ulster banner, right; and centre front, symbolic memorabilia, banner across the floor and table with cushion, testament and crown.

The plethora of friendly societies at Mount Morgan was similar to the situation two generations earlier in other mining centres like Castlemaine in Victoria. Moreover, the popularity of Manchester Unity Oddfellows and Foresters Court[18] featured at Mount Morgan. Whilst the similarity of associations saw some societies bracketed with church temperance groups, over time, public perception of the difference between orders at Mount Morgan seemed blurred. Trades dominated in society membership, but permanent resident members might be socially removed from transient mine workers who were also members.[19] However, transfer of association membership accompanied worker mobility in terms of workplace relocation.

---

[18] Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, pp. 51, 52.
[19] Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, pp. 129-131.

Fig. 21. Lodge gathering, 1900, presumably Ancient Order of Foresters and Court Lady Franklin Foresters at Foresters Hall, 1900. Note regalia, sashes and ribboned medals. One of two banners on the anteroom wall reads 'Star of Hope' (Rechabites); two halberds are on stands in the foreground.

The Foresters built the first association hall in town by the 1890s, the place available also for hire as a public hall until independent benefit associations faded with the gradual introduction of state welfare. The hall became a cinema, but the masonic temple was for the exclusive use of the masonic fraternity. Hotels also continued to provide for some association gatherings to farewell members who moved on or in time, to apprentices who completed their training. However, Mount Morgan was not always the place for aspiring 'journeymen' as they moved through their *rites de passage* with appropriate ritual and celebration.[20] The Company provided apprenticeships at the mine and expected that on completion of their training, tradesmen would remain at the Works, rather than leave to gain outside experience. For example, members of lodges and societies were aware of general manager Richard's open antagonism towards such institutions. In the tradition of journeymen, however, apprentices of mine and town celebrated their final *rite* at a local hotel. At the same time, a new 'apprentice' might be

---

[20]   *DR*, 11 September 1908.

indoctrinated into the 'club' for which blacklisting of outsiders was lore, and drinking was manly activity.[21]

Association fundraising was an ongoing necessity and by 1911, the 'lodge' band featured in public ceremony. The number of active associations at Mount Morgan might have challenged group solidarity, given that an attempt at affiliation failed. Despite establishment of an Amalgamated Friendly Societies Dispensary and the introduction of an annual picnic and sports event to celebrate 'Friendly Societies Day' - that included the Hibernians - societies at Mount Morgan came together only for social events.[22] Twenty friendly societies and lodges functioned by 1917, and memberships of associations away from the workplace shored up links of male bondage.[23] A consequence of this was social contact between families that resulted on occasion in the marriage of sons and daughters of society members into member families of other associations. Therefore, the connection between friendly societies, lodges and Freemasonry was extended and perpetuated. Not only that, the scope of influence was apparent in securing employment. Charlie Shannon, an apprentice carpenter of Irish-Catholic parents, required a work transfer when the Company closed in 1927. Shannon recalled the response of a staff officer, 'a member of an influential lodge - the Masons – "Don't worry, I'll get you a job." He did, too.[24]

The Christian church preached spiritual freedom with Jesus Christ, refuting the attributes of associations and lodges, but in an ironic parallel, the praise of integrity saw spiritual and temporal faith as one. For many, this faith came to account with the rise of industrial conflict. Hypocrisy, perceived as a bourgeois characteristic, was lampooned frequently in the Mount Morgan press, suggesting that custom rather than inclination

---

[21]  Clawson, *Constructing brotherhood*, pp. 103, 156.
[22]  *Daily Record* (*DR*), 11 September 1911.
[23]  *Mount Morgan Chronicle* (*MMC*), 20 April 1917.
[24]  C. Shannon, interview with the author, 10 September 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project (MMOH).

brought many people to church. Moreover, clergy observed that faces in the pews might reflect 'blank indifference.'[25] In 1908, a local journalist reporting on the court case of respected town agent Briggs, boomed 'Corruption is rife…one thing that strikes me forcibly is the regular way they attend church'. The cavil continued in verse:

> On Monday, Tuesday Wednesday
> Thursday Friday and Saturday,
> They are robbing all they can,
> But they go to Church on Sunday
> Just to show they are honest men.[26]

A high percentage of mostly English immigrant miners came to Mount Morgan in the establishment years. Occupations of paternal parents who remained in their country of origin were diverse, but included some miners and tradesmen. Immigrants might follow the trade of their fathers but employment at Mount Morgan did not ensure upward mobility.[27] Four religious denominations held services in the town in the 1880s: Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and the dissenting Primitive Methodists. These faiths preceded the Baptist and Congregational churches and the Salvation Army, their non-conformist fervour, fellowship in faith and appeal to the poor entrenched in Welsh and English mining communities.[28]

Membership of the Anglican parish council and church committees at Mount Morgan reflected the association of mine hierarchy and management with the Rockhampton Diocese.[29] Holyoake Woodd[sic] was secretary of the Company and lay synodsman for St. Mary's parish. The mine's major shareholders, William Knox D'Arcy, Thomas Skarratt Hall and his brother Walter Russell Hall also donated to the

---

[25] A.A. Fellows, *Full time*, Rockhampton, 1967, p. 32. The Venerable Arthur Fellows served the Rockhampton Anglican Diocese 1912-1954.

[26] *Critic,* 4 September 1908. This was the Briggs/Hempenstall case discussed in chapter four.

[27] Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, p. 145.

[28] Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Williamsburg, 1982, pp. 162-167; Mount Morgan Baptist Church, Deacon's Minutes, 1902, K8/963, CC/CQU.

[29] *Proceedings of the First Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1893. Dr. R.R. Ranking, Anglican synodsman and police magistrate at Rockhampton, presided intermittently at the Court of Petty Sessions, Mount Morgan.

diocese.[30] By 1897, their contributions to the diocesan capital account amounted to £600, and diocesan capital investment in Mount Morgan was £634 by 1898-1899.[31] However, the diocese was cognisant of the lack of financial support for Mount Morgan parish by shareholders in fabulously rich mine. The pastoral letter of 1899 addressed the issue:

> The parochial district of Mount Morgan that suggests a prodigality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice is, alas, most inadequately supported. The working people who compose the congregation give freely and willingly; but from those who derive great wealth from the goldmine and who may reasonably be expected to take some interest in the moral and religious well-being of those whose labour they employ hardly any help is received. The most pressing needs are the building of a parsonage, and the erection at of a mission church at Crocodile Creek. How easily one or two of the wealthier shareholders could provide these two wants. May this paragraph meet the eye and touch the conscience, and better still, reach the hearts of some who are well able to help.[32]

By 1899 Anglicans built a fine brick church on a hill overlooking the town and mine. The local brickmaker was an Anglican whose son worked at the mine until succumbing to miner's phthisis. J. Wesley Hall, the first supervisor of the mine, contributed substantially to the cost of The Church of St. Mary of the Nativity[33] that provided an impressive architectural statement symbolising the established church and conservatism.

The majority of Anglican marriages conducted at Mount Morgan between 1889-1909 were between British, or native-born and British, 40 per cent of males and 33 per cent of females being British or European born. Mining was the occupation declared by 80 per cent of males[34] for whom Rockhampton was the port of entry for Mount Morgan,

---

[30] Endownment Fund Report, *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, December, 1897.

[31] *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1898.

[32] Pastoral letter delivered in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Rockhampton, 7 June 1899, *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton,* Rockhampton, 1899.

[33] Fellows, *Full time*, pp. 43, 90.

[34] St. Mary's, Mount Morgan, Marriage Registers 1889-1897, 1898-1899, 1900-1909, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Rockhampton.

Price, Two Shillings.

## BIRTH. №21212

1913

'BIRTH in the District of *Mount Morgan* in the ~~Colony~~ State of Queensland,

Registered by *Richard Power*
District Registrar.

| Marginal Notes (if any). | Column. | |
|---|---|---|
| | **1** Number in Register .. .. .. | 4645. |
| | **CHILD.** | |
| | **2** When and where born .. .. .. | 15th August 1913, Moongan, Mount Morgan. |
| | **3** Name, ~~and whether present or not~~ .. | Robert |
| | **4** Sex .. .. .. .. | male. |
| | **PARENTS.** Father— | |
| | **5** 1. Name and surname .. .. .. | 1. Frank Henry Cole |
| | 2. Rank or profession .. .. .. | 2. Labourer. |
| | 3/4. Age and birthplace .. .. .. | 3. 27 years 4. Totland Bay Isle of Wight. |
| | **6** 1. When and where married .. .. | 1. 27th April 1912, Mount Morgan |
| | 2. Previous issue living .. .. .. | 2.—Living Queensland years. |
| | 3. Deceased .. .. .. .. | 3. Deceased. |
| | Mother— | |
| | **7** 1. Name and maiden surname .. .. | 1. Grace Gertrude formerly Schlenter |
| | 2/3. Age and birthplace .. .. .. | 2. 25 years. 3. London, Middlesex, England. |
| | **INFORMANT.** **8** Signature, description, and residence of informant .. .. .. .. | Certified in writing by Frank Henry Cole, Father, Moongan near Mount Morgan |
| | **WITNESSES.** **9** 1. Medical attendant .. .. .. | 1. |
| | 2. Nurse .. .. .. .. | 2. Nurse Anderson. |
| | 3. Names of Witnesses .. .. .. | 3. |
| | **REGISTRAR.** **10** 1. Signature of District Registrar .. | 1. R. Power. |
| | 2/3. Date and where registered .. .. | 2. 9th September 1913. 3. Mount Morgan. |
| | **11** Name, if added after registration of birth | |

I, *Richard Power*, District Registrar, do hereby certify that the above is a true Copy of an Entry in a Register of Births kept in the District Registry Office, at *Mount Morgan*, and I further certify that I am a person duly authorised by law to issue such Certificate.

Extracted this *Twenty third* day of *July* 1928.

District Registrar.

Fig. 22. Birth Certificate. Robert Cole, b. Moongan, Mount Morgan, 15 August 1913, the birth attended by a midwife.

probably their planned destination. For example, miner Frank Cole, born Totland Bay, Isle of Wight, son of a coast guard, and Grace Schleuter, born Middlesex, daughter of a London tobacconist, were betrothed when they emigrated to Queensland with Schleuter family relations. Their marriage was solemnised at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Mount Morgan in April 1912.[35] The Cole family left Mount Morgan in 1917, during the three week strike at the mine.

For Irish-Catholic immigrants, it is perceivable that Mount Morgan was simply a place to seek work. A majority of Irish were unskilled and were among those who worked at the mine as labourers, living in tents and huts until renting small cottages built by petite bourgeoisie or, on occasion, thrifty working class.[36] From the outset, a visiting Catholic priest travelled regularly to the mine to say Mass and celebrate the sacraments for men at their tents or gathering places. A parish was declared in 1885[37] benefited from Bishop Joseph Cani's purchase of eleven lots at the second land sale in 1887. The lots, confined to one section of the town grid and with frontage to three streets, became the Catholic precinct. The canvas and shingle Church of the Sacred Heart served also as a school under the care of lay-teachers. During school hours, a red curtain drawn in front of the tabernacle closed and protected the sanctuary.[38] By 1891, 80 enrolments at the school compared favourably to the more than 150 enrolled at the government primary school opened earlier in 1887. A convent, and a new school named St. Patrick's, were built by 1895 when a Congregation of Sisters of Mercy replaced lay teachers. Catholic children attending the government primary school across the road were 'urged to go to their own school' or were simply taken to the new school.

---

[35] Barbara Webster, information provided relating to the Cole family, Rockhampton, provided to the author 1999.

[36] Mount Morgan Municipal Council, Rate Book, 1890, Mount Morgan Shire Council Archives (MMSCA).

[37] F. Golding, The Irish influence at Mount Morgan, n.d., typescript, J18/255, CC/CQU.

[38] Rockhampton Catholic Diocese, *The Review*, Rockhampton, May 1982, pp. 11, 12.

The greater percentage of Catholic pupils lived within the Tipperary Point, Red Hill, Cemetery Road and Jubilee Hill areas, but children of a police constable, bank manager, tailor, butcher, storekeeper, baker, carrier and others lived in town or in the more removed suburbs scattered along the hillsides and valleys to the north.[39] By 1913, when the school register showed 1 039 enrolments since the school opened, a large room was built as an infants' school. First enrolments numbered 22 boys and 25 girls, the register citing 49 per cent as children of miners. In this early period at Mount Morgan and before union inspired definitive separation of work categories, a majority of male parents declared their occupation as 'miner', in a ratio of 4:1 over labourers. The visiting Cardinal Moran blessed the new schoolroom that was known immediately as 'Cardinal's Hall', but was not seen as 'sacred space' *per se*, typically finding use for both honorary and remunerative purposes outside school hours, as a meeting and function venue for Catholics and others.

An additional Catholic primary school opened in 1913 at the predominantly labourers' suburb of Red Hill, adjacent to Tipperary Point, and which drew pupils from areas south to Horse Creek and Hamilton Creek. The school, an old shed used previously by a saddler, was painted inside and out and a calico ceiling was hung above desks and forms. The donation of an old organ, placement of a wooden cross on the roof and a sign proclaiming 'Our Lady of the Annunciation', saw the new school epitomise the separation of religious and secular education.[40] The 1919 register listed male parents as thirty labourers, two miners, two tradesmen and a publican.[41]

A Presbyterian circuit encompassed Mount Morgan town and district. The church incumbent held meetings and study sessions at the manse and in 1908, claimed more

[39]  St. Patrick's Catholic School, Mount Morgan, Enrolment Register, 1902-1913, 1913-1948, Sisters of Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.
[40]  *The Catholic Review*, Rockhampton, November 1970, p. 10.
[41]  Red Hill Catholic School, Mount Morgan, Enrolment Register, 1913-1927, Sisters of Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

than two hundred visits to Presbyterian households in town and more than five hundred within the parish circuit. These official visiting figures suggest a phenomenal rate, given the difficulties of transport in the era. By 1909 also, 43 baptisms for the year prompted the introduction of a Church Cradle Roll and confirmed town population increase.

The Scottish ethic of teaching and learning[42] saw twenty-one teachers trained in the Canadian Church study programme. Associated with the Queensland Sabbath School Union, the Mount Morgan Presbyterian Sabbath School in 1907 had 254 on the roll, including 97 boys and 157 girls, with average attendance of 120. The church library circulated widely and provided literature for Sabbath school, bible class and debating and literary club. Use of the library was critical to spiritual teaching and the committee waived the subscription fee after extension of the catalogue with the private donation of 62 books during three years. The Ladies Church Aid Society held welcome socials for newcomers and benefit socials for the widowed and destitute of the congregation, but ad hoc financial assistance was according to a stringent church budget that did not extend to social welfare.[43] Moreover, frequent appeals from the pulpit for contributions to the sustentation fund reflected scant response.[44]

Competition between faiths was strong at Mount Morgan. Within a year of the Anglicans establishing at Baree, a Presbyterian church opened nearby. Built of hardwood and furnished with pews, lamps, harmonium and the customary reading table, the building accommodated 120. Whilst 34 young people attended the Sabbath School in a rented hall nearby, the church congregation at the opening service numbered more

---

[42]   Malcolm Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1987, p. 29.
[43]   Renate Howe, 'Protestantism, social Christianity and the ecology of Melbourne, 1890-1900', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, April 1980, p. 72.
[44]   Mount Morgan Presbyterian Church, *Annual Report*, 1907, 1908, 1909, Rockhampton, 285/M, Mitchell Library, (ML).

than one hundred to hear a hint of Sabbatarian rhetoric in the visiting State Moderator's sermon demanding spiritual obedience and temporal discipline:

> The habit of non-church going [is] increasingly in our midst, the evident effects of which are desecration of the Lord's Day and lack of religious sincerity in our national life.[45]

A simple rectangle of slab and shingle was the first church of the Primitive Methodists at Mount Morgan in the 1880s, more than a decade before amalgamation of the sect with Wesleyan and the Bible Christian Methodists at Rockhampton in 1898.[46] Subsequently, whilst austere buildings were the outward sign of Methodism, congregation numbers fluctuated according to the pulpit voice that espoused Sabbatarianism, unionism and charity within the tenet of spiritual faith.  In the tradition of Wesleyan Sabbath Schools, untrained but zealous lay people provided Testament instruction for increasing numbers of Mount Morgan Methodist youth.

The voice of dissent echoed in the drumbeat of the non-gender specific Salvation Army band as 'soldiers' made their own spiritual and social impact in the town.  Theirs was a unique ritual; resplendent in their uniforms, regimental caps and striking 'coal scuttle' bonnets, the 'Army' took Christian faith and the collection box into the public arena at Mount Morgan.  Commitment of the faithful was evident; in the thirty enrolments in the 26 years to 1916, numerous addresses cited were in poorer areas south of the town.  With street meetings on Sundays and weekday evenings, the Army welcomed all to their circle and collected from the givers in order to reach out to the disadvantaged.  They framed a quintessential service for salvation in Scripture readings, prayer, homily and songs of praise raised to the rhythm of trumpet, timbrel and drum. The Army drew large crowds, albeit many gathered to hear music and song and to follow the 'first class band' of the Mount Morgan Corps, but few marched with the

---

[45]   Alexander Hay, Right Reverend, Moderator of the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 18 July 1909, Mount Morgan Presbyterian Church, *Annual Report*, 1909.
[46]   Jim Faull, *The Cornish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 14-18.

'B' - 'Backslider'
'T' - Transferred to another Corps
'G' - Promoted to Glory'
'R' - 'Removed'
'C' - 'Gone to Chapel'
'T' - 'Gone to Training Home'[47]

Table 6.  Soldiers' Roll code, Salvation Army,
Mount Morgan, 1916.

soldiers into the Gordon Street 'barracks' in the centre of town.[48]  Adherents accepted the

code of the Soldiers' Roll where the reference to 'backslider' and 'chapel' confirmed a

similarity to the early Methodist system of categorising adherents.[49]  By 1916, Mount

Morgan levels of attendance and resident mobility were documented succinctly.  Four

were backsliders, eight transferred to another corps, one went to chapel and four went to

Glory.  The corps enrolment that increased by 51 in the decade following World War I

suggests the influence of the Salvation Army's service and image.[50]

Within a decade of the opening of the first Mount Morgan primary school in

1887, the typically small building soon became inadequate for its purpose.  In response

to the request of the school committee for additional buildings and extension to original

classrooms,[51] a representative from the Office of the Colonial Secretary met with a

deputation at Mount Morgan in 1896.  Reporting on the situation later, he declared that

although 237 pupils had transferred to the Catholic school by 1896, the progress of the

mine and rapid increase in town population resulted in overcrowding at the public

school.  In an era when gender separation at schools was an evolving ethos, Wilson

deplored the:

---

[47]  Mount Morgan Salvation Army, Soldiers' Roll, 1890-1949, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

[48]  *MMC*, 11 May 1900.

[49]  Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, pp. 388, 400.

[50]  Salvation Army, Mount Morgan, North Queensland Division, Mount Morgan Corps file 1890-1949, Mount Morgan Historical Museum, (MMHM).

[51]  Rob Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life: a centenary magazine of the 100 years 1887-1987 for the State Schools of Mount Morgan Shire,* Rockhampton, 1987, p. 10.

> mixing of the sexes producing grave abuses which might lead to serious results…There is no fence dividing off the girls and boys…unseemly conduct occurs when the Master's eye is not on them.[52]

Lack of response by the Department of Public Instruction prompted Dr. S.J. Richard, government medical officer at Mount Morgan to demand immediate action to overcome the overcrowded conditions at the existing school. Less than 3½ square feet of space for each child was prejudicial to health and the problem of space prevented acceptance of more pupils.[53] A year later, two large classrooms and a separate school for girls and infants - to include boys of less than seven years - were constructed on the five acres of the reserve.

The girls' school accepted 180 enrolments, and the total attendance at the primary school on opening day was 591 pupils of a total enrolment of 789, where the staff of seven teachers and six pupil teachers taught an average pupil attendance of 71 per cent. This was evidence of the constant problem of school absenteeism, given problems of health, distance, parental attitude or juvenile obligation to family work. The Mount Morgan State School became the largest primary school in Queensland, in terms of pupil numbers and buildings. However, construction of additional large classrooms did not accommodate all the children in the town environs or district. The progression of state education saw a network of eight primary schools at Mount Morgan at a time when the Scholarship examination was the zenith of education for the majority of pupils in local – and Queensland – state schools.

Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Fahey suggest that in mining communities, few had extensive kin until the third generation, by which time, geographic mobility

---

[52] H. Wilson to Chief Secretary D.H. Dalrymple, 22 June 1896, cited in Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life,* p. 17.

[53] S.G. Richard to Department of public Instruction, 19 February 1897, cited in Ogilvie (ed.), *The best days of your life,* p. 15.

dispersed family networks that took so long to build up.[54] The circumstance of three generations occurred at Castlemaine mines.[55] This equates with the Mount Morgan experience in which numerous mining families assumed that sons would work at the mine. By the turn of the century, the first generation of native-born in the town included boys who joined a village tradition of working heritage that passed from father to son whereby generations worked at the mine, grandfather, father and son. If employees did not become tradesmen or miners, labouring work was an option always. The generation ethic was a matter of family pride: father and son might be employed at the same time, perhaps for similar work and on the same shift. The Heberlein family spent their lives at and around Mount Morgan, where four generations worked at the mine.[56]

The business of town undertaker, customarily an adjunct to the enterprise of carpentry and furniture making, did not bring social mobility. Moreover, business depended on population and the level of settlement. For example, in the years before the proclamation of a town cemetery reserve at Mount Morgan in 1889, the resident undertaker complained that he dealt with 'barely one procession a month.'[57] This does not suggest the robust health of inhabitants; rather, that people buried their dead in the vast empty spaces in the town. If wooden tombstones marked burial places, these probably deteriorated or were removed over time, so the number and location of graves remains unknown. Mount Morgan folk lore locates few sites: at Jubilee Hill, the grave of an Irish storekeeper's daughter, and on high ground near the suburb of Walterhall, the graves of two Chinese.[58]

---

[54] Pat Grimshaw and Charles Fahey, 'Family and community in nineteenth century Castlemaine', *Australia 1888*, Bulletin no. 9, April 1982, p.113, cited in Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, p. 139.

[55] Renfree, Migrants and cultural transference, p. 121.

[56] Colin Heberlein, interview with the author, 21 October 1992, MMOH.

[57] Ivimey, *Rockhampton and Mount Morgan,* Brisbane, 1888, p. 42.

[58] Information received from A. Christmas, curator, Mount Morgan Historical Museum, 1997, OH.

By 1890, a small group of ethnic 'other' who were not mine employees manifested their own culture and religious beliefs at Mount Morgan. On a large plot within the boundary of the town cemetery, local Chinese erected a Heung Lew (incense burner) shrine.[59] From a base about four feet square, the structure rose about six feet to a pyramidal top three feet high that had two small ornamentations at the top. The internal cavity of the Heung Lew was a brick lined furnace for the burning of prayer papers. Four vents were in the pyramid with one large vent at the base and an iron door



Fig. 23. Chinese Heung Lew (incense burner, shrine) constructed at Mount Morgan cemetery, c. 1890.

that sealed the opening to the shrine. Prayer papers and cash were offered in the shrine at funerals and days of religious observance, whilst at a burial, ducks, fowls and pigs were offered at the Heung Lew to speed the departed spirits of friends and family on

---

[59] *MB*, 6 April 1973.

their journey to the next world.[60] This cultural tradition compares to European funerals where spiritual celebration or secular service includes the offering of flowers at burials and the erection of memorials in cemeteries and other public spaces.

For some in the late nineteenth century and early 1900s, funerals assumed connotations of social events. Undertakers arranged for the printing of notices at the local newspaper office to advise of impending funerals, tacking the sheets to white painted 'funeral posts' located at busy street corners. One post was opposite the Leichhardt Hotel at the junction of Morgan and East Streets, a centrally situated and popular meeting place in the main shopping area.[61] As only the notice was removed after a funeral - a local myth predicted bad luck to follow removal of the tacks - the studded posts remained urban memorials to the town dead.

With the gazettal of the cemetery reserve in 1889, burials assumed a status in terms of attendance and display, ceremony and ritual. More persistent than memory, the inscriptions on many monumental stones remained public historical profiles. The citation style on many headstones that honoured early immigrant miners and residents included the county and country of origin, 'Jarrow on Tyne'; 'Flintsane, Wales', whilst that of the first president of the Mount Morgan Hibernians included the caption '… of Galway, Ireland. Branch Secretary 1888-1907 St. Michaels Branch H.A.C.B. Society'. Headstones of native-born cited their colony or state of birth: 'b. Victoria' and on occasion, the headstone cited the suburb of residence of the deceased, '...who died at Baree', or 'Baree, Mount Morgan'.[62]

Funeral assurance through friendly societies provided some financial support to members. However, in the era preceding worker's compensation or government

---

[60]  A. Christmas, History of the Chinese in Mount Morgan, typescript, c. 1990, p. 7, MMHM.
[61]  Gertrude Marcombe, interview with the author, 3 March 1998; Oral History (OH);  N. Chardon, Horses and funerals, typescript, 1973, p. 1, MMHM.
[62]  Headstone epitaphs, Mount Morgan Cemetery, September 1996.

welfare, mining culture required that as a gesture of respect, 'the hat was passed around' for the widow and family of a deceased breadwinner. Moreover, a society or organisation, group of workmates or other associates of the deceased might raise a tombstone at the grave. For example, when 'Joe Hickman b. 'Jarrow-on-Tyne', died in 1896, he was a long serving member of the Mount Morgan Cemetery Trust and the organisation provided the headstone for his grave.[63]

Charity functions were regular events, generally organised as a ball, concert, or social and dance held in the Mount Morgan School of Arts. With a local identity as Master of Ceremonies and with string band accompaniment for dancing, such events were the stuff of fund-raising for victims of mine accidents, for widowed families, or the Mount Morgan Hospital. The Hospital Ball set an early tradition in the town. By 1907, with the £100 raised at the annual function, establishment of a Children's Ward was possible as funds in hand drew the appropriate 2:1 government subsidy.[64] However, the need for ambulance facilities was critical in a town where the primary workplace was dangerous, yet Mount Morgan was without an ambulance service for 30 years. Representatives of local friendly societies met to discuss public subscription for the provision of a local service, but were aware of the Company's assertion that those who suffered accident or illness could receive immediate treatment at the Works by an honorary 'corps' of off duty miners.[65] However, some mine victims of accident or illness walked or were carried substantial distances to receive aid on the mine site.

In order to build an ambulance centre, a committee leased Company held land at nominal rent in 1912. The mine general manager, Benjamin Magnus, agreed that the new service would take over the mine 'corps' and that three mine staff members would assist the new brigade. Whilst the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust donated £125 towards a

---

[63] George H. Haswell, A Tyneside worthy, paper read at the Tyneside Club, Birmingham, England, 27 November 1897, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library (FL).

[64] *MMA,* 23 September 1908.

[65] Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

building with mechanical doors, equipment was limited to a mining stretcher, eight collapsible stretchers and an old litter. The Company donation of £200 was a seemingly generous action, but astute general manager Benjamin Magnus was aware that a town brigade would save the cost of an ambulance service at the mine. Moreover, although the Company had refused a Council request in 1903 to supply electricity to the town from the mine powerhouse, a decade later Magnus also supplied mine electricity to the new ambulance free of charge. Statistics for the first eleven months of operation proved the necessity for a brigade to serve town and mine: 383 cases were treated at the centre, 258 calls were received in and around the town and 365 cases involved travel.[66]

An appointed Ladies Auxiliary moved into fund-raising, organising a 'Tag Day' in the streets[67], cricket match, social and fair, card evenings, charity film shows and the first Ambulance Ball. A charity carnival in the first year became an annual event, a part of the town scene and an event similar to the ambulance carnival at Rockhampton. Fundraising proceeds assisted costs of ambulance equipment, transport including a horse drawn rubber tyred wagon for patient comfort, and an Ashford litter and stretchers. Staff and assistants included a waged superintendent, permanent bearer and 19 honorary bearers. Margaret O'Brien's brother, 'a real mad ambulance too' was an honorary bearer for the corps from its inception.[68] However, Mount Morgan unions condemned the service years later with the claim that they, and other mine employees, were unaware that an ambulance vehicle was available at a building on the mine site:

> A man had a head injury and had to come to the store - almost a mile - before he could receive attention ... everyone at the mine walked. The workers wanted an ambulance man on the spot where the men were. They fought for it and the Company said they had a first class ambulance on the lease.[69]

The mine took its toll of life at Mount Morgan, confirming a perception of masculinity that required men to die nobly, if not in mortal combat, then against

---

[66]   Queensland Ambulance Transport Board, *Annual report*, Rockhampton, 1913.
[67]   An identifable 'tag' with pin and worn on payment of a donation.
[68]   Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, MMOH.
[69]   Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.

dangerous odds. For those at Mount Morgan who were not underground workers at the mine, the comprehension of death underground from falling rock or explosion in a tunnel or chamber was beyond imagining. Death underground brought posthumous enshrinement in local culture:

> We shall never forget them, though they have lost their lives,
> So let us pay attention to their children and their wives.
> It simply is our duty now, and let us all beware,
> Their fathers died a noble death and left them in our care.[70]

Between September and November 1908, a total of twelve men were killed in two tunnel collapses at the mine, one fall at the 850 foot level on Saturday, 7 September at 5 p.m., when seven men were killed, the other at the 750 foot level about 3.30 p.m. on the afternoon of Wednesday, 4 November.[71] Immediately the tragedies occurred the prolonged howl of the mine hooter sent the awful news through the town and suburbs, business came to a standstill and, according to mining culture, mineworkers ceased work until after an *en masse* funeral attendance some days latter.[72] The tragedy brought shock, inconsolable grief and emotive news reportage to the town:

> On Saturday night, as soon as the news became known, knots of willing men were rushing to the mine to assist and right up to the last body was recovered late on Sunday evening, the yard was full of men eager and ready to risk their lives to recover their mates' bodies. This is practically what it amounted to for the fall continued at intervals - of course in small quantities - all the time the men were being sought for.[73]

Gympie was the home town of four of the seven men killed in the September accident, and coffins were brought from Rockhampton for the bodies to be taken by train to Gympie for interment. In funeral style, a large number of miners and others marched alongside and behind the lorry draped in black cloth that transported the

---

[70] A.L. Lloyd (comp), *Come all ye bold miners: ballads and songs of the coalfields*, London, 1978, p. 187.
[71] Accidents at Mount Morgan, minutes of evidence and appendices*, Queensland Legislative Assembly*, Brisbane, 1908, pp. iv, v.
[72] *MB*, 7 September 1908.
[73] *Critic*, 11 September 1908.

coffins from the town hospital to the station. Men stood silent to witness the departure and progress of the train and its awful freight.[74] The funeral train took the calamity of death to the wider sphere, from Mount Morgan through outer suburbs and villages along the line to Rockhampton, then by sea and rail to the stunned and disbelieving town of Gympie.

> Don't you see that funeral train?
> Don't you see that funeral train
> Going down that lonesome valley?
> It's the longest one I've seen.[75]

Death underground heightened the fearsome significance[76] of a funeral. Moreover, the mass burial of the three Mount Morgan men killed in September 1908 was a collective experience for the thousands of town residents, whether they marched in the cortege that extended for almost a mile, or watched from streets and hillside. The procession that passed rows of houses where doors were closed and blinds drawn, shops shut and draped in black, and flags at half-mast brought the town and its organisations together as one. Leaving from the town hospital and led by two local mounted police, the procession moved to the continuous, slow beat of the Mount Morgan Brass Band playing the ubiquitous funeral dirge 'The Dead March from Saul', while the Mafeking Bell at the Council Chambers and the Catholic church bell tolled in sombre unison. One victim had been a member of The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society and members in regalia walked ahead of the three draped coffins on biers carried shoulder high by relays of miners for the full distance to the cemetery. Hundreds of miners,

---

[74] *MB*, 7 September 1908.

[75] Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin, 'Scofield mine disaster'*, Heart songs: the old time country songs of Utah Phillips*, Massachusetts, 1997. After a mine disaster claimed many lives at Scofield, Utah in 1900, coffins were sent from Salt Lake. They were loaded on rail and townspeople watched as the train wound through the valley from Scofield.

[76] Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 458.

Fig. 24. Funeral procession for three of seven miners killed underground at Mount Morgan mine, 7 September 1908.

including members of the Fitzroy Miners Union, marched in lines eight across, followed

by members of the public.  Vehicles and horsemen brought up the rear.  Two directors,



Fig. 25. Funeral procession at Mount Morgan for miners killed underground 4 November 1908, the second multiple fatality within two months.

the assistant general manager and senior staff attended also.  At the cemetery gates, the

cortege divided in two lines, one proceeding to an ecumenical graveside service for two

of the victims, the second group to a service according to masonic ritual for the other

victim.[77]  The fall at the 750 foot level of the Linda Tunnel in November 1908 claimed

---

[77]  *MB*, 8 September 1908.

the lives of five local miners. Fifteen men were working at an underground location and most were timbering. Of the five killed in an escape attempt, the only body recovered by midnight on 4 November was buried the following day. When the remaining four bodies were recovered, the funeral arrangements and procession for their multiple burial were more complex and representations by religious and secular associations more spectacular than the September burial.[78] The following year, a vast crowd gathered at the Mount Morgan cemetery for the dedication of a memorial erected to the memory of all men accidentally killed at the mine. Dominating the cemetery precinct, the obelisk



Fig. 26. Mount Morgan Cemetery, 1909. Dedication of the 'Linda Memorial' to 26 miners killed at Mount Morgan mine between 1894-1909. The shattered top of the obelisk denotes broken life. Foreground note: some women are veiled.

style 'Linda Memorial', was named for the Linda tunnel, scene of the 1908 tragedies. The memorial also named all miners accidentally killed at the mine and buried in the town cemetery and at Gympie.[79] Another death by mine accident had occurred since the

---

[78]   *MB*, 7 November 1908.
[79]   *MB,* 12 March 1974.

1908 tragedy and the name of the latest victim was included in 26 inscriptions for men who were killed at the mine between 1894 and 1909. Centred in a burial site 16 feet square that featured ornamental concrete surrounds, the memorial rose from a four feet square base. Rather than reaching a height of almost 20 feet, the last seven feet of the pillar were shattered, the broken top a ubiquitous gravestone symbol of a life cut short.

At the workplace and in town, miner nonchalance was manifested in a garrulousness[80] that suggests a deep, if natural fear. Between miner and family, the mental barrier of threat of accident or death at the workplace was a constant; given that despite the Company's claims to the contrary, accidents were frequent and over the years, single deaths occurred regularly.[81] The crises of mine disasters and resultant multiple deaths that made heroes of victims and rescuers alike, bonded the town subsequently more than any other phenomenon. The mine precinct became the battlefield where the enemy - the mine - triumphed in making the abstract threat of death a concrete truth. For many weeks after the 1908 disasters, the social fabric of the town was severely crushed.[82]

Threads of womens' activities at Mount Morgan entwined every aspect of Mount Morgan existence. Chapter seven will address issues facing working-class women, but it must be observed here that most women remained an unsung population. During the dreadful hours and days after underground accidents in September and November 1908, women seemed invisible. Whether, on hearing the sirens and the news of the tunnel collapses or during the searching hours, they simply took access to the mine site, waited at the gate, or were even to be seen is not known, nor were their actions or reactions reported. They might have followed the funeral biers in 1908, yet were mentioned in press reports only in the context of 'grieving families'. These were the mining women,

---

[80] Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1972, p. 267.

[81] Discussion of findings by The Board of Inquiry into the accidents in 1908 is included in chapter six.

[82] *Critic*, 8 September 1908.

not those of the mine hierarchy or petite bourgeoisie and who were applauded in the local press for charitable activities in guilds and auxiliaries. They were not the members of the Methodist sponsored and politically driven Women's Christian Temperance Union, or the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, the Catholic Womens' Association or other organisations at Mount Morgan that provided opportunities for social and moral action.[83] Church adherence and commitment to their faith did not ensure that many working-class women had time to spend outside the home. Moreover, the burdens of a large family and low income might be exacerbated by the ongoing illness of the breadwinner.

A badge of heroism was not the reward of a man who died from miner's phthisis, scourge of the industry. When Mount Morgan gold was pouring out of the town, down the Razorback and through Rockhampton to the south, the disease had been acknowledged three decades earlier as a significant cause of gold miners' death in Victoria and New South Wales.[84] Dust from the mines caused lung damage resulting in a disease that did not manifest itself for at least five years,[85] after which the victim's health deteriorated slowly until ultimately neither work nor exertion was possible. The sufferer was committed to a future confined to bed, invariably in a room at the rear of the house, the window traditionally closed, the fetid atmosphere adding not only to patient misery but also to contamination of the environment. A constant danger to others was the pulmonary tuberculosis associated with phthisis. The virulent infection spread from the mine victim's coughing and expectoration of 'black spit' and the sharing and handling of contaminated utensils.[86]

---

[83] Roger C. Thompson, 'Women and the significance of religion in Australian history', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 78, no. 108, April 1997, p. 118.

[84] Walter Summons, *Miners' phthisis: report of an investigation at Bendigo into the prevalence, nature, causes and prevention of miners' phthisis*, Melbourne, 1906, pp. 8-13.

[85] Sandra Kippen, 'The social and political meaning of the silent epidemic of miners' phthisis, Bendigo 1860-1960', *Journal of Social Science Medicine*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1995, p.495.

[86] David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, 'Consumption, silicosis and the social construction of industrial disease', *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, no. 64, 1991, pp. 482, 483.

The future was bleak for sufferers and their dependents, yet miners tolerated this ghastly menace of the workplace and seemed to do little to help themselves. Their negative attitude to safety and health protection was endemic at Mount Morgan as throughout the mining industry.[87] Management provided gauze cloths to cover nose and mouth, known in mining as 'clean-alls' and colloquially at Mount Morgan as 'nose-rags', but many miners refused the protection of the masks, complaining they made breathing difficult. Perhaps also their attitude was contrary:

> The old mine only gave you what was of benefit to them ...they gave us…a clean-all to put round our nose to stop the dust and fumes. The cloths were gauze…they were cut off a big roll...they put these round their face to keep the dust out…The cloths were not standard issue, but provided when necessary.[88]

By 1919 the Westwood Sanatorium, located about 50 kilometres south west of Mount Morgan, operated as an institution initially for the treatment of miner's phthisis. The Labor government initiative was so significant to the region that even the conservative *Morning Bulletin* lauded the support for miners by Mount Morganite MLA, James Stopford, and his untiring efforts to secure the new sanatorium.[89] Men in the advanced stages of the disease were removed to Westwood until the terminal illness claimed them. Ironically, that many were buried at the sanatorium cemetery suggests the official death statistics of Mount Morgan after 1919 did not include deaths at Westwood.

For the family whose breadwinner died in a mine accident, the posthumous status of the deceased brought respect and pity but did little to secure their future. Fear did not cease; rather, the family might be engulfed in the immediate threat of pauperism. In an era before workers' compensation, the Company paid an amount to the stricken family immediately, not only to provide for their immediate needs, but also to extricate the

---

[87] Summons, *Miners' phthisis*, p. 64.
[88] Shannon, 10 September 1992, MMOH.
[89] *MB*, 8 September 1919.

mine from further financial responsibility. Families with friendly society insurance received a small lump sum and 10s. per week. The press notice that urged support for a benefit football match to aid the widow of Willie Simmonds promoted town pride as much as financial aid for a disadvantaged family, reading 'Keep up the Mount's rep[sic] in this direction and come right along'. Noticeably, Mrs. Simmonds was not identified in the press when the benefit was arranged for her family, but referred to simply as 'the widow of Willie Simmonds.'[90]

The funereal celebration of burial, the presence of distraught families and other mourners brought the fact of death into the town milieu as Mount Morgan grieved publicly for residents who died in dreadful circumstances. By comparison, the death of a family member in war remained in the abstract, despite devastating shock when news



Fig. 27. Service at the Light, c. 1917. The Coronation Light, right centre, Union Jack unfurled, about fifteen men in military uniform, many others replacing their hats. Gathering includes mostly women and children. Services conducted at the Light preceded the customary march to churches for commemoration services. Note two banners: left, centre, the Methodist Sunday School, and Anglican at the edge of the crowd. Photographer stands on shop roof opposite.

[90]  *Critic*, 12 July 1907.

was received and, for family and others, a lasting sense of loss. With World War I providing the first national day of commemoration in 1916, the Anzac Day service at Mount Morgan was celebrated at the Coronation Light, a great gas standard on the corner of Morgan and East Streets. A revered medical practitioner and Scot, Dr. A.C. MacKenzie donated the Light to the town to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII. Soaring high from a three-tiered base, the Light became a gathering place for public remembrance or celebration.[91] Curiously, a funeral post stood at the street corner nearby. In later years, the Light and its space assumed a more democratic significance as a venue for political rallies and public debate.

The Mount Morgan experience was a drama of activity, accidents and attitudes in a town where every day at the mine meant confrontation with a workplace that coveted human life and limb. Conversely, for those in town, the outward normality of everyday existence masked an inward fear of the mine. Yet the spindle of society remained the family, protected - not by the Company - by the spiritual nourishment of obedient faith, church fellowship, the moral ethic and ritual of freemasonry and, most significantly, material 'care', however meagre, from associations and charity groups. Public pretence and language in defence of social survival did not mirror the real Mount Morgan, and whatever status the town possessed lay in the democratic rule of mateship that drove the collective attitude and actions of the men.

---

[91] Nessie Chardon and F.L. Golding, *Centenary of the town of Mount Morgan 1882-1982*, Rockhampton, 1982, p. 44.