

NOT TO BE RELEASED

9/1/80. R. B. Lib

McEWEN, Ellen Mary

Ph. D. Jan 1980

Restricted access.

until Jan. 10, 1981

The University of Sydney

Copyright in relation to this thesis*

Under the Copyright Act 1968 (several provisions of which are referred to below), this thesis must be used only under the normal conditions of scholarly fair dealing for the purposes of research, criticism or review. In particular no results or conclusions should be extracted from it and it should not be copied or closely paraphrased in whole or in part without the written consent of the author. Proper written acknowledgement should be made for any assistance obtained from this thesis.

Under Section 35(2) of the Copyright Act 1968-1976 (Commonwealth) the 'Author of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work is the owner of any copyright subsisting in the work'. By virtue of Section 32(1)(a) copyright 'subsists in an original literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work that is unpublished' and of which the author was an Australian citizen, an Australian protected person or a person resident in Australia.

The Act, by Section 36(1) provides: 'Subject to this Act, the copyright in a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work is infringed by a person who, not being the owner of the copyright and without the licence of the owner of the copyright, does in Australia, or authorises the doing in Australia of, any act comprised in the copyright'.

Section 31(1)(a)(i) provides that copyright includes the exclusive right to 'reproduce the work in a material form'. Thus, copyright is infringed by a person who, not being the owner of the copyright and without the licence of the owner of the copyright, reproduces or authorises the reproduction of a work, or of a substantial part of the work, in a material form, unless the reproduction is a 'fair dealing' with the work 'for the purpose of research or private study'.

Kenneth W. Knight
Registrar

* 'Thesis' includes 'treatise', 'dissertation' and other similar productions.

SUMMARY

In the late nineteenth century the northern coalfield of N.S.W. consisted largely of the present inner suburbs of Newcastle. At that time these were small colliery villages with an average population of about 4,000. The thesis examines the society that grew up in these newly formed towns from the standpoint of how far they were the close knit mining communities that coal towns always are in conventional wisdom.

The analysis seeks to determine how far this group of towns, collectively termed the Newcastle coalmining district, were communities by examining the principal activities, institutions and forces which operated in them. These are divided into the family, attempts to secure prosperity, local services and social security, leisure, religion, politics and the extent of geographical mobility. Three questions are asked of each institution, activity, or organizations within an activity, in order to indicate their possible contribution to the development of community. These are how far the institution or event contributed to the growth of a distinctive culture, to what extent it divided or drew together the population and how far the various institutions in the colliery townships contributed to an integrated system.

There is no doubt that the life style that developed in the Newcastle coalmining district was, because of the class composition and peculiar regional origins of the population in Britain, culturally distinctive. Small town size and the dominance of one occupation meant that there were either institutionalized or personal links between most activities and institutions. However, much of social life divided inhabitants on the basis of class, occupation, age, sex or religion. High geographical mobility meant few shared a common residence for long. In addition, the district was in transition from a system of social status based on old world patronage by the colliery manager to working-class self-help and independence. The co-existence of the two led to ambivalence and a fragmented status system. These divisive tendencies were counterbalanced by close family ties, which linked people in the same and neighbouring towns and from different classes, and the fact that many of those who moved house remained in the Newcastle coalmining district.

THE NEWCASTLE COALMINING DISTRICT OF NEW SOUTH WALES,
1860 - 1900

A thesis submitted to the department of history at
the University of Sydney in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Ellen M. McEwen

May 1979

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Theses are rarely written without help, inspiration and encouragement from others. This one is no exception. Dr. John Turner of the University of Newcastle gave advice and encouragement when I first conceived the topic and knew little about Newcastle, or N.S.W. My supervisors, associate professor K.J. Cable and Dr. Heather Radi provided the advice, criticism and encouragement necessary to complete this work.

It would have been impossible to undertake the thesis without help from the staffs of numerous public and private bodies who hold records pertaining to Newcastle. These include the Newcastle Public Library and Archives, the University of Newcastle Archives, the Australian National University Archives, the Archives Authority of N.S.W., Mitchell Library, the Uniting Church Records Society, Ferguson Memorial Library and Independent Order of Rechabites. I am particularly grateful to those individuals who went out of their way to find material for me. Mrs. Lillian McDonald and Mr. E.G. Clancy of the Uniting Church secured Methodist marriage registers, now kept with the records of the Registrar General's department, for me. Mrs. Gwen Hunter and Mrs. Bea Hodge made available notebooks in their possession. Miss Elsie Patrick gave generously of her time to discuss her childhood memories.

Special thanks are also due to those persons outside my own department at the University of Sydney who gave expert advice. Without the help and encouragement of Dr. T.W. Beed of the University of Sydney sample survey centre I could not have undertaken the analysis of marriage registers and electoral rolls which could only be done efficiently by computer. Mr. John Goodhew of the department of economic statistics, by making available the resources of his department, enabled me to interpret the voluminous material on wages systematically in the minimum amount of time. I also wish to thank Ms. Vivienne Milligan who applied the statistical package for the social sciences to my work with the sample survey centre. Finally, I must record my gratitude to Mr. Edgar Ford, who not only drew the maps and diagrams, but gave advice on how best to present them.

Since all of those who helped me either provided information which I interpreted, or gave advice on the basis of facts and interpretations I presented, full responsibility for any errors in this regard rests with me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
Acknowledgements	ii
List of tables	v
List of figures	x
List of plates	xii
A note on terms	xiii
Abbreviations	xiv
1 Introduction	1
2 Family, kin and neighbours	23
3 Prosperity	62
4 The politics of public services	107
5 Social welfare	147
6 Leisure	186
7 Mechanics Institutes	223
8 The churches	259
9 Politics	301
10 Mobility and identity	334
11 Conclusion	368
Appendices:	
1 Marriage register survey	382
11 The electoral roll survey	387
Bibliography	394

LIST OF TABLES

	page
1.1 Distribution of the adult male workforce in the Newcastle colliery townships, as shown on the electoral roll of 1894	9
1.2 Population of the N.C.D., 1861-1901	11
1.3 Population growth rates in the N.C.D., 1861-1901	11
1.4 Sizes of the Newcastle colliery townships in 1891	12
1.5 Origins of non native population in the N.C.D., 1861-1901	12
1.6 Birthplaces of English born in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	13
1.7 Colonial born in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., 1871-1901	13
1.8 British born in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., 1871-1901	13
1.9 The socio-economic hierarchy of the N.C.D. in 1871 and 1894	16
2.1 Population under 15 years: N.C.D., Sydney and country, 1861-1901	26
2.2 Population aged 45-49 never married: England and Wales, N.C.D., N.S.W. country and Sydney, 1871, 1891, 1901	26
2.3 Population married in the 20-24 age group: N.C.D., N.S.W., 1871-1901	29
2.4 Fertility ratios in N.S.W. and the N.C.D., 1861-1901	29
2.5 Married female fertility ratio: N.C.D., N.S.W., 1871-1901	30
2.6 Marriage market for N.C.D., Sydney, country, 1871-1901	32
2.7 Female employment in Newcastle, 1881-1900	36
2.8 Residence of husbands of brides from the colliery townships, 1860-1900	48
2.9 Kin and work groups among coalminers at certain collieries in the Newcastle district, 1871-1900	55
3.1 Birthplace of British born coalminers in the colliery townships, 1860-1900	65
3.2 Prices in N.S.W. and Newcastle for selected years	72
3.3 Estimated rent for a four bedroomed weatherboard house in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1862-1900	74
3.4 Variation in wages paid to miners at certain collieries in the Newcastle district, 1871-1900	80
3.5 Property owned by miners in certain municipalities in the 1890s	86
3.6 Trade per member of cooperative societies in Britain and the N.C.D. for selected years	91
3.7 Paid up shares per member for British and the Wallisend-Plattsburg cooperative societies	92
3.8 Retail cooperative societies in N.S.W. in 1898	94

3.9	Religious affiliations of members of cooperative societies in the N.C.D., 1880-1900	95
3.10	Electoral qualifications of all heads of households in the N.C.D. and those in cooperative societies, c. 1891	98
3.11	Occupational distribution of the workforce and cooperative society members in the N.C.D., 1870-1900	99
4.1	Rental value per acre of improved land in N.S.W. and N.C.D. in 1900	119
4.2	General rate per acre in N.S.W. municipalities in 1900	119
4.3	Occupational status of aldermen and mayors in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1871-1900	133
4.4	Electoral qualifications of heads of households in the N.C.D. and those in cooperative societies, c. early 1890s	135
4.5	Electoral qualifications of union officials in the N.C.D., 1875 and 1891	135
4.6	School board members in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1881-1900	137
4.7	Justices of the peace from the Newcastle colliery townships, c. 1875-1900	137
5.1	Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows: weeks of sickness per member in five yearly age groups in U.K., N.S.W., N.C.D. at the end of the nineteenth century	151
5.2	Accidents at Newcastle collieries, 1881-1900	152
5.3	Non-fatal injuries at Newcastle collieries, 1873-1900	155
5.4	Mortality among Manchester Unity members, N.S.W., N.C.D., 1879-1900	155
5.5	Friendly societies in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	160
5.6	Friendly society membership in certain colliery townships, 1891	164
5.7	Outdoor relief distributed by the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society, 1897-1898	170
5.8	Occupations of friendly society members in the N.C.D.	175
5.9	Occupations of husbands of members of the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society in 1895	177
5.10	Contributors to the Cooperative Colliery Family Relief Fund, 1891	181
6.1	Organized recreations in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	193
6.2	Popularity of different types of recreation in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	194
6.3	Commercial entertainment and benefit concerts in the colliery townships, 1871-1900	208
6.4	Occupation and involvement in organized leisure activities in the N.C.D., c. 1880-1900	215

6.5	Occupation and function in certain organized leisure activities in the N.C.D., c. 1880-1900	217
6.6	Involvement of colliery managers in organized recreation in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900	219
7.1	Reference works in Mechanics Institute libraries in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in the 1890s	231
7.2	Mechanics Institute membership per 100 inhabitants in the colliery townships for certain years, 1880-1900	231
7.3	Town size and Mechanics Institute membership: N.S.W. and the colliery townships in 1897	233
7.4	Occupations of members of Mechanics Institute committees in the Newcastle colliery townships: c. 1870-1900	234
7.5	Occupations of presidents and vice-presidents of Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900	236
7.6	Composition of the bourgeoisie on municipal councils and Mechanics Institute committees in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900	236
7.7	Works of fiction in Mechanics Institute libraries in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in the 1890s	239
7.8	Circulation of library books at Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. for certain years, 1876-1900	240
7.9	Newspapers and periodicals kept by Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900	242
7.10	Literacy among adult males and females in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	248
7.11	Religious affiliation of known church members on Mechanics Institute committees in the colliery townships, c. 1879-1900	250
7.12	Religious affiliation of known church members on certain Mechanics Institute committees in the N.C.D., 1871-1900	251
7.13	Voluntary associations and <i>ad hoc</i> groups using the Mechanics Institute buildings at Wallsend, Plattsburg, Hamilton and Merewether in 1886 and 1891	255
8.1	Religious adherence in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in 1891	262
8.2	British born in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in 1891	264
8.3	English born in the Methodist churches of the N.C.D., 1860-1900	264
8.4	Sunday attendance at the Anglican and Presbyterian churches of the N.C.D., 1871-1901	267
8.5	Accommodation and attendance at certain churches in the N.C.D. in the 1890s	268
8.6	Membership and communicants at churches in the N.C.D., 1871-1901	269
8.7	Church members and communicants in the N.C.D., c. 1900	270
8.8	Rank order of church membership and communicants in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., c. 1890-1900	271

8.9	Distribution of Sunday school enrolment and adherence among churches in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., c. 1890-1900	273
8.10	Religion and class in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	283
8.11	Class and commitment to churches in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	285
8.12	Sunday school teachers at Presbyterian churches in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	297
9.1	Electors as a proportion of those entitled to vote in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	311
9.2	Voter turnout in general elections in the late nineteenth century: N.C.D. and N.S.W.	312
9.3	Class and involvement in the campaigns of protectionist M.P.s in the Northumberland electorate to 1891	314
9.4	Voting and the major factions at general elections in the electorate of Northumberland in the 1880s	314
9.5	Class and involvement in the campaigns of free trade and protectionist candidates in the N.C.D. before 1894	316
9.6	Polling in the 1891 general election: electorate of Northumberland	320
9.7	Polling in the 1894 general election in the N.C.D.	320
9.8	Polling in the 1895 and 1898 general elections in the N.C.D.	323
9.9	Class and political allegiance in the N.C.D. before and after 1894	324
9.10	Voting at the federal referenda of 1898 and 1899 among electors in the N.C.D.	328
9.11	Class, occupation and attitude to the federation bill in the N.C.D. in 1898 and 1899	328
10.1	Miners employed in local pits in the N.C.D., 1870-1900	340
10.2	Miners living in the Newcastle colliery townships who worked at their local colliery, 1870-1900	340
10.3	Accident victims from the colliery townships working at inner city collieries in the 1880s and 1890s	345
10.4	Destinations of electors leaving Newcastle colliery townships for another part of Newcastle, 1875-90, 1881-90	359
10.5	Population movement and tenure in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1875-8, 1881-4	362
10.6	Residents remaining in the colliery townships who had freehold or leasehold tenure in 1890	363
A1.1	Marriages included in marriage register survey: denomination and decade	383
A1.2	Marriages recorded in the Newcastle colliery townships in the 1880s and the 1890s: civil registers and the surviving church registers	384

A1.3	Strength of the main denominations in the N.C.D. in the marriage register survey and the 1891 census	385
A2.1	Removal of those known to have died or left one of the Newcastle colliery townships within one year of the event	388

LIST OF FIGURES

	page
1.1 Principal towns in the Newcastle District, c. 1891	6
1.2 Main areas of settlement in the Newcastle coalmining district, c. 1891	7
2.1 Crude birth rates in the Newcastle mining district and the rest of N.S.W. from 1876 to 1900	28
2.2 Intermarriage in the Newcastle colliery townships: 1860-1900	47
2.3 Occupations of the sons of manual workers in the Newcastle coalmining district, 1860-1900	50
2.4 Occupation of the men married by the daughters of manual workers in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	50
2.5 Occupations of the men married by daughters of the bourgeoisie in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	51
2.6 Father's occupation of women married by men with bourgeois occupations in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	51
2.7 Occupation of sons of the bourgeoisie in the N.C.D., 1860-1900	52
3.1 Money wages of miners in the Newcastle district, 1862-1900	68
3.2 Hewing rates, days worked and wages in Newcastle collieries: 1870-1900	69
3.3 Real wages of miners in Newcastle: 1862-1900	76
3.4a Weekly cost of living and average miners' wages in the N.C.D., 1862-1900	78
3.4b Weekly cost of living and average wages, minus the standard deviation: 1862-1900	78
3.4c Weekly cost of living for a family with one extra dependent and average miner's wages in the N.C.D., 1862-1900	81
3.4d Weekly cost of living and average wages plus the standard deviation in the N.C.D., 1862-1900	84
3.4e Weekly cost of living (less rent) and average wages in the N.C.D., 1862-1900	84
3.5 Land and housing investment by miners	87
3.6 Wages of coal miners and certain non unionized mine labourers in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century	97
4.1 Coal properties and municipalities in Newcastle district, c. 1890	115
4.2 Average capital value of all rateable property in the incorporated townships of the N.C.D. in the 1890s	129

4.3	Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Adamstown, 1900	140
4.4	Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Lambton, 1900	141
4.5	Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Merewether, 1900	142
4.6	Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Wallsend-Plattsburg, 1900	143
5.1	Proportion of Manchester Unity members sick in N.S.W. and the N.C.D., 1879-1900	150
5.2	Days sick per member of the Manchester Unity in N.S.W. and the N.C.D., 1879-1900	150
8.1	Churches in the Newcastle colliery townships in 1900	261
10.1	Pit location (major workings) in Newcastle: 1860-1900	337
10.2	Distribution of underground colliery employment and miners in Newcastle in 1894 and 1900	338
10.3a	Work places of union officials in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1871-1880	342
10.3b	Work place of accident victims living in Newcastle colliery townships: 1881-1890	343
10.3c	Work places of accident victims living in Newcastle colliery townships: 1891-1900	344
10.4	Population movement from the Newcastle colliery townships	357
10.5	Population movement from the Newcastle district	357
10.6	Population movement in areas of the N.C.D. with or without security of tenure: 1875-1900	361
10.7	Class, occupation and physical mobility in the N.C.D., 1894-1900	364
11.1	Relationship between various institutions and agencies in the Newcastle colliery townships in the late nineteenth century	373

LIST OF PLATES

	between pages
I The collieries	18 and 19
II Housing	82 and 83
III Houses of the rich	103 and 104
IV The townships	122 and 123
V First miners' picnic committee	195 and 196
VI Hotels of the colliery townships	200 and 201
VII Poster for benefit concert	205 and 206
VIII Mechanics Institutes	253 and 254

A NOTE ON TERMS

The need to distinguish between the Newcastle area generally and the areas in which most of the male workforce were coalminers meant certain words had to be given specific meanings. The appellations 'Newcastle', 'Newcastle district' and 'Newcastle area' refer to the whole of Newcastle which, by the end of the century, stretched from Stockton to West Wallsend and Teralba and Belmont. 'Newcastle coalmining district', 'the colliery townships' and 'the mining towns' denote the area which is the subject of the thesis. 'Elsewhere in Newcastle' refers to those parts of Newcastle that were not classified as colliery townships.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.A.G.	Annals of the Association of American Geographers
A.A.Co.	Australian Agricultural Company.
AEHR	Australian Economic History Review
AMHS, J&P	Australasian Methodist Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings
ANUA	Australian National University Archives
B.N.E.	Board of National Education
C/E	Church of England
Col.Sec.	Colonial Secretary
CI.Ed.	Council of Education
Dept.Ed.	Department of Education
F.L.	Fisher Library, University of Sydney
FML	Ferguson Memorial Library
GUOFG	Grand United Order of Free Gardeners
GUOOF	Grand United Order of Oddfellows
HRD Minutes	Minutes of the Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association of the Hunter River District
H.S.	Historical Studies
IOOF	Independent Order of Oddfellows of N.S.W.
Jnl.L.C.	Journal of the Legislative Council of N.S.W.
JRAHS	Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society
L.M.	Lay Methodist
M.A.	Miner's Advocate and Northumberland Recorder
M.L.	Mitchell Library
MUIOOF	Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows
N.C.	Newcastle Chronicle
N.C.C.	Newcastle Coalmining Company
N.C.D.	Newcastle coalmining district
N.M.H.	Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate
NPL	Newcastle Public Library
NPLA	Newcastle Public Library Archives
NUA	Newcastle University Archives
N.S.W.A.A.	N.S.W. Archives Authority
N.S.W.P.D.	N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates
N.S.W.P.L.	N.S.W. Public Library
N.S.W.S.R.	N.S.W. Statistical Register
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers of N.S.W.

PAF Soc.	Protestant Alliance Friendly Society
PLL	Political Labour League
P.M.	Primitive Methodist
R.C.	Roman Catholic
SAMCo.	Scottish Australian Mining Company
Tech.Ed.correspondence	Correspondence of the Department of Technical Education
TLC	Trades and Labour Council
UCRS	Uniting Church Records Society
UFM	United Free Methodist
V&PLA	Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W.
W&PSun	Wallsend and Plattsburg Sun
W&B.I.C.C.	Wickham and Bullock Island Coal Company

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Subject

This thesis is about the kind of social organization that developed in the Newcastle Coalmining District (N.C.D.) of N.S.W. between 1860 and 1900. Briefly it asks how far towns on this coal-field were the 'close-knit communities' that studies of coal towns today and popular tradition would have us believe.

Today the word community is part of public opinion jargon, constantly on the lips of politicians, journalists, trade unionists and other pressure group leaders. We hear of the 'business community', 'Australian community', 'Italian community', 'university community', 'the community' and 'the community at such and such a place'. Although most of these usages are roughly consistent with the Oxford English Dictionary definition of a community as a group of people living in the same place or with a common way of life, the use of community to describe such diverse entities as pressure groups, ethnic minorities, local inhabitants and nations makes one wonder if the term has become anything more than a general synonym for any form of human association. This suspicion that the word has lost its original connotation of a group of people living in the same place is confirmed by the journalist who referred to 'the parish community' when reporting on church schools¹. Such widespread use of the word to describe so many categories of people makes a clear statement of the meaning of 'community' in this thesis imperative.

Whilst popular usage has given community an increasingly general application, social scientists have narrowed its meaning. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rapid changes in the social order, because of industrialization and urbanization, led sociologists to believe we were in transition from one kind of human association to another. The breakdown of kinship and neighbourhood ties, decline of traditional values in governing behaviour and emergence of a highly mobile, urbanized life style, in which voluntary associations related to specific interests served most human needs, resulted in the postulation of two opposing forms of human association, community and

1. see article by Paul Kelly in *The National Times*, 10 Ap. 1978.

society. The former described small rural populations, linked together by kinship and common residence, whilst 'society' referred to large cities, where mobility was too high for kin or neighbourhood groups to develop and the population too large for them to coordinate inhabitants and their needs efficiently. Generally, communities were acclaimed as the more satisfactory kind of human association, because of the many close links between people. The warmth and sense of belonging in small traditional groups was contrasted with lonely, busy cities.

Contemporary social studies have found the community-society dichotomy inadequate. Traditional ascriptive groupings like caste and tribe have been mobilized in support of modern political parties. Voluntary associations in the city have been found to lead to informal relationships which may well end in ties of blood. Old kinship ties, far from being cut, have been the means of survival on migration to cities. Moreover, many city areas have, over a generation of close living, developed a strong sense of identity and close ties of kinship². Thus community has lost its exclusive relationship with rural areas and the concept is now applied to suburbs of cities or large towns. Community and society have become 'ideal-types', characteristics of which may appear in any area. This conceptual shift has also involved a subtle change in meaning so that community refers to highly cohesive and society to wider, less closely knit human associations.

Therefore, to say that a town is close-knit implies that it is also a community, whether the links be forged through the traditional ties of family and neighbourhood, a highly integrated set of voluntary associations, or a combination of all three³. Our study of the Newcastle

-
2. e.g., Joseph R. Gusfield, *Community, a critical response* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 67-81. P.H. Mann, *An approach to urban sociology* (London, 1965), p. 99. P.M. Hauser, 'Observations on the urban-folk and urban-rural dichotomies as forces in western ethnocentrism', in P.M. Hauser and L.F. Schnore (eds.), *The study of urbanization* (N.Y., 1965), p. 509. M. Anderson, *Family structure in nineteenth century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 153-62. P. Willmott and M. Young, *Family and kinship in east London* (London, 1960).
 3. Examples of studies taking such an approach are: Ruth Durant, *Watling, a survey of social life on a new housing estate* (London, 1939); M. Stacey, *Tradition and change, a study of Banbury* (Oxford, 1960).

colliery townships in the late nineteenth century, then, is an examination of the relationships between inhabitants. Its theme is how far the area developed institutions and customs which gave it a common way of life and how far these, along with social and economic characteristics, drew people together, or divided them into conflicting groups. Although it is difficult to assess a variety of qualitative factors, some attempt will be made to work out whether or not the society that had evolved in the Newcastle colliery townships by 1900 was, on balance, united or divided. This will include observations on how far the different colliery townships in the area developed a distinctive and cohesive society that united them all.

2. The Area

In 1798 Lieutenant Shortland discovered the Hunter River, at the mouth of which the city of Newcastle now stands, and reported the presence of coal outcrops. Three years later Governor King surveyed the coal deposits, declared them crown land and set up a penal colony to work this valuable resource. The settlement failed and withdrew. A few years after, in 1804, a convict riot at Castle Hill made the Governor look around for a suitably isolated place to set up a penal settlement for especially difficult prisoners. Accordingly, the colony at Newcastle was reestablished. It survived as a convict settlement until 1821, when the convicts were removed to Port Macquarie and Newcastle declared a free city. The exploitation of the coal deposits remained in government hands for want of people fit to lease them. In 1827 the Australian Agricultural Company (A.A.Co.) was given sole rights to work the Newcastle coal deposits for 31 years. Over the next decade it successfully worked deposits close to the port and lifted production from 780 tons in 1829 to 30,265 tons in 1840⁴.

The success of the A.A.Co. in coalmining encouraged others to look to the coalfields as a source of profit and to agitate for removal of its monopoly. In defiance of the law collieries were established at Minmi and on the Burwood Estate, which eventually formed part of the town of Merewether. This was the beginning of

4. M.T. Daly, "The Urban Pattern of Newcastle", *A.E.H.R.*, V. 10(1976), p. 191.

the Newcastle coalmining district as it developed in the late nineteenth century. The next few decades saw the foundation of the other main colliery townships. Exploitation of the coal outcrops had, by the 1850s, moved out of the coastal area and shafts were sunk at Pit Town or Happy Flat, which became the town of Hamilton. The end of the A.A.Co.'s monopoly in 1851 led to the formation of companies to explore the coal seams west of Hamilton. In the early 1860s this culminated in the foundation of collieries and settlements at Waratah, Wallsend and Lambton. In 1862 miners set up the Cooperative colliery on Platt's estate next to the Wallsend Company's town. This mine produced Wallsend's rival, Plattsburg. In 1867 J. and A. Brown, exploiting the success of the Scottish Australian Mining Company (SAMCo) at Lambton, established the New Lambton Colliery a mile south of Lambton.

By the 1870s, then, there were eight settlements based on coalmining around Newcastle: Minmi, Hamilton, Wallsend, Plattsburg, Lambton, New Lambton, Burwood (later Merewether) and Waratah. Between Hamilton, Lambton, New Lambton and Waratah lay the Newcastle pasturage reserve or commonage, on which there was dispersed settlement. Miners and their families squatted on the crown land where it bordered on the mining towns because there was not enough accommodation for them in the towns. The area remained crown land until the late 1880s when the government decided to auction it off to squatters and others. Its residents were officially attached to the town close by. In the 1850s a tiny settlement called Junction emerged on the border of the Newcastle Coal and Copper and A.A.Companies' properties. The inhabitants worked in the Burwood pits. Later most of Junction was incorporated in the municipality of Hamilton, but its social and employment links were with Merewether, only a mile away (figure 1.2).

The area which constituted the N.C.D. in 1870 changed little until the early twentieth century. The opening up of the Greta seam saw heavy outmigration of miners and the establishment of B.H.P. changed the colliery townships into industrial suburbs. Coalminers remained the largest occupational group in the male workforce in the nineteenth century. This marked the colliery townships proper from the industrial suburbs of Wickham and Carrington and the port. In

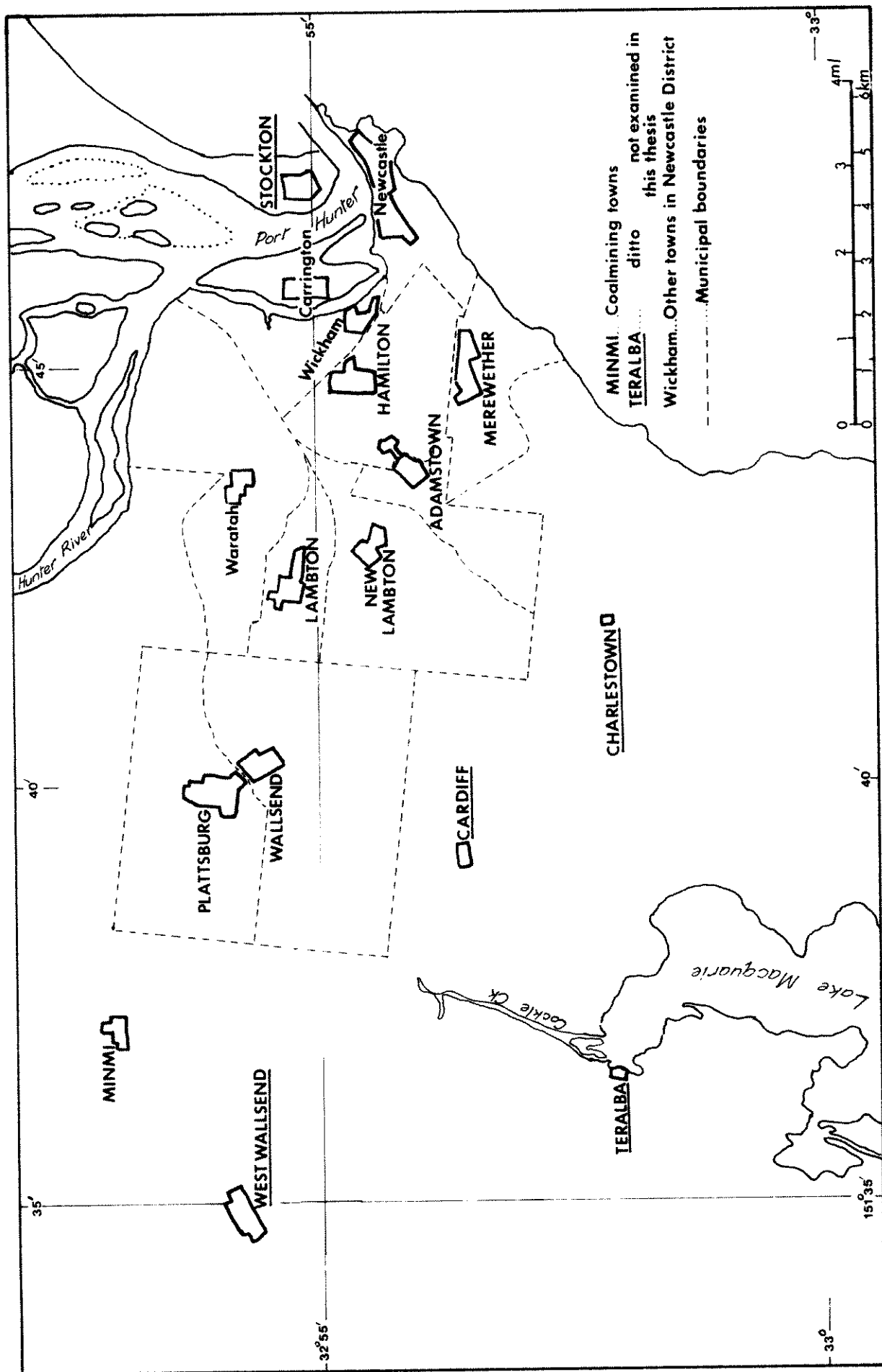


Fig. 1-1 Principal towns in the Newcastle District, c. 1891

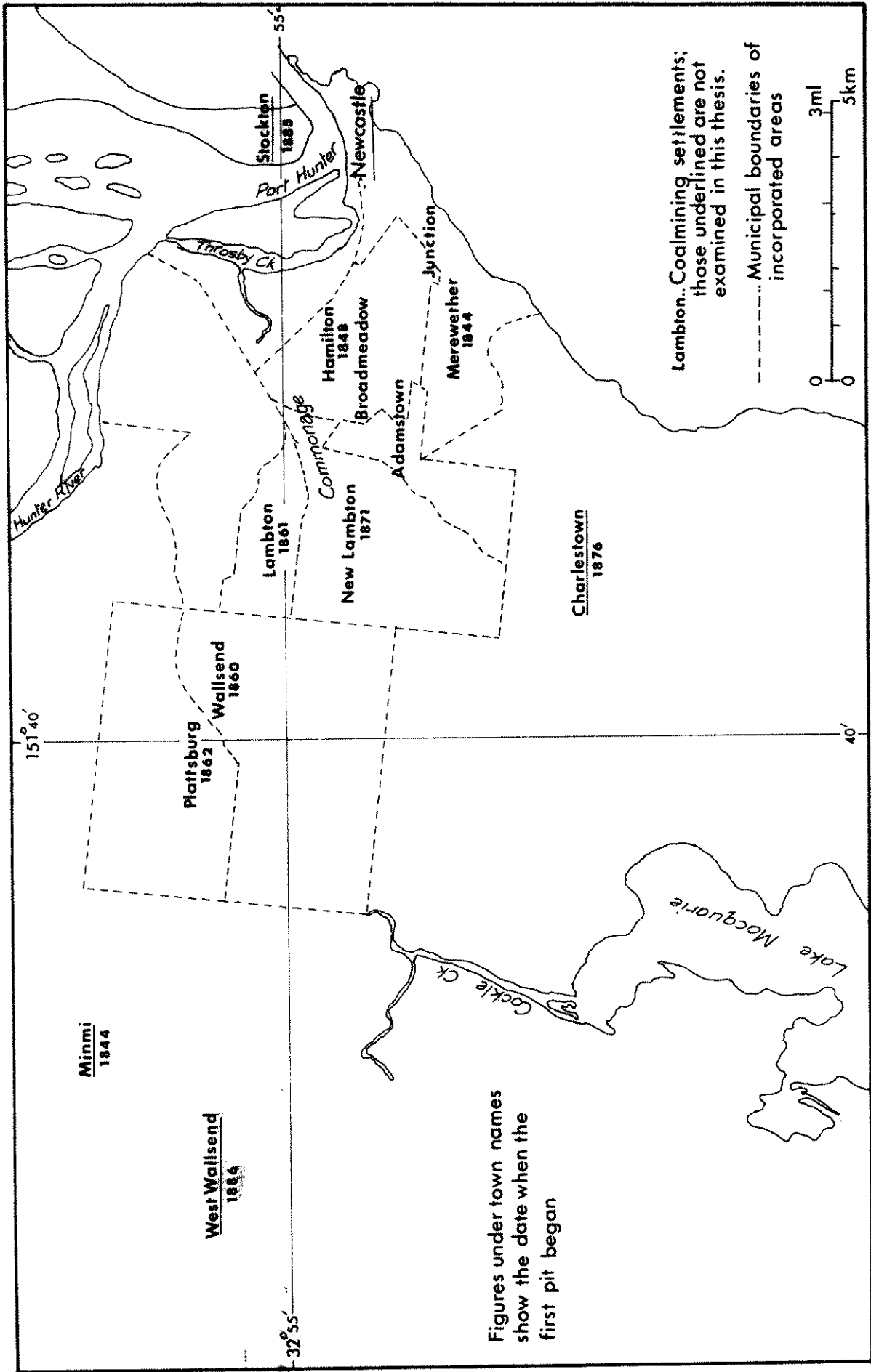


Fig. 1-2 Main areas of settlement in the Newcastle Coalmining District, c.1891

the 1880s, with the movement in pit location from outcrops west of Newcastle to the deeper measures under the sea, these towns acquired collieries and coalminers. However, they were never dominated by coal mining. Exceptions to the stability of the N.C.D., as it existed in 1870, were the decline of Waratah and emergence of Adamstown in the late 1870s. By 1875 the Waratah pits were worked out and the town was left to become a residential suburb with some industrial and agricultural functions. Waratah's decline signalled the growth of Adamstown, a private subdivision, in response to the Waratah Company's proposed sinking of a shaft close by. Although the plans failed, the opening of the Newcastle Coalmining Company's (N.C.C.) pits at Merewether and the A.A.Co's Hamilton pit between Hamilton, Merewether and Adamstown in the late 1870s provided employment⁵. Whilst not founded on a colliery, Adamstown, like the other towns in the N.C.D., had a workforce engaged principally in coal mining (table 1.1). At the end of the period, a thickening of population on the Hamilton commonage produced the settlement of Broadmeadow, part of Hamilton municipality, but on its borders with New Lambton and Adamstown.

The expansion of mining operations in the 1880s led to the development of many more colliery townships. West Wallsend, Charlestown and Stockton were all thriving by the 1890s. These three settlements have not been included because they are unsuited to intensive study. Stockton, originally a shipping and industrial town, did not acquire a colliery and become dominated by those engaged in coalmining until 1885. West Wallsend and Charlestown were too small for much to be written about them or any detailed census material to have been published. This is not to say that they were not part of the N.C.D., or should not be mentioned when known to display the same characteristics, but that individual studies of them would yield little information in most cases and, where it did, would generally confirm conclusions based on a study of the older or more substantial mining towns.

Our study of the N.C.D., then, deals with the eight major towns which, from the 1870s to 1900, had coalmining as the modal occupation:

5. *M.A.*, 1 Sept. 1875.

Table 1.1

Distribution of adult male workforce in the Newcastle colliery townships,
as shown on the electoral roll of 1894.

Occupational Category	Town (%)							
	Adamstown (N=468)	Hamilton (N=1142)	Lambton (N=729)	Merewether (N=1004)	Minmi (N=556)	New Lambton (N=338)	Plattsburg (N=712)	WallSEND (N=844)
Professional	1	6	3	1	2	1	4	4
Business	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1
Shopkeeping	7	15	10	7	7	4	13	9
Clerical	1	1	0.1	0.3	0	0	0.3	0.1
Skilled	10	18	8	9	6	11	10	8
Miner	64	31	65	58	69	71	57	62
Unskilled	14	18	12	23	16	13	15	15

Note: Electoral rolls had to be used because the 1891 census did not give occupational breakdown
by municipality.

Source: *Electoral roll of N.S.W., 1894.*

Adamstown, Hamilton, Lambton, Merewether, Minmi, Wallisend and Plattsburg and two minor settlements, Junction and Broadmeadow, within the Hamilton municipal boundaries.

3. The People

From the 1860s to the late 1880s there was a stream of new settlers to the N.C.D. In 1861 there were under 4,000 people but by 1890 numbers had increased more than six fold to nearly 26,000 (table 1.2). The rate of increase was not steady. Table 1.3 shows that whilst the annual growth rate was 6 to 8 per cent in the 1860s and 1880s, it was 13 per cent in the 1870s. That is, population more than doubled over the decade. The depression of the 1890s, coupled with the gradual working out of the oldest pits, almost put a complete stop to growth in that decade. Population increased at only 0.5 per cent a year. Indeed, some towns fell in size. This overall small increase actually masks the heavy outmigration of this decade. Natural increase was 6,709. Thus the net increase in the 1901 census hides an outmigration of over 8,000⁶.

Town size varied considerably, but no one town dominated the area. By 1891 Adamstown, Minmi and New Lambton had 1500 to 2500, Hamilton and Merewether over 4000 and Lambton, Plattsburgh and Wallisend about 3500 (table 1.4). Thus no town contained as much as 20 per cent of the population. The N.C.D. consisted of a number of small settlements, usually a mile or two apart, which were at most large villages.

The people who came to the N.C.D. were almost entirely from the British Isles (table 1.5). Their regional origins within Britain were diverse. In 1891 a quarter of British born were from Scotland, nearly 10 per cent from Wales and 7 per cent from Ireland. Although the rest came from England, some regions were more strongly represented than others. Table 1.6 shows about 40 per cent were from the counties of Northumberland and Durham, which contained the largest coalfield

6. Calculated from *N.S.W.S.R.* (vital statistics volume), 1891-1900.

Table 1.2Population of the N.C.D., 1861-1901

<u>Date</u>	<u>Population</u>
1861	3934
1871	6956
1881	15,933
1891	25,787
1901	27,179

Note: 1881 is an estimate. Most of the 1881 census was destroyed by fire before results were compiled.

Source: *Census of N.S.W., 1861-1901.*

Table 1.3Population growth rates in the N.C.D., 1861-1901

<u>Period</u>	<u>Rate of Growth (%)</u>	
	<u>per decade</u>	<u>per year</u>
1861-71	76.8	7.7
1871-81	129	13.0
1881-91	61.8	6.2
1891-1901	5.4	0.5

Note: Rates calculated arithmetically.

Source: *Census of N.S.W., 1861-1901.*

Table 1.4Sizes of Newcastle colliery townships in 1891

Town	Population
Adamstown	2030
Hamilton	4844
Lambton	3436
Merewether	4339
Minmi	2595
New Lambton	1598
Plattsburg	3301
Wallsend	3644

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.

Table 1.5Origins of non native population in the N.C.D., 1861-1901

	Census Year			
	1861	1871	1891	1901
Birthplace	(N=2457)	(N=3121)	(N=8669)	(N=6252)
Britain	95	96	97	95
Elsewhere	5	4	3	5

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1861, 71, 91, 1901.

Table 1.6Birth places of English born in the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Birthplace	No.	%
Northumberland/Durham	222	41
Staffordshire	61	11
Cornwall	33	6
Elsewhere	227	42

Source: Marriage register survey, 1860-1900.

Table 1.7Colonial born in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., 1871-1901

Area	Colonial Born (%)		
	1871	1891	1901
N.C.D.	53	62	78
N.S.W.	61	72	81

Note: Colonial born includes those born in New Zealand.

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

Table 1.8British born in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., 1871-1901

Area	British Born (%)		
	1871	1891	1901
N.C.D.	45	36	25
N.S.W.	35	24	17

Note: British born refers to those born in British Isles.

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

in England at that time. Therefore, there were at least four definite regional groups at a time when definite regional cultures still existed in Britain: the Scots, Irish, Welsh and Geordies.

The heavy migration to the area until the 1890s meant that the proportion of British born was much higher than in N.S.W. as a whole. Table 1.7 shows that the number of Australian born increased from about half to three quarters of the population from 1871 to 1901. However, until the end of the century the proportion of Australian born in the colliery townships was about 10 per cent less than in the colony as a whole. That one of the peak periods of immigration to N.S.W. occurred between 1871 and 1891 meant that the proportion of Australian born increased by only 10 per cent over these 20 years. The cessation of migration and, indeed, outmigration in the 1890s rendered natural increase almost the sole contributor to population growth. In these circumstances, the proportion of Australian born in the whole of N.S.W. grew twice as fast, that is, by 10 per cent, in the next decade. In the N.C.D. it grew by 16 per cent.

Even though the proportion of Australian born in the N.C.D. came close to that for N.S.W., the influence of the British born remained stronger. Table 1.8 shows that to 1891 the proportion of British born in N.S.W. was at least 10 per cent less than in the N.C.D. However, while the proportions of Australian born in the colliery townships and colony were almost equal by 1901, British born were still 9 per cent more of the N.C.D. population in 1901⁷. Throughout the period the British born were more numerous than in the rest of the colony. Their influence was correspondingly stronger.

Religion was closely tied to regional cultures. Nearly half the British born Primitive Methodists were Geordies, 62 per cent of the Presbyterians were Scottish born and 53 per cent of the Roman Catholics were Irish⁸. The Welsh, most of whom still spoke their

7. The higher proportion of British born in the N.C.D. in the face of increasing numbers of Australian born was due to the higher proportion of persons born elsewhere in N.S.W. than in the N.C.D.

8. Calculated from marriage register survey.

native tongue as their first language, had their own churches. Regional cultural divisions were also religious divisions.

The dependence of the district on one industry made for a simple occupational structure. The colliery workforce consisted of miners, who hewed the coal, labourers and other semiskilled workers, who loaded the coal and worked the mine machinery, and skilled tradesmen, who attended to machinery in the colliery workshops. This distribution of labour dominated the occupational structure of individual towns and the district. Over half the workforce were miners, 10 to 20 per cent labourers and about 11 per cent were skilled tradesmen. In all about 85 per cent were manual workers. In addition there was the non-manual colliery staff: the colliery manager, the clerks who worked in the office and the other mining officials, who supervised operations above and below ground. A small service population provided for the needs of those engaged in mining and their families. They included professionals, such as lawyers and teachers, bank managers, master tradesmen and shopkeepers.

Each occupational group had a particular place in a social hierarchy (table 1.9), which was determined by its prestige, power and relation to the means of production, distribution and exchange. Essentially, these characteristics resolved themselves into a division between prestigious professionals, or property owning employers, and employees in manual jobs.

At the top was the professional class. The principal person in this small group was the colliery manager who, although an employee, was, as the company's representative, highly paid, highly qualified and exerted considerable power over the colliery workers. This power extended to the service population where the colliery company owned all the land in the town. Also in this group were the professionals who served the local population: teachers, clergymen, the doctor, lawyer and police magistrate. Members of parliament were added to this group in the 1890s, when local men were elected to parliament. Below the true professionals were the prosperous businessmen, who ran small scale manufacturing establishments like cordial factories,

Table 1.9The socio-economic hierarchy of the N.C.D. in 1871 and 1894

Occupations are those of the male workforce.

Position in Hierarchy	Occupations included	Year	
		1871 N=2200	1894 N=5848
I	Professions, independent means	2	3
II	Managers, manufacturers, large businessmen	0	1
III	Shopkeepers, publicans, agents	11	11
IV	Clerks, shop assistants, overmen	1	0.5
V	Tradesmen, working foremen	9	10
VI	Miner	67	57
VII	Semi-skilled, labourer	9	18

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871.*Electoral roll of N.S.W.*, 1894.

tradesmen with large establishments, such as contractors, and other salaried employees, like bank managers. This group did not exist in 1871 and was only about 1 per cent of the work force in 1894. Most of those providing services in the town were small shopkeepers and their like: publicans, grocers, greengrocers, butchers⁹, ironmongers and booksellers. Although their occupations were not prestigious, and often did not provide a very high income, they involved the ownership of property, non-manual work and often employer status.

The lowest group were the labourers, who were paid the poorest wages and did heavy manual work that involved no special skill. They were strongly despised by the miners who were just above them. Although they did heavy manual work, miners were more skilled. They also drew considerable prestige from working underground in dangerous conditions. Many must have thought themselves equal to the skilled tradesmen who, because of their long apprenticeship, stood above them. Between the non-manual population, who, for want of any better term, will be referred to as bourgeois or middle-class, and the definitely working-class manual workers, was an intermediate category. It consisted of clerical workers, shop assistants, minor colliery officials, such as overmen, and public servants, like the postmaster and policeman. Whilst all were employees, they were not manual workers. Clerks and public servants did not get their hands dirty, wore collars and ties and did not do dangerous work. As a result, they considered themselves above the blue-collar employees, who confirmed their status by moving into such occupations themselves, or encouraging their children to do so. The minor colliery officials were the equivalent of foremen, but they were highly skilled, held exceptional responsibility and no longer dirtied their hands. The mixed status of this group put them either at the bottom of the bourgeoisie or the top of the working class.

4. The Sources

The social history of a non-metropolitan area of N.S.W. in the late nineteenth century poses considerable problems in terms of source

9. Butchers are a skilled group, but those in the N.C.D. were mostly self-employed. They also had to be wealthy, since they maintained their own slaughter yards.

materials. The smaller the area, the harder it is to find statistical and literary information about its inhabitants. These problems are made more difficult for the N.C.D. because of its working-class character. Few people had the leisure to write personal letters. Still less thought they, or even more formal records, were worth preserving for posterity.

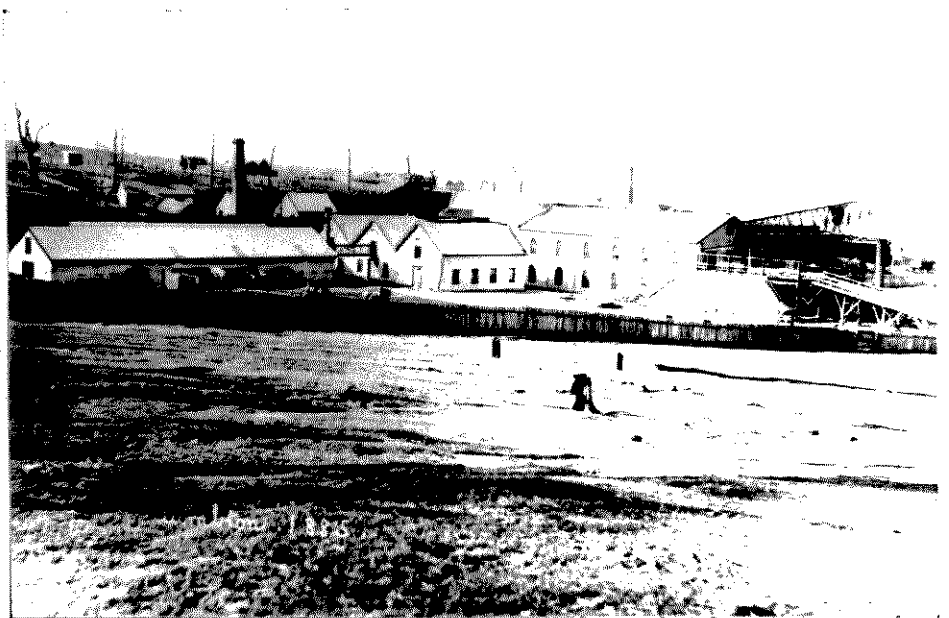
This does not mean it is impossible to write the history of such an area. Electoral rolls, parish registers and census material are reasonable. So, too, are church records. Much of the source material is statistical and a matter of reading between the lines. The people themselves rarely spoke. The N.C.D. also has several advantages which make the source material richer than usual for rural areas.

As a coalmining district, it was a problem area. The dangers of mining led to state intervention through legislation from the 1860s. Strikes, which disrupted trade, manufacturing and domestic life in the colony, by halting the supply of fuel, were a major cause for concern. As a result, probably more was written about those engaged in coalmining than any other part of the economy. In many enquiries the people speak for themselves. Because the district was engaged in coalmining, big companies with large amounts of capital and a hierarchy of officials were involved. Their size meant the volumes of correspondence and other records were more likely to be kept. A few have survived the mass destruction that often results when companies run out of space.

From 1871 the Newcastle area was served by at least one twice or thrice weekly newspaper. From 1881 the *Newcastle Morning Herald* (N.M.H.) was produced daily. This paper was not notable for its reporting of and comment on international and colonial affairs. Although it did this, most inhabitants could get such information elsewhere. Its real reason for existence was to report on local affairs. This it did through advertizements, correspondents' reports from the various settlements in the area and publicizing local opinions through letters to the editor. Now the N.C.D. was a major part of Newcastle. The N.M.H., as the *Miners' Advocate*, had started at Wallsend in 1874. It retained its following from and feel for the



WallSEND, 1870



Lambton,
1885



Glebe, 1888

mining towns when it moved to Newcastle¹⁰. The details of everyday life recorded in this paper are a rich source of information. In fact, it was so voluminous that detailed reading had to be restricted to certain years¹¹. Thus much of the material for this study is fact or inference drawn from newspapers, be it the situations vacant, death notices, advertizements for coming events, reports of life in the townships, letters to the editor, or feature articles.

5. The Approach

The people who settled in the N.C.D. were largely of British stock. Since they were from all parts of Britain they had different regional and religious backgrounds. The population was also divided according to socio-economic status. For a close-knit society, or community, to grow up, these fundamental cleavages between inhabitants, as well as the normal ones of sex and age, had to be overcome. This was possible in three ways.

First, inhabitants could develop standard arrangements through primary groups, such as kin and neighbours, or through formal voluntary associations, to cope with common problems. D. Martindale had argued that this is fundamental to the development of community. It involves three processes: the establishment or 'stabilization' of customs which solve the various problems related to the common needs of inhabitants, the resolution of any conflicts which may arise between the practices which have been established and the forging of links between the various institutions¹². Quite clearly such an integrated system of arrangements, where different aspects of the whole are

10. For a discussion of the character of the M.A. see J.D. Moody, 'The development of the newspaper press in Newcastle, 1855-1900, and its social and political attitudes' (M.A. Thesis, University of Newcastle, 1971), pp. 57-67.

11. All editions of the N.M.H. in 1875 (M.A.), 1881, 1891 and 1900 were read, as well as 1861, 1862 and 1871 of its forerunner, the *Newcastle Chronicle* (N.C.). The 1886, 1891 and 1895 editions of the *Wallsend and Plattsburgh Sun* (W&PSun) were also read in detail.

12. D. Martindale, 'The formation and destruction of communities', in G.K. Zoltschan and W. Hersch (eds.), *Explorations in Social Change* (London, 1964), pp. 69-74.

related to each other, without gaps or duplication of functions, would unite inhabitants, by giving them a common way of life. On the other hand, if inhabitants developed a variety of conflicting customs and groups to cope with common needs, which duplicated each others' functions, then one could say people did not share a common way of life.

A common way of life, the various parts of which are integrated into a system, is not the only means of encouraging the development of a united society. If the customs and habits which made up this integrated system were different from those practised in the rest of the colony they would give individual towns, or, if shared by all mining towns, the district, a distinctive culture. Social and economic differences, such as the occupation and incomes of inhabitants, would also contribute to a distinctive way of life. These differences would create solidarity among inhabitants by emphasizing the ways in which they differed from outsiders. However, if the characteristics of the area were largely the same as, or aspects of it of similar significance, in other areas of the new land, a sense of solidarity based on sharing the same culture would be of little significance in the development of community.

The social relations involved in carrying out collective arrangements may or may not involve face-to-face relationships between persons otherwise divided by age, sex, religion, ethnicity or socio-economic status. If these arrangements separated, or did not draw together, people of the same sex, age, religious or ethnic background, or social class, they would emphasize rather than minimize these divisions. Segregation on the basis of these differences need not detract from cohesion where they are accepted, such as in the Indian caste system. However, most of those who have looked at western society have taken them into account when studying towns and villages as communities. Their importance to the development or otherwise of community depends on how easily definable they are and the strength of other factors encouraging cohesion.

For example, in a study of a small town on the Welsh border, Alwyn D. Rees observed that although the people were united by a

relatively inclusive kinship system, they were divided in terms of class and religion. However, even here 'the dominant cleavages were few and the edges of groups blurred'¹³. This situation contrasts markedly with the larger towns of Glossop and Banbury in England. In the former voluntary associations did not cut across status groups, except in the women's associations¹⁴. M. Stacey found the recreational and social life of Banbury was built around political and religious divisions, so that different groups rarely confronted each other in informal situations. The working-class had their own set of voluntary associations, which had no contact with those of other classes. The occupational-status frontier bisected the whole world of voluntary associations. Religion and politics also determined membership of leisure associations. For instance, the Anglican/Conservative group was associated with a wide range of sporting interests, while the Free Church/Liberal group had little concern for sport, but was very interested in cultural activities. For this and other reasons Stacey concluded that Banbury was not a community¹⁵.

There are other factors which will also influence the development of community. The existence of strong ties of kinship and neighbourhood must contribute to a sense of unity, especially if they involve strong social and economic relationships. Population turnover is also important. A stable population will facilitate the development of a common way of life and the establishment of kin and neighbourhood ties. It also permits shared experiences, which will give people a sense of unity. If people are constantly moving, neighbourhood ties and a sense of belonging are impossible. Any kinship ties that are formed are likely to be disrupted by movement from the town or district.

Three kinds of institutions and influences shape the growth or otherwise of a close-knit society. These are primary relations, the voluntary associations and other arrangements which may develop in response to local needs, and mobility. The study will start by examining the nature of primary relations. Chapters three to nine will look at the way of life which developed in the colliery town-

13. Quoted in R. Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain* (Penguin, 1966), p. 57.

14. *ibid.*, p. 146.

15. *ibid.*, pp. 165, 172. M. Stacey, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 168-9.

ships and its contribution to the development of a distinctive culture, the bridging of fundamental cleavages and emergence of a common life style. Chapter ten will examine the extent of geographical movement within and out of the colliery townships and the wider Newcastle district.

CHAPTER TWO

FAMILY, KIN AND NEIGHBOURS

This chapter examines the nature and functions of primary groups: family, kin and neighbours, in the Newcastle colliery townships. Late nineteenth century sociologists saw these as the basis of communities. They claimed that with increasing urbanization, which involved migration to the city, such ties would not only break down, but could not serve the same functions in these larger, less stable areas¹.

Although the towns in the N.C.D. were not undergoing rapid urbanization during our period, this contention is relevant to the district as a newly settled area. If urban migration meant breaking with traditional ties of mutual aid and companionship, how much more must this have been so when migrating to a new land on the other side of the world, to live among people from all over the British Isles. Moreover, recent studies have suggested that kin have facilitated rural-urban migration. We are interested in whether this also occurred in migration from Britain to the colliery townships, what kinds of links were preserved, what happened to them on reaching the new land and the nature and strength of such ties. Finally, we know little of the role of neighbours in migration, or how far new neighbouring relationships were built up in the new land. This is an important issue given the class structure of the N.C.D. Empirical studies have shown that although strong ties of neighbourhood have developed in urban areas where people have lived for generations, the same families have not always succeeded in recreating such ties when removed to housing estates on the city outskirts. Even after forty years migrants from London's Bethnal Green to the housing estate of Dagenham had not developed ties with new neighbours. On the other hand, middle-class migrants to the new London suburb of Woodford quickly established relations with their new neighbours. This has led to suggestions that working-class people have less confidence in making friends in new areas². In a district where more than 80 per cent of the population was working-class, how inhabitants fared in this respect is crucial to the development of a community.

1. see chapter one.

2. P. Willmott and M. Young, *Family and Kinship*, pp. 63-4, 133-42, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London, 1960), pp. 103-6, 128.

Migrants to the colliery townships recovered very quickly from the destruction of old ties. Family formation was more widespread than anywhere else in the colony, or England, because of the conditions created by the mining industry and the population structure of settlements. Kinship ties were not cut completely on migration and were extended by the ageing of the population and intermarriage over time. The near absence of upward mobility among the working-class meant their families were not disturbed by inter-generational conflicts. Large scale intermarriage of the small number of bourgeois with the large number of working-class families produced blood ties cutting across the fundamental cleavage of occupational status. Unlike their twentieth century counterparts in Dagenham, people did not keep to themselves, but developed intimate ties with neighbours. The local economy, state of technology and almost complete absence of social welfare at the time made family, kin and neighbours more important than they might have been in other areas, or today. This and the links these primary groups created between different families, towns and occupational groups played an important part in the development of identity and social cohesion in the district.

Families were far more common in the N.C.D. than in the rest of the new land, or the old. This is clear from a variety of population statistics: age structure, proportion ever married, the age at marriage and the birth rate.

Throughout the period, 40 to 50 per cent of the population consisted of children under 15 years. Since there were no boarding schools, orphan asylums or reformatories in the coal mining district, they had to live in family units. Table 2.1 shows the proportion of children was higher than in the rest of N.S.W. Whilst the difference was negligible in 1861, in the 1871, 1891 and 1901 censuses it was around 10 per cent.

The single proportion of the population was below that anywhere else in the colony or England for both sexes. This is clear from table 2.2 which shows the number of persons who had never married by the time they reached the 45-49 age group. The proportion of never

Table 2.1

Population under 15 years:
N.C.D., Sydney and country, 1861-1901

Year	Area		
	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country
1861	41.8	38.3	37.5
1871	50	39.8	42.4
1891	45.5	36	39.2
1901	40.5	32.9	37.2

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1861, 1871, 1891, 1901.

Table 2.2

Population aged 45-59 never married: England and Wales, N.C.D.,
N.S.W. country and Sydney, 1871, 1891, 1901

Year	Area							
	N.C.D.		England & Wales		Sydney		Country	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1871	10.1	0.9	9.9	12.4	14.9	7.5	36.5	2.9
1891	6.9	0.8	10.4	12.9	18.1	9.1	28.2	4.2
1901	8.8	0.3	11.4	14.2	18.8	10.8	26.2	6.9

Sources: P. McDonald, *Marriage in Australia* (Canberra, 1974), pp.68, 96.
Census of N.S.W., 1871, 1891, 1901.

married females was far less than in the rest of rural N.S.W. and the number of bachelors less than in England and Wales, where single males were less common than in the colony because of the more even balance of the sexes. Thus the number of persons who married and established families was higher than in the old country or the new.

It is not surprising, then, that the crude birth rate was, over the period for which it can be calculated, usually far above that of urban and rural N.S.W. Figure 2.1 also suggests that the decline in the crude birth rate, which set in in the metropolis from 1886, did not occur in the N.C.D. until 1894, that is, nearly a decade after. Moreover, despite the fall, it was still above the crude birth rate for the rest of the colony.

Not only was marriage almost universal and the birth rate high, but the process of family formation began very early. The average age of brides at marriage in the district from 1860 to 1900 was 21 years. For grooms it was 24 years³. Table 2.3 suggests that this was well below the average age at marriage elsewhere. Throughout the period more men and women in the 20-24 age group were married in the N.C.D. than in Sydney or other rural areas.

The number of children in the district, the high birth rate and early marriage suggest not only that families were common, but that they were exceptionally large. The fertility ratio (table 2.4) would seem to support this view, but both it and the crude birth rate are misleading, because of the large number of married women in comparison with the rest of the colony. This must influence the crude birth rate in comparisons with areas having fewer married females and would have had the same effect on fertility ratios. If we use a fertility ratio based on married rather than all women of childbearing age, as in table 2.5 (henceforth called the married female fertility ratio), it becomes clear that women in the N.C.D. were not always more fertile. Although higher than the rural ratio in 1871, by 1891 the married female fertility ratio was below the country figure and held the same intermediate position in 1901.

3. Calculated from marriage register survey.

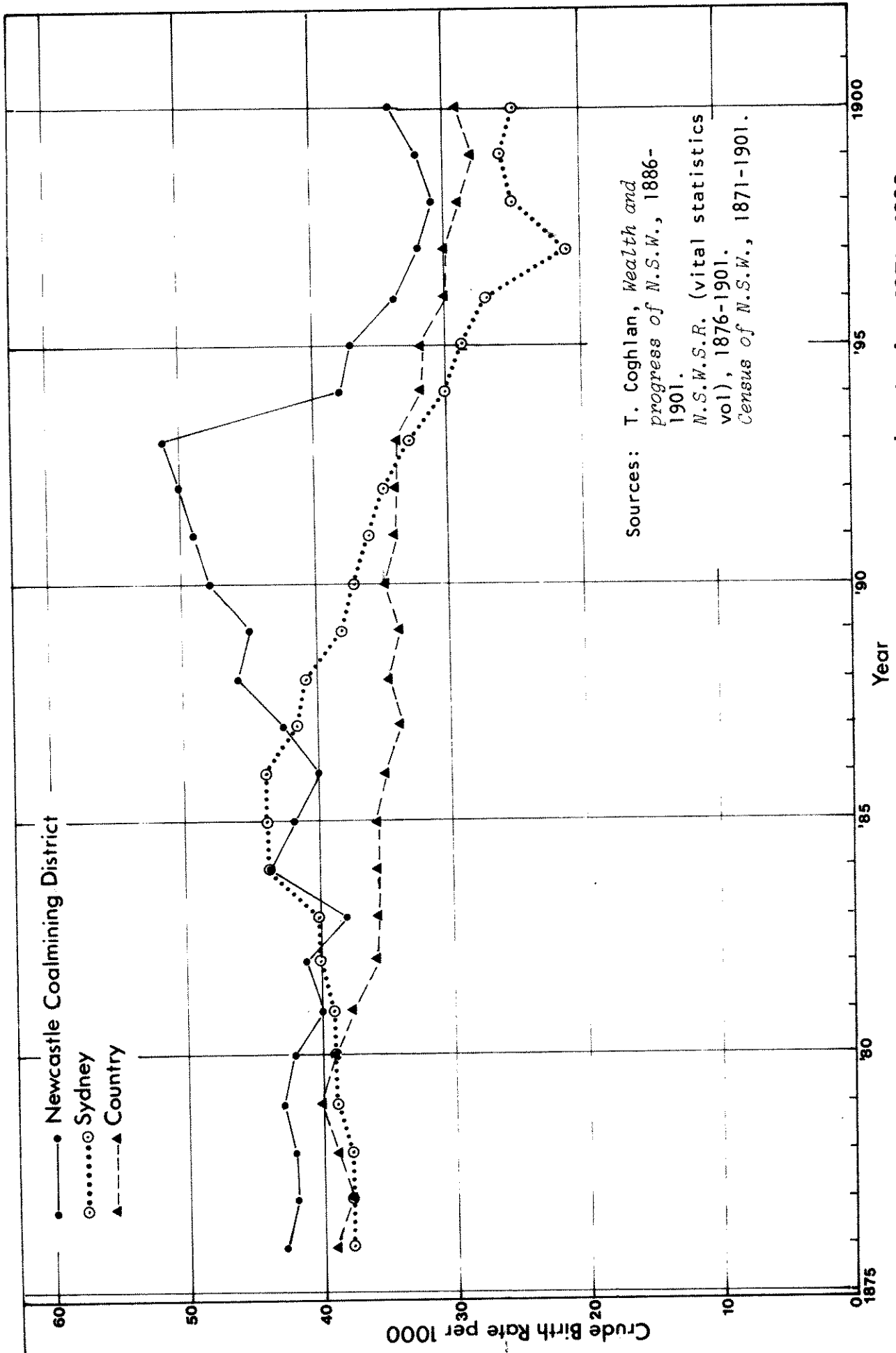


Fig. 2-1 Crude Birth Rates in the Newcastle Mining District and the rest of New South Wales from 1876 to 1900

Table 2.3Population married in the 20-24 age group:N.C.D., N.S.W., 1871-1901

Year	Males (%)			Females (%)		
	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country
1871	43.0	19.4	14.0	81.9	37.6	52.7
1891	18.2	14.7	10.3	61.0	36.4	39.7
1901	22.3	14.2	9.5	47.5	30.9	41.6

Source: *Census of N.S.W., 1871, 1891, 1901.*Table 2.4Fertility ratios in N.S.W. and the N.C.D., 1861-1901

Note: This measure refers to the number of children 0-4 years to females 15-44 years.

Year	Area		
	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country
1861	1013	604	868
1871	1115	629	918
1891	901	569	772
1901	560	203	591

Source: *Census of N.S.W., 1871, 1891, 1901.*

Table 2.5Married female fertility ratio: N.C.D., N.S.W., 1871-1901

Note: This measure refers to the number of children 0-4 years to married females 16-44 years.

Year	Area		
	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country
1871	1412	1107	1371
1891	1288	1112	1485
1901	995	752	1316

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

Despite earlier marriage, family size was probably smaller than in rural, though larger than in the metropolitan area, in the second half of the period.

The only acceptable explanation for this lower fertility is increasing family limitation. Infant mortality must be discounted as having any influence, for whilst the only figures we have show this was far above the rest of N.S.W., they represent the last years of the period, when public health in the district had much improved⁴. Since infant mortality was probably the same or higher in earlier years, it could not have contributed to the fall in the fertility ratio between 1871 and 1901. It was over this period, though, that family limitation grew in the district. A Newcastle doctor told the royal commission into the decline in the birth rate

4. From 1898 to 1900 infant mortality in the colliery townships averaged 135.1 per 1,000 live births in comparison with 108.3 for rural and 127.5 for urban N.S.W. Hunter River Combined Sanitary District, *Reports of the medical officer of health, 1898-1900* (N.S.W. Health Commission Library).

in 1904 that over the previous 25 years both contraception and abortion had increased. Although the lower classes were more inclined to miscarriage and the better educated to prevention, the latter was practised among all classes. The chief reasons for family limitation, he said, were poverty, which had grown in Newcastle over the last twenty years, and the trouble of child-rearing⁵. Although the doctor did not believe poverty was the real reason for the falling birth rate, the drop in the crude birth rate for the colliery townships in the 1890s suggests the depression in the coal industry caused a major change in habits. As figure 2.1 shows, the crude birth rate dropped some fifteen points from 1891 to 1900. Decline began in 1894 and continued steadily thereafter. The change in habit was reflected dramatically in the married female fertility ratio which fell by 124 points from 1871 to 1891 and 293 points in the next decade.

Despite the decline in family size in the colliery townships until it was below that of other country areas, the family remained important. The popularity of marriage made for large numbers of children who had to be cared for in families, whilst the early age at which family formation began meant there were few years in which individuals were neither dependent children nor parents.

The root cause of the importance of the family was the popularity of marriage. This was a consequence of peculiarities of the district: the character of migration, local conditions and social attitudes.

McDonald has drawn attention to rural-urban differences in the sex ratio for nineteenth century N.S.W. and their effect on the number of marriages. The excess of single males of marriageable age in the country and of females in Sydney, he has argued, meant more men were married in the city and more females in the country⁶. Since the N.C.D. marriage market was between that of rural and urban N.S.W. (table 2.6), one would expect fewer men and more women to be

5. *R.C. into the decline of the birth rate and infant mortality* (Sydney, 1904), vol. 2, pp. 122-5.

6. P.F. McDonald, *Marriage in Australia* (Canberra, 1974), pp. 94-5.

Table 2.6Marriage market for N.C.D., Sydney, country, 1871-1901

Note: This measure refers to single males 20-49 years plus half the single males 15-19 per 100 single females 15-44 years.

Year	Area		
	N.C.D.	Sydney	Country
1871	184.5	88	200
1891	141.8	112	158
1901	95.5	94	126

Sources: P. McDonald, *Marriage in Australia*, (Canberra, 1974), p. 95. *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

married than in Sydney and fewer women and more men to be married than in the country. However, we have already seen that the proportion married was higher than anywhere else for both sexes (table 2.2).

This situation suggests there were more factors behind the pattern of marriage in the N.C.D. than the sex ratio. One possibility is a more favourable attitude to marriage. Certainly, the main occupation of the district, coalmining, encouraged widespread and early marriage. However, part of the explanation could also lie in the distinctive character of migration to the area: more family groups and fewer single adults. This, along with a more favourable attitude to marriage, could cause a high proportion of the population to be married, despite an unfavourable sex ratio.

In the peak period of immigration to N.S.W., 1877 to 1886, 66 per cent of adult male migrants were single. The corresponding

figure for those among them who went to Newcastle was 48 per cent. Single women were 62 per cent of assisted adult females migrating to N.S.W., but only 42 per cent of those who then proceeded to the Newcastle district. Only 37 per cent of adult assisted migrants to N.S.W. in these years were married, but 54 per cent of those who proceeded to Newcastle⁷. The larger numbers migrating as married couples would have increased the numbers married in the district without affecting the marriage market. That the N.C.D. had a higher proportion of foreign, that is non-colonial, born than the rest of N.S.W. throughout the period must have increased the influence of the character of migration on the statistics of conjugal condition.

Even so, there were strong reasons for men in the colliery townships being more disposed to marriage than their counterparts elsewhere in the colony. Moreover, if one accepts McDonald's finding that there was a 75 per cent correlation between the sex ratio and female marriage, but only a 43 per cent correlation with male marriages⁸, their attitude must be considered crucial, especially since it was the proportion of married men rather than women which was so different from the rest of N.S.W. (table 2.2). Personal need and local attitudes made marriage both necessary and desirable.

The working conditions of miners in the nineteenth century meant it was most desirable for them to have someone to look after them. After a day's work, a coalminer is grimy from head to foot and his clothes damp as well as filthy. Thus each work day ended with a warm bath and scrub down and drying his pit clothes, which possibly had to be washed out as well. All this took time and heavy labour in an age without hot water laid on or washing machines. These needs would create a strong desire for marriage not only among newly arrived single men, but also those native to the district who, whilst able to enjoy these comforts in their parents homes, would have had little personal freedom under the eyes of their fathers. Marriage was the obvious solution in both cases.

7. 'Reports of the Immigration Agent', 1877-86, V&PIA, 1878-9 - 1887.

8. McDonald, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

Social attitudes were also more favourable to the married than the single state. Married men were thought more stable and reliable, a belief which caused hostility towards head masters of schools unfortunate enough to be single⁹. Colliery managers gave married men privileges for which the single were ineligible. In 1875 the Hamilton correspondent for the *Miner's Advocate* reported the A.A. Co. was allowing household coal to married men alone¹⁰. They were also given priority in employment. In 1895 the Wallsend Council gave them preference on their new unemployment relief works. Adamstown people became very angry in 1900 when they found the Government Tramways had engaged single men to build the new tram line¹¹. Relief funds in strikes and bad times were called 'family' relief funds, implying that the single could be left to their own devices and on resumption of work married men were always taken on first¹². Therefore, married men in the N.C.D. did not face the hostility from employers or insecurity of employment that McDonald claims forced many men to stay single¹³.

It may also have been easier for young couples to set up house in the N.C.D. The standard of housing was low and so rents were cheaper. In some areas they could settle without paying rent at all. Anyone could squat on the commonage and build whatever shelter they wished. When tracing sample electors on the electoral rolls, it became clear that young married couples were using the commonage as a cheap source of accommodation. In 1875 Joseph Dunlop, William Johnson and Henry Short were residents of New Lambton, Lambton and Hamilton respectively. The tital 'resident' on the rolls indicated a person lived as part of another household, be it a family or boarding house. Thus most residents were probably single men. By 1878 all three men had moved to the commonage and were listed as householders. This suggests they had married and set up house on the commonage. In other towns ground was leased and people built their

9. T. Croudace to R.A.A. Moorehead, 9 Dec. 1874, 'Croudace letterbook', 1864-5 (NPL).

10. *M.A.*, 6 Jan. 1875.

11. *W&PSun*, 11 Sept. 1895, *N.M.H.*, 15 Ap. 1900.

12. *W&PSun*, Sept.-Nov. 1891, *N.M.H.*, 27 Jan. 1891.

13. McDonald, *op.cit.*, pp. 123-5.

own homes on it¹⁴. This was much cheaper than having to pay rent on a house as well as ground rent.

The population structure, nature of migration and social attitudes in the N.C.D. made the family a more common social group than elsewhere in N.S.W. or England. The sex ratio meant most women married whilst the number of married immigrants, the social and economic pressures on men to marry and the availability of cheap accommodation raised the numbers of married men and women even further. The result was a unique situation. The proportion of men ever married by the ages of 45-49 was more English than Australian in character. This high number of married men and the characteristic sex ratio of immigrant societies made the percentage of women ever married higher than elsewhere in the colony and the mother country. This rather than large family size made for a high proportion of children who had to be accommodated in families.

Not only was family life almost universal in the N.C.D., but members of families were bound together by strong economic and social ties, as well as those of blood. The nature of employment meant the family depended heavily on the father or principal breadwinner, which led to a strongly patriarchal society. This and the opportunities for family oriented leisure so strengthened ties of sentiment that most put loyalty to the family before anything else.

Today purely coalmining districts are characterised by a lack of female employment¹⁵. The N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century was no different, the number and range of jobs for women being small. The number advertised in the *N.M.H.* grew from 912 to 1881 to 2,174 in 1900. However, only 10 per cent of these positions were in the colliery townships. Domestic service was well over three quarters of all employment (table 2.7). Now in 1900 wages for female

14. For details see chapter three.

15. See M.J. Wise, 'Some notes on the growth of population in the Cannock Chase Coalfield', *Geography*, v. 36 (1951), p. 243. N. Dennis, F. Henriques, C. Slaughter, *Coal is our life*, 2nd ed. (London, 1956), pp. 14-17.

Table 2.7Female employment in Newcastle, 1881-1900

Type of Employment	Vacancies					
	1881		1891		1900	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Domestic	791	86.7	1730	79.6	2318	85.4
Sewing Trades						
Apprentices	102	11.2	160	7.3	102	3.7
Other	14	1.5	214	9.0	70	2.2
Factory	1	0.1	10	0.5	36	1.3
Clerical or Shop	3	0.3	24	1.1	39	1.4
Other	1	0.1	35	1.6	149	5.5
Total	912		2173		2714	

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.

servants ranged from five to ten shillings a week¹⁶. This was the range of most male wages a day. Whilst it allowed a woman to pay some of her expenses, it could hardly make her independent of parents, or a contributor to the family income. The second highest source of employment was the sewing trades, but around half the vacancies were for apprentices. This lack of employment opportunities shows in the occupations of brides at marriage: just over a third were in the workforce¹⁷. Thus most daughters who had left school were still totally dependent on their fathers for upkeep. Married women, faced with the

16. This observation is based on advertisements stating wages in the *N.M.H.*

17. Calculated from marriage register survey.

same lack of remunerative employment, could contribute little to family income either.

The mines did provide work for adolescent boys as trappers, drivers and wheelers. Although employed by the company, not their fathers, they were still tied to the main breadwinner. Boys got work at the pits because their fathers worked there. Colliery managers who employed 'strangers' instead of the sons of their employees were told they were under some obligation to the men who kept them and their families in affluence¹⁸. Furthermore, boys often worked with their fathers, wheeling their coal or learning to hew¹⁹. Whilst not usually allowed to get coal until eighteen, they could start two years earlier if they were to work with their fathers²⁰. It was in a father's interest to take his son on as a mate because hewing was better paid than wheeling and so family income rose. Often wages were paid directly to the father, the child receiving no part of them²¹. Although earning money and contributing to the family income, boys were still bound to their fathers.

The result of the economic functioning of the family was to strengthen paternal authority. Since the rest of the family either relied on him for physical survival or was effectively under him whilst working to raise the family income, his power was considerable. The authority of fathers over sons was further strengthened by the colliery managers' exploitation of their economic relationship as a means of social control. When the A.A.Co. wheelers struck in 1875, the manager invited the boys and their fathers to his office²². If fathers did not control

18. *M.A.*, 12 May 1875.

19. Winship to Hodgson, 24 June 1861, A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (ANUA 1/59 JBW-A no. 6).

20. 'H.R.D. Minutes', 20 Jan. 1875, p. 12 (ANUA E165/28).

21. 'Progress report of the select committee on employment of children', *V&PLA* v. 6 1875, p. 913. *N.M.H.*, 1 Oct. 1900.

22. Winship to Merewether, 10 Sept. 1875, 'Coal Papers' (1/59 JBW-0 no. 20).

their children to the liking of the manager, their own security was threatened. When the Lambton manager gave two men notice because their sons had 'greatly neglected their duties as wheelers' he justified this step as a way of putting pressure on fathers to control their children²³. Fathers, then, had control over their sons' behaviour not only in the home, but at work.

Increased paternal authority meant less autonomy for women and children. Mr. Richard Ford testifies to this patriarchal social organization in his reminiscences. He claims father was the boss and that a girl was only allowed to go courting after the young man had visited the home and her father given his approval²⁴. Further evidence comes from school inspectors who attributed increasing vandalism in the 1890s to so many fathers being out of the district. The mothers of those involved 'had but little control over their children'²⁵.

The social functions of families were not tied solely to economic relationships. Families were also units of social enjoyment and support through the kind of friendship they offered. Formal leisure activities in the district were notable for their segregation by age and sex²⁶, but they were not the only opportunities for recreation. Picnics and excursions were open to any family group who could afford them and casual music making was available to all who had the talent. That many did make music as a family is clear from the existence of dancing and orchestral groups described as such. In addition, many voluntary associations held social events specially for members and their families. The churches, Loyal Orange Lodge, and cooperative societies held social teas. Friendly societies and trade unions had picnics. In the 1890s the Mechanics

23. SAMCo. 'Superintendent's Letters', 1869-74, p. 249 (F.L.).

24. R. Ford, 'A history of New Lambton and my life therein', pp. 9-10 (unpub. ms., 1971, NPL).

25. Dept. Ed., 'Schools Files', Newcastle South, 1896 (N.S.W.A.A. P. 2007).

26. See chapter six.

Institutes specialized in the 'social', which consisted of a tea, concert and dance, open to all subscribers and their families free of charge²⁷.

Strong economic and social ties made for family loyalty, which further increased solidarity. This is not to say families in the colliery townships were models of domestic harmony: the courts of petty sessions were full of trivial quarrels between husband and wife²⁸. Rather, the family was where one had a place, regardless of faults. A good illustration of this concerns the birth of children out of wedlock. The local benevolent society did not separate married and single lying-in cases, as did many other asylums, because there were so few of them²⁹. Now the illegitimacy rate in the district was not low³⁰, so single mothers must have had their children at home. An inquest into the death of a child born of a 27 year old single woman suggests such situations were accepted without family upheaval. Both parents knew of their daughter's condition, which she never tried to conceal, but only her mother spoke to her of it. She had never made any clothes for the child, because her mother had plenty³¹. This incident might be of little account had the family not been highly respectable. The father had risen from active unionist to colliery overseer, was prominent in the temperance movement, a sabbatarian and Methodist lay preacher. On the evening of the birth the whole family had assembled for prayers before retiring³². That the daughter of such a family would not feel the need to hide her pregnancy suggests considerable trust in her parents. The absence of a crisis or attempt to force a marriage on the part of the parents makes it clear that they accepted

27. *N.M.H.* 12 Feb. 1881, 16 Feb. 1900. *W&PSun*, 27 May 1891. *M.A.*, 5 May, 2 Sept. 1875. Dept.Ed., 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', Plattsburg 1897 (*N.S.W.A.A.* P.3684).

28. *N.M.H.* 10 Feb. 2 Mar. 1881.

29. 'R.C. on subsidised benevolent institutions, minutes of evidence', *Jnl. L.C.* 1899 (2) Pt. 2, p. 112.

30. Illegitimacy per 1,000 single women 15-44 years was closer to Sydney than the country. In 1891 rates were: N.C.D. 25.9, Sydney 28.9, country 16.9. Calculated from *N.S.W.S.R.* (vital statistics), 1891, *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.

31. *W&PSun*, 18, 28 Nov. 1891.

32. *ibid*, 18 Nov. 1891.

her for better or worse.

When a member of the family was threatened from without, blood was thicker than any tie by virtue of age or shared position of authority. Children were defended, if not believed, when neighbours disapproved of their behaviour. Quarrels between children from two families sometimes ended with parents being fined for assault, because they had automatically sided with their children and delivered physical as well as verbal blows in their defence³³. Harsh and injudicious treatment of children could lead to the removal of a teacher. The Plattsburg school came close to closure when enrolments fell from 125 to 25, in the face of a 25 per cent population increase, because of the headmaster's 'uneven' treatment of the children. In advising the transfer of the teacher the inspector indicated the strength of family feeling when he wrote:

'It is useless to say they should not be allowed to come to the school, pitwives cannot be put down and the teacher that has not the tact to manage them will [be] sure to come to grief'³⁴.

That the family was an economic and social as well as reproductive unit gave it a cohesion more akin to the rural than urban ideal-type family sociologists have constructed. That is, husband and wife, father and son, had to co-operate more and a few people played a variety of roles to each other, thus intensifying relations³⁵.

Sociologists have made much of the independent roles of husband and wife in contemporary working-class homes, where the wife has no direct relevance to her husband's job and the joint responsibility for maintaining the household is mediated by the housekeeping money alone³⁶. Whilst wives and daughters in the Newcastle colliery townships were generally quite dependent on their menfolk, they in turn

33. *M.A.*, 9 Jan. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 14 Jan. 1891, 14 Aug. 1900.

34. Cl. Ed., 'Miscellaneous letters received', 1871 (*N.S.W.A.A.* 1/881).

35. For a detailed discussion of rural-urban differences see R. Frankenburg, *op.cit.*, pp. 286-92.

36. *ibid.*, p. 19. Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *op.cit.*, p. 182.

relied completely on the women to do the washing and cleaning jobs their work created, because of the primitive state of household technology and the lack of pit-head amenities at the time. Thus women performed a service industry to the pits. Conjugal roles, though separate, were, like that of the farmer and his wife, complementary.

Fathers and sons related to each other in their work as well as at home. To sons, fathers played not only the role of provider and guardian, but also teacher, supervisor and work mate. This meant authority was concentrated in one person, instead of being diffused among several, thus making for greater integration. Such multiple role-play is more characteristic of rural societies, where a farmer is head of the family, chief breadwinner, instructor and employer, than urban areas, where these functions are shared by several persons. Such intense relations must have contributed to the sentiment which made the family such a strong unit of social support.

Nevertheless, this highly integrated unit was not indestructible. The local economy might encourage marriage and cohesive families, but it could also tear apart the bonds it fostered. Outside factors could also affect family relationships.

Breadwinners who could not make a living in slack times often went far afield looking for work. Some went to mineral mines in other colonies, whilst others went to the U.S.A. or South Africa. Consequently, a wife might not know where her husband was for months. Even when contact had been re-established, regular payments to the family were difficult to arrange over such long distances³⁷. In practical terms the family was without a breadwinner. The departure of the father also meant the temporary loss of the authority figure, a general breakdown in social control and a rise in truancy and vandalism. This was most noticeable in the 1890s when thousands of men left the district looking for work³⁸.

37. *N.M.H.*, 23 May 1881. Dept. Ed., 'Schools Files', Minmi 1889 (P.1853).

38. See comment of school inspector quoted p. 38 above. The exact number of departures to the other colonies, N.Zealand and S. Africa is not known, but those commenting on the area claimed that it was large. See Reports of the minister for public instruction, 1893, 1895, 1896, pp. 209, 183, 178 respectively (M.L.).

The high accident rate in coalmining also affected family relationships. The inadequacy of sickness benefits provided through the trade union and the friendly society and the absence of any workers' compensation scheme forced an injured man to depend on the labours of his children and wife. Along with his breadwinner status, he lost his authority. For some sons, keeping the family proved too much and they moved out³⁹. Such incidents, though, seem much less common than Anderson found in nineteenth century Lancashire towns, where children could earn higher wages and find accommodation more easily than in the small mining towns of the N.C.D. While Anderson found suggestions 'that children frequently manifested independence from their parents', the number of instances reported in the N.C.D. suggest it was a rarity⁴⁰. That such incidents occurred shows how the local economy could create strains on, as well as consolidating, family ties.

Factors beyond local conditions also affected the family. Some married women had property and businesses of their own. The 1885 inquiry into petitions for and against the incorporation of Merewether showed quite a few married women were leaseholders. In each case their husbands lived on the land, but they paid the ground rent, controlled the property and saw to its upkeep. One had built a second house on the land and leased it out. Another leased part of her land to her husband. It is not sure how they acquired their property, but most likely they were bequeathed it, or the means to acquire it. One woman did mention that she was left her house by a former husband⁴¹. Applicants for loans from building societies also included married women in business for themselves. An inspector reported of one miner's wife:

'Mrs. Brown is a very smart business woman and very regular in her payments. She has a favourable opportunity of becoming tenant of the Beach Hotel, Merewether, and the loan is for that purpose'⁴².

39. 'Schools Files', New Lambton 1888 (N.S.W.A.A. P.1835).

40. M. Anderson, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-35.

41. Municipality of Merewether, proposed incorporation 1885, Col. Sec., 'Special Bundles' (N.S.W.A.A. 4/858-1).

42. Northumberland Building Society, 'Applications for advances of money', no. 89, 1899 (NUA).

The independence women with their own means must have lessened paternal authority and family integration, by reducing the wife's dependence on the husband and providing a rival source of income.

It is impossible to tell how common any of these circumstances which weakened family relations were. That examples of lack of filial piety and instances of female independence drew comment suggests they were not the norm. Departure of the breadwinner was a common problem and so far more likely to upset family relationships. However, that school inspectors never commented on this phenomenon until the 1890s suggests it only occurred in noticeable proportions in the last decade of the century. For most of the period families were tied together economically and socially in a variety of inter-related functions which made more for a rural *gemeinschaft* than an urban *gesellschaft*.

That the family was a strong group was important, but not the only requirement for the growth of primary relations in the district. Contemporary studies show that where the nuclear family survives migration relationships can intensify because of the loss of and failure to re-establish kinship ties⁴³, that wider network linking family groups. Admittedly, one would expect twentieth century housing estates to be especially disadvantaged in this way, because young married couples alone were accepted. Even so, migrants always tend to be in the 20-40 age groups rather than grandparents, who would gain little by leaving their homeland at that stage of their lives. It is important, then, to see how far kinship ties were kept up in migration and fostered in the new land, as well as the nature of these ties.

Migration often occurred because of encouragement from kin and so maintained old links. Persons already in the colony could, by nominating their acquaintances, secure assisted passage for them. Available evidence suggests not only that the inhabitants of the colliery townships were active in persuading others to migrate, but that those nominated were mostly kin. From 1877 to 1879 the

43. Willmott and Young, *Family and kinship*, pp. 133-42.

Newcastle district nominated 855 persons⁴⁴. Migrants to the colliery townships on the *Camperdown* interviewed by the select committee on assisted immigration at that time were nearly all brought out by relations. Two were sponsored by brothers-in-law, one by his son-in-law and another by his wife's uncle⁴⁵. Clearly links with kin by blood and marriage were retained in migration. They were confined to two generations, however, no grandparents being nominated.

The tendency to nominate quite a few relatives at the same time meant many single persons, who seemed from migration statistics to travel alone, came with relatives. The two men nominated by their uncles were cousins. Most other single men on the same ship were brothers or sons of heads of families on board⁴⁶. That this was no coincidence is born out by other passenger lists. The three single men despatched to the coalmining towns from the *Samuel Plimsoll* in 1862 were brothers. The only single woman aboard the *Annie Wilson* in 1862 came with her parents. Families came together, too. Also aboard the *Annie Wilson* were two families called Roberts and three called Musgrave⁴⁷. The man nominated by his wife's uncle came not only with his spouse, but his parents-in-law, their six children and another brother-in-law⁴⁸. Those setting out for the new land were comforted both by the prospect of reunion with kin on arrival and the presence of relatives on board.

Although ties with relatives were kept, despite migration, there could be no total transfer of old relationships. Since grandparents were not prominent as immigrants, relations with kin were shallow though extensive. Moreover, given the heterogeneous nature of migration to the district, the different groups in each town had to be linked together for thorough integration at the level of primary relationships. These problems could only be solved with time, as young married couples survived to old age and their children grew

44. 'Progress report of the select committee on immigration', *V&PLA*, vol. 5 1879-80, p. 855.

45. *ibid.*, pp. 800-804.

46. *ibid.*, p. 812.

47. 'Coal Papers', (1/59 CC-I nos. 33, 61).

48. 'Select Committee on assisted immigration', *loc.cit.*, p. 803.

up, married each other and had children.

The proportion of inhabitants old enough to be grandparents was small, but gradually increased. If we take the average age of female marriage in the district, 21 years, and assume a woman bore a daughter within two years of marriage, then the average woman would be a grandparent by the time she was 45. Her husband, if he married her at the average age of 24, would be 48. From 1871 to 1901, the population 45 years and over grew from 8 per cent to 14.3 per cent and the ratio of children under fifteen to persons 45 and over from 1:0.15 to 1:0.35⁴⁹. Although 0.35 of a grandparent for each child sounds miserable, we must remember that most people have more grandchildren than children. For example, a woman with three children, each of whom married and had three children, would have nine grandchildren. If we multiply 0.35 by 9 we get 3.15 or three out of four possible grandparents. That these crude calculations relate to a real rather than theoretical situation is born out by death notices for infants in the *N.M.H.* in 1891 and 1901. Only one failed to mention a grandparent among the mourners⁵⁰. At the same time as the population 45 years and over was increasing, so was that 70 and over. Thus the capacity to have great grandchildren rose⁵¹. So, it is not surprising to read that relatives spanning four generations attended the golden wedding of a New Lambton couple in 1900⁵². By the end of the period kinship linked three or four, rather than one or two generations.

That most people chose a marriage partner within a narrow geographical area widened kinship ties by building up relations within and between colliery townships, as against elsewhere in Newcastle and

49. Calculated from *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1901.

50. These were death notices inserted by grandparents, not general lists of mourners. This indicates that they lived in the area.

51. From 1871 to 1901 the 70 years and over age group rose from .17 to 1.7 per cent of the population. The lower limit of 70 years was chosen because it was the closest census grouping to 69 years, the result of adding the average female age at marriage plus two years to the lower age limit for grandparents (46 years). Calculated from *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

52. *N.M.H.*, 17 Dec. 1900.

outside the region. Table 2.8 sets out the residences of men who married women from the colliery townships whose marriages are recorded in surviving church registers⁵³. The proportion of women marrying outside Newcastle never reached 10 per cent and the leakage from the colliery townships to the rest of Newcastle was 13 per cent. Nearly 60 per cent of women married into their own town, linking inhabitants by blood and making kinship and town boundaries identical. The other 23 per cent married someone from another colliery township, creating ties between towns. In all, 80 per cent married a man from the same or another coalmining town. The N.C.D. became united not only by a common way of earning a living, but mutual relatives. The prevalence of marriage meant the kinship system was more extensive and intricate than it otherwise might have been.

The pattern of marriage between the colliery towns was not diffuse. Rather, it created strong links between certain groups of towns. Although there was some marriage between all colliery townships, at least 50 per cent was with one or more adjacent towns. The result of this is seen in figure 2.2 which shows the marriage areas of each town. Clearly, relationships were strongest over short distances. Thus children were born amidst, or a few miles from, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. When they grew up they lived near their own grandchildren, nieces and nephews. However, the interlocking nature of marriage areas suggests the overall effect was to link the whole area in a chain of kinship ties. This situation contrasts markedly with Brisbane in the 1890s, where Lawson found most of the population were still first generation immigrants and only a third of those interviewed could remember visiting relatives⁵⁴.

The maintenance of these kinship ties created by the passing of generations and intermarriage was made easier by the lack of social

53. The marriages of grooms were not included because the custom of holding marriages at the bride's residence would mean that those men who married outside Newcastle would not appear on the local registers. On the other hand, all marriages of women from the colliery townships would most likely appear in registers from the Newcastle district.

54. R. Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s* (Brisbane, 1973), pp. 123, 231.

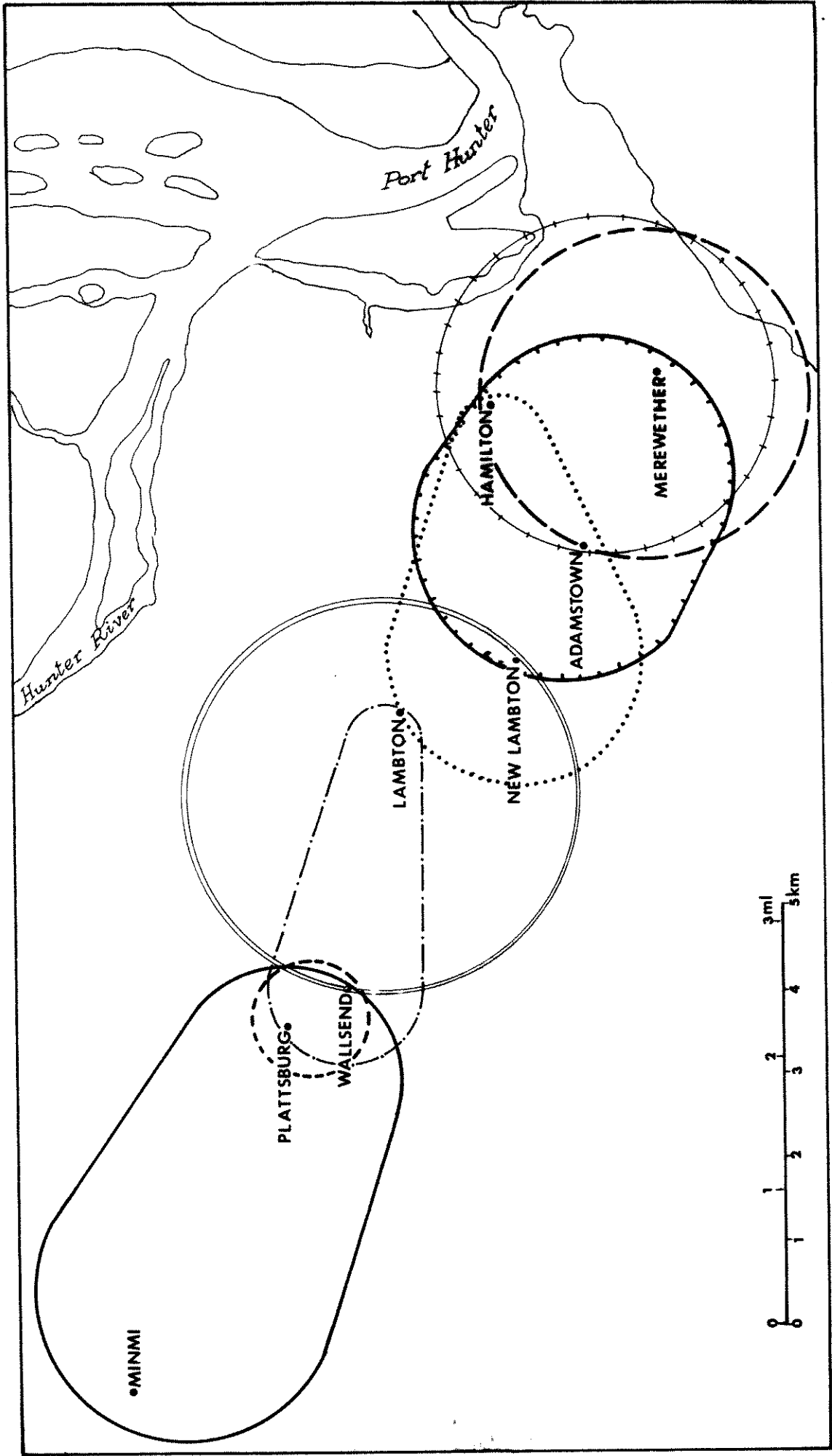


Fig. 2-2 Intermarriage in the Newcastle colliery townships: 1860-1900

Note: Each ring encloses the town concerned and touches on those with whom 50 per cent of marriages into other colliery townships occurred.

Source: Marriage register survey.

Table 2.8Residence of husbands of brides from the colliery townships, 1860-1900

Residence of Bride	N =	Residence of Spouse			
		Same Town	Another colliery Township	Newcastle District	Elsewhere
Adamstown	110	53	30	10	7
Hamilton	232	49	20	26	5
Lambton	165	66	12	18	4
Merewether	276	67	15	14	4
Minmi	69	77	10	5	8
New Lambton	79	54	30	9	7
Plattsburg	99	45	41	6	8
WallSEND	253	54	22	14	10
Total	1283	58	23	13	7

Source: Marriage register survey.

mobility among the working-class majority in the colliery townships. This meant that, when they grew up, there were none of the tensions between parents and children, or among siblings, which stem from differences in outlook between those who have acquired a higher status than the rest.

In our discussion of the family as an economic unit we implied that most miners got their sons work in the pits when they left school and then taught them to get coal when they were old enough. The marriage registers of the district testify to this, for 81 per cent of miners' sons were also miners. This is not to say some did not wish their sons to do better. Rather, the cost of school fees, loss of income entailed in keeping a child at school and the exceptional ability required to do well in a poor environment kept the ideal of the workingman's child 'reach [ing] the highest pinnacle of fame and becom [ing] an ornament to society'⁵⁵ a pious hope. Circumstances meant most came to believe education was not possible for miners' children. As one woman wrote to the *N.M.H.*:

55. *N.M.H.*, 20 Mar. 1891.

What with books and boots and to dress to keep on our rough boys that never were used with them, nor their fathers behind them, is simply to ruin them and to teach them notions of extravagance quite unsuited to their position. A lady teacher had the impudence to tell me that the inspectors looked for the same success from miners' boys as they obtained from those attending other schools. I just told her they were fools because we can't buy books and keep servants and pamper our children with fine houses to sit down to lessons at night. We want to rear strong, sturdy boys and girls who will be able to work like their fathers and mothers ...⁵⁶

The obstacles to social mobility among miners' children also existed for the children of other workingmen. However, the small numbers of tradesmen and labourers needed in the mining towns meant they were less likely to follow their fathers' occupations. Still, they had little choice but to become manual workers of some kind. Figure 2.3 shows nearly 90 per cent of tradesmen's and labourers' sons were manual workers. Thus there was little of the uprooting, lack of empathy and tensions between fathers and sons, brothers and brothers, that contemporary writers like Seymour, Storey and Hoggart have described when dealing with the movement of the sons of workingmen into the middle-class professions⁵⁷.

That most work in the district was in industry meant most daughters of workingmen married manual workers. Two thirds of miners' daughters married miners and 91 per cent married manual workers. Figure 2.4 shows that nearly all tradesmen's and labourers' daughters also married workingmen. Therefore, there were few girls who felt the need to isolate themselves from their humble backgrounds by refusing to communicate with their parents, brothers and sisters.

The bourgeoisie of the colliery townships did not share the social stability of the manual workers. Most of their sons and daughters married beneath them. Although this must have made for intergenerational tension, it also created ties of blood between the working-class majority and the professional and employing class.

Table 2.5 shows that most of the daughters of professionals and

56. *ibid.*, 28 Nov. 1891.

57. A. Seymour, *The one day of the year* (London, 1962). D. Storey, *In celebration: a play in two acts* (London, 1959). R. Hoggart, *The uses of literacy* (Pelican, 1957), chapter 10.

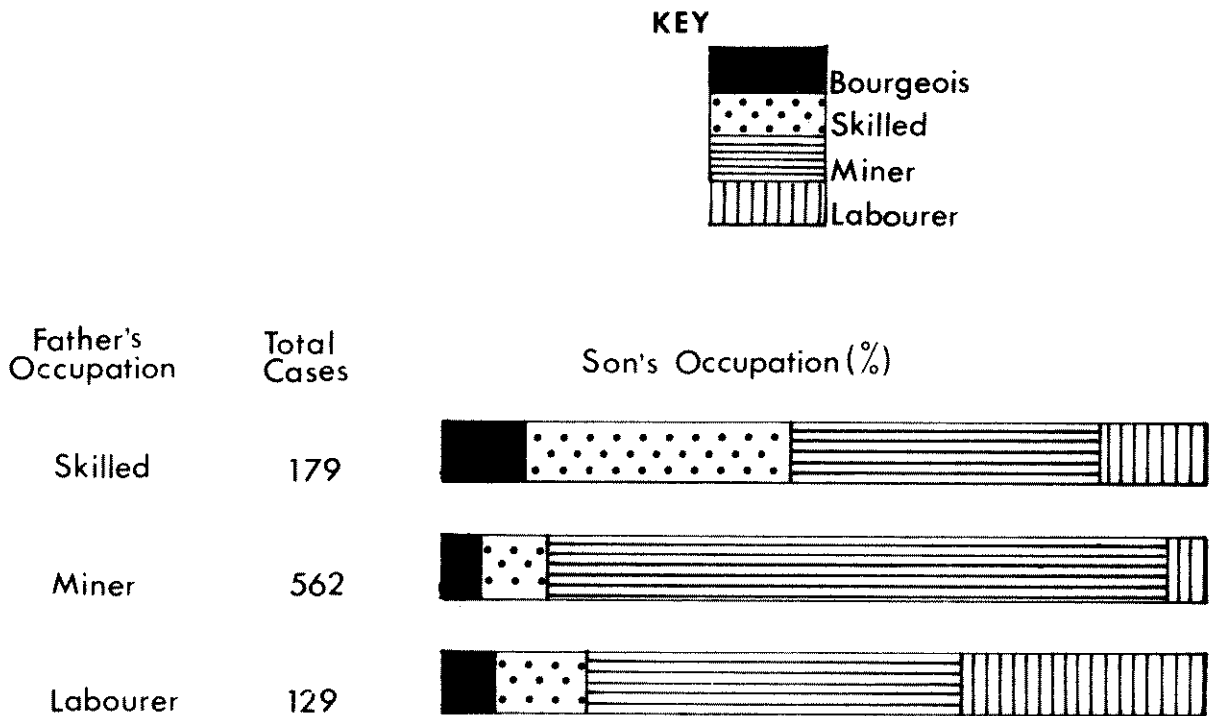


Fig. 2-3 Occupations of the sons of manual workers in the Newcastle Coalmining District (N.C.D.), 1860-1900

Source: Marriage register survey.

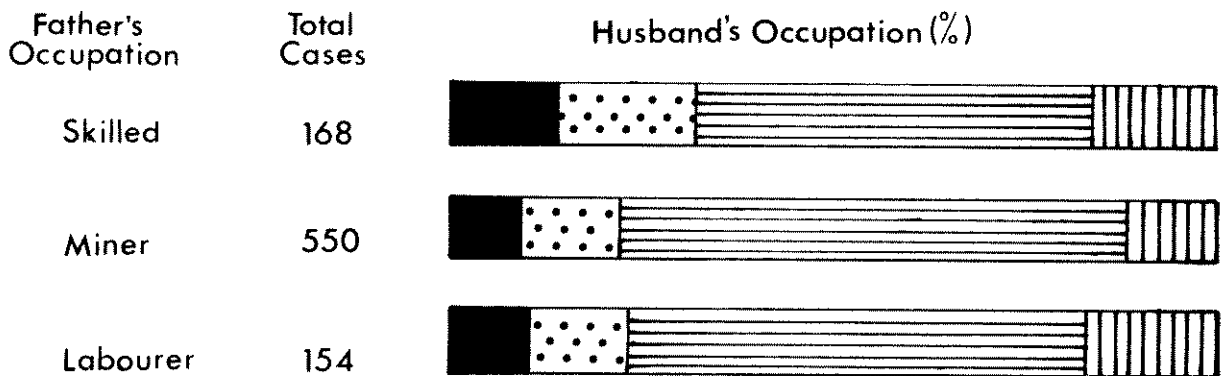


Fig 2-4 Occupation of the men married by the daughters of manual workers in the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Source: Marriage register survey.

KEY

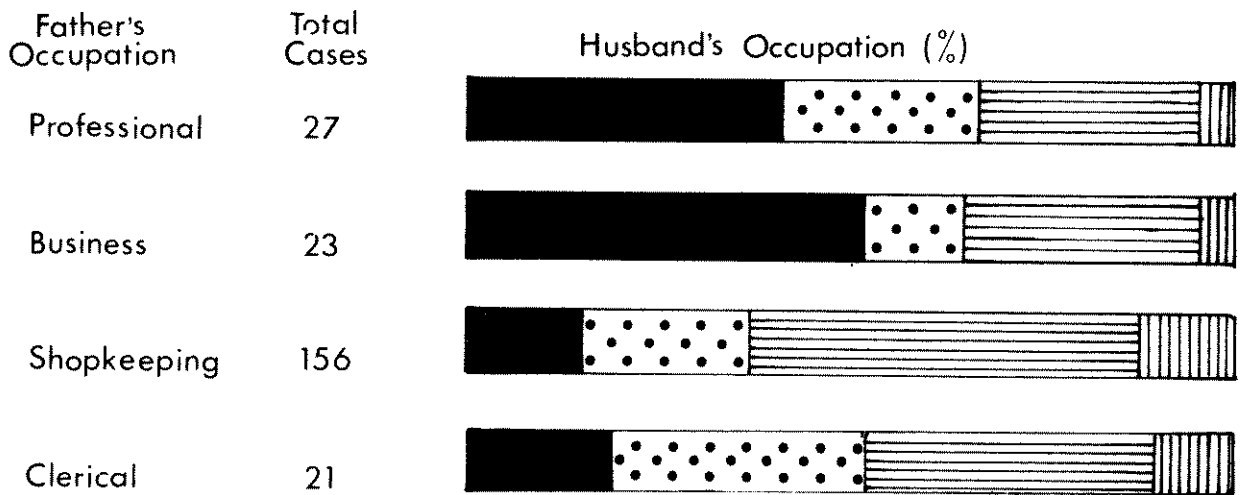


Fig. 2-5 Occupations of the men married by daughters of the bourgeoisie in the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Source: Marriage register survey.

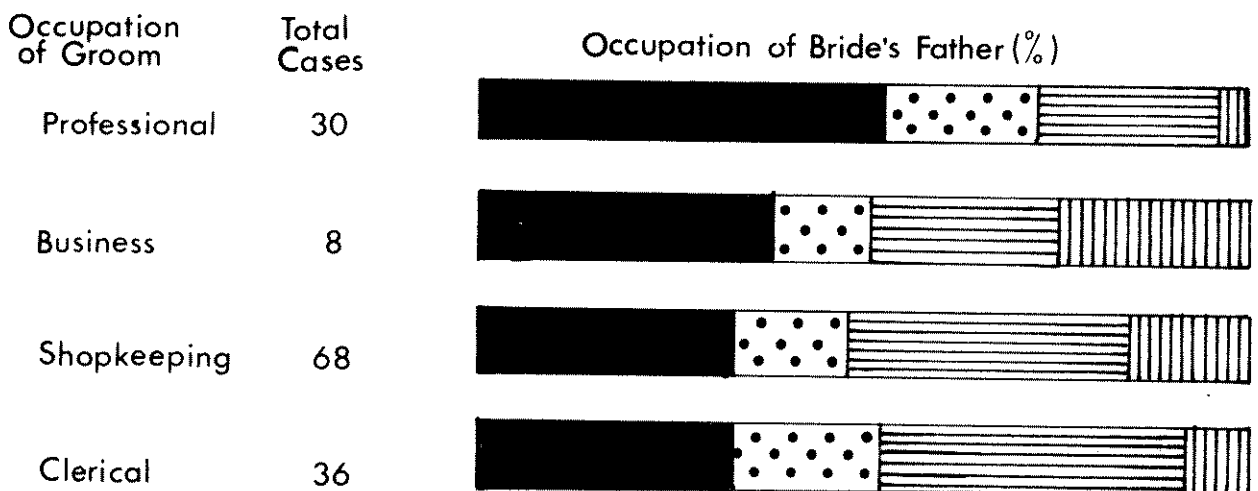


Fig. 2-6 Father's occupation of women married by men with bourgeois occupations in the N. C. D., 1860-1900

Source: Marriage register survey.

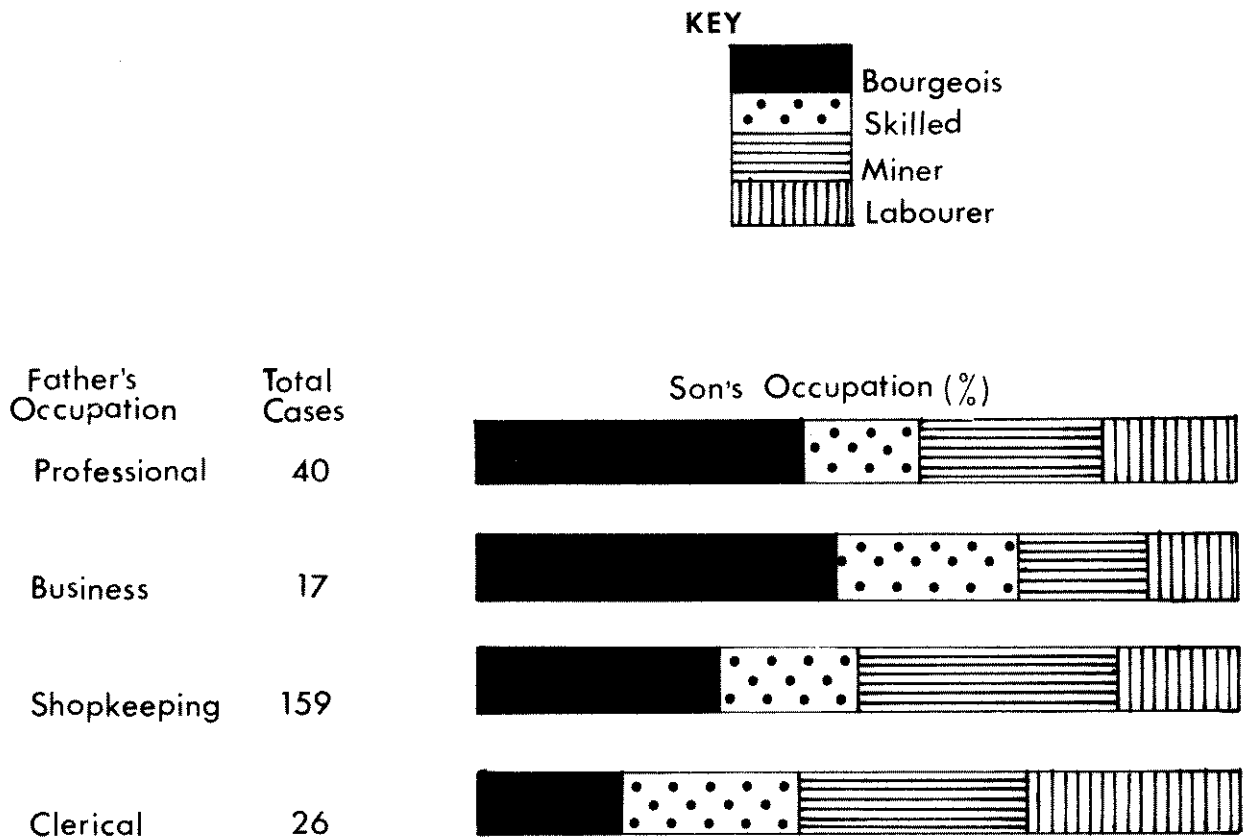


Fig. 2-7. Occupation of sons of the bourgeoisie in the N.C.D., 1860–1900

Source: Marriage register survey.

shopkeepers and nearly half those of large businessmen married tradesmen, miners or labourers. This was most pronounced in the shopkeeping class, which contained most of the bourgeoisie. 22 per cent married tradesmen, 51 per cent miners and 12 per cent labourers. The clerical and supervisory group also married heavily into the working-class proper. Figure 2.6 shows most grooms with bourgeois occupations also married into the working-class, although to a lesser extent than their sisters. Whereas 86 per cent of middle-class brides married workingmen, 61 per cent of men in business or professional occupations married the daughters of manual workers. Nevertheless, the balance was still in favour of integration into the working-class.

It might be argued that those from bourgeois families who married into the working-class could simply be cut off by their wealthier kin. This might have happened had the phenomenon been less widespread. As it was, a bourgeois father who took such steps might well be left without relatives to rely on in times of need. Unless a man was particularly stubborn, he would most likely accept this situation. Moreover, he was probably resigned to the downward mobility, because of the dominance of secondary industry and absence of tertiary industry. As a result, most of the sons of the bourgeoisie moved into manual jobs. Figure 2.7 shows over half the sons of professionals, businessmen and shopkeepers became tradesmen, miners or labourers⁵⁸. Either the bourgeoisie had to reject most of their kin by blood and marriage or accept the situation. Since most had probably married the daughters of workingmen themselves, they were unlikely to be so prejudiced.

Kinship, like the family, was more than a matter of blood. Relatives were important in solving economic problems like getting work and accommodation. They also gave emotional support and, in matters of social welfare, took over where the simple family could no longer manage.

Assisted immigrants stayed either with the relatives who nominated them or in houses they found for them. The brother-in-law who migrated with his wife and in-laws arranged a four roomed house with a friend. John Cogan's family stayed in his brother-in-law's second house⁵⁹.

58. This of course, explains why the proportion of bourgeois women marrying into the working-class was so high.

59. 'Select committee on assisted immigration', *loc. cit.*, p. 803. 'Notebook kept by John Cogan', in the possession (1977) of Mrs. Bea Hodge, 14 Cram Street, Merewether.

Leasing houses to kin was common. The rate books for Merewether, Adamstown and Hamilton contain many houses owned and occupied by different persons of the same surname. The exact relationships are hard to determine, but since married women and men let to each other and men to men, the probable relationships were widowed mothers and sons, fathers and sons, brothers and brothers. Although only about 10 per cent of all tenancies⁶⁰, they must understate this kind of relationship with kin because in-laws cannot be included. Yet it is clear from other sources that renting to them was common⁶¹. Finally, kin helped to build each other's houses by providing cheap labour and expertise. The son-in-law of one building society applicant, a carpenter, was to choose the timber and build the house, thus cutting out the contractor's profit⁶².

Employment was another area where kin cooperated. Men secured jobs for relatives as well as sons. The man who found his immigrant kin a house also arranged employment at a nearby mine. The plea of a father-in-law could get his son-in-law a hewing job in the pits, despite his lack of experience⁶³. The work relationship that grew up between father and son when the latter began to hew could last well beyond apprenticeship⁶⁴, but was not the only such relationship with kin. Inquests and union minutes show that brothers, half-brothers, fathers and sons-in-law worked as mates⁶⁵. A look at available colliery pay sheets bears out this evidence. Table 2.9 shows that except in one case a quarter to a third of all work groups included persons of the same surname. Again, this must be an understatement, because it excludes step and in-law relatives. Doubling these proportions to allow for such relationships suggests that over 50 per cent of miners worked with kin. Relatives not only worked with, but for each other. For instance, one father-in-law hired his son-in-law to drive his buses⁶⁶. This

60. This figure is based on rate books for Adamstown (1887, 1894 and 1900), Hamilton (1877, 1887, 1897) and Merewether (1897). The rate books for Adamstown and Hamilton are in the possession of the Newcastle City Council and that for Merewether in the NPLA.

61. Municipality of Merewether, proposed incorporation, *loc. cit.*

62. Northumberland Building Society, *op. cit.*, No. 36 1900. See also *N.M.H.*, 9 Jan. 1891.

63. 'Select committee on assisted immigration', *loc. cit.*, p. 803. *M.A.*, 23 Mar. 1875.

64. This is clear from inquests into pit accidents. See *W&P&Sun*, 6 Oct. 1886. *M.A.*, 24 Ap., 22 Sept. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 21 Nov. 1891.

65. *M.A.*, 23 Ap. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 28 Feb., 4 Jy. 1881, 18 June 1900.

66. *W&P&Sun*, 29 Sept. 1886.

Table 2.9

Kin and work groups among coalminers at certain collieries in the
Newcastle district, 1871-1900

Company	Work groups with the same surname (%)					
	1871	1881	1891	1894	1899	1900
Australian Agricultural	27.3	25.1	27.7	29.3	-	30.4
Newcastle Coalmining	-	29.4	17.7	-	-	29.4
Wickham & Bullock Is.	-	-	-	-	32.4	32.9

Note: Dash indicates not available or company not in existence.

Sources: A.A.Co., 'Pay Sheets', 1870-1900 (ANUA).

N.C.C., 'Pay Sheets', 1876-1900 (ANUA).

WSBI.C.C., 'Pay Sheets', 1889-1900 (N.S.W.A.A.).

kind of relationship also extended to female kin, although how much payment in cash and kind was involved one cannot tell. One assault case revealed that a woman's sister had acted as a servant to her and her husband for six or seven years. On leaving school a 14 year old Wallsend girl went to mind her brother's children. Another young girl giving witness at an inquest said that, when she saw the accident, she had been scrubbing her married sister's front verandah⁶⁷.

In old age or sickness, the absence of any state assistance meant kin stepped in where there was no nuclear family, or that group could not cope. The reports of the department of Public Instruction on the ability of families to pay school fees contain numerous cases of breadwinners supporting aged parents, as well as their own families⁶⁸. Death notices giving the residence from which the funeral was to leave show that the sick and dying were cared for by parents, adult children and siblings. A married woman might go to her parents or sister, single men to sisters and parents to their children. The frequency with which a son-in-law's house was mentioned as the place of departure for funerals suggests aged parents relied most often on their married daughters⁶⁹. Widows and deserted wives received no government pension of the kind they would today. They were supported by parents, children or siblings. The high death rate, including that caused by pit accidents, also obliged many breadwinners to support siblings, siblings-in-law, nieces, nephews and grandchildren, besides their own family, lest they be sent to an asylum⁷⁰.

Kin also served as an emotional support in times of trouble. Wives assaulted by, or quarrelling with their husbands often took

67. *ibid.*, 30 Nov. 1895. 'Schools Files', Wallsend 1888 (P. 1840). *N.M.H.*, 29 Aug. 1900.

68. See especially 'Schools Files', 1888-93 (P. 1840, 1841, 1897, 1924, 1950).

69. Of the 12 funeral notices stating place of departure other than own home, half mentioned a son-in-law's residence, two (both married women) parents, two sons, one a sister and one a sister-in-law's home. Other evidence of caring for sick kin can be found in 'Schools Files', Newcastle South 1889 (P. 1854), *M.A.*, 20 Jan., 23 June 1875.

70. 'Schools Files', 1888-91 (P. 1833, 1841, 1849, 1851, 1874, 1892, 1896, 1903). Also *M.A.*, 19 June, 11 Sept. 1875.

themselves and their children to their parents' houses for shelter and consolation. The relatives might also help to restore harmony⁷¹. Poor treatment of a man by a voluntary association might cause his brother to resign. Relatives were fined for helping each other resist arrest or defending each other in a brawl⁷². Like families, kin kept together in quarrels with neighbours. In 1891 an Adamstown woman prosecuted a neighbour for assault with the help of evidence from her sister⁷³. The conclusion that blood was more important than any other tie extends to kin as well as family.

The functions kin performed for each other all imply intensive co-operation and strong feeling. Many of these functions also led to close or co-residence, which further strengthened kinship. As well, many families chose to live close by, thus expressing and consolidating close relations.

Shelter, care and employment given by kin often necessitated permanent co-residence. Thus households sometimes contained aged parents, sick siblings, daughters who were deserted wives and orphaned brothers, sisters, nieces, siblings-in-law and grandchildren. Sometimes this meant a child lived with almost as many cousins as sisters and brothers⁷⁴. In addition, relatives looked after children nuclear or simple families could not cope with. Miss Elsie Patrick was sent to live with her grandparents because of the birth of another child and did not return to the family until she was six years old. She believes it was common for relatives to look after the children of kin on a temporary basis⁷⁵. Finally, domestic employment of women by kin implied co-residence. The sister who acted as a servant lived in and the girl who minded her brother's children went to live with the family⁷⁶. The co-operation

71. viz., *W&PSun.*, 21 Aug. 1886, 21 Mar. 1891., *N.M.H.*, 17 Dec. 1891.

72. *W&PSun.*, 16 June 1886. *N.M.H.*, 18 Jy. 1891.

73. *N.M.H.*, 10 Oct. 1891.

74. One man kept his orphan sister and two aged parents as well as his own family. Another kept three orphans of his brother, as well as five children of his own. 'Schools Files', New Lambton, Wallsend 1891 (P. 1897, 1903).

75. Interview with Miss Elsie Patrick, 6 Feb., 1977 at her home, 41 Glebe Road, Junction.

76. *W&PSun.*, 30 Nov. 1895. 'Schools Files', Wallsend 1888 (P. 1840).

and more frequent contact involved in living together must have made for stronger ties between kin living this way.

It was not uncommon, either, for kin to live next door, or at least close by, thereby facilitating mutual aid and support. Some women who ran to relatives during fights with their husbands lived next door and an aunt visiting a sick nephew might only have to go 300 yards⁷⁷. In the Adamstown and Hamilton rate books there were many cases of people with the same surname living next door or several houses away. Yet again, the numbers must be underestimated, for other sources show living next to sons-in-law was as common as living next to sons. Also, kin might live at the back of rather than next door to relatives and so would not be listed consecutively⁷⁸. Sometimes close residence arose from leasing to kin. It was common for property owners to divide their land down or across and build another house which could be let. Whatever the reason for close residence, it expressed a willingness to do the best for one's relatives and strengthened already firm ties.

Despite or because of such intimacy, relations with kin were not always cordial. Economic ties meant arguments about money were inevitable. Brothers-in-law working as mates fought over the division of wages and female relatives came to blows when both wanted the job of midwife to a mutual relative⁸⁰. The social security functions of kin meant there were bound to be harsh words between aged mother and married daughter over maintenance allowances⁸¹. Finally, co-residence created its own tensions. The continuous presence of in-laws meant ill-feeling was bound to be expressed towards them at some time. Living in the same house also meant they were more likely to take sides in any argument, thus creating further tension and resentment⁸². This does not alter the argument that kinship ties were strong, for none of these incidents would have happened without strong commitment. Relations with kin might

77. *W&PSun.*, 21 Aug., 27 Sept. 1886, 21 Mar. 1891.

78. *ibid.*, 21 Mar. 1891. Municipality of Merewether, *loc.cit.*

79. Northumberland Building Society, *op.cit.*, No. 89, 1891.

80. *N.C.*, 12 Jan. 1861. *W&PSun.*, 24 Feb. 1891.

81. *N.M.H.*, 7 Jan. 1891.

82. e.g., *ibid.*, 7 Feb. 1891.

be good or bad, but they were always close and never loose or indifferent.

Thus the kinship ties upset by migration were rebuilt in the new land so that they linked people over three or four generations and across different family groups and occupations. In this way they contributed to cohesion within and between towns of the N.C.D. The importance of economic and social security functions meant kin, like families, played a variety of roles towards each other. This pushed the colliery townships further towards a rural *gemeinschaft* and away from the urban *gesellschaft*.

So far, any mention of neighbours has referred to conflict rather than co-operation. Certainly there was much bad feeling between neighbours and quarrels among them ending in a prosecution far outnumbered those between kin. Part of the explanation for so many disagreements may lie in the strong sentiment between family members. All cases where the cause of a dispute was given involved interference with other members of the family. One arose because a neighbour had caused trouble between husband and wife and the rest started with children fighting⁸³. Therefore, whilst recourse to litigation suggests relations were not good enough for people to settle their differences themselves, the quarrels imply considerable communication in the first place. Before a neighbour can cause much trouble between husband and wife she must be on intimate terms with both. Children usually fight when they play together. As with kin, feuds stemmed from intense rather than luke warm relationships.

Voluminous evidence about good relationships between neighbours lends weight to this argument. Public notices in newspapers thanking them for putting out fires and kindness and assistance in bereavement and illness⁸⁴ suggest that in crises neighbours, like kin, were

83. These cases were found in the *M.A.*, 1875, *N.M.H.*, 1891, 1900, *W&PSun.*, 1895.

84. *N.M.H.*, 29 Nov., 23 Dec. 1881, 11 Jan., 1 May 1900. *W&PSun.*, 7 Sept. 1895.

ready to help. The reminiscences of Richard Ford support this impression. As soon as neighbours found out there had been a pit accident or someone was ill, he recalls, they came round offering all kinds of help and sympathy. In the case of death the whole neighbourhood mourned⁸⁵. Mr. Ford also remembers much borrowing and social contact. Because they were expensive, not all households had mangles for washing, but neighbours were always willing to lend. Yeast for baking was bought from them by the quart⁸⁶. Informal leisure often consisted of sing-songs among neighbours⁸⁷. Finally, they helped those in need. A woman ill-treated by her husband might run to neighbours. An old lady too blind to feed herself might be helped with her meals by someone next door⁸⁸. When breadwinners deserted families, people living nearby kept the children in food⁸⁹. In cases of long-term need neighbours might canvass the town for donations. In 1900, when five boys were left quite unprovided for through the death of their parents and eldest brother, those living nearby began a subscription⁹⁰.

Essentially, neighbours performed the same functions as kin: help when the family was in need or difficulty, care for the sick and aged and comfort in family conflicts. The emphasis, though, was different. Much of the aid was temporary and was on a smaller scale. Neighbours might help an old woman or deserted children, but usually they did not take them in. There was more mutual aid of the borrowing and lending kind and fewer economic ties. Finally, although there was close co-operation with both kin and neighbours, there were fewer fights with kin. This suggests that kin and family relationships contributed more to cohesion than the neighbourhood and the latter never really congealed sufficiently to settle disputes without recourse to litigation. This situation is still very different from twentieth century Dagenham, where after forty years exchanges between neighbours are not intense enough to cause conflict.

85. R. Ford, *op.cit.*, pp. 7, 10. See also *N.C.*, 26 Dec. 1871.

86. Ford, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

87. *ibid.*, p. 7.

88. *W&PSun.*, 10 Aug., 29 Sept. 1886.

89. 'Schools Files', New Lambton, 1888 (P. 1835).

90. *N.M.H.*, 1 Oct. 1900. See also *M.A.*, 31 Mar. 1875.

There is no question that the primary relations destroyed by migration were re-established in the district, despite its working-class character. The functions of all primary groups were such as to bring about cohesion more akin to that hypothesized for rural than urban areas. This is not to argue that the N.C.D. achieved an ideal-type 'community', but that despite the migrant character of the inhabitants, they did not depend on secondary associations alone for employment, aid and companionship. To this extent primary groups helped create a close knit society. Many of the unique characteristics and functions of primary groups stemmed from peculiarities of the district. Population and sex structure, the nature of migration and social attitudes made marriage more common than anywhere else. This in turn made marriage more effective in uniting each town, the district as a whole and bourgeois and working-class families. The coal industry helped make marriage more attractive to men, encouraged economic interdependence in the family and, through its inability to create much tertiary employment, forced the bourgeoisie to become manual workers or marry into the families of workingmen. The functions of family, kin and neighbours were also related to the state of technology and social welfare at the time. The relative lack and high cost of labour saving devices made husbands dependent on wives, wives on neighbours. The complete lack of social welfare services meant that when in need there was little choice but to rely on kin and neighbours for support. The successful establishment of highly integrated primary groups in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century was due as much to the character of the age as unique features of the region. It was the latter, though, which made for greater integration in the district than there might have been in other areas at the same time.

CHAPTER THREE

PROSPERITY

Although family and kin served important social and economic functions in the N.C.D., such groups were not the best means of coping with some of the needs of inhabitants. Most wageearners, be they married or single, kin or non kin, shared the goal of securing the highest real wages possible. Indeed, as a group they probably placed more importance on this aspect of life than many who stayed in the old country. Had the collieries opened up around Newcastle in the late nineteenth century not held out the promise of a higher standard of living, noone would ever have gone there. The main purpose of migration was to take advantage of the higher wages labour could command¹. Migrants persuaded their relatives to join them on the grounds that they would do better in the colony. Immigration agents, newspapers and colliery proprietors held out to the would-be immigrant the reward of higher rates of pay². In practice, securing and maintaining the promised standard was not so easy. Employers, although they quoted the high wage rates to encourage migration, resented having to pay them. From the start they saw migration as the way to saturate the labour market and weaken the bargaining position of workmen³. This clash of interests with employers was not new to those who had come from the British coalfields. Since the late eighteenth century they had formed trades unions to resist the efforts of employers to lower their wages in real or monetary terms. Therefore, those who came to the district already had a tradition of voluntary associations which went beyond kin and neighbourhood in their membership. Moreover, the trade union was not their only such organization. In the early nineteenth century the cooperative society had been set up in many British towns with the aim of increasing real wages by giving its members better value for money. By the second half of the century the cooperative and the trade union were key institutions in the British working-class struggle

1. *N.C.*, 21 Aug. 1861.

2. 'Select committee on assisted immigration', *VSPLA*, v. 5, 1879-80, pp. 800-804. The implication of any colliery company advertizement was better pay. See *N.C.*, 21 Aug. 1861.

3. A.A.Co., 'Extracts of Despatches, Letters from the Court of Directors' 27 June 1885, quoted in R. Gollan, *The coalminers of N.S.W.* (Melbourne, 1963), p. 30. Young to Grainger, 22 Nov. 1862, Report from Thomas Croudace, 17 Nov. 1862 in SAMCo, 'Manager's Letters', 1859-63 (F.L.)

to achieve a better standard of living. They were put to the same purpose in the new land.

This chapter discusses the establishment, success and contribution to the culture and social cohesion of the colliery townships of these two institutions. Although the trade union flourished in the N.C.D. from its beginnings, its success in bringing inhabitants prosperity was limited. The cooperative was less popular, but provided considerable benefits for those who belonged to it. Neither drew together all sections of the population in their membership, but their existence contributed to a distinctive culture in the area.

The principle of trade unionism came to the N.C.D. with miners from the militant coalfields of north eastern England and Scotland. Whilst the Welsh and most English coalminers remained passive until the late nineteenth century, those from Northumberland and Durham were prominent in the early nineteenth century trade union movement⁴. There were strikes against binding men in yearly contracts in 1810 and 1831. In 1844 there was a general strike over a variety of grievances. Miners of north eastern England also worked together to secure the passage of a better Mines Regulation Bill in 1850⁵. In this period unionism was also growing in Scotland. As early as 1893 secret societies called brotherings were recorded among coalminers still bound as slaves. According to one pamphleteer the brothering was an

'engagement to stand by each other. In the west country, where this practice is universal, they have some watch word, by the sending round of which they can lay the whole of the collieries in the country idle ...

If a collier from ... any other place, who is not of the brotherhood, comes among them, he is immediately obliged to enter into the Society, and take his oath, or they will not allow him to work.'⁶

4. G.D.H. Cole, *A century of cooperation* (Manchester, 1944), p. 153. J.H. Morris and L.J. Williams, *The South Wales coal industry, 1831-75* (Cardiff, 1958), p. 269.

5. R. Fynes, *The miners of Northumberland and Durham*, 2nd ed. (London, 1923), pp. 19, 24, 37, 49-60, 125-41.

6. R. Page-Arnot, *A history of the Scottish miners from the earliest times* (London, 1955), pp. 11-12.

Thus it is not surprising that there was also trade unionism and industrial action in Scottish mines in the 1840s⁷. The Geordies and Scots were the strongest regional groups in the N.C.D. Table 3.1 shows they were over half the British born miners whose marriages are recorded in surviving church registers. Some of them had been forced to leave the old world because of the part they played in trade unions. In 1875 the miners got up a collection for the ageing Mark Dent who had been forced to leave Britain because of his part in the 1844 strike⁸.

Table 3.1

Birthplace of British born coalminers in the colliery townships:
1860-1900

Birthplace	Proportion of British born	
	No.	%
Northumberland and Durham	93	27
Staffordshire	23	7
Cornwall	15	4
Elsewhere in England	72	21
Scotland	87	26
Ireland	12	4
Wales	38	11
Total	340	100

Note: English born not stating county were excluded.

Source: Marriage register survey.

The preponderance of Scots and Geordie miners already accustomed to taking industrial action meant united action in this area was a feature of the district from its earliest times. Newcomers sometimes celebrated their arrival by striking for higher wages and in 1850 all

7. *ibid.*, pp. 33-37.

8. *M.A.*, 4 Sept., 2 Oct. 1875.

miners struck to raise the hewing rate. There was quite a lot of industrial action in the 1850s and a union among the Coal and Copper Company's miners. In 1860 a union of all miners working in Newcastle was formed. It won a strike in 1861, but disintegrated in 1862, when employers imported large numbers of indentured mine workers⁹. In 1870 the Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association of the Hunter River District was formed. Although the district organization changed its name several times over the next thirty years, the union represented the miners in all negotiations with employers and had almost universal membership. Each colliery had its own lodge which negotiated with local management on matters affecting it. Lodges paid fees and sent a delegate to the district committee of management. The latter coordinated union policy on matters affecting all miners, intervened on behalf of individual lodges, fixed the levy to be paid by each lodge to those on strike and organized united action when warranted¹⁰. The issues concerning the union were the health, safety and hours worked as well as the wages of miners.

When seeking to maximize wages, miners concentrated on two issues: the hewing rate and compensation for working in difficult parts of the pit. Throughout the nineteenth century, coalmining was paid by the ton hewn. Thus the hewing rate, as it was called, was a crucial aspect of wages. The fixing of a good hewing rate did not automatically secure the best wages possible for all. Those in narrower seams, below the water table, or where coal was difficult to extract found their output lowered. In 1862 men working upright in the 5'10" Minmi seam were twice as productive as A.A.Co. miners working a three foot seam on their sides¹¹. This led to the practice of negotiating compensatory payments for working seams below a minimum height, under water, or mixed with other minerals which had to be removed. 'Considerations', as they were called, for working in deficient places were

9. Gollan, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-8. J.W. Turner, 'Coalmining and manufacturing in Newcastle, 1897-1900' (Ph.D., University of Newcastle, 1977), pp. 169-71.

10. In 1887 the Newcastle coalminers established links with other Australian miners and became part of the Amalgamated Miners Association, no. 2 Colonial District, N.S.W. For an outline of its regulations see 'Rules of the Amalgamated Miners Association, no. 2 Colonial District, N.S.W. 1887' (N.P.I.).

11. *N.C.*, 12 Mar. 1862.

designed to allow the miner with a bad place in a good pit, or in a pit with a difficult seam, to earn as much as those working in better places.

Average wages varied enormously from year to year. Figure 3.1 shows that the lowest wages were paid in the early 1860s, when the A.A.Co. destroyed the union by importing labour. The highest wages were received in the mid 1870s (1872-8) and from 1882-91, with the exception of the years when the union felt strong enough to take general strike action: 1885, 1888 and 1890. The 1870-80 recession and the prolonged depression of the 1890s saw wages fall below the pre-1871 level, whilst 1900 saw a return to the wage levels of the 1880s. The struggle for higher wages was no success story, much of what was achieved in the 1870s and 1880s being lost in the 1890s, when wages were as low as in the 1860s.

Figure 3.2 shows the hewing rate, average number of days worked and average wages at collieries, for which this information is available, from 1871. A cursory glance suggests that, despite the emphasis the union put on the hewing rate, fluctuation in wages followed closely the number of days worked. Given a constant hewing rate from 1883 to 1891, wages fluctuated with the days worked. Even with a falling hewing rate they could rise if work increased sufficiently, as in 1879-81, 1893-4 and 1895-7. What is more, the bargaining position of the union was closely tied to economic conditions. The hewing rate was at its highest in the late 1870s, the most prosperous time for the coal trade in the whole period. In the depression years of 1870-81 and in the 1890s it dropped sharply¹².

The fluctuation of the hewing rate with the state of the coal industry and the importance of the number of days worked in determining wages raise the question of whether the union's emphasis on the hewing rate was justified. This is a difficult question because it requires speculation about what might have happened had there been no union. Figure 3.2 shows that wages rose considerably after the revival of the union in the 1870s. A close look at figure 3.2 shows that a higher

12. For an account of trends in the Newcastle coal industry see Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-3, 304.

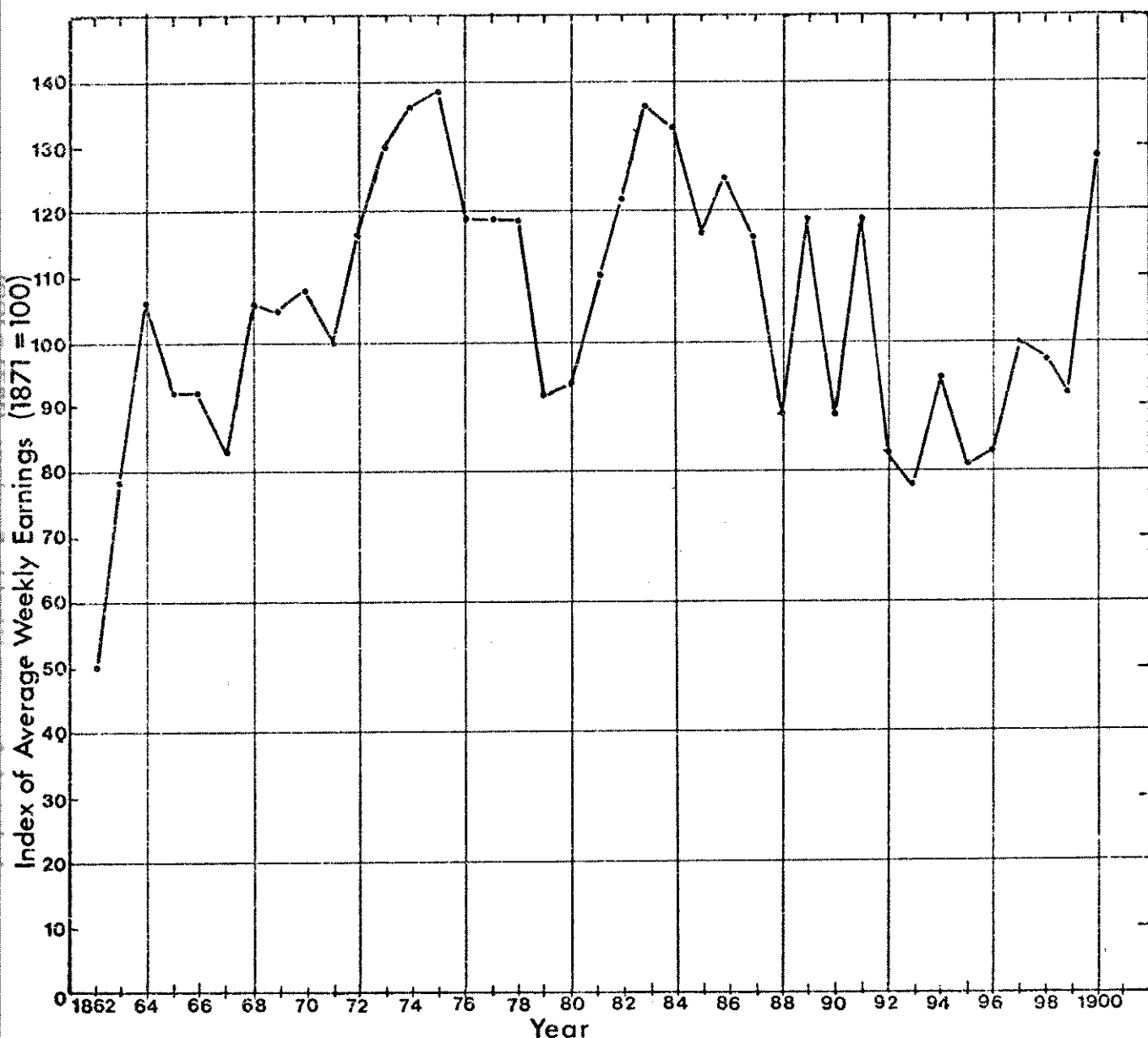


Fig 3-1 Money wages of miners in the Newcastle District, 1862-1900

Note: From 1870, when the pay sheets start, weekly wages were calculated on the basis of days worked and wages paid in pays 4, 10, 16 and 22 of each year. Wages per day for each of these were multiplied by the number of days worked in the relevant quarter and the four quarters averaged to give average weekly earnings for the year. For the years before 1870 the A.A.Co's calculations of average wages were used.

Sources: A.A.Co., 'Pay abstracts', 'colliery abstract sheets' (ANUA 1/101, 102), 'Pay sheets' (ANUA), 'Coal Papers' (1/62 CL-1 no. 12). N.C.C., 'Pay sheets'. W&B.I. Coal Co., 'Pay sheets' (N.S.W.A.A.)

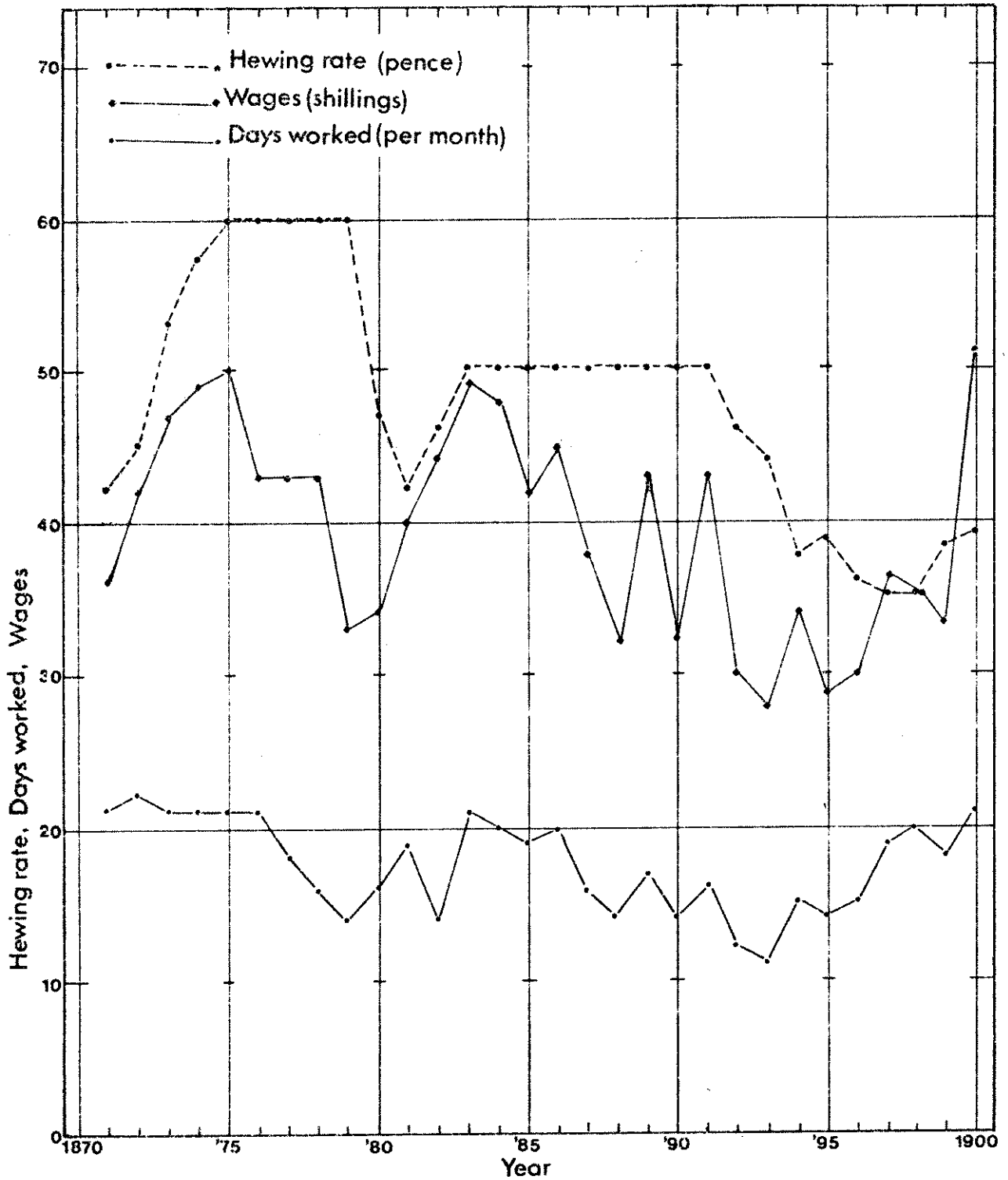


Fig. 3-2 Hewing rates, days worked and wages in Newcastle Collieries: 1870-1900

Note: Where the hewing rate changed in mid year the annual rate was calculated on a weighted average to the nearest month.

Sources: R. Gollan, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
Coal Companies, as for fig. 3.1.

hewing rate did enable miners to do better than they might have if they had not bargained over it. An increase could offset a fall in days worked, as in 1872-3 and 1881-2. Given the same amount of work it determined wages. In 1879, 1888 and 1895 the average number of days worked was 13 a month. The hewing rate was 5/-, 4/2 and 3/3 respectively. Wages varied accordingly. Negotiations over the hewing rate were important in determining how low wages could fall. They enabled miners to make the best of the good years when they were in a position to secure a higher hewing rate. Despite the deterioration in the union's bargaining position in bad years, determination to keep the rate as high as possible could cushion the effects of falling demand.

More important than the level of wages is what they can buy. In the nineteenth century prices could fall along with wages in bad years so that real wages might not fluctuate as sharply as money wages. However, indices of real wages only show how much better or worse off wageearners were over time, not what wages meant in terms of subsistence and affluence. Real wages could be comparatively high, but still below subsistence. Conversely, they could be at their lowest but still allow breadwinners to make ends meet. To really understand what wages meant in terms of subsistence and affluence we must look at actual rather than relative prices and wages. This method of assessing the standard of living is not popular with statisticians. It is far easier to compile indices of wages and prices in key areas than to devise a weekly household budget and relate it to specific incomes¹³. Such an exercise involves estimates on all items, clothing and rent as well as food, not to mention the size of an average household. This is all the more difficult when dealing with a region where prices, although they probably followed general trends, may well have been consistently higher or lower. Moreover, the possibility of different periods of prosperity and depression in the N.C.D. means land values and house rents could have fluctuated according to these rather than the general colonial pattern. Fortunately, there is enough information about prices

13. Viz. Wood, when looking at changes in prices in nineteenth century N.S.W., restricted his analysis to foodstuffs. G.H. Wood, 'Changes in average prices in N.S.W., 1828-1898', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 64, no. 4, 1901, pp. 661-676.

in the district to test their comparability with those in the rest of the colony. There is also enough information on consumption of foodstuffs to give them appropriate weighting in the weekly budget. Rent and expenditure on other items necessary to welfare can also be estimated. Thus the construction of a weekly budget is possible. Such detailed budgets are not usually used by historians in constructing indices of real wages. Since these are needed to compare actual costs and wages and there is no other index of prices for the Newcastle district, we will also use it for this purpose.

If we look at N.S.W. and Newcastle prices for the most common commodities in the years when there is information for both (table 3.2), we see that there was little difference. If anything, prices of some goods were somewhat lower in Newcastle. In the earlier years many inhabitants complained of the difference in prices between the colliery townships and the port. Their response to this problem, however, was to shop in Newcastle. By the end of the period even these differences had disappeared. In 1898 the Northumberland Benevolent Society did not buy provisions for outdoor relief in bulk in Newcastle because there was so little difference in prices between the port and suburbs¹⁴. Therefore it is safe to use N.S.W. prices for goods in the household budget.

The central problems in devising a weekly household budget are to identify common items of expenditure, the proportions in which they were consumed and average household size. They can be solved by reference to food consumption statistics and census material for nineteenth century N.S.W.

From 1886 Coghlan's *Wealth and Progress of N.S.W.* gives annual consumption per head of the most popular foodstuffs in the colony. This not only serves as a regimen of foods eaten, but indicates average consumption per head. This average is not without its problems. Coghlan observed that total per capita consumption was, in terms of energy derived, above international estimates of what was necessary to sustain

14. *N.C.*, 9 Mar. 1871. Cl. Ed., 'Miscellaneous letters ...', 1868, (N.S.W.A.A., 1/793). 'Minutes of the R.C. on subsidized benevolent institutions', *Jnl. L.C.*, 1899(2) pt. 1, p. 116.

Table 3.2

Prices in N.S.W. and Newcastle for selected years

Commodity	1861 N.S.W. Ncle.	1862 N.S.W. Ncle.	1871 N.S.W. Ncle.	1875 N.S.W. Ncle.	1881 N.S.W. Ncle.	1886 N.S.W. Ncle.	1891 N.S.W. Ncle.	1895 N.S.W. Ncle.
Bread (2 lb.)	6½	4	4½	3½	3½	4	3½	
Beef	4½	3	4½	3½	3½	2	4½	
Butter	1/-	1/6	2/3	1/3	1/4	1/4		1/-
Cheese		9	6½	7½	6½	6½	9	7½
Sugar		4½	4½	4	3½	3½	3½	3
Tea		2/-	2/3	2/3	2/1	2/-	2/-	1/9
Potatoes (cwt.)		8/-	3/-		5/6	6/-		
Eggs (doz.)		1/5	1/3					
Rice					3	3	3	2½
Soap					3	2		
Tobacco				2/-	2/6	2/-	2/-	2

Note: All commodities are in lbs. unless otherwise stated. All prices are in shillings and pence.

Sources: N.C., 1861, 1862, 1871. M.A., 1875. N.M.H., 1881, 1891. W&S, 1886, 1891, 1895. G.H. Wood, 'Changes in Average Prices in N.S.W. 1828-1898', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 64 (4), 1901, pp. 661-76.

the individual¹⁵. The amount we eat reflects cultural standards as much as need. The better off may eat more to draw attention to their more comfortable existence. Therefore, these consumption figures are closer to the average to which all aspired than subsistence. Since all immigrants came in search of prosperity, this is a fair standard to set when measuring expenditure against income.

The remaining central problem is to estimate family size. This is complicated by the presence of more than one breadwinner in families where older children worked. To simplify matters a household was defined as breadwinner, children and spouse, on the grounds that adolescent wageearners could only keep themselves¹⁶. The number of children under twelve years in proportion to married men or women, whichever was larger¹⁷, widows and widowers, was calculated for each census. The result was three dependent children per family and so an average family size of five. Therefore it was possible to estimate average weekly expenditure on foodstuffs. Since Coghlan's consumption figures were averages for the total population, men, women and children, it was not thought necessary to take account of the different amounts consumed by husband, wife and children.

Though food is one of the basic items of weekly expenditure, it is not the only or most costly one. Clothing is also crucial to survival, but very hard to gauge because of lack of evidence. A contributor to *The People* in 1900 claimed a household of six children and three adults spent £25 a year on clothing¹⁸. This works out to 5/4 a week for five persons. Since prices generally fell during the period, the amount was probably greater earlier and so may underestimate costs. On the other hand, falling prices may increase consumption without reducing expenditure. Such an estimate is rough, but at least it is related to what people claimed to spend at the time.

Shelter is just as important as clothing, but it is difficult to get reliable rental values for the colliery townships each year.

15. T.A. Coghlan, *The wealth and progress of N.S.W.*, 1889-90, p. 379.

16. see 'Schools Files', Hamilton 1889, (P. 1849).

17. This was done to allow for desertions and temporary absences.

18. *The People*, 25 Aug. 1900 (M.L.).

Newspaper advertisements and building society estimates need not be representative. To get a better idea of rents for four roomed wooden or weatherboard houses, the most common kind and size of house in the area, municipal valuations for Merewether, Adamstown and Hamilton in certain years were averaged¹⁹. These three towns are fairly representative of the district. Adamstown was a freehold town, Merewether a leasehold town and Hamilton a larger freehold town than Adamstown, experiencing a rapid rise in land values at the end of the period. Using this information, together with newspaper and building society material, probable rents for different periods were calculated, taking account of local economic fluctuations (table 3.3). As with food, these estimates are rough, but they are made in the light of standards and trends at the time. So, they are unlikely to misrepresent average expenditure to any great extent.

Table 3.3

Estimated rent for a four bedroomed weatherboard house
in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1862-1900

Period	Weekly Rent (shillings)
1860-72	4
1873-78	7
1879-81	5
1882-91	6
1892-1900	5

Sources: *N.C.*, 1861, 1862, 1871. *M.A.*, 1875. *W&PSun*, 1895.
N.M.H., 1881, 1891, 1900. Newcastle Building Society,
Northumberland Building Society, 'Loan Applications'.
Rate Books for the municipalities of Merewether (1897),
Hamilton (1877, 1887, 1898), Adamstown (1886, 1894, 1900).

19. These were: Adamstown (1886, 1894, 1900); Hamilton (1877, 1887, 1898); Merewether (1897).

Essential expenditure to maintain the accepted standard of living did not, by the late nineteenth century, consist of just food, clothing and shelter. Some provision for social security was common and the education of children compulsory. In addition, miners had to pay union fees and were charged for the cost of blasting powder, repairs to tools and tallow. Most of these costs were fixed. Friendly society contributions were around 1/6 a week and school fees 1/6 for three children. From the 1870s union dues were collected in the N.C.D. and cost about 1/3 a week. Charges for blasting powder, repairs and tallow varied, but not much. In 1881 the weekly cost was 3/0³d. and in 1892 2/10d²⁰. Thus it would be safe to say union dues and these charges came to around 5/- a week. These costs were added to essential weekly expenditure so that it approximated the standard a respectable, provident coalminer's household would have to meet. Thus the standard of living devised corresponds to that the average workingman in the nineteenth century would aspire to, rather than subsistence. This is a fitting level against which to measure the goal of all in the new land, prosperity.

Figure 3.3 shows the changes in miners' real wages in the Newcastle area. The fluctuations were less extreme than those of money wages but were still sharp. They suggest similar trends in prosperity to money wages. The early 1870s were prosperous years with 1875 still the best year of the period. 1883 and 1884 were also good years and thereafter real wages fluctuated in the face of strike action to maintain standards. The early 1860s, 1879-80 and the 1890s were the worst years for miners, with purchasing power well below the 1871 level. For the Newcastle miners falling prices could cushion the sharp fluctuations in wages, but could not offset the general trend.

Actual wages and costs as set out in figure 3.4a show that for the average miner the respectable standard of living we have devised was more a goal to aspire to than a reality because for most of the period he was hard put to meet it. Of the 39 years for which data is shown, wages were greater than expenditure in only sixteen and equal to it in three. Moreover, when the total profit and loss for the period are added up, the answer is a clear minus. Thus a miner

20. *N.M.H.*, 11 Nov. 1861. A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (1/62 CM-1B).

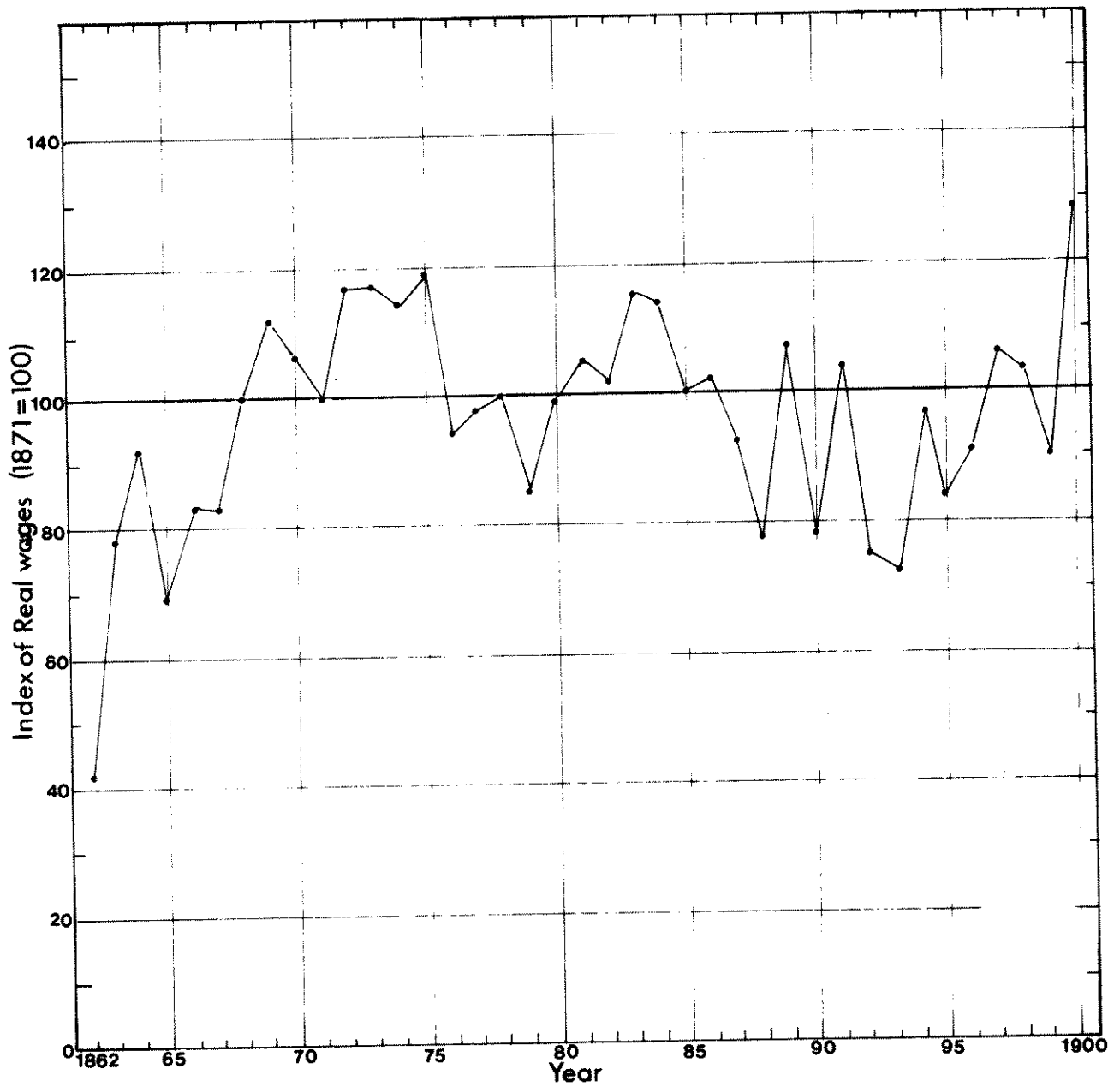


Fig. 3-3 Real wages of miners in Newcastle: 1862-1900

Sources: For wages see Fig. 3.1.

For expenditure see text.

constantly earning average wages would have found it impossible to save in the better years to maintain a respectable standard in the bad. How far he had to compromise in his family's standards of food, clothing and shelter and how close he came to primary poverty is impossible to tell. There is no doubt, though, that many would have agreed with a miner who in 1875 won second prize in an essay competition on the 'Past, present and future condition of the working' class'. He wrote:

'Many think we are well paid for our labours but when all the expense which is connected with our calling is taken into consideration, it will be found that our wages are nothing remarkable. Very few are able to save enough though as sober and industrious as any other class'²¹.

If a miner earned average wages and had average expenses, that is, a wife and three children to keep, he was relatively lucky. Any average implies that there will be a large or small deviation from the norm. In the N.C.D. many earned less than average wages. Others had more than the average number of dependents.

There were enormous variations in miners' wages because of the variations in the quality of the coal seam. Although the union tried to get compensation for those working in deficient places, bargaining power was inadequate in this area. In 1875, the most prosperous year for the colliery townships, the union was strong enough to secure an agreement making all pleas for compensation subject to arbitration. The weaker bargaining position of the union by the 1880s meant management, which was becoming increasingly united, could refuse to go to arbitration²². Consequently, the issue of compensations returned to the field of strike action. It caused the stoppage at Lambton in 1885. In 1888 there was a general strike in support of a new general agreement which stipulated standard seam height and paid compensations for narrow seams and various types and quantities of impurities in the coal. The agreement eventually concluded did increase payments for

21. *M.A.*, 18 Aug. 1875.

22. R. Gollan, *op. cit.*, p. 55. J. Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-4.

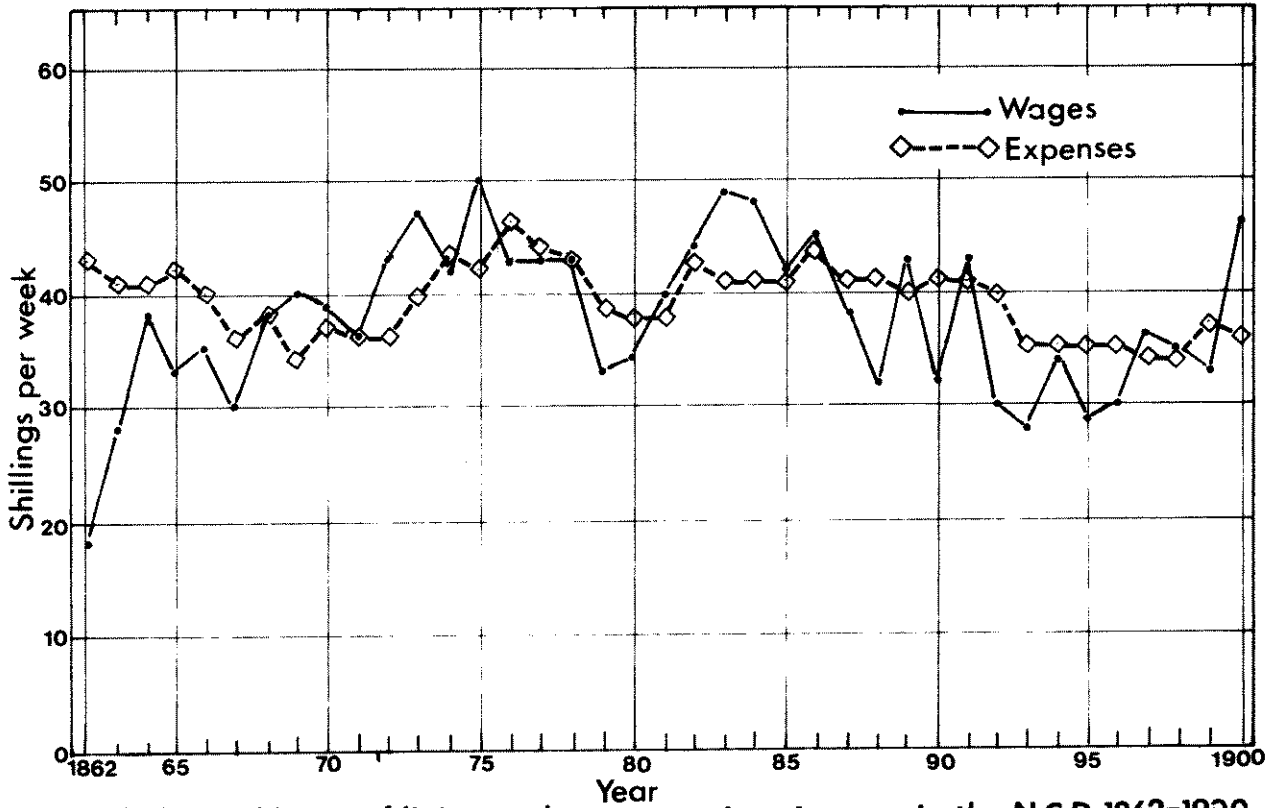


Fig. 3-4a Weekly cost of living and average miners' wages in the N.C.D. 1862-1900

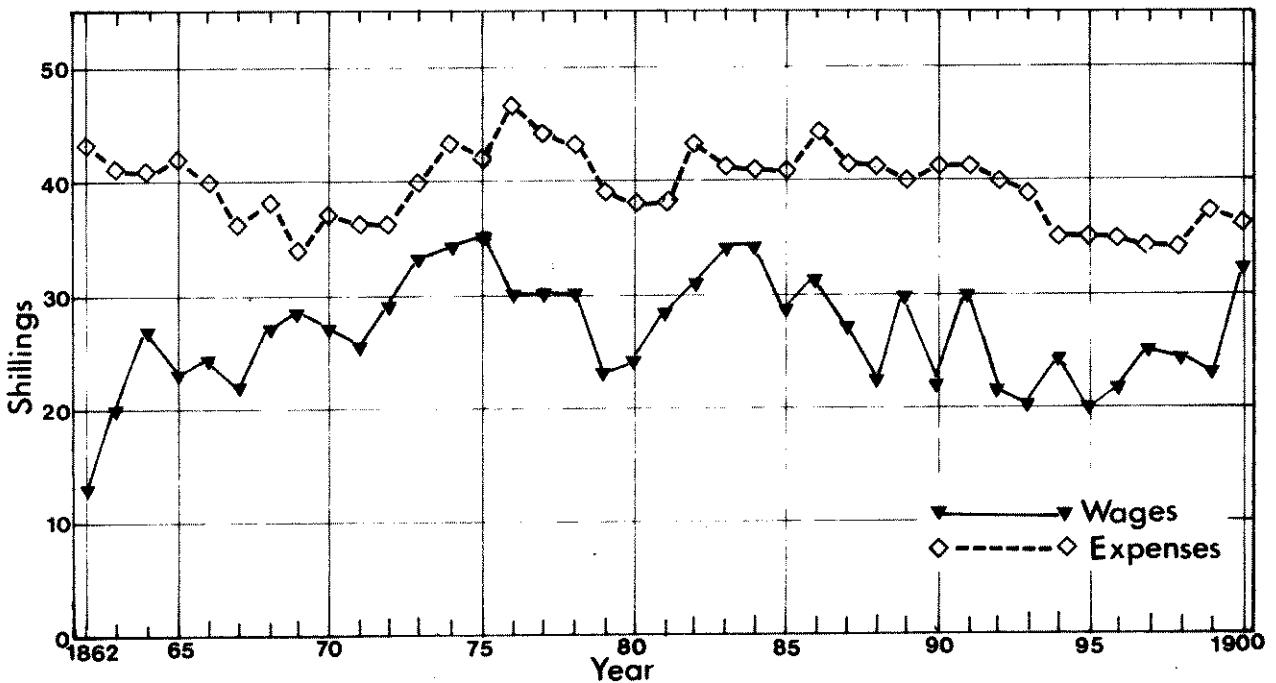


Fig. 3-4b Weekly cost of living and average wages, minus the standard deviation: 1862-1900

Note: In the years before 1870 the average A.A.Co. coefficient of variation (30%) was used to estimate the standard deviation.

Sources: As for fig. 3.3.

deficiencies, many of which could be obtained without arbitration²³. In practice the agreement seems to have done little to even out wages. In 1891 there were complaints about the Jubilee district in the Wallsend pits and it was argued that the only way to solve the problem was 'to pay for deficient places'²⁴. Extreme variations in wages continued, despite agreements. The average coefficient of variation at the A.A., Newcastle and W&B.L. collieries was never less than 21 per cent and could be as high as 43 per cent. The average at any pit, for all the years when there is data, was between 25 per cent and 33 per cent (table 3.4).

Figure 3.4b shows average wages minus the standard deviation and the cost of a respectable standard of living. There was no way a miner earning such a wage could approach such a level of expenditure in any year. In fact, if he earned such a low wage constantly, he was probably living in primary poverty. However, allocation was by ballot, or cavi, as it was called, and it cannot be assumed on the laws of probability that some always had very good and others very bad luck. Rather, a run of average or good places would be followed by several bad ones and income could drop from plus to minus the standard deviation from year to year. Although the laws of chance would give each an equal chance in the cavils, it is well known that some are luckier than the laws of chance would suggest. In addition, some miners continually secured lucrative positions through favouritism by the management, despite the cavi system²⁵. This meant others were consistently penalized. The levels of average and below average wages indicate that a miner with average to bad luck could never come near the respectable standard of living we have set.

Although the average family size was five, many families had more than three dependent children. Many also had obligations to other kin: aged parents, orphaned siblings, or sisters who were deserted wives. Figure 3.4c shows the effect of having another person to feed and clothe on weekly expenses for a miner on average wages. Quite clearly, anyone with above average obligations had to compromise with a respect-

23. Gollan, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-77.

24. *W&BSun*, 11 Ap. 1891.

25. Letters from M. Yates to E.C. Merewether, 15 Dec. 1864, 3 Ap. 1866, A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (1/59, CC-1 no. 170, CC-M no. 49).
W&BSun, 11 Ap. 1891.

Table 3.4

Variation in wages paid to miners at certain collieries in the Newcastle district, 1871-1900

Year	Coefficient of Variation					
	A.A.Co.		Sea.	N.C.C.		W&B.I.C.C.
	No. 2	Hamilton		A.Pit	B.Pit	
1871	31.5					
1872	37.9					
1873	32.9					
1874	34.3					
1875	31.4	42.3				
1876	28.5	31.3				
1877	28.3	26.4		35.6		
1878	27.4	38.3		25.3		
1879	27.1	35.9		24.3		
1880	27.3	28.9		24.1		
1881	35.6	34.1		29.5		
1882	29.5	26.9		28.3		
1883	30.5	27.8		29.5		
1884	30.4	28.4		23.5		
1885	34.4	33.2		28.4		
1886	29.2	33.1		26.5		
1887	28.5	31.6		22.5	26.2	
1888	31.1	31.9		26.2	35.4	
1889	35.8		22.1	26.3	21.2	25.7
1890	31.4		30.2	24.2	24.7	29.8
1891	29.3		33.5	26.1	22.1	21.8
1892	31.7		28.2	28.4	27.9	23.5
1893	41.2		23.6	21.4	25.1	23.6
1894	37.1		37.2	23.9	24.6	28.5
1895	34.9		31.9	24.1	24.6	29.3
1896	43.2		34.5	32.1	30.5	27.2
1897	37.8		29.3	27.7	25.8	28.4
1898	33.2		32.7	29.2	27.4	34.3
1899	31.7		27.4	28	21.7	29.1
1900	34.5		28.8	27.6	23.4	28.4
Average	32.6	32.2	30.0	26.8	25.8	27.5

Note: Annual figures are averages of the coefficients of variation for Pays 4, 10, 16 and 20.

Sources: A.A.Co., 'Pay Sheets', 1871-1900 (ANUA)
 N.C.C., 'Pay Sheets', 1877-1900 (ANUA)
 W&B.I.C.C., 'Pay Sheets', 1889-1900 (N.S.W.A.A.)

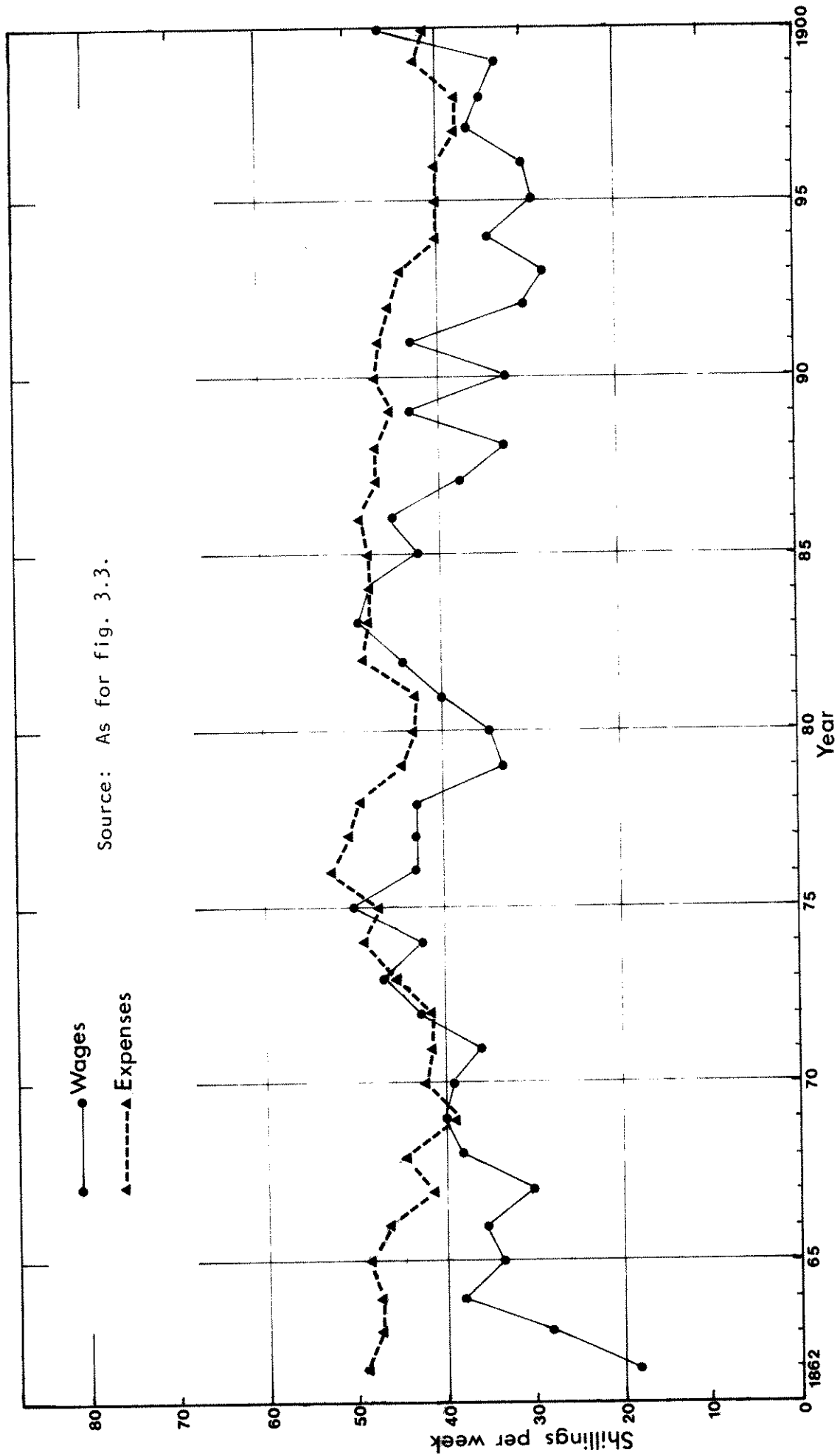


Fig. 3-4c Weekly cost of living for a family with one extra dependent and average miner's wages in the N.C.D., 1862-1900

able standard of living. This was particularly so in the late 1880s and 1890s, when there were more likely to have been dependent parents to keep. Those with an even larger number of dependents must have been extremely poor.

Literary sources, such as newspapers, colliery correspondence and the reports of school attendance officers, who from the 1880s to 1894 investigated the circumstances of parents unable to pay school fees, show many miners were so far below the respectable standard in depression and strike years that they were in primary poverty. In 1889, when they were recovering from a strike followed by slack times, one attendance officer reported the homes of families he visited looked 'poor' or 'very wretched'²⁶. One Minmi man with seven children, who in 1893 claimed he had not earned a proper wage since 1888, said he could not send his children to school neatly dressed as expected. Others were not fined for the non-attendance of their children because they had no clothes to wear²⁷. Descriptions of the clothes of children who were not kept from school suggest children who were kept at home were especially badly off. Teachers noted many came poorly clad or not dressed warmly enough. In 1890 the New Lambton headmaster was cautioned because of the state of his school. The specific complaint was the appearance of the children. Some had no boots whilst others had no change of clothing. This meant it was common for children to attend 'not only with the pants but other garments in a torn condition'²⁸. Barefooted children were commonplace. In 1896, when asked to explain defects in the boys' drill, the Minmi headmaster pointed out that more than half had no boots and the yard was covered in gravel. Mr. Richard Ford who grew up in the 1890s claims most boys went to school barefoot²⁹. Many families were so poor that they lacked food. In 1881 it was common knowledge that some Wallisend families were living on boiled bran, whilst 'pretty near starving' was the term used to describe miners' families during slack times at Lambton in 1890 and Plattsburg in 1891³⁰.

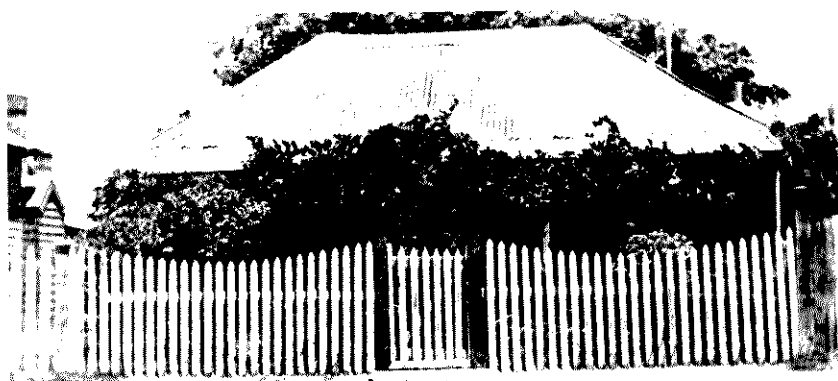
26. 'Schools Files', Adamstown, Minmi 1889 (P. 1841, 1353).

27. *ibid.*, Minmi, 1893 (P. 1941). *W&F Sun*, 4 Jan. 1895.

28. 'Schools Files', New Lambton 1888, 1890, Wallisend 1892-3, Merewether 1897 (P. 1835, 1874, 1924, 1950, 2022).

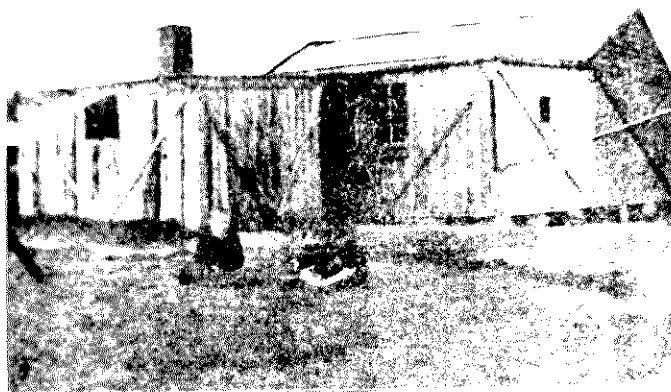
29. *ibid.*, Minmi 1896 (P. 2006). Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

30. *N.M.H.*, 4 Mar. 1881. Monthly report of Thomas Croudace, 16 Ap. 1890, SAMCo, 'Superintendent's Letters', 1889-90 (F.L.). *W&F Sun*, 19 Aug. 1891.



Cottage in Hamilton

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle City Council



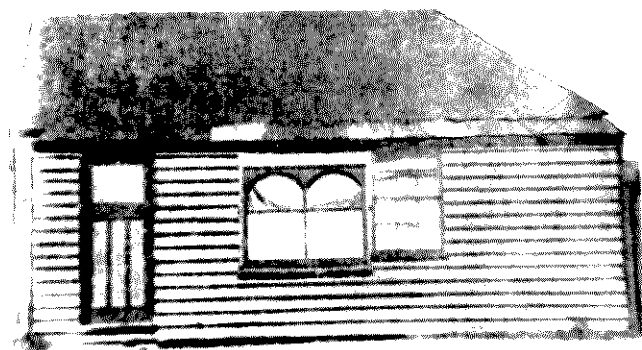
Houses on Newcastle Wallsend Company's Estate

Reproduced by permission of the Mitchell Library



House on Merewether Estate

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle City Council



Variable working conditions meant not only that some earned less than the average wage, but others earned more. Figure 3.4d shows the average wage plus the standard deviation was usually well above the cost of a respectable standard of living, except in the earliest years and the worst part of the 1890s depression. Again, it must be born in mind that few would have earned this level of wages constantly. It is more likely that they earned wages between the average and average plus the standard deviation. Even so, in the best and even average times they must have been able to enjoy the prosperity, the promise of which brought them to N.S.W. To this affluent group we must add the substantial minority who paid little or no rent. A quarter to a fifth of the population lived rent free on the commonage in houses they built themselves. The inhabitants of Merewether, most of which was owned by E.C. Merewether, had to pay rent for land, but not for the houses they built on it. Owner occupation of houses in Merewether was 56 per cent.³¹ The weekly cost of ground rent was less than a shilling and so added very little to expenditure³¹. Figure 3.4e sets out average wages and weekly expenditure for those with an average family and those with an extra dependent, who paid little or no rent. Clearly those with average family commitments could live at a respectable standard, or more, from 1869 onward, except for 1879, 1888 and the early 1890s. Those with extra dependents, however, fared about as well as those with average wages who had to pay rent.

That the better off miners achieved the prosperity they sought is clear from records of land and property ownership. These are: electoral rolls, building society applications and rate books.

Before 1893 N.S.W. electoral rolls specified the qualification which entitled an elector to vote. These were residence, presiding over a household, leasehold and freehold. The last mentioned could be resident or absentee landowners. Thus the rolls can show how many

31. Ground rent estimated from Northumberland Building Society, 'Loan Applications' (NUA), Newcastle Building and Investment Society, 'Loan Applications' (NPLA). Owner occupation calculated from Merewether Assessment Book, 1897 (NPLA).

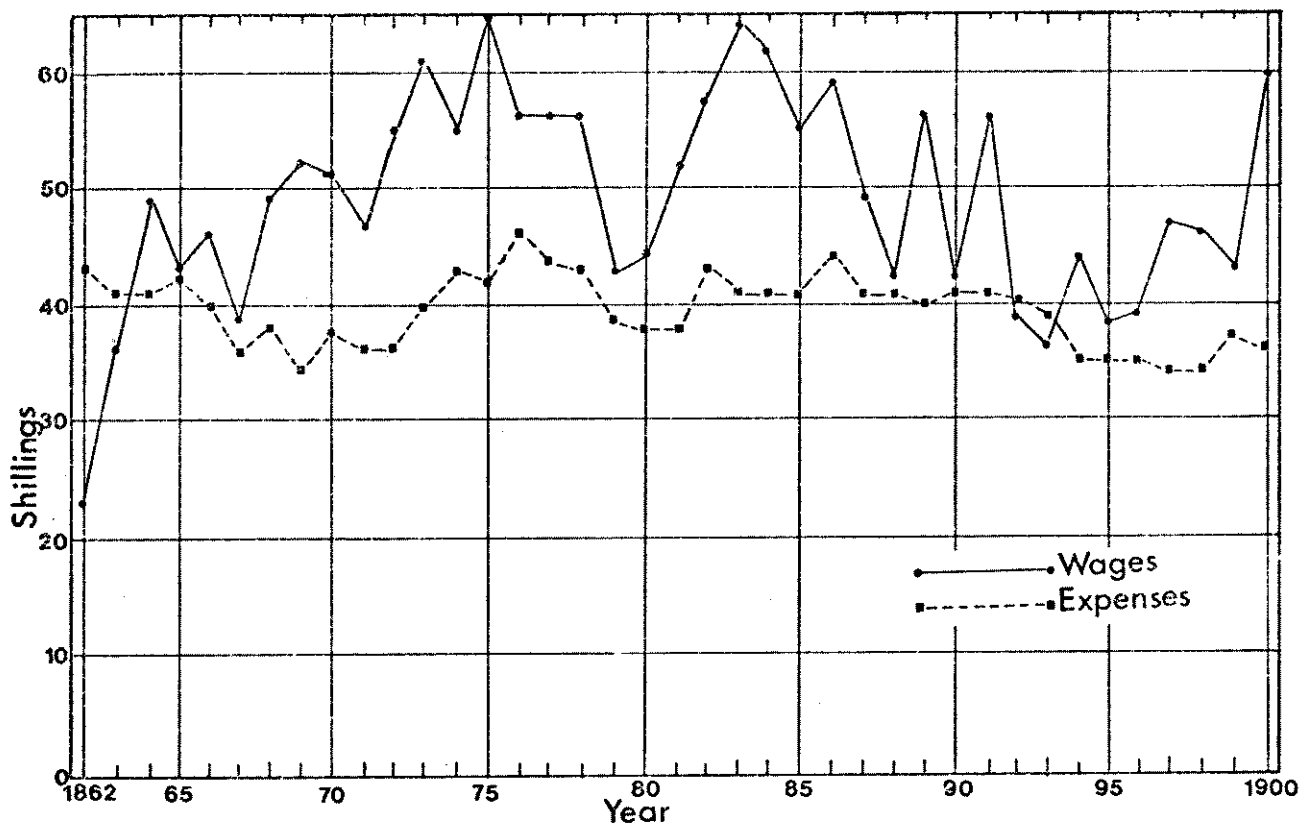


Fig.3-4d Weekly cost of living and average wages PLUS the standard deviation in the N.C.D., 1862-1900

Sources: As for fig. 3.3

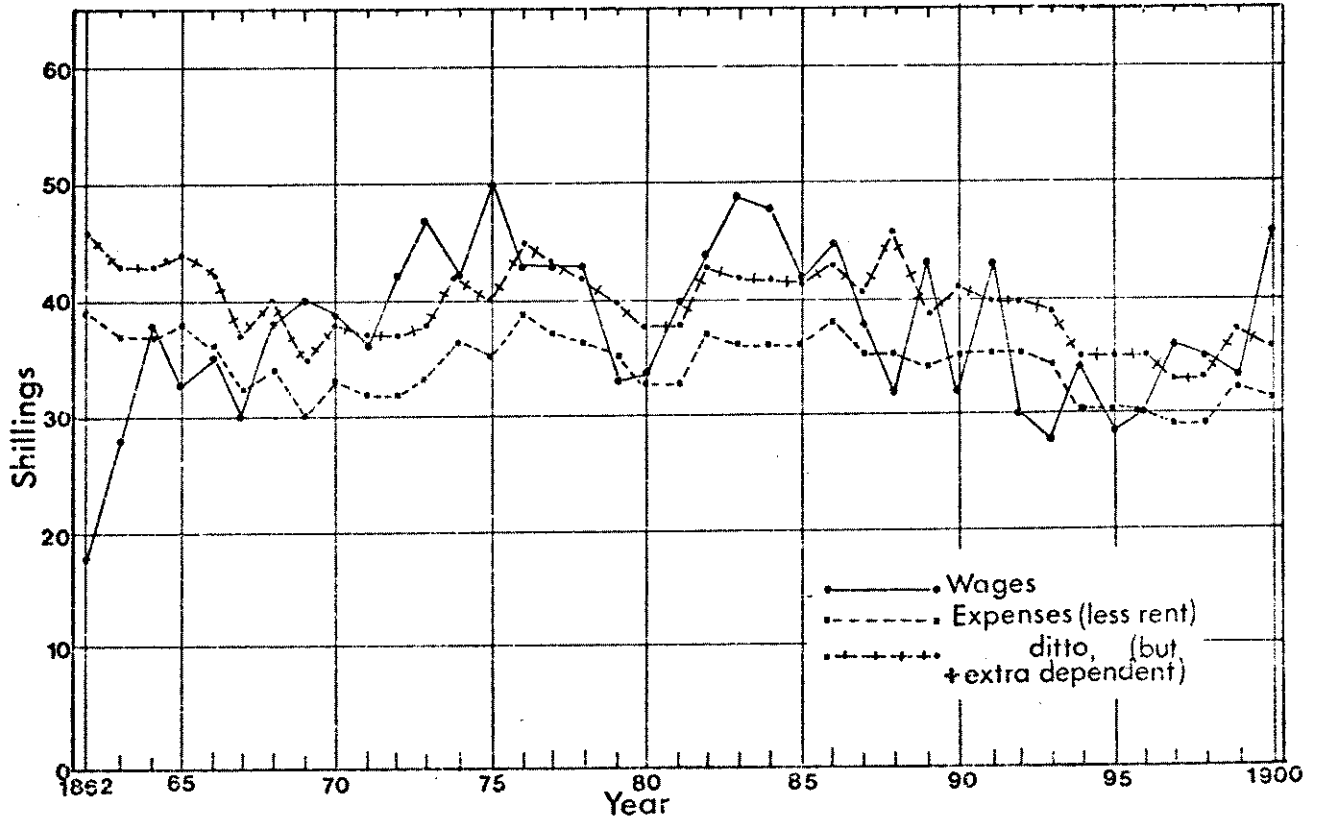


Fig. 3-4e Weekly cost of living (less rent) and average wages in the N.C.D. 1862-1900

Sources: As for fig. 3.3.

people owned land. In 1875, 20 per cent of a sample of resident electors in the N.C.D. were freeholders. By 1890 56 per cent of this sample who still lived in the Newcastle district owned land, whereas only 20 per cent of all resident electors in the N.C.D. were freeholders in that year. Similarly, 20 per cent of a sample of the 1881 roll were freeholders, but by 1890 44 per cent of those still in the district owned land³². Those who could not buy land in their own town secured it elsewhere. In 1875 66 per cent of land owned outside towns of residence was held by New Lambton electors. At that time New Lambton was owned by J. and A. Brown. In 1881 73 per cent of sampled electors with freeholds in the Newcastle District, but outside their own town, were from the leasehold townships or commonage.

Building society records further illustrate the affluence of better off miners. The average annual repayment proposed on loan applications from the colliery townships was £33.8.0 a year or 13/10 weekly, about twice the rent of a four roomed weatherboard house. The land on which applicants built was often larger than necessary for a single dwelling. At least two of the 264 applicants identifiable as miners had five acres, several half or three quarters of an acre and at least eleven had a quarter of an acre. Sometimes part of this land was under cultivation which increased its value. Such allotments were often subdivided and a second house built on the same property, the first being mortgaged as security for the building society loan. At least sixteen miner applicants offered as security houses they owned already which gave them extra income. The most prosperous did not restrict their purchases to land and houses, but bought shops and hotels³³.

These records do not suggest the more affluent miners could afford to throw away money. They added to their wealth by careful saving and enterprising alterations. The increase in the proportion of freeholders in 1890 from the 1875 and 1881 samples shows inhabitants slowly acquired their own land through careful saving. Often building

32. Calculations based on electoral roll surveys of 1875 and 1881. Sampling was at the 95.5 per cent confidence level.

33. These calculations and observations are based on loan applications for the Northumberland and Newcastle Building Societies.

society loans paid for materials and the applicant did all or part of the work. Wives were frequently enlisted to do the painting³⁴. Shops and hotels were acquired over some time with as much economy as possible. A small house would be built and then the front enlarged to make a shop and dwelling³⁵. Larger houses were turned into hotels. In 1877 one coalminer bought an allotment at Hamilton for £20. On it he built two semi-detached houses, each with two rooms, a kitchen and attic, valued at £200. By 1879 he had increased the value of his property to £500 and on the adjacent land he had bought was a small house. The original building had been altered to an hotel by extending the kitchens and adding a wash house, stable and cellar. Another room had been added to the single dwelling (figure 3.5). The total rental value of his property had risen from £31.4.0 to £46.10.0 a year³⁶. In general, though, the property acquired was modest. Table 3.5 shows the

Table 3.5

Property owned by miners in certain municipalities in the 1890s

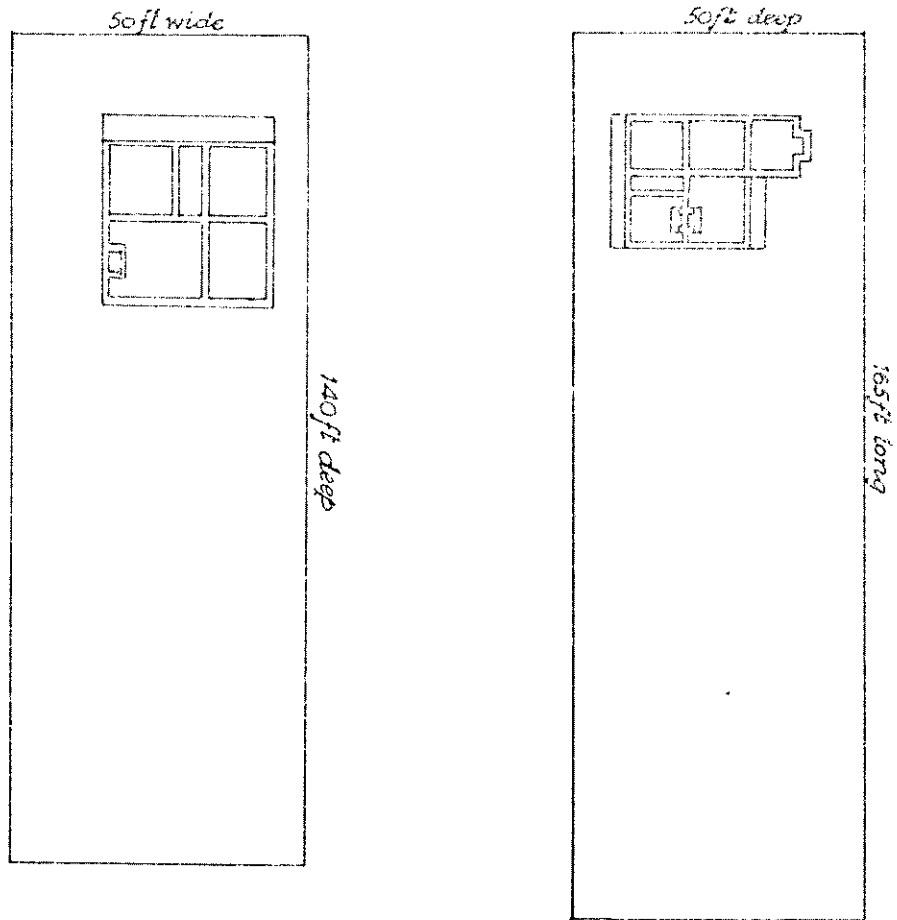
Houses and or allotments owned	Merewether (1897)	Adamstown (1894)	Hamilton (1898)
One	269	233	151
Two	15	24	12
Three	2	5	6
Four	1	5	1
Five	-	-	1
Six	-	1	1
Ten		1	-
Estimated number of miners in each town	588	299	465

34. Northumberland Building Soc., *op. cit.*, no. 215 1891, no. 10 1899, no. 80 1900.

35. *ibid.*, no. 15 1900-1. Newcastle Building Soc., *op. cit.* Arrangement is alphabetical and one of the conditions of access was that no names be quoted.

36. Newcastle Building Soc., *op. cit.*

Ground plans of properties mortgaged to the Newcastle Building and Development Society
 (A) Showing room to build another house at the back or side



(B) Acquisition and improvement of property

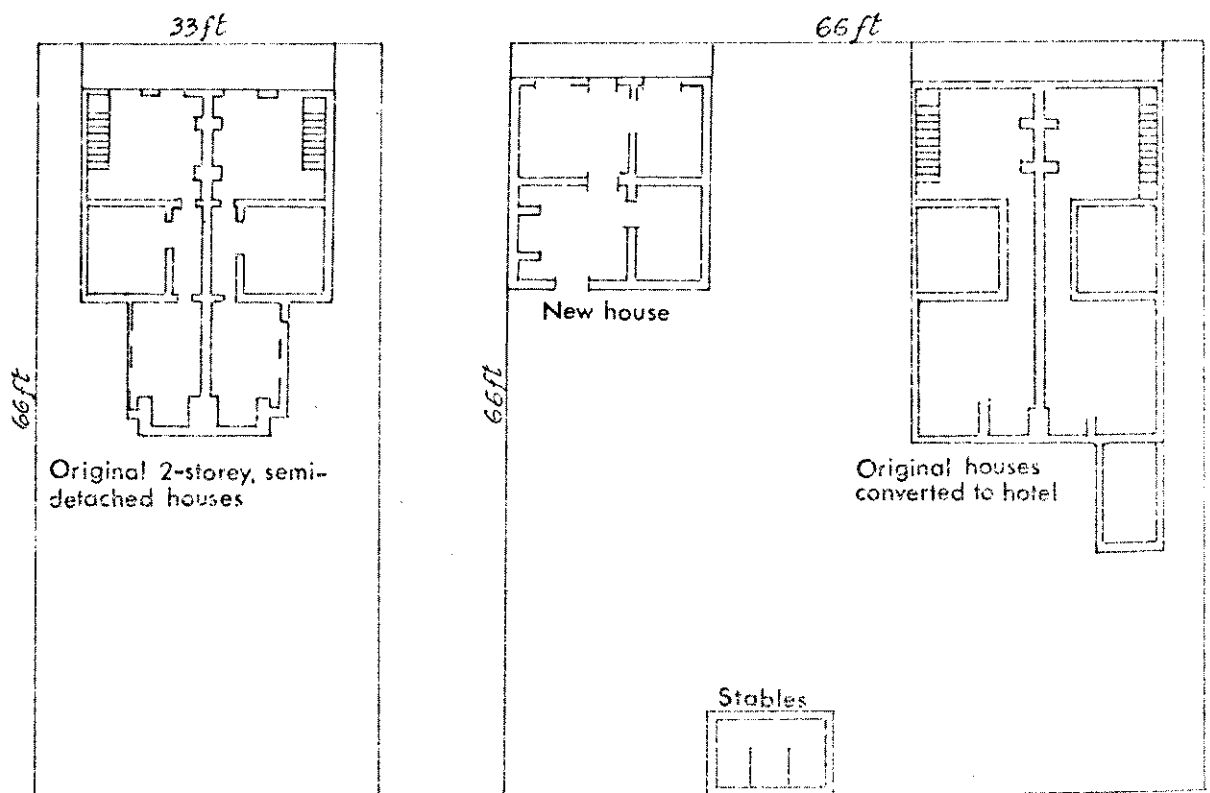


Fig. 3-5 Land and housing investment by miners

property owned by miners in the municipalities of Merewether, Adamstown and Hamilton in the 1890s. While quite a few owned a house or a plot of land³⁷, the proportion with more than one house was small, more than two pieces of property rare and more than five almost unheard of. Whilst the more affluent coalminers could live well above the respectable standard of living, few were more than small landlords.

Trade unions in the N.C.D. won for a minority that prosperity, the promise of which made all of them sacrifice home and friends in the old land. Whilst negotiations over the hewing rate ensured that they made the best of good and bad times, the average miner with an average sized family had to make considerable compromises with the respectable standard of living colonial society strived to maintain. Those earning average wages, but with more than the average number of dependents, were worse off. At times they were probably reduced to absolute poverty, whilst those earning less than average wages must have lived close to subsistence most of the time. If, as is often claimed, miners were better paid than other workingmen in the colonies in the late nineteenth century³⁸, the difference was not enough to buy most the prosperity they sought. A minority who did not have to pay rent or earned above average wages and had average sized families were able to go well beyond a respectable living to become landowners and petty capitalists.

The second institution inhabitants drew from their cultural baggage to increase real income was the cooperative. At the retail level the aim of such societies was to get what their shareholders wanted at wholesale prices and return the surplus or net profit to them as a dividend. This and the interest paid on shares increased savings. In production their purpose was to secure to workers the full fruits of their labours. The origins of the movement were in

37. This figure is in no way comparable with that for owner occupation outside the district because of the numbers who did not own the land they built on. Merewether was a leasehold town. Both Adamstown and Hamilton included parts of the commonage.

38. viz. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

the utopian socialism of the early nineteenth century which saw cooperation as a total way of life. It would create a new society where there would be none of the insecurity, poverty and misery working people suffered at the time. With the coming of better times in the 1850s, the movement became reformist rather than revolutionary. Retailing, first seen as a way of raising funds to attain the new society, became a means of allowing workmen to obtain a higher standard of living, greater independence and fair dealing in goods within the capitalist system³⁹. The 1850s saw an expansion of this form of cooperation in the industrial areas of Northern England and Scotland. Among the northern English counties where the movement flourished were Northumberland and Durham.

The Scots and Geordies who so quickly established trade unionism in the district set up their cooperatives just as fast. In 1861 there was a store at Hamilton. By 1866 it had branches at Wallsend and Hamilton and was known as the Borehole-Wallsend Cooperative Society⁴⁰. The foundation of these societies was in step with movements at home. Between 1859 and 1875, 70 cooperatives were founded in Northumberland and Durham which were still in existence in 1944. Newcastle on Tyne became one of the main centres of cooperation⁴¹. The rapid growth of cooperatives in this area in these years meant those who migrated from there to the N.C.D. were familiar with the purposes of the movement and wished to see it established in the new land.

Whilst inhabitants formed cooperatives principally for retail purposes, one of their first ventures was in cooperative production. Strikes often made English miners think of sinking pits on the cooperative principle. In the 1870s industrial unrest plus record prices in 1872-3 produced a spate of such projects⁴². In 1861 the Newcastle miners responded to the strike by starting their own mine. A shaft was sunk near Wallsend and coal was being raised before the strike ended. By 1862 the mine was being operated commercially and continued for eight years, when it became insolvent and was sold to

39. S. Pollard, 'Nineteenth century cooperation: from community building to shopkeeping' in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in labour history*, 2nd ed. (N.Y., 1967), pp. 74-112. Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 64.

40. *N.C.*, 12 Oct. 1861, 11 Jy. 1866.

41. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

42. *ibid.*, pp. 160-62.

a private company⁴³. This was the same fate that met the later English attempts⁴⁴.

Retail cooperatives were less popular in the N.C.D. than in those areas from which immigrants imported them. Even so, they served their members just as well and, in comparison with the rest of N.S.W., flourished.

The first society, which was established by 1861, was the only one which survived throughout the period, albeit under different names. Until 1886 it was the only cooperative in the district. Known first as the Borehole (Hamilton) Cooperative Store, by 1866 it had branches in the three largest towns at that time: Hamilton, Wallsend and Lambton. In 1878 the society changed its name to the Hamilton and Lambton Cooperative Society, which suggests Wallsend had withdrawn. In 1886 the Merewether 'Pioneer' society formed. The Broadmeadow and Wallsend-Plattsburg societies began in 1887. Of these, only the Wallsend-Plattsburg cooperative survived, the others faltering in the depression of the 1890s⁴⁵. Although these societies touched all colliery townships at one time or another, for they had branches in smaller towns like Minmi and New Lambton⁴⁶, for most of the period the majority of towns had no cooperative store. From 1860-78 three towns had stores, from 1879-85, two, in 1886, three, from 1887-92, seven, from 1893-98, six and from 1893 to 1900, five. Thus it was only for the last thirteen years of the century that more than half the towns had a store.

43. Gollan, *op. cit.*, p. 39. N.C., 27 Aug. 1862.

44. Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-62.

45. The Merewether society was wound up in 1892. The Broadmeadow cooperative is reported to have collapsed in 1892 as well, but newspaper and other sources suggest it disappeared some time between 1896 and 1900. This chronological account is based on the N.S.W.S.R., 1894, 1898, and the Registrar of Friendly Societies, 'Entry Books' (N.S.W.A.A.).

46. N.M.H., 8 Jy. 1899, 9 Ap. 1894. The New Lambton store was continually referred to as the Lambton store, but it is clear from its membership that it was at New Lambton.

Membership of cooperatives was tiny, given the Geordie and Scots origins of many inhabitants. In 1890 probably only one in three families were in the Wallsend-Plattsburg and Merewether cooperatives. In 1900 one in six families were in the Wallsend-Plattsburg society⁴⁷. This is very different from county Durham where Webb estimated that 90 per cent of householders belonged to a cooperative society⁴⁸.

Even though the establishment of cooperative societies was less successful and membership below that of English mining areas, those who joined were as enthusiastic as their British counterparts. Table 3.6 shows trade per member for selected years in Britain and the colliery townships. Allowing for bad years in the N.C.D., which

Table 3.6

Trade per member of cooperative societies in Britain and the
N.C.D. for selected years

Year	Britain	Trade per Member (£)		
		Wallsend-Plattsburg	Newcastle Colliery Townships Merewether	Broadmeadow
1887		46		37.2
1888	27.1		31.6	
1889		37.9	35.4	30
1890			37.8	
1893		33		
1894	27.7	22		
1895		20.2		
1898	27.9	22		
1899		21		
1900		30		
Average	27.5	29.0	34.9	33.6

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1887-1900. G.D.H. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

47. Average family size was taken as five, as in calculations of weekly expenditure. Calculations based on *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891, 1901 and reports of cooperative membership in *W&PSun*, 7 Jan. 1891, *N.M.H.*, 27 Sept. 1890, 29 Oct. 1900.

48. S. Webb, *The story of the Durham miners, 1862-1921* (London, 1921), p. 12.

are cancelled out in the British averages, members in the colliery townships spent as much as or more than the British at their stores. Moreover, shareholders in the N.C.D. were as active investors as the British. Although capital per head was about a third higher in Britain than the Newcastle colliery townships (table 3.7), this is not a fair measure of willingness to invest. Table 3.7 suggests that the longer a society existed, the more likely members were to have bought more shares. Since the only figures we have of share

Table 3.7

Paid up shares per member for British and the Wallsend-Plattsburg
cooperative societies

Year	Paid up shares per member (£)	
	Britain	Wallsend-Plattsburg
1881	9.8	
1884	9.5	
1887	10.3	4.1
1889		4.2
1896	9.9	6.9
1899	11.7	7.9
1900		8.0

Sources: *N.M.B.*, 1887-1900. Gosden, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

capital per member are for the Wallsend-Plattsburg society, which did not begin until 1887, it is not comparable with British societies which were twenty years older. However, if we compare the growth of investment per shareholder we see that whilst investment grew by £1.9 from 1881-1899, or 1.6 shillings a year, in Britain from 1887 to 1900, capital per member in the Wallsend-Plattsburg society nearly doubled in thirteen years, or grew at 5.3 shillings a year. As a means of saving the cooperative society was used by members as enthusiastically as in Britain.

While the cooperative did not flourish in the new land to the extent that the trade union did, the working-class character and origins of many inhabitants made it a more popular and far more successful institution than in the rest of N.S.W. The Registrar General's return of registered cooperatives in 1898 shows that, in terms of number, age, paid-up capital and assets, consumer cooperatives in the colliery townships were older, wealthier and far more numerous than would be expected from their share of the colony's population. Of the retail cooperatives registered in 1898, three were in the colliery townships in this study and three in other mining towns in the N.C.D. which were not included in this study because of their small size and late growth: Charlestown, Stockton and West Wallsend. Of the other four only two were from Sydney, one was in a south coast colliery township and the last in a country town. 60 per cent of all retail cooperatives were in the N.C.D. Cooperatives from the colliery townships were also older. The Hamilton and Lambton society was the only one registered before 1870 and of the five registered before 1890 only one did not belong to the N.C.D. Half the societies had been registered in the 1890s. Finally, because of their age, the colliery township cooperatives were wealthier. The three societies from the towns in this study accounted for 67 per cent of total paid up share capital of retail cooperatives and 59 per cent of total assets. Altogether the N.C.D. accounted for 86 per cent of paid up shares and 80 per cent of assets (table 3.8). In nineteenth century N.S.W. the N.C.D. was distinctive for its achievements in the field of consumer cooperation and, despite its provincial status, it was the home of the cooperative society.

Both the trade union and the cooperative affected solidarity in the colliery townships through their activities and membership. Although the cooperative was more successful in furthering the interests of its members, it was the trade union which had the most important impact on society.

Cooperative society membership, as we have seen, was small. For most of the period most towns did not have a society. However, among their small membership they did help social cohesion in some ways.

Table 3.8Retail cooperative societies in N.S.W. in 1898

Society	Date of Registration	Paid-up Capital (£)	Total Assets (£)
Broadmeadow	1887	633	1329
Charlestown	1892	144	294
Hamilton and Lambton	1866	1501	3312
Stockton	1887	415	310
Wallsend-Plattsburg	1888	2436	3371
West Wallsend	1890	725	999
Helensburg-Lilyvale	1892	222	350
Civil Service	1871	n.s.	n.s.
Shoalhaven	1897	292	1999

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1898, pp. 860-861.

When discussing primary relations we mentioned the family oriented nature of social activities in cooperatives. The cooperative went further than providing a venue for family entertainment. Although male heads of families were the shareholders and officials of the society, women, as the ones who balanced the domestic budget, stood to gain most from them. Consequently, every effort was made to attract their support. They were made especially welcome at quarterly meetings and expected to cater for social teas⁴⁹. Although not formal members with voting powers, women were not excluded from the cooperative in the way they were from so many other voluntary associations in the district, including, of course, the union. The Wallsend society even had a special 'purchase club' for women⁵⁰.

Culturally the cooperative belonged to the Scots and Geordies and evidence on religious adherence of members suggests they dominated membership. Of the 47 who were identified as prominent churchmen,

49. *N.M.H.*, 25 May 1889, 5 Sept. 1899, 1 Jan. 1895.

50. *Ibid.*, 1 Jan. 1895.

half belonged to the Primitive Methodist and a fifth to the Presbyterian church. Together they accounted for over 70 per cent of churchmen. That two regional cultures were strong supporters of cooperatives meant that people from both met for business and pleasure. Men from denominations not identified with north eastern England or Scotland were also attracted to cooperation. As a result, members of the largest and most enduring societies included, by the end of the period, supporters of most religious groups: Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Baptist, Roman Catholics and Anglicans, as well as Presbyterians and Primitive Methodists (table 3.9).

Table 3.9

Religious affiliations of members of cooperative societies in
the N.C.D., 1880-1900

Society	Religion						
	C/E	R/C	Presbyt.	Wes.	PM	Cong.	Bap.
Wallsend- Plattsburg	2		2	1	6	2	1
Broadmeadow			1	1	1		
Merewether					11		
Hamilton- Lambton		1	3	5	5	1	1
All societies	2	1	6	7	23	3	2

Sources: Newspapers and church records listed in detail in chapter eight.

Neither the cooperative or the union did much to bridge the fundamental cleavages of occupation and income. The union aggravated differences in income which the cooperative increased even further. Union activities inevitably created clashes of interest with other occupational groups.

The failure of the miners' union to negotiate adequate compensation for deficient places meant marked differences in income and prosperity were inevitable, even without the problem of extra dependents. Some were quite poor in the best of times, others could live comfortably in some, but not most years, while others could usually afford to live well and even save. That the last mentioned acquired property meant that sometimes they were landlords to fellow workers. So, the weakest areas of union negotiations led to status divisions within the organization. This was not the only cleavage among workers due to trade unionism. Although the bulk of the workforce, coalminers were a privileged group. To survive in their job they had to have some skill, to do well they had to be highly skilled. The early emergence of unions among them can be partly attributed to this skill, which put them on the level of craft unions in bargaining power, if not in status. For most of the period other workers in the district were either too few and isolated, or too unskilled to form unions. It was only after 1885 that unionism began to grow. The industrial groups who organized at that time and operated in the mining towns were the colliery firemen, colliery enginedrivers, carters, quarrymen, shop assistants and brick yard and pottery workers⁵¹. Most of the mine labourers: screenmen, plate-layers, furnacemen and others, stayed unorganized. As a result there was a gap between the average wages of the unionized and non-unionized types of labour in the mines (figure 3.6), especially in the more prosperous years when miners could insist on a higher hewing rate. Although all employed by the colliery, the kind of work and wages paid emphasized differences rather than similarities, thus making for disunity.

Cooperatives widened the gaps between miners with different income levels and miners and labourers. The principles of cooperation, as established by the Rochdale society and generally followed in the N.C.D., put them beyond the lowest paid workers. To become a shareholder or member one had to afford a £1 share and pay cash instead of relying on credit⁵². As figure 3.4a shows, this would have been impossible for the average miner in most years, let alone a labourer.

51. A. McLagan, 'History of Newcastle district trade unions' 2 vols. (unpub. ms, NPL). Vol. 2 lists unions in the district and their dates of foundation on the front page.

52. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

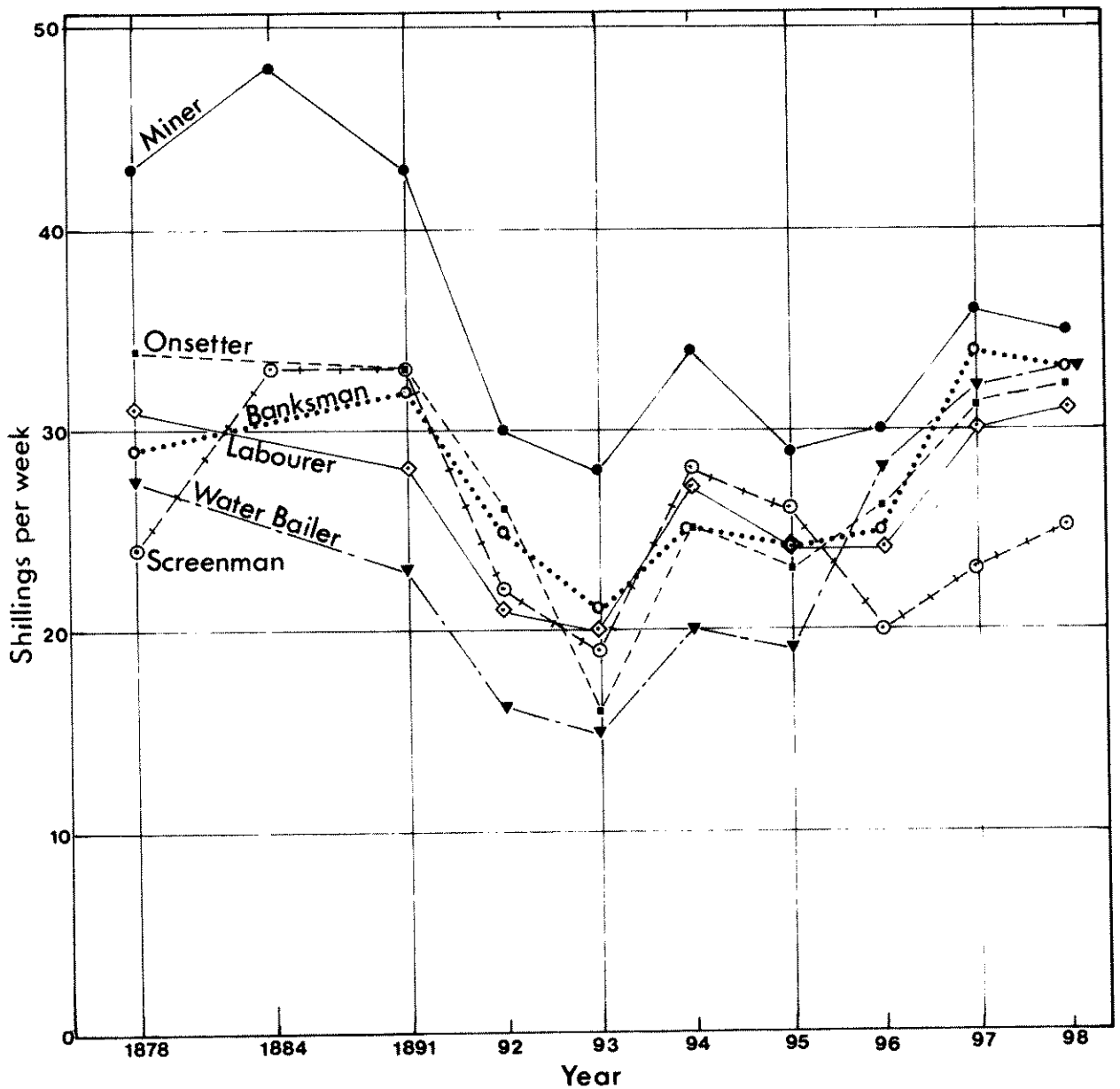


Fig. 3-6. Wages of coalminers and certain non unionized mine labourers in the N.C.D. for certain years in the late 19th century

Note: Weekly wages were calculated by multiplying average rates by the average number of days worked in the A.A., N.C.D. and W&B.I. pits.

Sources: N.C.C., 'Managers outletters', 27 Oct. 1878, pp. 264a-265 (ANUA). A.A.Co., 'Pay sheets', 'Pay and store abstracts' (ANUA). W&B.I. 'Pay Sheets'. Letter from T. Croudace to F.D. Metcalf, 22 Oct., 1884, 'Letterbook', 1881-6. T. Coghlan, *Wealth and Progress*, 1891-8.

The cooperator also had to forego cheaper prices for the sake of higher dividends and quality goods. One reason for the popularity of consumer cooperation in England was that only pure and unadulterated goods were sold. It is clear from reports of quarterly meetings in the colliery townships that shareholders would not buy from the store unless goods were of a high class⁵³. Then, cooperatives, especially in English mining villages, had a reputation for selling dearer to increase the dividend⁵⁴. Comments on the conduct of stores in the N.C.D. show that they too worked on this principle⁵⁵. Those who could only afford the cheapest had to take their custom elsewhere. Although the dividend might 'find boots for the children'⁵⁶, there were some who found it difficult to feed themselves without thinking of footwear. That the better off were the ones most likely to join is clear from table 3.10. Whereas only 26 per cent of householders in 1891 were also freeholders, nearly twice that number of

Table 3.10

Electoral qualifications of all heads of households in the N.C.D. and those in cooperative societies, c. 1891

Qualification	Cooperative (%) (N=120)	District (%) (N=4,392)
Freehold	51	26
Leasehold	7	13
Household	43	61

Note: Those with a 'resident' qualification were excluded on the grounds that most were young, unmarried men, unlikely in those days to buy their own home.

Source: *N.S.W. electoral roll, 1890-91, 1893-94.*

53. *N.M.H.*, 14 Jan. 1897, 24 Jy. 1899.

54. J.H.P.H. Gosden, *Self help. Voluntary associations in the nineteenth century* (London, 1953), p. 199.

55. A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers', 22 Aug. 1861 (1/59 JBW-A, no. 37).
N.M.H., 30 Sept. 1899, 15 Oct. 1890.

56. *N.M.H.*, 25 May 1889.

householders in cooperatives were landowners.

Even so, the cooperatives did not attract all who could afford to join. Table 3.11 shows that noone from the professions or business and hardly any shopkeepers joined. The nature of consumer cooperation made this inevitable. The professional and business classes were a

Table 3.11

Occupational distribution of the workforce and cooperative society
members in the N.C.D. 1870-1900

Occupational Group	Workforce (%)	Cooperative Societies (%) (N=143)
Professional	3	0
Business	1	0
Shopkeeping	11	4
Clerical	0.4	3
Skilled	10	7
Miner	57	83
Unskilled	18	4

Sources: *N.S.W. electoral roll*, 1894. *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1887-1900. *W&PSun*, 1891, 1895.

small and often transitory proportion of the population, unlikely to have had much previous association with cooperation and wealthy enough to save without it. The small business group consisted mostly of shopkeepers, who stood to lose trade by the cooperative store. As a result, the cooperative was the almost exclusive organization of the better off working-class. Miners and non manual employees were overrepresented in relation to their strength in the workforce and skilled workmen were not significantly underrepresented. Predictably, the unskilled were. In all, 90 per cent of members belonged to the upper working-class in terms of income. As an organization with which the professionals and businessmen could not identify and which

threatened the small shopkeeper, the cooperative did little to bridge the gap between the bourgeoisie and workers. At the other end of the scale it widened the gap unions had created between miners who earned good and miners who earned average wages and the skilled or unionized and the unskilled, non-unionized workers. This economic gap was translated into social distance through the exclusiveness of the cooperative society.

The industrial action the miners' union took to improve wages and conditions was calculated to create further tension between various occupational groups in the district. When miners struck they were seeking concessions from the colliery company which was represented by the mine manager. On such occasions the colliery manager and the union were the principle protagonists and bitter exchanges, not to mention violence, occurred. If there was no coal being hewed, the rest of the colliery workforce was without work or wages: the overmen, skilled tradesmen and labourers. This was not calculated to engender good feelings between miners and other employees. Since the miners were the bulk of the workforce, if they were not spending, or could not afford to pay their debts, the service population was threatened with bankruptcy. The only ones who were not affected were the school teachers and other public servants, like the policeman and postmaster. Thus the ultimate weapon of the union made obvious the inevitable clashes of interest between the different occupational groups and provided an occasion for the expression of such tensions.

Not only did unionism provide occasions which might threaten social cohesion, but it also created ties with other areas and so weakened local solidarity. Trade unions in the nineteenth century centred on the work group, regardless of residence. We have already noted that the miners' union, although it had branches in every colliery, was coordinated at the district level. The Newcastle and County Shop Employees' Union was similarly organized. Smaller unions like the engine drivers were too small to function at individual collieries, so all business was conducted at the district level⁵⁷. Whilst regional organizations were in keeping

57. There is no evidence, as in the rules of the miner's union, of division into lodges. See 'Amended rules of the Colliery Engine-drivers Association' in A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (1/61, CM-F, no. 43).

with local solidarity, by the end of the period they were usually part of a colonial association as well, either as specific occupational unions, or through affiliation with the TLC, which established a branch in Newcastle in 1885⁵⁸. By then the world view of the miners' union extended much further than Newcastle, let alone the colliery townships. Sensitive to the problems of fellow unionists, they responded to and were affected by events beyond local boundaries. When the Seamen's Union struck in 1890, miners refused to cut coal for ships to be manned by non-union labour and were promptly locked out. In the resulting Maritime strike in which transport, mining and shearing workers in N.S.W., Vic., S.A. and N.Zealand stopped work, Newcastle miners were represented on the Labour Defence Committee along with men from the southern and western coalfields of N.S.W.⁵⁹. By encouraging class solidarity trade unionism weakened regional boundaries.

Despite its potential for intensifying cleavages between occupational groups and reducing regional identity, unionism became one of the main aspects of regional culture, the defence of which strengthened identity.

Although strikes threatened the economic survival of the rest of the population, so too did low wages among miners. Women, whose task it was to balance the weekly budget, had a direct interest in the hewing and other rates which determined wages. The prosperity of those in service industries: shopkeepers, publicans, insurance agents and non colliery tradesmen, depended on the level of earnings in the pits. If miners could not pay their debts they could not survive in business. This is well illustrated by the occupations of those unable to pay school fees. Until the 1890s most of those unable to pay were miners or labourers. By 1893 hotelkeepers, blacksmiths, carters and shopkeepers could not pay because people were heavily in debt to them⁶⁰. Finally, low wages and strikes to improve them

58. McLagan, *op. cit.*

59. Gollan, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6.

60. 'Schools Files' Jesmond, Wallsend, 1893 (P. 1938, 1950). See also *N.M.H.*, 16 Feb. 1881.

affected the work of municipalities. The resulting low level of economic activity meant rates fell. The key position of coalminers in the regional economy meant great support for the union from miners' families, shopkeepers, professionals like doctors and lawyers and local government.

Business people gave support so that strikes to win higher wages could continue. Shopkeepers extended credit as long as they could and wealthier professionals gave liberally to the strike fund so that miners could hold out longer. Just as they helped miners, the service industries hindered management. In the 1895 strike at Minmi, when the Browns brought in non-union labour, the extra policemen sent to protect them had to stay at the manager's house, several hotel-keepers having refused to take them in⁶¹.

In times of strike, or when conditions were deteriorating to the point where industrial action seemed inevitable, local councils tried to bring about settlements to avert loss of income from rates. Against a background of constant reductions in the hewing rate in 1895, the Plattsburg council carried a motion to convene a municipal conference to 'consider the advisability of devising a means for averting future difficulties in the coal industry', out of which came a committee to arrange a conference between managers and miners. The proponents of the original motion claimed that until then they had waited for a strike, but the savage and continuous reductions meant they 'did not know where matters would end'. In 1900 rising dissatisfaction among miners over the low hewing rate and wages, which also made trade dull, led to a similar conference. A motion was carried that the hewing rate be increased and a clause making arbitration compulsory be included in any agreement, for the sake of rates and the stability of the area. A strong letter and deputation regarding these resolutions were sent to the Premier⁶². Clearly, what was good for the miners was good for the colliery townships.

61. *N.C.*, 5 Jy. 1862. Letter from E.S. Turner, 23 May 1896, SAMCo, 'Manager's Letters', 1895-97 (F.L.). HRD minutes, p. 242.
W&PSun, 9 Mar. 1895.

62. *W&PSun*, 19 Oct., 2 Nov. 1895. *N.M.H.*, 5 Mar., 3 Ap. 1900.

Those who stood to lose through industrial action by the miners, the other colliery workmen, were not necessarily out of sympathy with them. That other groups were not unionized does not mean they disapproved of trade unions. When they got the chance other workers also organized unions. All the occupational groups in the colliery townships had relatives who were miners. Figure 2.3 shows as many sons of tradesmen became miners as skilled workers, whilst most labourers sons had become miners. Many of the sons of men who were clerks or had become overmen also went down the pits. In addition, many had married miners' daughters (figure 2.6). If the rest of the colliery workforce did not share precisely the same economic interests of miners, the extension of kinship and passing of generations must have caused them to identify with them by the later years of the period.

The key position of the miners in the economy and their ties of kinship, which developed with members of other occupational groups, made the principle of trade unionism, brought from northern England, part of local heritage. Any persons or practices which did not conform to the custom of limiting freedom of contract for the general good were overridden.

Inhabitants did their best to hinder or intimidate labourers sent from Sydney to work or load coal. In 1888 there were disturbances at Merewether and Wallsend. At the latter 10 men were charged with throwing stones outside the colliery tunnel. They were part of a crowd of 2,000 to 2,500, who greeted the free labourers and colliery officials as they left work, and lined the road from the pit, along which the labourers were escorted by an armed guard. At Merewether three N.C.C. miners were similarly charged when about 100 men chased a platelayer who was filling small coal, pelting him with stones⁶³. Old hands who refused to follow union policy paid for their decision with fear and often ended up leaving the district. In 1879 the Lambton men who resumed work asked for a night patrol because they feared for family and property. Three of them, who were attacked by union men, were too frightened to give evidence to the police. Two left the

63. *N.M.H.*, 24 Sept., 24 Oct. 1888.



Residence of Newcastle Wallsend colliery manager
Reproduced by permission of Mitchell Library



Residence of E.C. Merewether
Reproduced by permission of Mitchell Library

district at once⁶⁴. Social control was exerted to uphold the principle of unionism.

Women and children showed their support by playing an important part in enforcing local standards. Everyone knew that police and military were less likely to use force against them and so they kept men who would be dealt with more severely from getting into trouble⁶⁵. In 1871 they were proposed at an aggregate meeting as the ones to 'twig' non-unionists into joining because their methods were more effective⁶⁶. As in the mining districts of England, their weapons were yells, sticks and stones and 'tin kettling', that is, deafening 'music' with kitchen implements. Every day at knock-off time they assembled to 'greet' free labourers and local blacklegs and escort them home⁶⁷. Men sent to load coal were easier targets because they worked above ground. In 1861 such groups eventually withdrew under pressure from miners' wives at Wallsend and Glebe. At the former women carrying flags made of petticoats and red pocket handkerchiefs floating from poles or sticks marched on the pits, greeted the imported labourers with shouts, yells and tin kettling and secured their departure. Women were also prominent in general crowds. At Wallsend in 1888 they were described as shouting like Indian 'squaws' and several struck the colliery manager with their umbrellas⁶⁸. The current image of women being against strikes hardly applies to the N.C.D. at any time in the late nineteenth century.

On several occasions colliery managers who had employed black-legs, only to have them intimidated by the local population, asked the government to send in armed troops to protect those working the coal and keep order⁶⁹. This led to mass demonstrations by inhabitants which testified to and strengthened solidarity. At Merewether

64. Report on Lambton Colliery disturbances, Col. Sec., 'Special Bundles' (N.S.W.A.A., 4/817-4).

65. *N.C.*, 5 Oct. 1861.

66. *ibid.*, 9 Mar. 1871.

67. *W&PSun*, 16 Mar. 1895.

68. *N.C.*, 21 Sept., 5 Oct. 1861. *N.M.H.*, 29 Oct. 1888.

69. E.g., Letter from R.A.A. Moorehead to Inspector General of Police, 19 Sept. 1879, 'Croudace Letter Book', 1875-86. Troops were also sent to Minmi in 1895. J.W. Turner 'An incident at Minmi', *Labour History*, v. 6 (1959), pp. 3-9.

in 1888, 2,000 men, women and children 'of all sizes and descriptions' descended in procession on Newcastle, protesting against the despatch of soldiers and police to the town. They were led by the local band and a banner describing them as 'The Little Capital Army to secure the Union of Labour'. Many men were in semi-military uniform, whilst others arranged their garments to represent martial clothes. Several 'gunners' drew an imitation field gun. A few years before a military contingent had been despatched to the Soudan and protest about this was incorporated into the demonstration. A donkey and goat, said to be the emblems of the Soudan, headed the procession, gaily decorated and mounted. Much needed strike funds were canvassed vigorously by the Little Boy from Manley with a tin money box⁷⁰.

The establishment of trade unionism as a part of local life exemplified two principles said to be present in the development of community: stability and consistency. If we accept that much of the character of a community lies in the set of rules that make up its total way of life, there must be two processes in development. First customary solutions to group problems must be stabilized and then any conflict between these solutions must be solved⁷¹. The colliery townships opted for the trade union from the very beginning and agreed to limit freedom of contract accordingly. Inhabitants were united and vigorous in supporting their choice and their activities to this end showed and enhanced their unity.

Neither the trade union, nor the cooperative were particularly successful in providing the prosperity inhabitants sought. They also did little to bridge the fundamental cleavages of occupation, which they either emphasized or intensified. Although the cooperative drew together members of different denominations and both sexes, its membership was too small for it to have a great effect on society. The economic and family links between the miners and the rest of the population cushioned or negated clashes of interest that trade union activity caused. The exception was the colliery manager. As representative of the colliery company, he was not

70. *The Radical*, 6 Oct. 1888 (M.L.).

71. Martindale, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-2.

dependent on the economic state of the townships for his income, and unlikely to marry into a miner's family. Consequently he had no shared interests with them.

Both the trade union and the cooperative were standardized arrangements to solve common problems. They were brought from the coalfields of north eastern England and Scotland when the area was just opening up and became part of the culture of the diverse groups who settled there. The cooperative, although not strong like in Northern England, was far more successful and widespread than in the rest of the colony. The role of miners in the local economy made trade unionism an unquestioned principle. Other 'rights' which conflicted with it, like freedom of contract, were limited by general agreement. Defence of those on strike against outsiders who were sent in to work the pits, or 'keep order', led to impressive demonstrations of local solidarity which must have further strengthened regional identity. Therefore, the union and the cooperative gave the colliery townships a distinctive way of life which marked them off from other areas and in this way contributed something to the growth of a close-knit society.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Good wages and the prosperity they brought were a common aspiration among inhabitants of the colliery townships. They were not their only objective. There were other shared needs essential to a comfortable existence which the N.C.D., as a new settlement, lacked. Initially, there were no roads, bridges, post offices, court houses, or schools, not to mention rules to facilitate living together. Nor was there any means of providing for those services which in the late nineteenth century people were recognizing as necessary for a healthy, comfortable life: drainage, sanitation, sewerage, public lighting and hospitals. The solution of such problems required a major effort by inhabitants.

Between 1860 and 1900 the people of the N.C.D. transformed their isolated villages, totally lacking in amenities, into places that enjoyed a reasonably civilized existence. Schools, post offices and court houses were built. The people applied for and secured courts of petty sessions, police protection and municipal bye-laws to make communal living easier. Roads were made passable and safer. Public transport on them was regulated and expanded. Inhabitants established public parks, fire protection and a mining district hospital. They also arranged for a permanent, piped water supply. The more advanced townships introduced street lighting and some means of safe night soil disposal.

How well the colliery townships succeeded in improving their living conditions is an important topic in its own right and deserves consideration. Since my study concentrates on the growth of community and there was nothing unusual or distinctive in these improvements which contributed to or took away from that process, this chapter will deal with the effects of this attempt at town improvement on the cohesion of the colliery villages, rather than actual material progress.

The new settlers were faced with two traditions when deciding how to go about improving this aspect of living. These were the patronage of the traditional and the self-help of the new industrial society. In the colliery and other villages of England the customary way of securing improvements had always been through the patronage of

the poor by the wealthy. The coming of a *nouveau riche* class of industrialists, more concerned with making money than enjoying the status of wealth, led to a gradual decline in patronage in the nineteenth century. This was even more pronounced in the new land, not because of large-scale industrialization, but because the opportunities for social mobility through any avenue made for a more flexible social structure. Consequently a hereditary elite, imbued with the idea that patronage was the privilege of the well-to-do, barely existed. A combination of self-help and government assistance provided much needed facilities. Although the initial response in the mining towns was to try to marry the two traditions, the inevitable clashes of interest, intensified by growing hostility between the colliery manager and other inhabitants in industrial matters, gave rise to the gradual withdrawal of colliery managers from public life. At the same time the establishment of self-help organizations led to the emergence of a rival system of patronage and status. The co-existence of the old and the new caused ambivalence and disunity.

In the English colliery villages the mine manager was still the equivalent of a rural squire. Often the company owned all the land, so that the inhabitants were tenants as well as employees. That pits were often sunk in remote areas, where there were no houses, shops or utilities, meant the company had to provide some facilities. This, plus the strong nineteenth century belief that a contented workforce was in the interests of profits, made the colliery companies major benefactors in the towns that grew up around their pits. They built the houses people lived in, schools for the children, Mechanics Institutes for the workmen and assisted with donations and materials in building and maintaining churches and chapels¹. Because the land was their estate they decided on how and where roads and bridges were to be built. In negotiations with government they represented the town, or 'their people', as they called them.

Both people and management in the N.C.D. came from this tradition. In N.S.W. they were living in circumstances which made such

1. R. Moore, *Fitmen, preachers and politics* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 78-85.

paternalism less necessary and more difficult to effect.

For a start, the company did not own all the land in most townships. Although the Newcastle Wallsend, Lambton and A.A.Co all built huts and houses for their workmen, they also sold land to business people. If miners had enough money they, too, could buy it. As a result a tenant might have for his landlord a shop-keeper, baker or fellow miner. Often the huts the management built had a short life. They were rudimentary, ill-kept and subject to sabotage. In 1862 the A.A.Co had to ask for a police guard to prevent men who were on strike removing the huts and re-erecting them at Waratah and Wallsend, where there were new pits². In 1870 Thomas Croudace suggested that SAMCo write off its huts. He claimed that

as soon as they became vacant, the people round-
about commence to pull them to pieces and steal
the doors and windows ...³

No company owned Adamstown, and Plattsburg began as a cooperative mine, run by members of the miner's union. Merewether, although it belonged to a former superintendent of the A.A.Co., was a private estate. In addition, most of New Lambton and areas of Lambton, Hamilton and Adamston were commonage. Minmi alone was a company town throughout the period.

Not only were inhabitants less dependent on the coal companies for shelter, but there were alternative ways of getting facilities. Many of the amenities necessary for a decent existence were run by the government and were provided if a town was united enough to ask for them and could prove need: post offices, policemen, courts of petty sessions, public transport and schools. The *ad hoc* groups which secured many of these improvements were quite unsuited to the provision of other services which government did not provide, such

2. Harper to Merewether, 6 June 1862, A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (1/59 JBW-B, no. 23).

3. Report of T. Croudace, Jan. 1871, SAMCo., 'Superintendent's Letters', 1869-74, p. 190.

as roads, bridges, water supply, street lighting, or sewerage. These involved the expenditure of hundreds of pounds a year and constant surveillance. A permanent body, which could not only organize and superintend improvements, but also raise money to finance them, was necessary. By the late 1850s similar problems all over the colony had led to the passing of a Municipalities Act. This Act, as clarified in 1867, allowed 50 persons liable to pay rates for property, or occupying a household, that is, freeholders, leaseholders and householders, to petition for incorporation⁴. The proclamation of a municipality permitted the levying of rates on property and entitled the area to government grants for roads, streets, bridges, lighting, water, sewerage and recreation reserves. Persons elected to run the municipality were also empowered to legislate for the suppression of public nuisances and preservation of public health and safety⁵. Incorporation, then, was the obvious solution for those seeking the finance and authority to set up a whole range of communal facilities in a new area. Finally, there were those amenities which local governments could, but did not have to provide, requiring large-scale expenditure, such as fire brigades and hospitals. By the mid 1880s the government was prepared to give grants in aid to towns willing to organize and maintain such services. Theoretically, any town in N.S.W. could build up the necessary utilities if it was willing to make the effort.

Inhabitants were well able to organize voluntary movements and disposed to joint action through trade unions and cooperatives. Predictably, they were not slow to ask for those utilities the government was willing to provide. In 1871 a public meeting was called in Lambton regarding legal and police protection. Those who attended were of the opinion that it was about time Lambton had a court of petty sessions, court house and police station. Too much time was lost in going to Newcastle regarding the law and administration of justice. Moreover, Lambton was in the centre of a large mining population. The meeting carried motions to get up a petition and establish a committee with power to coopt. The petition quickly collected over 400 signatures and by 1875 the town had all three

4. Colony of N.S.W., 31 Vic., no. 12.

5. F.A. Larcombe, 'The history and development of local government in N.S.W., 1857-1919' (M.Ec., University of Sydney, 1945), pp. 11-13.

services. In 1875 Wallsend and Plattsburg got up a similar movement for a court house. Courts of petty sessions were held there, too. All three towns had post offices before the 1870s. By 1881 these were being rebuilt or extended⁶. Local initiative and the willingness of the government to provide services, where need was established, meant the colliery companies, who traditionally would have secured these facilities from the government on behalf of the people, were superfluous.

Some of the services which the government was willing to provide if asked, like schools, were not maintained free. Until the Education Act passed by the N.S.W. parliament in 1880, at least one third of the cost of building and maintaining public schools had to be raised locally. This meant that although inhabitants were capable of petitioning successfully, they might well not get what they wanted, if they could not provide the funds. Moreover, there was nothing to stop any management anxious to have a school in their town from applying, providing the funds and setting up a school board to run it.

At Lambton the paternalistic attitudes of the colliery manager, Thomas Croudace, and his belief in the benefits of education, led to the establishment of a 'company school'. In December 1864, he and the colliery engineer, Isaac Bowman, applied to set up a 'national' school at Lambton. They stated that SAMCo would pay a third of the cost of the school building. Although the land and buildings belonged to the Council of Education, the local board consisted of three company officials. They decided what improvements should be made to the school, when they should be made, reported on the conduct of the teachers and recommended older children suited to become pupil teachers⁷. This did not please many of the inhabitants, who, through

6. *N.C.*, 14 Nov. 1871. *M.A.*, 18 Aug. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 3 Mar., 31 Nov. 1881.

7. Board of National Education, 'Miscellaneous letters received' (*N.S.W.A.A.* 1/432, nos. 251, 254). *Cl. Ed.*, *op. cit.*, Lambton 1867-79 (*N.S.W.A.A.* 1/744, 720, 816, 848, 876, 909, 970).

trade unions and a cooperative, were already managing their own affairs without the help of the colliery manager. They had also, through their own efforts, secured various government services, like the court house and post office, on their own initiative. Thus they did not take kindly to being 'continually kept in the dark' and without any part in management. By 1876 they were becoming alarmed by the school site which, being over a water course, was subject to rising damp, not to mention chronic infection among the children and the headmaster's family. Led by the mayor, Thomas Abel, who worked at the Waratah, not the Lambton colliery, they held a meeting to protest at the site, to get the school removed to a healthier position and to secure representation on the school board. Croudace, who was at the meeting, had once written to one of his brothers in England:

Pray treat all your men civilly and firmly
keeping them in their proper places and you
commanding their respect ...⁸

Not surprisingly, he hotly assured the meeting that if they persisted they would have to fight him and his company and would not get a foot of ground to build a new school⁹. Faced with the power of the company as a large land owner and employer of many, the movement lapsed and the school continued to be run by the company.

In the other towns miners' enthusiasm for education and management's belief in its long term benefits led to a fusion of the old and the new. School boards consisted of interested parties, both employers and employees. In 1863 the Minmi school board included the manager, undermanager, at least three miners and a storekeeper. Of the five men who applied for a school at Plattsburg in 1865, four were miners and one a storekeeper. The school board subsequently established consisted of twelve miners, a storekeeper and a sawyer¹⁰. Even where the first buildings were vested in the company, the rapid growth of the towns meant they

8. T. Croudace, 22 May 1866, 'Letter book', 1864-75.

9. 'School Files', Jesmond 1876, [enclosure] (P. 1706).

10. B.N.E., *op. cit.* (1/423, no. 230, 1/434, nos. 197, 199).

were constantly being resited and rebuilt. The councils formed to build the new schools were more representative. The first school building at Wallsend belonged to the Wallsend Company. Among those who signed the formal application for a new school in 1865 were at least two miners and in 1867 the board consisted of the colliery manager, three storekeepers and a surveyor. Similarly, the first school at Hamilton belonged to the A.A. Co., but by 1868 the board included at least two miners and a storekeeper¹¹. However, the resources of the companies gave them special privileges within such committees. They were in a position to grant land for schools, the value of which was considered part of the local contribution. This, and the other donations they were able to give, put them in a powerful position¹². Thus, if a colliery manager was on a school board, he was invariably the chairman. In constitution, however, the boards, which lasted until 1880, were oriented towards self-help and representative organisation.

The services government provided free, like post offices and policemen, could be secured without the help of colliery managers, whom they affected in no way. Schools were not quite free, but the companies had come to believe they were of benefit to their future workforce. That the government was willing to pay two thirds of the cost relieved them of much of the associated financial burden. Incorporation, on the other hand, threatened company profits and so the collieries obstructed it with all the power and influence they could assemble.

Colliery managers opposed incorporation because, as large land-owners, they would be liable to heavy assessment. Figure 4.1 shows that all the major colliery companies held mineral rights on much of the ground that made up the N.C.D. Many also owned land above ground in the same areas that they held underground rights. Although a lot of it was unimproved land, the colliery buildings and pit machinery stood on it. Most of the railways which crossed the district were

11. *ibid.*, (1/401 no. 196, 1/438 no. 46). Cf. Ed., *op. cit.*, Wallsend 1867, Pit town 1868 (1/756, 787).

12. B.N.E., *op. cit.* (1/401 no. 200, 1/432 no. 468, 1/438 no. 48).

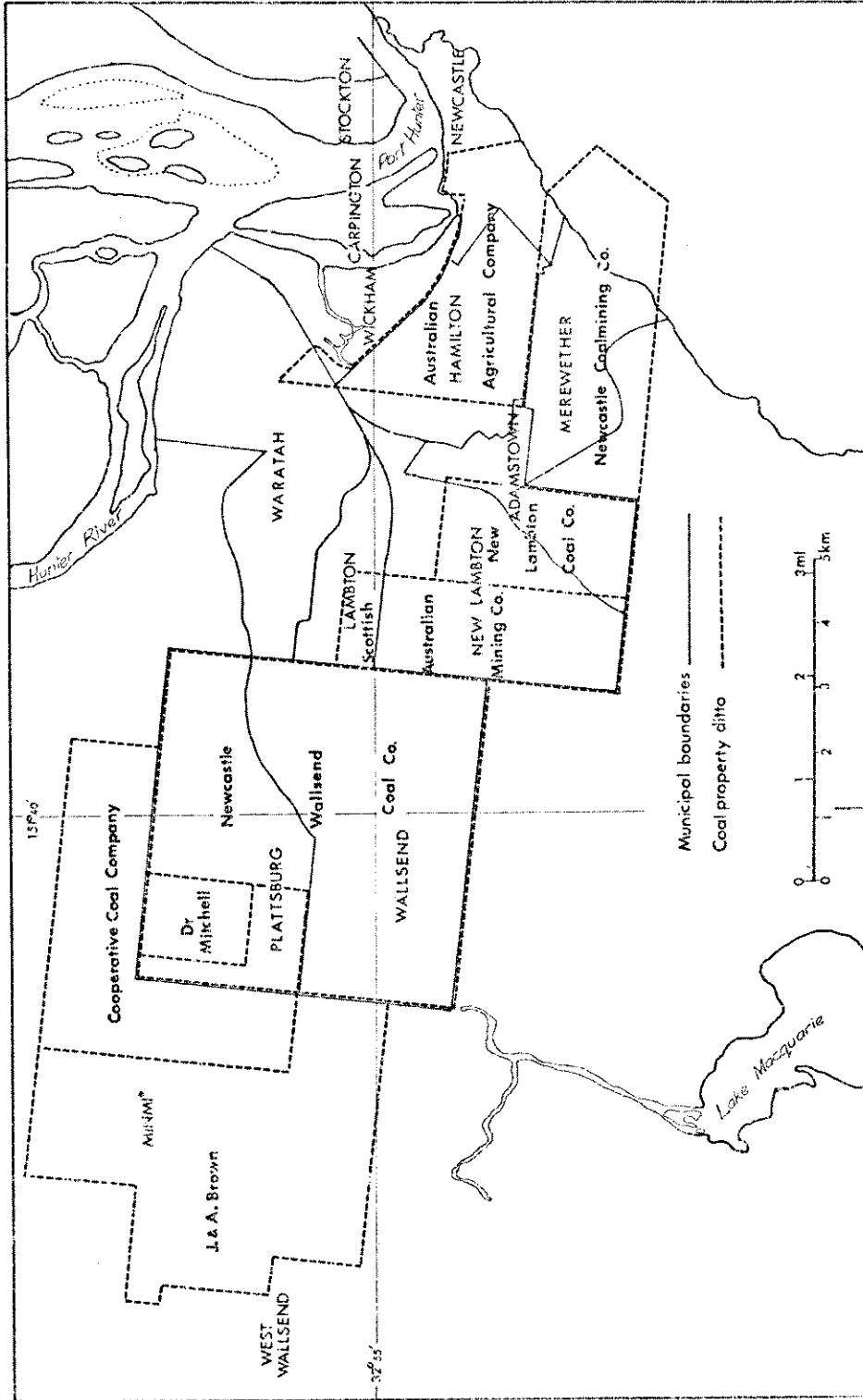


Fig. 4-1 Coal properties and Municipalities in Newcastle District, c.1890

Source: Edwards, Allen & Co., *Map of coal properties in the Newcastle district, 1890 (M.L.)*

privately owned lines from the collieries to the port. Coal companies were also landlords. We have already noted that the A.A. and Newcastle Wallsend companies rented land or houses to some of their employees throughout the period, whilst J. and A. Brown owned the whole of Minmi. Other large landowners, who were not colliery companies, were in the same position. E.C. Merewether owned the Burwood Estate and the Anglican church owned the Glebe area. These were eventually united as the municipality of Merewether.

Therefore, whenever inhabitants got up a petition for incorporation, they were likely to be challenged by the companies. There were two kinds of obstruction. The first was to oppose incorporation outright. SAMCo got up counterpetitions to the incorporation of New Lambton, where it owned much land, and Adamstown, through which one of its railways ran¹³. The N.C.D. owned none of the ground on the Burwood Estate, but it leased the underground mineral rights from Merewether and had constructed buildings and railways above ground. The company opposed the incorporation of Merewether to the very last¹⁴. When plain opposition had no chance of success, they tried to get their property excluded from municipalities. In 1871 Croudace did his best to get the proposed Lambton boundaries changed so that they excluded SAMCo property in the south west corner of the municipality¹⁵, where the pit shaft and colliery buildings stood.

Those who owned some of the land in the proposed municipalities could only try to stop incorporation. Those who owned all the land could stifle it completely. Where inhabitants were tenants with short or no leases, they were against incorporation, for they were loathe to be taxed to improve an area from which they might soon be evicted. Thus, while Merewether's tenants, who could get leases for up to 66 years by the 1870s, wanted incorporation, inhabitants of the Glebe were against the idea, so long as the Anglican church refused to give any security of tenure¹⁶. Furthermore, the power of such

13. *N.M.H.*, 13 Sept. 1892. Croudace to Moorehead, 25 Aug. 1884, 'Letterbook', 1881-6.

14. Municipality of Merewether, proposed incorporation 1885, Col. Sec., 'Special Bundles' (4/858-1).

15. *N.C.*, 22 June 1871.

16. *N.M.H.*, 17 Oct. 1881.

landlords could quash anyone brave enough to propose incorporation. One reason why the first incorporation attempt at Merewether in 1876-7 failed was because E.C. Merewether disliked the proposed boundaries and threatened to fight the movement if the leaders did not follow his wishes. Considerable pressure was also put on the leaders of the movement to abandon it altogether¹⁷. At Minmi the Browns were not only landlords, but employers and so could threaten to evict or discharge anyone favouring incorporation. Although there is no evidence of such action at Minmi, the absence of any attempt at incorporation, in contrast to other leasehold towns, suggests that the inhabitants either feared repercussions, or knew they had no chance of success. As both landlords and employers, the Browns were especially powerful and had a reputation for using their position against those who stepped out of line¹⁸. Thus, one cannot avoid the conclusion that their powerful position, as much as insecurity of tenure, made inhabitants opt for an improvement committee rather than a municipality.

Although inhabitants eventually defeated the companies and other landlords in all towns except Minmi, this did not end their conflicts. The wealth of the colliery companies gave them power to defy the councils with impunity. The councils, for their part, were so poverty stricken that they were forced to seek favours from the mining companies.

In the end, most colliery companies could not avoid incorporation. However, they could always appeal against the rates or refuse to pay them. Compulsion involved taking them to court, which was expensive, and so possibly self-defeating for the councils. In 1872 Croudace wrote to the Lambton council informing it in a most high handed fashion that he would not pay the rates as levied in 1871, but would pay them at the same level of assessment as in 1872. Although he was behind, he had no qualms about defying the workingmen on the council. In the following years he constantly opposed assessments.

17. J. Dixon, *A History of Merewether* (Newcastle 1935), p. 12 (M.L.). *N.M.H.*, 17 Oct. 1881.

18. J. Turner, 'An incident at Minmi', *Labour History*, v. 6 (1964), pp. 3-9.

In 1876 he reported triumphantly to R.A.A. Moorehead, company superintendent, that he had got them reduced by £54. In 1877 he got them reduced from £180 to £120¹⁹. Lambton was not unique. At Wallsend the company paid rates on its mineral rights, but nothing for its 300 tenants²⁰.

Whilst the companies were obstructive when it came to paying rates, the councils were dependent on their co-operation if they were to improve the district. As landowners they often had to be asked to dedicate streets to the councils before they could be made properly. Whenever such streets needed to be extended councils had to make the same request²¹. The companies also had resources the councils could well use. Gravel was needed for road building, but the collieries often owned the land from which gravel could be taken. The Plattsburg council had to send a deputation to the Wallsend company manager regarding a portion of land for this purpose. The SAMCo had its own quarry which the New Lambton and Lambton councils asked permission to use²². Large areas of land for recreation reserves, drainage and night soil paddocks could often only be acquired from the companies or other large land owners.

Local government not only needed the co-operation of the colliery companies in its attempts at improvement. The councils were so poor that without the companies taking on their traditional role as benefactors they could not get very far. Table 4.1 shows that the rental value of improved land in the N.C.D. was well below that of Sydney's suburbs or other rural areas. In 1901 the average rates for a Sydney municipality was £6606, country £868 and the N.C.D. £766. The low figure for the colliery townships was partly due to their smaller size, but if one compares rates per acre, it is clear there was far less revenue in relation to area than in metropolitan areas and although higher than in rural areas, the population it had to service was greater (table 4.2).

19. Thomas Croudace, 7 May 1872, 6 Jy. 1876, 31 May 1877, 'Letterbook', 1864-75, 1875-86.

20. *N.M.H.*, 18 Mar. 1881.

21. *ibid.*, 7 Sept. 1891. T. Croudace, 15 Aug. 1877, 'Letterbook', 1875-86.

22. *N.M.H.*, 10 Ap. 1891. T. Croudace, 2 Sept. 1877, 'Letterbook', 1875-86.

Table 4.1Rental value per acre of improved land in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in 1900

Area	Rental value (£)
Sydney and Suburbs	49.6
Country	36.2
Adamstown	17.1
Hamilton	22.7
Lambton	15.3
New Lambton	19.5
Merewether	20.4
Plattsburg	22.7
Wallsend	22.6
N.C.D. ($\bar{x}$)	20.0

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1901.Table 4.2General rate per acre in N.S.W. municipalities in 1900

Area	General rate per acre (£)	Population
Adamstown	0.41	2420
Hamilton	0.95	6124
Lambton	0.6	3159
New Lambton	0.15	1578
Merewether	0.95	4547
Plattsburg	0.26	3177
Wallsend	0.23	3820
N.C.D. ($\bar{x}$)	0.43	3546
Sydney Suburbs ($\bar{x}$)	1.50	9016
Country ($\bar{x}$)	0.07	2508

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1901.

The solution to this awkward situation of antagonism and dependence was to get the colliery managers to identify with the new municipal institutions and to persuade their companies to act out their traditional role in the new context. This proved no problem in Wallsend or Plattsburg. Neither colliery opposed incorporation of the combined municipality in 1871-2²³. The Wallsend manager, J.Y. Neilson, was an alderman from 1874 to 1879 and mayor in 1876, 1877 and 1878. James Fletcher of the Co-operative colliery was on the Wallsend council from 1874 to 1877 and mayor in 1874. When Plattsburg was incorporated separately in 1878 he was elected alderman. His son, James jr., who succeeded him as manager, served on the council from 1880 to 1882 and was mayor in 1882²⁴. Managers who had tried to obstruct incorporation, like Thomas Croudace, came to see its advantages. Quite hostile in the early 1870s, in 1877 he did not dismiss completely a deputation asking him to stand in the coming municipal elections, but hinted

the time may come when I may consider
it desirable to identify with your
Municipal Institution²⁵.

Five years later he took this step. He served on the Lambton council from 1882 to 1888 and 1891-4. He was mayor from 1882-5 and in 1893. When New Lambton was incorporated in 1889, he stood as alderman, serving in this capacity from 1889-92 and as mayor in 1891 and 1892²⁶.

The contribution of the colliery companies to the municipalities was considerable. Hamilton's two large recreation areas, Gregson and Learmonth Parks, were gifts of the A.A.Co. SAMCo allowed New Lambton council to get gravel from its quarry and built a tramway to it for the council. During 1884 Thomas Croudace donated about £218 for street improvement to Lambton council. His triumph, however, was Lambton Park. The most suitable land for a recreation ground was a

23. *N.C.*, 18 Mar. 1871.

24. The names of aldermen and mayors were published in the *N.S.W. Government Gazette*.

25. T. Croudace, 19 Jan. 1877, 'Letterbook', 1875-86.

26. See *Government Gazette*.

portion of the municipality south east of Elder Street, the main thoroughfare in Lambton. The government was willing to make over this land which was commonage, but the mineral rights belonged to SAMCo and the surface was covered with houses. Croudace persuaded the company to relinquish its rights and helped the people move their houses to other parts of the town. In 1891, when he was on Lambton council and mayor of New Lambton, these two municipalities decided to honour him with a presentation and dinner, including songs and recitations in Geordie dialect. The organizers claimed he had saved Lambton and New Lambton hundreds of pounds²⁷.

Although the colliery managers and other large landowners were in a position to help the colliery townships, what they did was very much their own decision. Moreover, their wealth and position as benefactors meant they could flout the councils and their work with impunity. The result was a love-hate relationship between the colliery companies and the townships.

A refusal to help a municipality could put much needed improvements beyond inhabitants. Merewether wanted a public park and a night soil paddock. All the other towns acquired, free from the government or colliery company, land for a park, where they could hold public meetings, demonstrations, sporting events and band concerts. Since Merewether was a leasehold town, it had to persuade the Merewether family to grant land. Although the Merewethers were willing to grant a long lease, they would not grant it free²⁸. By the end of the period the council was also anxious to establish a night soil system. Inhabitants were burying night soil in their backyards. This was endangering their water supply, which came mainly from underground tanks, most of which were not even bricked. In 1900 water in one such tank was declared unfit for human consumption or domestic purposes²⁹. However, Mr. Merewether rejected out of hand the idea of a night soil depot on his estate. The nearest suitable land outside the municipality was three miles away and was

27. *N.M.H.*, 24, 29 Jy., 23 Oct. 1891. T. Croudace, 23 Mar. 1885, 'Letterbook', 1881-6.

28. *N.M.H.*, 8 Mar., 14 Oct. 1900.

29. *ibid.*, 6 Sept. 1900.

without access road or water for washing pans. So, it involved expenditure for a road and dam. This was quite beyond the municipality³⁰.

If a council asked a favour, the colliery manager was in a position to stipulate conditions. In 1877 Croudace granted Lambton council permission to take gravel from the company quarry from such places as he specified, at reasonable times, for such periods as he decided, at the cost of two shillings a load. He also agreed to the extension of Croudace Street, provided it was metalled for its whole length. In 1891 he refused the council permission to take surplus earth from Howe Street to fill holes on vacant allotments in Pearson Street unless he was satisfied that the holes were doing injury to people³¹.

Managers could be as arbitrary as they liked. There was an exchange of strong words between Croudace and the mayor of Lambton in 1891, when the former revealed he had persuaded the government to give New Lambton Council partial control over the North Lambton quarry. The mayor, Thomas Dent, said Croudace had prevented Lambton Council from getting gravel from Charlestown Road, which ran through New Lambton, before he was appointed mayor there³². Managers could also be two-faced and get away with it. At the same time as he was mayor of Lambton and trying to get it a recreation ground, Croudace was opposing the incorporation of Adamstown. James Thomas, New Lambton colliery manager, was accused of influencing the government to buy a site offered by the company for a post office, rather than a more convenient and central site which was also offered³³. Clearly company profit went before municipal progress.

Finally, the largesse of the companies meant they could create havoc with municipal improvement without being forced to do anything about it. In Lambton, Wallsend and Plattsburg, the coal under the

30. *ibid.*, 28 Nov. 1900. Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Report on the proposal for a sewerage works for Newcastle and suburbs', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1901 pt. 3, p. 992.

31. T. Croudace, 15 Aug., 2 Sept. 1877. *N.M.H.*, 21 Jy. 1891.

32. *N.M.H.*, 23 Jy. 1891.

33. *ibid.*, 6 Nov., 4 Dec. 1891.

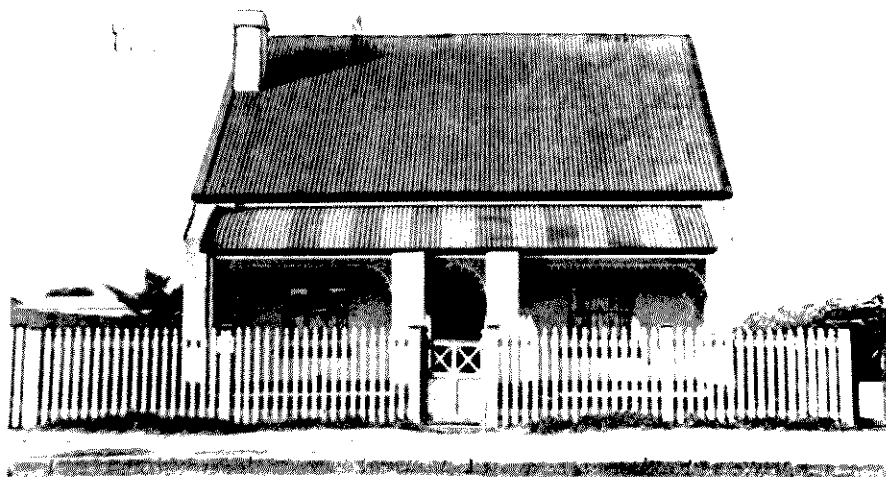


Lambton, 1890

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle Public Library

Minmi, 1885

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle Public Library



First council chambers, Hamilton

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle City Council

PLATE IV
The townships

streets was worked. This caused pitfalls which left them in a deplorable condition, endangering the lives of all who used them. In 1900 a pitfall twenty feet deep suddenly appeared in Nelson Street, Plattsburg's main thoroughfare, and engulfed a horse and cart full of bricks. The disruption caused a water main to break and fill the hole with soil and rushing water³⁴. Subsidence in the A.A.Co's pit caused the emergence of a swamp in Hamilton. At Lambton pitfalls collected polluted water, which seeped into underground tanks. In 1891 they were so large and numerous that the council could not find funds to deal with them³⁵. Although they could sue for damage to property such as roads and buildings, there was no way of preventing undermining, or enforcing compensation. Gaps in the Coal Mines Regulation Act meant the government had no jurisdiction in this area. Colliery managers whom the councils dared sue exploited their poverty by engaging in legal battles to get compensation orders dismissed³⁶. Even when such appeals failed they delayed repair, leaving large areas in a dangerous state for a long time.

Although incorporation seemed to provide a way of getting a better way of life for inhabitants without relying on the patronage of the mine managers, the wealth of the colliery companies, in contrast to the general poverty of the district, made this impossible. Local government had to secure the co-operation of management to get anywhere and the greater the co-operation the further they were likely to get. As a result, the patronage of the old world was adapted to the ways of the new. The colliery manager, although not usually landlord, resumed his old position of authority and leadership as mayor. When not officially in charge, he could exercise considerable control over councils by virtue of the privileges and favours he was in a position to grant. Such power enabled him to be as arbitrary as he liked and hinder municipal improvements not in his interest. As a result, inhabitants hated but needed the colliery companies.

34. R.C. on the Coal Mines Regulations Bill, *Jnl.L.C.*, 1896 pt. 2, pp. 138-41. *N.M.H.*, 15 Aug. 1900.

35. Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Report on the proposal for a sewage works for Newcastle ...', *loc.cit.*, p. 974. *N.M.H.*, 6 Aug. 1891.

36. *W&PSun*, 1 Dec. 1886. *Socialist Journal of Northern People*, 6 Aug., 1898 (M.L.).

The final way of providing utilities in N.S.W. in the nineteenth century was through voluntary associations assisted by the government. The colliery townships maintained fire brigades and a hospital in this way.

The large number of mining accidents requiring special surgery and intensive care meant that clean, efficient, well equipped hospitals were a necessity. Before 1875, though, hospitals in N.S.W. were regarded as places of last resort for paupers, with sanitary conditions and care which caused death rather than recovery. From that time on the concept of the hospital in N.S.W. changed slowly to a place of healing, but the new image did not reach rural areas until the 1880s³⁷. So, it was not until 1886 that Wallsend and Plattsburg thought about a district hospital for the outer colliery townships, for it was not until then that they could truly claim regarding accidents that

although the comfort and attention of home are ever welcome, in accidents the attendance of an Institution specially set aside for alleviating the sufferings of humanity is ineffably better³⁸.

Inhabitants had to provide at least half of the money to build and maintain the hospital. Although in 1891 the Wallsend Cottage Hospital committee applied for and received a government grant to build the hospital, much money was raised locally. At Wallsend a minstrel company was formed to give entertainments in aid of the hospital³⁹. Once built it was supported by subscriptions from, among others, the municipal councils, trade unions, friendly societies and colliery companies. Friendly societies began an annual Hospital Sunday Demonstration to collect money. There was also an annual hospital ball and a series of 'hospital socials' in winter, run by a ladies' committee⁴⁰. In 1900 the report presented at the annual general meeting acknowledged indebtedness to friendly societies, the local drama club and Musical and Literary society for assistance. Later that year Lambton and Charlestown held a fancy dress cricket match. There were 26 players a side, prizes for the funniest costumes and a procession around Lambton

37. B. Dickey, 'Charity in N.S.W., 1850-1914', (Ph.D., A.N.U., 1968), pp. 146, 214-215.

38. *W&P Sun*, 19 Mar. 1886.

39. *ibid.*, 7 May, 11 Jy. 1891.

40. *ibid.*, 26 Jan., 6 Ap., 4 May, 29 Jy. 1895. *N.M.H.* 12 May, 6 Aug. 1900.

to take up a collection for the hospital. Children from all the public schools in the hospital's drawing area gave a joint display. The Wallsend Jockey club agreed to give a meeting at the beginning of 1901⁴¹. The hospital was very much the concern of all inhabitants and not run or financed primarily by the colliery companies.

Fire brigades were maintained in the same way. Although the passage of the Fire Brigades Act in 1884 provided grants for equipment⁴², local fundraising was necessary to secure them. Local councils encouraged their formation and gave annual donations. Theatrical and musical groups gave fundraising entertainments. In 1891 Sample's amateur Drama Company from Lambton gave two performances for the Wallsend-Plattsburg Fire Brigade. At Adamstown the local Spectre Minstrels gave a concert to a crowded house, preceded by a torch-light procession consisting of the Adamstown and Hamilton brigades, headed by the local brass band. The brigades, once established, also arranged their own fundraising activities. Minmi had an annual ball and Hamilton an annual concert. At Adamstown the fire brigade and the minstrels had a football match, the players proceeding to the ground headed by the good templars' pipe and drum band⁴³. Although some colliery managers gave donations and sometimes the land on which the fire stations stood⁴⁴, they did not oppose or identify with them as they did municipal institutions.

The customs of the old world and the new, when it came to providing utilities and services, interacted with each other in a variety of ways. Where the government bore the cost of a service entirely, the mining companies were relieved of their traditional role. Thus, the bonds that might have arisen between benefactor and beneficiary to soften those of employer and employee did not arise. The relationship, if it can be called that, was between the inhabitants and an impersonal state. Where poorer areas stood to lose, because they could not raise enough money by themselves to get maximum government assistance, such bonds were established. Whilst the state provided most of the cost of

41. *N.M.H.*, 31 Jan., 9 May, 23 Nov., 3 Dec. 1900.

42. Larcombe, *op.cit.*, pp. 672-673.

43. *W&PSun*, 27 Feb. 1886, 28 Feb., 7 Mar. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 9 Mar. 1891.

44. *W&PSun*, 25, 28 Feb. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 17 Jan., 9 Mar., 20 Ap. 1891, 6 Aug. 1900.

schools and grants to local government, the poverty of the colliery townships meant they required any other help they could get. Their old world heritage made them look to the colliery manager, who held the key to many of the local resources they wished to tap. The colliery managers slipped easily into their old role when it came to schools. After initial opposition, they established a similar relationship with municipalities.

In this way the mine managers retained much of the power and status they had traditionally held as owners of mining towns, albeit in new guises. The colliery manager had prestige not just because he was the colliery manager, but because he was chairman of the school board and mayor. This situation also contributed to cohesion because of the multiple role play which softened underlying class antagonism. The colliery manager was not just the employer and, maybe, landlord. He was the principal benefactor of the schools and assisted local government. Horizontal division by class was mitigated by vertical integration stemming from shared interest in improving the way of life in the mining towns.

This situation did not last, for although the old ways seemed to fit easily into the new, so that traditional vertical integration was maintained, the ways of the colony held the seeds of its destruction. Changing attitudes of labour towards capital helped this process.

From paying two thirds of the cost of schools in the 1860s, the government moved to take total responsibility in 1880. This meant the large and quite powerful local boards were no longer necessary. The government now built and maintained schools, and hired, fired and transferred staff without advice from local residents, save in the case of serious irregularities. Local boards were still appointed, but they were much smaller and served districts rather than individual towns. Their powers were restricted to drawing the education department's attention to deficiencies in buildings and expressing local wishes. Thus before 1880 each school had a local board with about seven members. In 1881 four men were appointed to serve the new school district of Kahibah and Newcastle. Although school inspectors tended to nominate 'respectable men', like colliery managers and doctors, the

reduction in their power and functions meant the office was hardly comparable with that of school board chairman before 1880. This had had much of the authority and independence of a colliery manager who built his own school in the old country. Thus the colonial practice of increasing state aid gradually ousted colliery managers from this position.

Even though the colliery managers came to identify with the municipalities, they eventually withdrew from them. By 1900 the only colliery manager in local government was Robert Maddison of Wallsend, who leased a portion of the Wallsend mine as the Elemore Vale colliery and employed about 90 men⁴⁵. As a former miner and overman, employing less than 100 men, he was hardly of the same stamp as the managers of the large companies, who had as many as 800 men under them. Of the seven mayors, three were working miners, one a storekeeper, and another an undertaker. The sixth was a publican who until the year before had worked as a miner. The last was a colliery weighman. The process of withdrawal had started much earlier. At Wallsend no colliery manager served in local government after Neilson in 1878. After James Fletcher jr. finished his term in 1882, no colliery manager was mayor of Plattsburg, although his brother, William, was elected alderman at a bye-election in 1891. Thomas Croudace withdrew from municipal life after 1894. In the late 1890s, James Thomas of New Lambton alone served in local government.

The above account shows that some municipalities never had a colliery manager on the council and some colliery managers never served on councils. Adamstown and Merewether, which were not incorporated until after 1885, never had a colliery manager as an alderman. Hamilton was in the same position. The late nineteenth century saw increasing distance between employer and employee in Australia⁴⁶. Colliery managers were no exception, for the second generation do not seem to have been imbued with the same sense of duty as the first: Neilson, Croudace and Fletcher. James Barr, who succeeded the Fletchers at Wallsend, never took any part in local government. Nor

45. Dept. Mines *Reports*, 1890, 1900. Biographical details are taken from *N.C.*, 1871, *M.A.*, 1875, *W&PSun*, 1886.

46. J. Rickard, *Class and Politics, N.S.W., Victoria and the early Commonwealth, 1890-1910* (Melb., 1977), p. 294.

did the Crofts, who managed the N.C.C., the Turnbolls or Jesse Gregson of the A.A.Co., or Alexander Ross, who succeeded Neilson at Wallsend in 1889.

Part of the explanation for this withdrawal lies in the character of settlement in Newcastle. Although it consisted of small, nucleated settlements, none was very far from the other. This enabled some colliery managers to live in high class areas, away from the smoke and dust of the pits. Although the A.A.Co. manager first lived in Hamilton⁴⁷, by the 1890s Gregson, the superintendent, lived at Waratah. Originally a colliery town, this had become Newcastle's middle-class suburb, linked to the port, with its theatres and balls, by an efficient train service. Stewart Keightly, the N.C.C. chairman, lived in Newcastle. By 1900 one of the Turnbolls, who succeeded Winship as manager of the A.A.Co. pits, also lived there. For those who still lived in the mining towns, Merewether and Hamilton were so close to Newcastle that the Turnbolls and the Crofts could effectively cut themselves off from their townships and enjoy the polite society available in Newcastle.⁴⁸

Although managers of collieries in the outer townships continued to reside there or nearby, the growing financial problems of municipalities made them loathe to get involved. We have already indicated that the revenue from rates was below average. In the depression of the 1890s, land values dropped considerably (figure 4.2), leaving the councils with large debts to be paid off at pre-depression rates of interest. In this situation aldermen began to panic about the responsibilities they shouldered when they signed bonds. Although government representatives assured them the obligation was not personal, the banks disagreed⁴⁹. Lambton, which had borrowed heavily for its new electric light plant, was in trouble with its creditors by 1894. The municipality had total debts of £13,295 on which annual interest of £1,012.12.6 was due. Annual revenue was £870⁵⁰. Although Croudace was not among the aldermen who refused to sign a new bond in 1894,

47. Winship to Merewether, 20 Sept. 1861, A.A.Co., 'Coal Papers' (1/59 JBW-A no. 47).

48. Residence was traced through electoral rolls.

49. *N.M.H.*, 31 Mar., 7 Ap. 1894.

50. *ibid.*, 7 Sept. 1894.

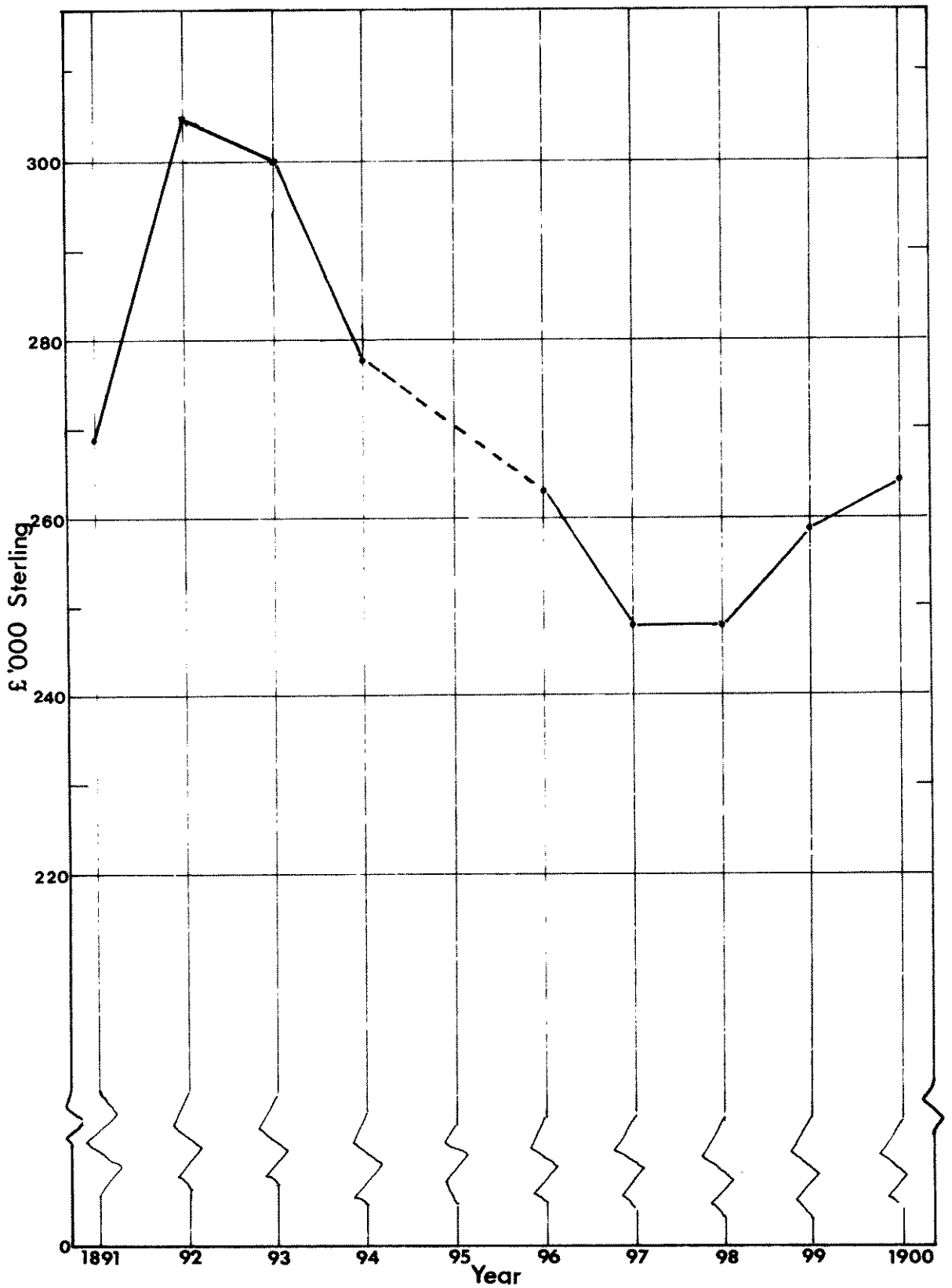


Fig.4-2 Average capital value of all rateable property in the incorporated townships of the N.C.D. in the 1890 s

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1891-1901.

he did not seek re-election in 1895⁵¹. When a receiver was appointed in 1899 and two aldermen, both miners, were convicted of contempt of court and imprisoned because they were unable to pay the fine of £10, his absence from local affairs was conspicuous.

Finally, the old tradition of patronage was wearing thin. In 1862 Thomas Croudace had claimed, when explaining why he was building brick cottages for miners, that good conditions attracted good men and that

the colliery that commands the best and steadiest men, will also command the largest trade, even in the face of all opposition⁵².

The SAMCo superintendent used the same argument when recommending a school in 1865:

I am sure, in a moral as well as in a business point of view the procedure now brought under their notice will commend itself to the approval of the Board⁵³.

The success of the union and constant industrial action demolished the myth that a better educated workforce would be more respectful, docile and grateful for the benefits conferred on it. As early as 1873 Croudace commented:

At present it goes against the grain to spend money on other people's property. Look at what we have done for the Public School ... Do we get any thanks from the public or from the Government -- not a pennyworth...⁵⁴.

A year later he was galled by the miners addressing each other as 'Mr.' and referring to the owners by their christian or nick names. By 1886 he was quite disillusioned. He wrote to one of the company directors that the 1885 strike had ruined the prospect of a poultry and horticultural show he had planned for Lambton. He added:

51. *ibid.*, 10 May 1894.

52. Memo from T. Croudace, 20 Nov. 1862, SAMCo., 'Superintendent's Letters', 1859-63.

53. Moorehead to Grainger, 20 Jan. 1865 in *ibid.*, 1863-69.

54. Croudace to Moorehead, 28 Mar. 1873, 'Letterbook', 1864-75.

It really seems to me the more you do for workmen and the better you pay them, the more ungrateful they are⁵⁵.

For their part the miners were coming to believe less and less that labour and capital had common interests. By this time the power of the colliery managers to obstruct municipal government, if it was in the interests of the colliery to do so, must have caused considerable resentment. In addition, the growing bitterness between employer and employee in the 1880s because of lower wages, the refusal of managers to go to arbitration and the arrival of European socialist ideas in Australia spilled over into non labour relations. In 1894 Plattsburg Council sent the Co-operative colliery notice to remove a level crossing which would render the council liable for damages in any accident. When the company ignored the order, the council directed its labourers to remove the tracks. The colliery then sued the council for damages. In the course of the hearing it claimed that, at the time, miners at their colliery were on strike and the intention of the aldermen behind this action was to coerce the colliery⁵⁶. Miners liked less and less the idea of managers on councils and in 1891, when William Fletcher stood for Plattsburg Council, a miner argued that a colliery manager or any large employer should not have a seat on a council since his position must influence voting⁵⁷.

The withdrawal of the colliery managers from much of public life in the townships had important implications for social cohesion. The role of the mine manager was no longer that of mayor and general benefactor. This reduced his relationship with his workforce to that of employer and employee. Thus conflict was unrelieved by co-operation in any other sphere. The fundamental cleavage between employer and employee was laid bare.

When they retired from town affairs, the colliery managers also left a social gap. The patronage they traditionally bestowed on the townships meant they were in great demand to officiate at local

55. T. Croudace, 25 Nov. 1875, 12 Jan. 1886, in *ibid.*, 1864-75, 1875-86.

56. *N.M.H.*, 29, 31 Jan. 1894, 13 Feb. 1895.

57. *W&PSun*, 23 Ap. 1891.

functions: school prize givings, church anniversaries and spelling bees⁵⁸. It also left other voluntary associations without suitable patrons to lend prestige and give donations.

Municipal institutions, to which colliery managers had adapted their traditional role so well, provided their replacements when they decided to withdraw from local life. As elected representatives of local interests, with considerable authority, alderman and mayors were a prestigious group. Mayors were expected to bestow patronage and grace official occasions in their towns, as were the colliery managers. When the colliery managers were mayors, they combined their traditional role in this area with mayoral duties. They were not, however, the only mayors in the colliery townships and far from the only aldermen. Table 4.3 shows that aldermen and mayors came from every occupational group, although some were more strongly represented than others. Over half the alderman and nearly 40 per cent of mayors were miners. Colliery managers constituted six aldermen (2 per cent) and five mayors (6 per cent).

Table 4.3 also suggests that municipal honours were a recognition of status. Persons who were bourgeois by virtue of belonging to the professions, being employers, or owning property, were grossly overrepresented in relation to their strength in the workforce. The intermediate clerical group of non-manual workers and non-working foremen was also overrepresented. Skilled tradesmen and miners were represented roughly in proportion to their strength in the workforce among aldermen, but underrepresented among mayors. Labourers were badly underrepresented among both aldermen and mayors.

Even among manual workers membership of a local government was a sign of status or merit. Most were either union officials, members of a co-operative society or owned land. Election as a union official was itself an honour and so recognition of achievement or merit. To be a member of a co-operative society a wageearner had to make enough to afford the £1 share needed to join and forego credit and low prices in the interests of a higher dividend and quality goods. This

58. *N.C.*, 2 May 1871. 'Coal Papers' 7 Ap. 1865 (1/59 JBW-E), 7 Aug. 1861 (1/59 JBW-K). *M.A.*, 2 Oct. 1875.

Table 4.3

Occupational status of aldermen and mayors in the Newcastle
colliery townships, 1871-1900

(All figures are percentages)

Occupation	Aldermen N=306	Mayors N=78	All Electors
Professional	4	8	3
Business	3	6	1
Shopkeeping	21	33	11
Clerical and Supervisory	4	4	0.4
Skilled	13	8	10
Miner	52	39	57
Labourer	3	2	18
Total bourgeois (proper)	27	47	15
Total working class	69	50	85

Sources: *N.S.W. Government Gazette*, 1871-1900.
N.S.W. Electoral roll, 1894, 1900-1.
N.C., 1871. *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1881-1900.
W&PSun, 1886, 1891.

was beyond all but the wealthier miners and tradesmen. Therefore, membership of a co-operative society signified a higher than average income. Finally, it was only the wealthier working-class that could afford to buy land. Thus the status of freeholder on the electoral roll also suggests a higher than average income. Table 4.4 proves that members of co-operative societies were the better off section of the working-class in that it shows that land ownership was twice that of all electors. Among union leaders land owners were also over-represented (table 4.5). Thus an official position in a union was also related to wealth.

Of the 34 manual workers who held the office of mayor in the Newcastle colliery townships, 85 per cent could be identified as a union official, co-operative society member or a freeholder. Many were all three. The only mayor in a semiskilled occupation must have been earning good money, because he belonged to the co-operative society and was a freeholder⁵⁹. It was not possible to identify all aldermen who served in the district, but of those who were on councils in 1871, 1875, 1881, 1891 and 1900, over 70 per cent were either union officials, co-operative society members or freeholders.

Since mayors and aldermen at large had been deemed persons of merit by virtue of occupational status, above average income, or merit, they slipped easily into the role of patron to other organisations and were the natural choice when looking for someone to preside at an official occasion. Moreover, that the office of mayor was itself a status symbol entitled its incumbents to other high status positions.

School inspectors, we have already noted, were disinclined to appoint miners to school boards. The first appointees to the new board in 1881 included, besides one colliery manager (Thomas Croudace), a doctor, a well-established manufacturer from Waratah and a police magistrate⁶⁰. Although the top professional and managerial groups continued to be represented on the boards, the nomination of former mayors and other local government officials could not be avoided in

59. It is significant that he was a colliery enginedriver. This group was unionized by the 1890s. See chapter three.

60. *N.M.H.*, 11 Mar. 1881.

Table 4.4

Electoral qualifications of heads of households in the N.C.D. and
those in cooperative societies, c. early 1890s

Qualification	Cooperative (%) N=120	District (%) N=4392
Freehold	51	26
Leasehold	7	13
Household	43	61

Note: Those with a 'resident' qualification were excluded on the grounds that most were young, unmarried men, who, in those days, were unlikely to buy their own home.

Source: *N.S.W. Electoral roll*, 1890-91 - 1893-4.

Table 4.5

Electoral qualifications of union officials in the
N.C.D., 1875 and 1891

Qualification	1875 (%)		1891 (%)	
	Electors N=296	Union N=58	Electors N=3884	Union N=47
Freeholder	32	57	29	55
Leaseholder	2	0	1	2
Householder	38	26	44	36
Resident	28	17	25	7

Note: Figures refer to freehold towns only.

Number of electors in 1875 refers to the sample drawn in the electoral roll survey.

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875. *N.C.*, 1891.

N.S.W. Electoral roll, 1875, 1891.

the incorporated towns. Thus half the known members of the post 1880 school boards, who can be traced, were former mayors, or other persons important in local government (table 4.6). Of these, four were shopkeepers, three miners and three in the clerical and supervisory category. Of the latter, one was a former miner who, after several years as mayor of Lambton, was appointed council clerk at Plattsburg. Another had worked his way from miner to overman. The third was a colliery weighman, which meant he probably began as a miner. Thus the respectable workingmen in this predominantly working-class area wriggled into other prestigious positions after proving their worth in local government.

As well as qualifying for the school board, mayors seem also to have been the natural choices for justices of the peace, along with residents of high occupational status. The first appointees were almost entirely colliery managers. In 1875, by which time at least four of them had been made justices of the peace, a correspondent of the *Miners' Advocate* commented:

The miners of this district are likely to have a lively time of it with a bench of colliery managers. It speaks very little for the intelligence of the district if the government can find no gentlemen in it who are imbued with a judicial mind without calling on the colliery managers to sit in judgement on their employees⁶¹.

Five years later the government had apparently been convinced that there were other gentlemen who could take on the office. A Lambton doctor and the current mayor of Lambton were appointed. Table 4.7 shows that half the known J.P.s appointed in the 1880s and 1890s were former mayors. Although the first, T.W. Dent, was an accountant, the occupations of others were not always so respectable. They included four miners and a weighman. Once again, the working-class manoeuvred into official positions through mayoralty.

61. *M.A.*, 15 Sept. 1875.

Table 4.6School board members in the Newcastle colliery townships, 1881-1900

Occupation/Status	Members
Colliery manager	2
Police magistrate	1
Medical practitioner	5
Manufacturer	2
Former mayor	9
Other local government official	1

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900*N.S.W. Government Gazette*, 1881-1900Table 4.7Justices of the peace from the Newcastle
colliery townships, c. 1875-1900

Occupation/Status	J.P.s
Colliery manager	4
Medical practitioner	3
Prominent businessman	2
Former mayor	9

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.

While the colliery managers were gradually withdrawing from public life, there was evolving an alternative status system which enabled the colliery townships to function without their patronage. Although the colliery managers were originally integrated into this system as mayors, members of school boards and J.P.s, they eventually shared these offices with their employees and other townsmen. The latter reached this position by virtue of occupational status or achievement of working-class respectability, as shown in above average earnings and wealth or a position in the union. Moreover, when it came to electing mayors and chairmen of school boards, personal qualities, not just status, were important. Hard work, integrity, seniority and length of residence were taken into account. In 1891 John Estell, a freeholder, member of the co-operative society, and future Amalgamated Miners' Association president and M.L.C., was elected mayor of Plattsburg, unanimously, on the grounds that he 'had plenty of go', was young, fond of hard work and had proved himself in local government. At Hamilton C.G. Melville, a storekeeper, who probably began as a miner, was elected mayor because he was one of the oldest aldermen who had not been mayor, had been associated with Hamilton since a boy and was upright in his dealings. When the Wallsend-Plattsburg school board met to elect a new president in 1900, the mayor of Wallsend, Andrew Drummond, was chosen unanimously because he was one of the oldest members and had been secretary for a long time⁶². Clearly the criteria of worth were changing from ascribed status to merit and achievement as the colliery townships came more and more to function without the presence of the colliery managers.

By the end of the period, then, there was an entirely different status system and kind of patron in the colliery townships. In 1875 Thomas Croudace was president of the Lambton Mechanics Institute and chairman of the public school board. He officiated at a dinner celebrating the centenary of Daniel O'Connell and the Baptist church anniversary. He also donated prizes for the local athletics carnival. The mayor chaired meetings on spiritualism, assisted immigration and a new railway. In 1891 Croudace was still president of the Mechanics

62. *W&PSur.*, 14 Feb. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 13 Feb. 1891, 18 May 1900.

Institute, but the mayor opened the Lambton Show, chaired the Lay Methodist Sunday school concert and was president of the cricket club and fire brigade⁶³. Before 1880 it had been customary for the colliery managers, as chairmen of the school boards, to provide annual public school treats and conduct the prize givings⁶⁴. By the 1890s colliery managers were virtually absent from public school functions. When arbour day was instituted in 1891, a member of the school board opened the concert at Lambton public school, three aldermen spoke and trees were planted by the aldermen. When the new public school libraries were opened in 1900, it was the mayors and school board officials, none of whom were colliery managers, who officiated. At Hamilton, Merewether, Newcastle South and Wallsend, the mayor chaired the ceremony. At Plattsburg and Lambton it was the school board president. At Adamstown a former mayor stood in for William Court, the current mayor⁶⁵, who apparently could not get time off from the colliery. The exception was Minmi, which remained unincorporated, and so did not produce alternatives to the colliery manager. Richard Thomas, the mine manager, continued, with the local doctors, to run the school board, chair church anniversaries and open church fetes. In 1891, when the School of Arts began, he was elected president unopposed and then elected president of the debating class. He was also chairman of the Minmi Eisteddfod and vice-president of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society⁶⁶.

It was not just the mayors who were expected to be patrons. They and their aldermen were among the officials of most political, sporting, cultural and self-help organisations in the colliery townships. Figures 4.3 to 4.6 show that by 1900 most organisations had at least one alderman among their officials. Among such organisations were the hospital, fire brigade and public school board. Thus all public utilities were overseen by municipal officials. Aldermen also represented municipal interests to other voluntary associations at the same time as they lent their support. Thus the new status system was not only based on different criteria, but its large number of

63. These events were reported in *M.A.*, 1875, *N.M.H.*, 1891.

64. *N.C.*, 23 Dec. 1871. *M.A.*, 1 May 1875. 'Coal Papers', 7 Ap. 1865 (1/59 JBW-E).

65. Accounts of these functions appear in *N.M.H.*, 1891, 1900.

66. These events were recorded in *N.M.H.*, 1891, 1900.

Each line represents one member

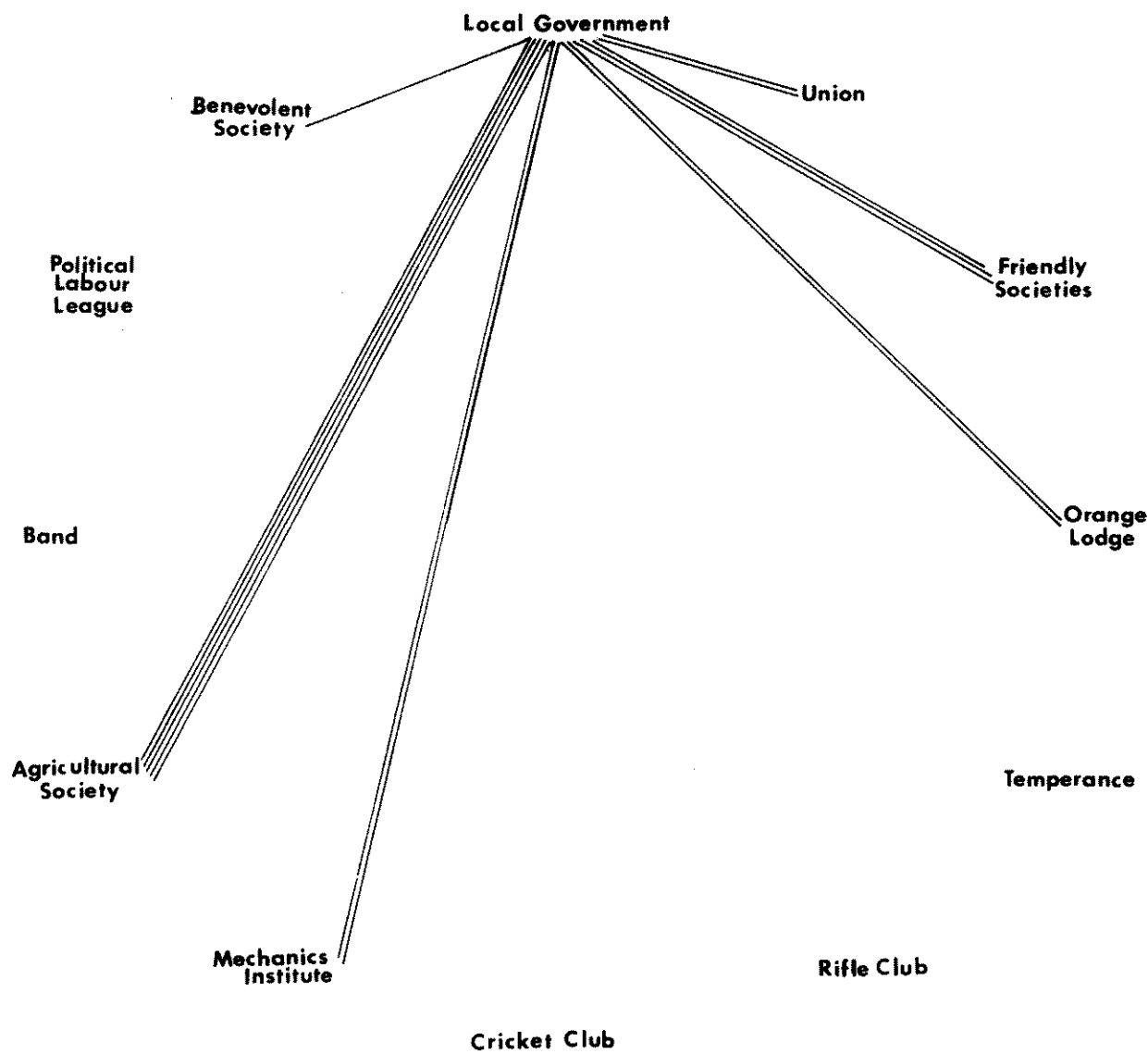


Fig. 4-3 Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Adamstown, 1900

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1900.

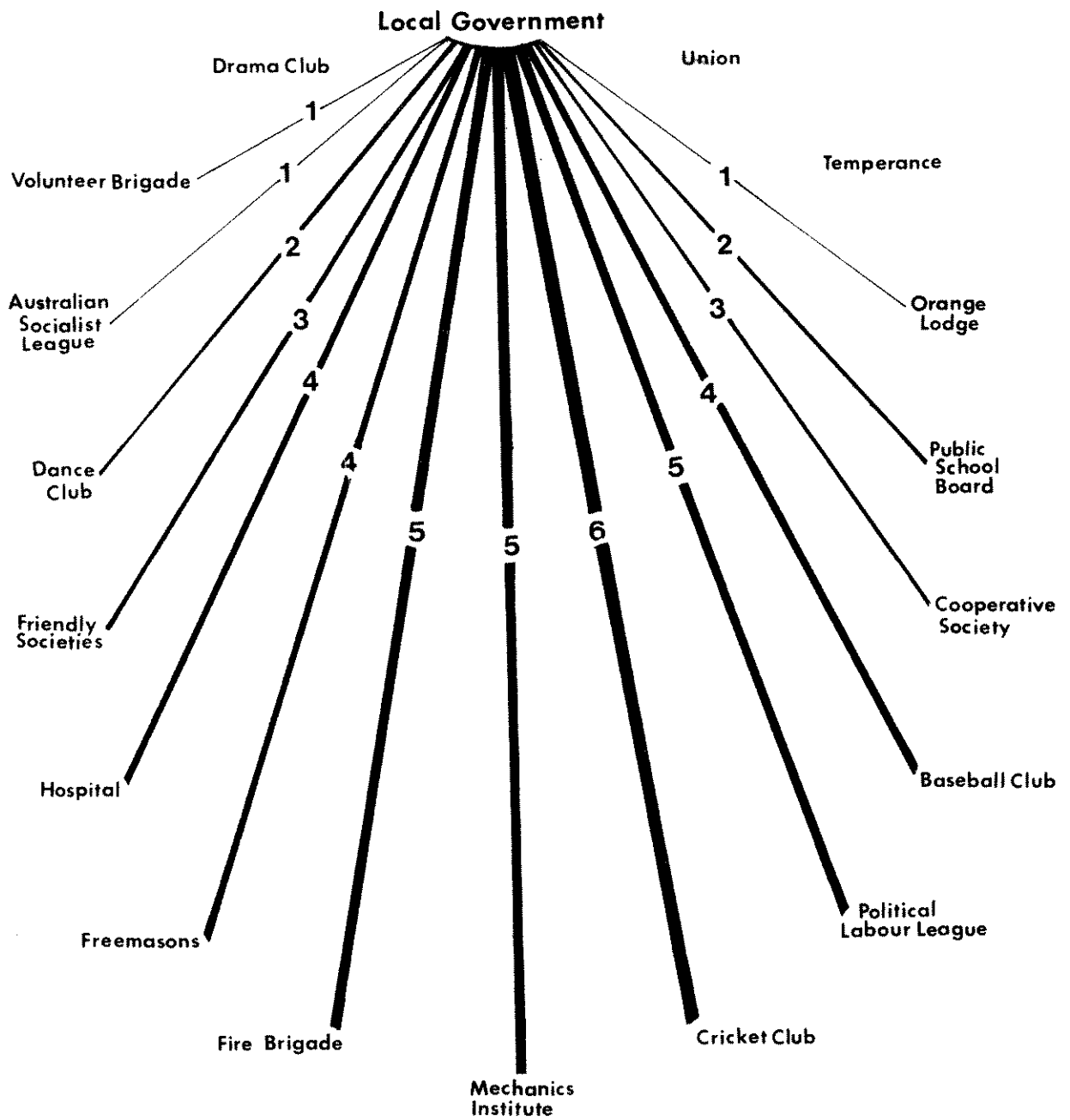


Fig.4-4 Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Lambton, 1900

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1900.

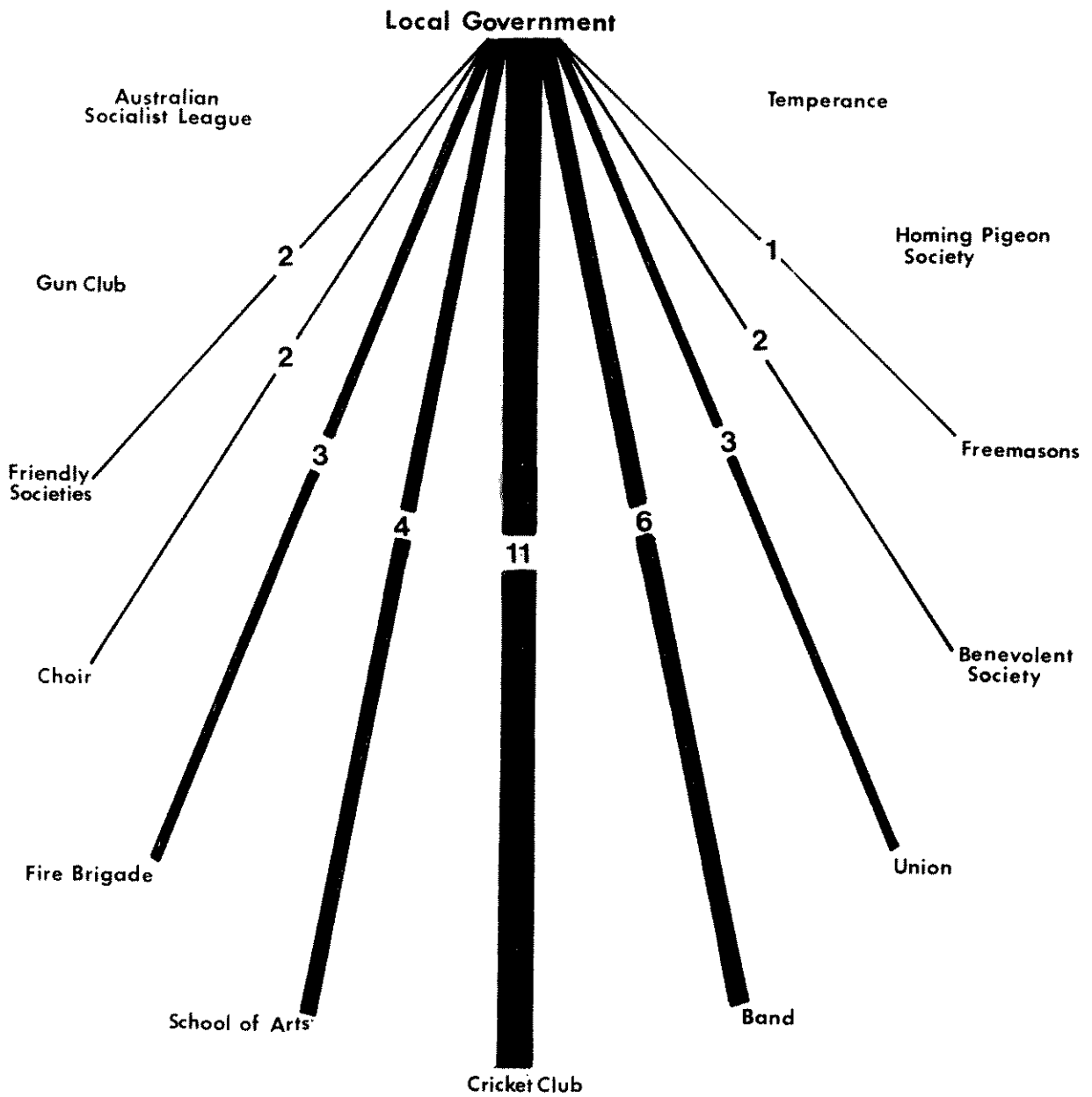


**Fig. 4-5 Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations:
Merewether, 1900**

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1900.

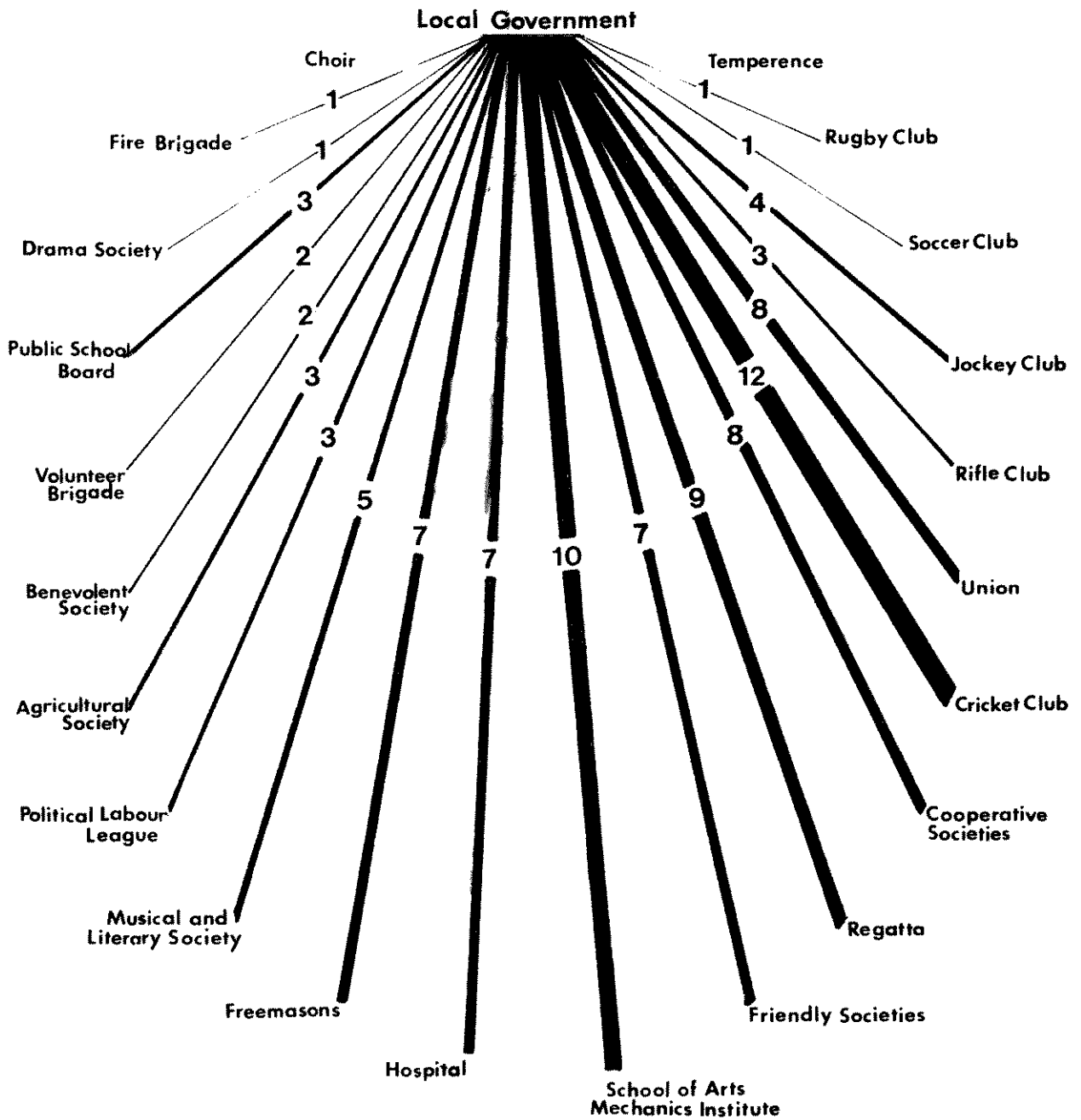


Fig. 4-6 Representation of aldermen in other voluntary associations: Wallsend-Plattsburg, 1900

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1900.

representatives meant it could play an important part in integrating different aspects of town life and representing them in local government. In addition there were more formal links between some voluntary associations and the council. We have already noted that they gave annual donations to the fire brigade and subscribed to the hospital. It was also customary for municipalities to give an annual donation to the Mechanics Institute, in the form of refunded rates. By the 1890s cricket clubs had become municipal cricket clubs with their property in the hands of the council, annual general meetings in the council chambers and annual donations. The connections were so intimate at Plattsburg and Merewether in 1900 that the mayor was elected president of the cricket club and all the aldermen were made vice-presidents.

Although a new system of social status and patronage had taken over in the colliery townships, it was not without rivals. In Adamstown, where there had never been a colliery, and Hamilton, where the managers never took part in local life, the new system was the only one. In other towns managers and large landowners still provided some patronage and leadership. In 1900 the mayor of Merewether was president of the band committee and cricket club, chaired the Welsh Baptist church concert, attended the Roman Catholic church fair, while his wife opened the Primitive Methodist bazaar. At the same time E.A.M. Merewether was patron of the fire brigade, gun club and cricket club and Croft vice-president of the fire brigade. The mayors of Wallsend and Plattsburg might have been vice presidents of the regatta, presidents or vice-presidents of the cricket club, Mechanics Institute and school board and chairmen for all public meetings, but Alexander Ross was patron of the regatta and president of the hospital board, agricultural society and the Wallsend School of Arts⁶⁷.

That the old and the new co-existed led to ambivalence and disunity. Allegiance went entirely to neither the new system, which signified growing working-class independence, nor the old system of working-class deference and vertical integration. The ambivalence

67. Lists of officials appeared in the *N.M.E.*

was often evident in the contradictory behaviour of miners. In 1875 the A.A.Co's miners got up a testimonial to an overman dismissed for standing up to J.B. Winship, the manager. Shortly after, Winship announced that he was leaving and colliery officials began a testimonial fund. Contributions exceeded all expectations, even though Winship was a particularly difficult man. It was claimed that most miners had contributed. However, only a handful recognized the inconsistency of their action⁶⁸. This ambivalence existed even in the minds of the new working-class elite. In 1891 John Estell, who had just been elected mayor of Plattsburg, wrote, as secretary of the Wallsend miners, to Alexander Ross, demanding an increase in the hewing rate. He signed himself 'your obedient servant'. That this was lingering deference, rather than habit, is clear from a letter he wrote at the same time to the Borehole lodge of the miners' union, where he signed himself 'yours truly'⁶⁹. Social relations in the colliery townships were in transition and the new social status system did not yet embrace the whole of local life.

The availability of alternative means of securing the facilities inhabitants needed for their health, safety, education and convenience caused conflict and disunity. The old paternalistic traditions were less necessary and attractive in the face of government assistance. Incorporation conflicted with the interests of the colliery companies and, although they adapted to the new system, the tensions between them and the inhabitants, whose aspirations they could fulfill or ruin, were too strong and obvious for the old vertical integration to survive. The withdrawal of the mine managers from town life signified a new era in which rich and poor, bosses and workers were separated by residence and social life, as much as incomes. Because the Newcastle colliery townships in the late nineteenth century were in a period of transition, neither the old system of vertical integration or the new system of horizontal solidarity in one-class societies held sway. The existence of rival status systems reflected ambivalence and so a lack of unified outlook. At the same time, the reduction of the relationship between colliery manager and employees through the disappearance of the traditional concept of duty and responsibility

68. M.A., 25 Sept., 30 Oct., 6, 17, 20 Nov., 15 Dec. 1875.

69. 'Coal Papers' (1/61 CM-H nos. 39, 40).

left nothing but strained industrial relations between them. This transition hindered rather than helped the development of a closer-knit society or community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL WELFARE

The inhabitants of the colliery townships shared a desire to improve their way of life by earning the best possible wages and securing the services necessary for a comfortable existence. This led to cooperation in wage maintenance, retailing and the establishment of utilities and municipalities, which would provide the good life. Inhabitants also shared threats to their ability to earn for themselves and families at all. They were especially prone to four kinds of insecurity: under or unemployment, sickness, old age and death. These prevented a man from earning enough or left his spouse and children quite helpless by taking away his ability to work. In the nineteenth century there was no state provision of unemployment or medical benefits, workers compensation, old age or widows pensions. So, there had to be some personal or collective provision against such threats.

The response of the colliery townships to this problem was to devise their own system of social welfare. It was built up gradually over our period, its various parts being added as needed. Its origins were in the by then well established British working-class tradition of self-help and solidarity. The system had two basic components, self-help in voluntary associations and charity through concerts, donations and, eventually, charitable organizations. Although the charitable part of the system suggests dependence, it was not the old-style dependence of the poor on the benevolence of their masters. Rather, it was a matter of the poor rallying around their more needy brethren. Not even the benevolent society had anything in common with the traditional paternalism of the rich. It was run by the better-off service population. Colliery managers played no part in organizing the relief of the chronically indigent. It was the people of the colliery townships who ran the local welfare system and, even though the various groups that contributed to it were confined to a few occupational groups, they formed an integrated system which contributed to the development of a common way of life in the N.C.D.

Although sickness, lack of employment, death and old age were not problems unique to the N.C.D., the nature of local industry and

the class structure of the area made them a greater burden on society. Sickness was more frequent and death more sudden. Under-employment, if not unemployment, was chronic. Because most of the population was on manual workers' wages, few were able to save for such contingencies. The result was a larger proportion of destitute persons than elsewhere.

Those outside the N.C.D. were not slow to realize that miners were more prone to sickness. In 1880 the royal commission on friendly societies held special sessions in Newcastle 'in view of the peculiar character of the societies of the Hunter River District and the numbers of miners who are members thereof.'¹ What drew their attention to the area was the amount of sickness in comparison with other friendly societies in N.S.W. The statistics of Manchester Unity illustrate this difference. Figure 5.1 shows the proportion of members sick each year was always higher in the colliery townships than the rest of the colony. Whilst the N.S.W. figure was rarely over 20 per cent, that for lodges in the N.C.D. was rarely under 20 per cent and in many years twice the proportion for the rest of the colony. Consequently, average sickness per member was higher in most years (figure 5.2). This sickness was in no way age specific. Table 5.1 sets out the average sickness per member for different age groups, showing that, in all but the 61 to 65 age group, there was more sickness per member in the colliery townships than in the rest of N.S.W. There was also more sickness than in most age groups in the U.K.

That age specific sickness per member was generally higher than in the U.K., as well as the rest of the colony, suggests it reflected some peculiar feature of the N.C.D., rather than poorer living conditions. Witnesses from the colliery townships told the royal commission in 1880 that the reason for more sickness was the high accident rate in coalmining². Table 5.2 sets out the accident rate at mines in the Newcastle district, based on reports of the department of Mines. It suggests that from 1881 to 1900 an average of nearly nine in every 1,000 or one in every 125 persons could expect to be injured each year.

1. R.C. on Friendly societies, *Jnl. L.C.*, 1881-3 pt. 2, p. 289.

2. *ibid.*, pp. 345, 355.

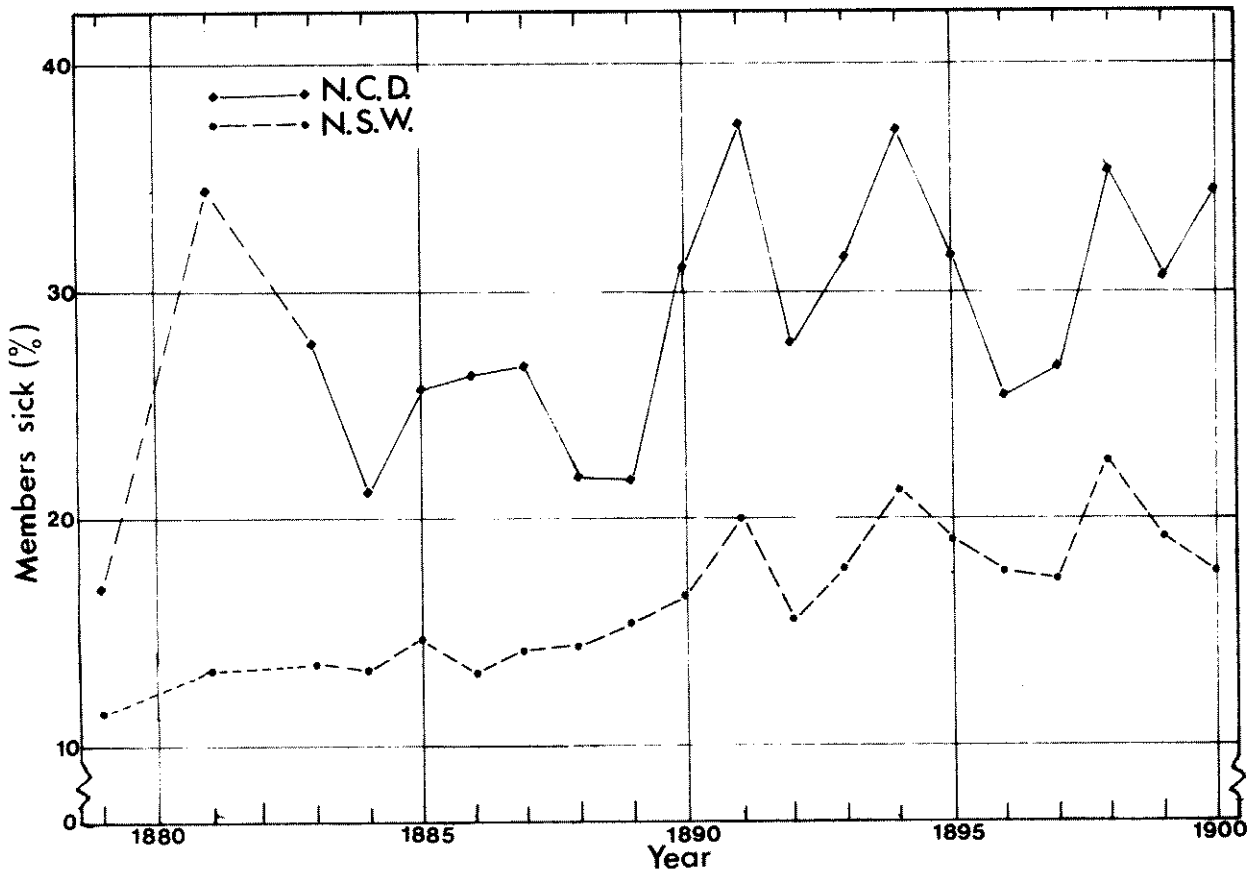


Fig.5-1 Proportion of Manchester Unity members sick in New South Wales and the N.C.D., 1879-1900

Source: MUI00F, *Proceedings of grand moveable conference, 1880-1901.*

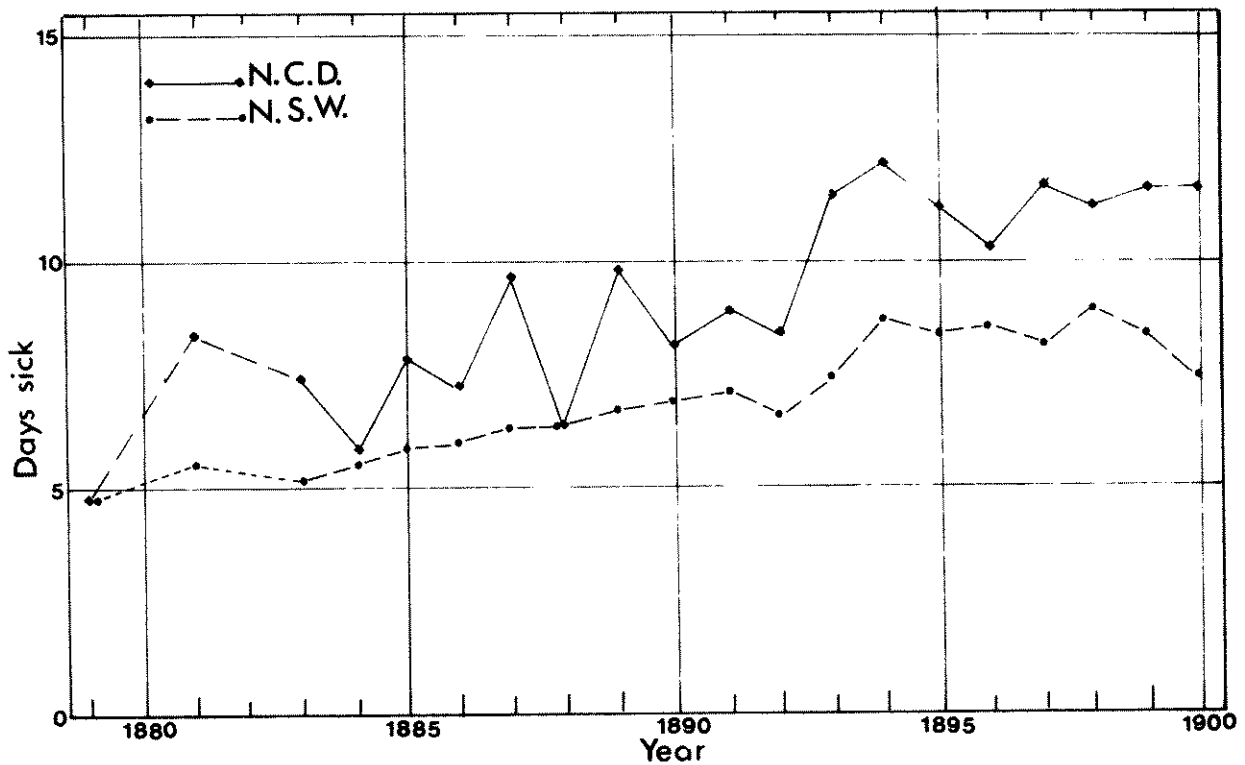


Fig.5-2 Days sick per member of the Manchester Unity in N.S.W. and the N.C.D., 1879-1900

Source: MUI00F, *op. cit.*, 1880-1901.

Table 5.1

Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows: weeks of sickness
per member in five yearly age groups in U.K., N.S.W., N.C.D. at the
end of the nineteenth century

Age	Weeks of Sickness		
	U.K.	N.S.W.	N.C.D.
21-25	.754	.401	.68
26-30	.827	.512	1.246
31-35	.954	.629	1.181
36-40	1.100	.828	1.050
41-45	1.348	1.181	1.797
46-50	1.776	1.583	2.011
51-55	2.406	1.949	3.538
56-60	3.441	3.299	3.456
61-65	5.306	6.616	4.994
66-70	8.399	6.949	15.650
71-75	13.092	15.164	30.000

Note: N.C.D. figures are an average for the years 1890-1900.

Sources: T. Coghlan, *Wealth and Progress of N.S.W.*,
 1897-8, p. 729.
 MUI00F, *op. cit.*, 1891-1901.

Table 5.2Accidents at Newcastle collieries, 1881-1900

Year	Accidents per thousand employed		
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Both
1881	0.3	8.7	9.4
1882	3.4	9.3	12.7
1883	3.0	7.0	10.0
1884	1.0	4.0	5.0
1885	2.0	5.9	7.9
1886	3.0	6.0	9.0
1887	1.0	5.6	6.6
1888	1.0	4.0	5.0
1889	4.5	5.8	10.3
1890	1.0	3.7	4.7
1891	2.0	3.8	5.8
1892	1.0	7.7	8.7
1893	1.0	3.7	4.7
1894	1.0	4.0	5.0
1895	1.0	6.0	7.0
1896	3.0	5.5	8.5
1897	2.0	8.0	10.0
1898	3.0	12.0	15.0
1899	1.0	14.0	15.0
1900	1.0	14.0	15.0
Average	1.81	6.94	8.8

Source: N.S.W. Dept. of Mines, *Reports*, 1881-1900.

These figures underestimate accidents to miners. First, they refer to ail working about coal mines rather than those working below ground, although the chances of a severe accident were higher among those who worked underground. In addition, accidents were under-reported. In 1881 the department of Mines reported 28 accidents in Newcastle collieries and the *N.M.H.* 37. Since newspapers are highly selective in their choice of news items, it is strange that the figures are so close. However, when we examine the list of names from the local newspaper and the department of Mines, it is clear that many accidents noted in the former were not reported officially, for 19 of the names in the *Herald* are not in the department of Mines' report. The same tendency is evident in later years. In 1886 nine of the 20 accidents reported in newspapers were listed officially and in 1891 ten out of 19³. This suggests that the accident rate was about twice that calculated from official statistics, which made it close to the N.S.W. crude birth rate in the 1890s⁴. It is unlikely, though, that newspapers reported all accidents.

So, the actual rates may have been higher. The allegation of the Wallsend miners that in 1893 the company reported just eleven of 123 minor accidents supports this suspicion. Were the unreported accidents mere scratches, failure to give notice of them would be inconsequential. However, those reported in newspapers alone include loss of sight, burns and many broken limbs. David Watkins, M.L.A. for Wallsend, confirmed this when he said he knew of many cases where men were laid up for months and not listed officially. On inquiry he found their accidents had never been reported⁵.

Accidents rates and days of sickness say very little about how injury affected individual earning capacity. The details of the reports of the department of Mines throw some light on this matter. As far as descriptions allow, accidents have been classified in

3. These figures are drawn from the following: *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891; *W&PSun*, 1886, 1891.

4. T. Coghlan, *Wealth and progress of N.S.W.*, 1900-1, p. 1003.

5. *N.M.H.*, 3 Jy. 1900. *N.S.W.P.D.*, 1895, ser. 1 v. 82, p. 2158, 1898 (2), ser. 1 v. 94, p. 1262.

table 5.3. Nearly half all injuries were broken bones. There was no other category so important, apart from the 'general' one, which is a miscellaneous group, consisting of rather vague descriptions such as 'injury to leg'. Some of the smaller categories were significant in their impact on the lives of victims. Injuries to eyes could result in total or partial blindness and a back or spinal injury could cripple a person for life. Amputations usually meant a man's days as a miner were over. In all, these disabling injuries accounted for nearly nine per cent of reported injuries.

The details of most injuries give no indication of their consequences and it is only when one traces individuals involved that the impact becomes clear. Among those unable to pay school fees the school attendance officers found many accident victims. Burns from a powder explosion put one man off work for four months. A fracture took at least that long to heal, but could take up to a year. One man the department of Mines described as having 'fractured ribs and other injuries' in early 1887 was still laid up in 1888. A serious burn or fracture could also totally or partially incapacitate. The man who was off work for four months because of the powder explosion was afterwards unable to work as anything but a labourer and could not do that regularly. In 1881 the department of Mines reported that Edward Lewis of Wallsend had fractured his collar-bone. In 1888 the school attendance officer said he had paralyzed his right arm in an accident seven years before. Others the department of Mines reported as having broken bones the attendance officers said were unable to work regularly because of pit injuries⁶. Thus even an apparently straightforward injury like a broken bone could ruin a miner. If we add this large category of accidents (45 per cent) to other permanently incapacitating injuries, that is, those to eyes, the spine and amputations (9 per cent), we see that over half the reported injuries were potentially ruinous to miners.

6. These conclusions were reached by tracing individuals mentioned in the reports of school attendance officers, newspapers and the annual reports of the department of Mines. The school attendance reports are found in the 'Schools Files', 1883-93.

Table 5.3Non-fatal injuries at Newcastle collieries, 1873-1900

Injury	No.	%
Broken bone	420	45.5
General	235	25.4
Burns	75	8.1
Bruises	46	4.9
Back/Spine	43	4.7
Internal	36	3.9
Amputation	27	2.9
Lacerations	16	1.7
Dislocations	13	1.4
To eyes	11	1.2
Concussion	2	0.2

Source: N.S.W. Department of Mines, *op. cit.*, 1873, 1874, 1881-1900.

Table 5.4Mortality among Manchester Unity members, N.S.W., N.C.D., 1879-1900

Period	Mortality per thousand members	
	N.S.W.	N.C.D.
1879-85*	8.6	6.0
1886-90	7.7	4.5
1891-95	7.9	7.5
1896-1900	8.6	5.8

*Omits 1880 and 1882 for which there are no statistics

Note: Annual rates have been averaged over five year periods to smooth out fluctuations.

Source: MU100F, *op. cit.*, 1880-1901.

Table 5.4 shows that, despite more sickness, mortality was lower in the mining towns. This does not mean there were fewer widows and dependents to be supported. Fatal accidents came without warning and with no reference to age or savings. Young married men were as likely victims as those in middle age. So, many were left destitute when they could least afford it. The occupational diseases, that is, phthisis, miners' asthma and T.B., of which many died, were so slow and drawn out that usually savings were exhausted before death. In 1875 an editorial in the *Miner's Advocate* pointed out that deaths through occupational diseases caused as much hardship as fatal accidents:

few people ever think of the poor fellows who struggle for years against a disease which is just as fatal though more lingering ... eking out a miserable existence, more dead than alive, starving his family and even disposing of his household effects, for the purpose of providing money with which to procure every boasted cure ... Such is the condition hundreds are now in and after their savings have been banished to the winds of heaven and their household possessions melted into doctor's medicines without having effected any relief, they die miserably, leaving their helpless families ... to battle ...⁷

Although mortality rates were lower for friendly societies in the N.C.D., the ways in which death came left more dependent families to swell the already large ranks of those who could not earn because of pit accidents.

Since there was no old age pension in N.S.W. in the nineteenth century, those who were too weak to work because of advancing years and had no relatives to support them faced death by starvation, or spending their last days in a benevolent institution, if they had no savings. As we have seen, the average wages of many in the N.C.D. gave them little chance of saving enough to forego credit at the local store, let alone keep themselves and dependents for 10 to 15 years. The healthier continued to work until very old. In 1891 one overman at the WallSEND colliery was

7. M.A., 30 Oct. 1875.

78 years old and had worked right up to his death. Since he had been appointed to that position 10 years before, he must still have been working as a miner at the age of 68⁸. For most the heavy manual labour required of face workers meant the old could not continue. Some took menial jobs with miserable pay, such as working at the colliery furnace, but it was often hard to work regularly even then because of infirmity⁹. The aged in the district were therefore in the same position as the partially disabled and constituted a similar and additional burden on society. That most breadwinners were manual workers meant the indigent old must have been a larger proportion of the elderly than elsewhere.

Unemployment was rare in the N.C.D. until the 1890s, but underemployment to the point of absolute poverty was common. The policy of colliery managers was to put on as many men as were available that orders might be filled as fast as possible¹⁰. Thus for a while there would be plenty of work for all, but when the market slackened the same number would have to share a smaller amount of work. Sometimes men were laid off, but usually, so long as there was a bord for them in the pit, they were kept on at a few days a week. Although the unions did not approve of overhiring, they had no control over it and felt that providing some work for their members was better than large-scale dismissals. Thus, from time to time, every town reported families 'in distress' because of slack times at the colliery employing most resident breadwinners¹¹. These families swelled the already large numbers of people who could not keep themselves because of sickness, death of a breadwinner or old age and had to be supported by other inhabitants. Since a large proportion of the population worked in the mines, such distress was far more severe than in industrially diversified districts.

8. *W&PSun*, 13 May 1891.

9. *ibid.*, 21 Jy. 1886. 'Schools Files', Hamilton 1889 (p. 1849).

10. 'Progress report of the select committee on assisted immigration', *V&PLA*, 1879-80 vol. 5, p. 759.

11. See *N.M.H.*, Oct. 1876, Feb. 1880, Feb.-Mar. 1881. *W&PSun*, Sept. 1891.

The traditional source of aid in sickness, death of a breadwinner, old age and lack of employment was the family and kin. We have already seen that relatives continued to provide such help. They were in no position to provide adequately for all the needy. For a start, some people, especially in the earliest decades, before they brought out relatives, or their own families grew up and married, had no kin. In addition, even though most married within the district, geographical mobility was quite high and must have separated kin¹². Then, many families, although willing to support their relatives, were in no financial position to do so. That many of those looking after widowed and deserted daughters, orphaned siblings, nieces and nephews and aged or sick parents were reported as so doing in explanation of their inability to pay school fees shows supporting them seriously strained the family economy. Some families were quite unable to take on these extra burdens. In 1895 Alfred Edden noted that in his electorate of Kahibah, which consisted almost entirely of colliery townships, many people had to send their parents to charitable asylums because they could not keep them on their own resources. He made it quite clear that they would willingly have kept them had they been able¹³. Knowing that when they lost their livelihood, temporarily or permanently, they or their families would have to throw themselves on relatives, who were ill-equipped to assist them, or in their absence beg for charity, forced people to cast around for alternative sources of aid.

The first agency of social security the colliery townships adopted was the friendly society. The aim of this organization was to provide payment in times of need in return for a small weekly contribution. Friendly societies began in England in the late eighteenth century. Originally for conviviality, by the nineteenth century they had added welfare functions. They grew most rapidly between 1835 and 1845, a difficult time for workingmen. Not only were they moving into urban areas where they might initially lack kin, but chronic underemployment and economic dislocation meant kin were themselves too poor to assist them. This period also saw the

12. See chapter ten.

13. *N.S.W.P.D.*, 1895, ser. 1 v. 82, p. 843.

rise of the trade union and cooperative society already discussed. Like them, the origins and strength of the friendly societies lay in the industrial north of England¹⁴.

In 1858 the first Manchester Unity lodge in the N.C.D. was founded at Junction. The next 15 years, during which most of the mining towns were established, saw the setting up of 10 friendly societies in five towns. Of these 10, seven survived throughout the period. Altogether, from 1860 to 1900, 13 different organizations tried to set up 40 lodges in the seven main areas of population. They included four orders of Oddfellows: Manchester Unity, Grand United, the Independent Order of N.S.W. and the American Order, as well as the Druids, Rechabites, Sons of Temperance, Free Gardeners, Foresters, Buffaloes, Ancient Britons and the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society. The most common and successful were the larger orders, Manchester Unity, Grand United, the Free Gardeners, Druids, Independent Order of Oddfellows and Foresters (table 5.5). These accounted for more than three quarters of attempted foundations and all successful ones¹⁵. Apart from churches, they were probably the most prolific voluntary associations in the district. While most towns had only one Mechanics Institute, one cricket club and one band, all except New Lambton supported more than one friendly society at any one time¹⁶.

In return for their contributions, members were entitled to free medical attendance for the family, when needed, and weekly payments if ill for more than a few weeks. At death a widow was paid a lump sum from the funeral fund and might get extra help for herself and children if necessary. There was little difference between societies in the way most payments were made. Whether widows and orphans were paid from part of a special or general fund varied with the order, but there was always some kind of donation. The scales of sickness benefits could differ, but most

14. J.H.P.H. Gosden, *The friendly societies in England, 1815-75* (Manchester, 1961), pp. 11, 33.

15. These conclusions are based on the sources quoted in table 5.5, plus Protestant Alliance Friendly Society, *Minutes and proceedings of annual session, 1886* (located at society's offices, Elizabeth St., Sydney).

16. i.e., New Lambton was the only town where just one friendly society operated.

Table 5.5Friendly societies in the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Town	Successful Orders	Foundation Date
Adamstown	Manchester Unity 100F of N.S.W.	1878 1885
Hamilton	Druids Grand United Free Gardeners Rechabites	1864 before 1891 before 1891 1895
Lambton	Druids Grand United 100F of N.S.W.	1866 before 1881 1882
Merewether	Manchester Unity* Druids* Rechabites 100F of N.S.W.	1858 1868 1895 1886
Minmi	Manchester Unity Druids Free Gardeners Rechabites	1877 before 1891 1885 1891
New Lambton	Manchester Unity	1863
Wallsend- Plattsburg	Manchester Unity Foresters Free Gardeners Grand United	1862 1868 1885 1868

*Located at Junction but composed of Merewether residents.

Sources: MU100F, *op. cit.*

100F N.S.W., *Proceedings*, 1884, 1887, (M.L.).

Rechabite and temperance magazine, 1898-1900,
(Rechabite House, Campbell St., Surrey Hills, Sydney).

R.C. into friendly societies, *loc. cit.*

N.C., 1861, 1862, 1871.

M.A., 1875.

N.M.H., 1881, 1891, 1900.

W&PSun, 1886, 1891, 1895.

were fairly close and all declined with the length of sickness. In 1881 the Druids and Sons of Temperance paid 15/- weekly and Manchester Unity 20/- a week for the first six weeks. In 1900 the Rechabites paid that sum for the first six months and 15/- for the next. For both payment in the third six months was 10/- a week and thereafter 5/-¹⁷.

Those who joined the friendly societies were trying to procure, through 'self-help', assurance of assistance in time of need. When the Star of Minmi lodge of the GUOOF began in 1875 a speaker from another lodge claimed friendly societies enabled men to provide for large families and made them independent when sick. Clearly, in the early decades of the period, they also meant much to those with no kin to depend on when needed. At the anniversary of the Independent Order of Ancient Britons at Wallsend in 1875 a visitor claimed:

No-one could estimate the blessings confirmed upon the poor by the establishment of friendly societies. Their influence was such that if a brother was in need and perhaps hundreds of miles from his home he would meet with someone who would take him by the hand and see to his wants. And then, when death came, it would be a comfort to know that the brothers with whom he had associated would accompany his remains to their last resting place.¹⁸

The N.C.D. showed its identity with northern England's new industrial culture through its attachment to and the nature of its friendly societies. It was not just the number of orders and lodges in the area, but total membership and the nature of some of its societies, which testified to the origins of much that was distinctive in its way of life.

The fullest available figures of friendly society membership suggest that they were far more popular in the N.C.D. than in the

-
17. R.C. on friendly societies, *loc. cit.*, pp. 255, 342, 347. MU100F, *op. cit.*, 1900. *Rechabite and Temperance Magazine*, 3 Jan. 1899 (at society's office, Campbell St., Surry Hills, N.S.W.).
18. *M.A.*, 26 June, 1 Sept. 1875.

rest of N.S.W. For 1891 membership figures are available for all friendly societies in the towns of Adamstown, Hamilton and Merewether. They indicate that over half the males over 15 years in these towns belonged to a friendly society. By contrast, under 15 per cent of all adult males in N.S.W. in 1895 were in friendly societies¹⁹. This suggests that breadwinners in the colliery townships, by custom or necessity, placed far more emphasis on self-help through friendly societies than those in the rest of N.S.W.

The N.C.D. was not just distinctive for the proportion of breadwinners in friendly societies. The royal commission of 1880 was surprised to learn that quite a few men in the colliery townships belonged to more than one order. The purpose of dual membership was to raise sickness benefits to subsistence level and was a common practice among working men in the old country²⁰. Of those who testified to the commission, one had been a member of Manchester Unity for 22 and the Druids for 17 years. Another belonged to the Foresters and the Protestant Alliance. It was common for funerals to be attended by members of two orders, such as Grand United and the Free Gardeners, Druids and Grand United and Manchester Unity and the Rechabites²¹. The extent of dual membership, and so its effect on the proportion of the population in friendly societies as set out in table 5.6, is difficult to tell. However, our previous analysis of the cost of living suggests that only the better off miner could have afforded to be in more than one friendly society. The average weekly contribution was 1/6. Now figure 3.4b suggests those earning below average wages would not have been able to afford even that, which probably explains why over half the population were not in friendly societies. Figure 3.4a shows that in most years the miner earning average wages was unlikely to be able to meet the cost of a respectable standard of living and so

19. In 1891 the *Newcastle Morning Herald* covered the activities of friendly societies more fully than usual. This made it possible to obtain complete information for some colliery townships. There was no official return of friendly societies in 1891, but there was in 1895 (see Report of registrar of friendly societies, *Jnl. L.C.*, 1898(2) pt. 1, p. 611). The intercensal rate of population increase was calculated arithmetically.

20. R.C. on friendly societies, *loc. cit.*, p. 351. Gosden, *The friendly societies in England*, p. 26.

21. R.C. on friendly societies, *loc. cit.*, pp. 345-54. *M.A.*, 20 Jan. 1875.

its dividing club²². Because they were easily wound up at the end of a year and had no ceremonial occasions, yearly societies could come and go without attracting attention from the press. Consequently, they are hard to trace. Clearly the colliery townships around Newcastle, N.S.W., carried on the Geordie tradition, with yearly societies in most of them at some time during the period. Newspapers show that there were yearly societies at Wallsend in 1875 and 1900, Hamilton in 1891 and Merewether, Jesmond (the north west corner of Lambton municipality) and Broadmeadow in 1900²³.

Although friendly society membership was far higher than in the rest of N.S.W., less than 50 per cent was insufficient in an area where a greater proportion of wage earners were likely to fall ill. Aware that the problem lay in the riskiness of the main occupation in the district, coalmining, those employed in the industry established an extra agency of self-help to ensure that all had some source of assistance when injured or killed. The first colliery accident fund began at the A.A.Co's colliery in the 1850s. The prelude to its rule book published in 1858 claimed:

The changeable state of human nature and the vicissitudes to which man is exposed in this world, the accidents to which he is liable and the sickness and decay to which his perishable nature is constantly subjected, render it a necessary duty to himself to make such a provision as reason and experience shall dictate for mutual comfort and support on the day of adversity.²⁴

However, pit funds did not become common until the rebirth of the union in the early 1870s. Whether or not there was a direct relationship between the growth of unions and colliery accident funds is impossible to say. In England the period 1860-75 was marked by the growth of separate benefit societies for miners. So, the newest arrivals could well have been reestablishing what they had become accustomed to. Whatever the cause of their growth in the early 1870s, colliery accident funds became part of the

22. Gosden, *The friendly societies*, p. 85.

23. *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1891, 1900.

24. 'Coal Papers' (1/62 CL-H).

Table 5.6

Friendly society membership in certain
colliery townships, 1891

Town	Number in friendly societies (%)
Adamstown	45.2
Hamilton	49.1
Merewether	47.4

Note: Percentages are computed as a proportion of all males over 15 years.

Sources: MUI00F, *op. cit.*, 1892. N.M.H., 1891. *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.

could not have been in a position to pay out to a second society. Thus only the miner earning above average wages would be able to belong to more than one friendly society. Moreover, even if half those in friendly societies had dual membership, the proportion would still have been well above the N.S.W. figure. Whatever its extent, the effect of dual membership was to raise the importance of the friendly society in the colliery townships far above that in the rest of the colony.

The attachment to friendly societies was not the only distinctive feature of the movement in the N.C.D. The kinds of society also set it apart and testified to the north eastern English origins of much of the population. In nineteenth century England affiliated orders were not the only kind of friendly society. Locally based societies consisting of members of one village were common among agricultural labourers. In addition, there were local clubs known as dividing or yearly societies, so called because at the end of the year, after putting aside a small sum with which to start the next year, the remaining profit, if any, was divided equally among members. These were very popular in the mining districts of north eastern England, where in 1872 it was estimated that every colliery had

district's way of life from that time²⁵. They were usually run by the miners' union.

The benefits the colliery funds paid followed closely the practices of friendly societies proper. Sickness benefits were graduated according to length of illness and there was a lump sum paid at the death of a breadwinner or his wife. However, there were certain variations from friendly society benefits which reflected the needs of the district. Initial benefits were less than those paid by friendly societies. The A.A.Co. Mutual Benefit Society paid, from 1886, 15/- for the first year, whereas Manchester Unity and the Rechabites were paying 20/- for some or all of that period. Whilst friendly societies might pay ten shillings for the next six months, the colliery fund paid that sum for the next year. Payment thereafter in the friendly societies was five shillings whilst the colliery fund paid 7/6. Thus the colliery fund made some provision for the fact that many were ill for a long time. The arrangements for funeral benefits were also a little different. Both provided a lump sum or funeral benefit at death, but the colliery fund also made a payment for each child under 14. A woman dependent on her son received half the amount if he died. Finally, a widow could ensure the payment of her funeral money to her heirs by paying a shilling a quarter to the fund to which her husband had contributed²⁶. This was a rather more elaborate arrangement which met better the needs of members who were likely to die suddenly and at any age from an accident.

Therefore, the colliery funds provided further social security in a district which, by occupation and class, was especially vulnerable to destitution in sickness and death. Since membership was compulsory, this was an extra insurance for those in friendly societies, not just because it provided more money, but because it took account of all dependents, not just a wife, at death. For those too old or infirm to be accepted in a friendly society, the compulsory colliery fund provided an alternative source of social security²⁷. Between both organizations most of the pop-

25. Funds were established at Wallsend in 1871 and at the Cooperative, New Lambton and Minmi pits by 1875. *N.C.*, 28 Dec. 1871. *M.A.*, 7, 24 Ap., 8 May 1875.

26. Rules of benefit society, 1886, 'Coal Papers' (1/62 CL-H, no. 13).

27. R.C. on friendly societies, *loc. cit.*, p. 353.

ulation was insured in some way against sickness and death. Some were doubly insured.

Even so, the benefits payable to inhabitants could not cover the needs of those permanently crippled or ill. All friendly society and colliery fund benefits fell to five shillings and 7/6 respectively after one and a half to two years. So, even if a man belonged to two friendly societies and one accident fund, which means he would have had to earn above average wages beforehand, his total income after two years could not have been more than 17/6 weekly. This would have come nowhere near average household expenditure at any time during the period²⁸. Those suffering from occupational diseases rather than pit injuries, but still in two friendly societies, would get even less. Anyone in the same position who had never been well enough to be accepted in a friendly society would receive nothing. Consequently, the 1870s saw not only the rise of the supplementary accident funds but forms of charity to fill in the gaps no self-help could meet.

One common way of raising funds for individual cases of need was the pay day collection. It involved soliciting donations from employees of a colliery when they were paid at the office. Often the collectors also canvassed among the local business people²⁹. The main use of the pay day collection was as a quick way of raising funds for pit widows and miners unable to work because of an accident or occupational disease. Since the amounts people were willing to part with without anything in return were never large, alternatives, which would give people a good reason for giving, had to be found.

The more important and successful way of raising money, which was traditional among working-class people, was the benefit concert. A committee of interested persons arranged these functions, which were given by local artists. They were used mainly for those bordering on destitution because of sickness or accidents. There were a variety of cases which came under these categories. There were pit widows in immediate or continual need and families whose

28. see fig. 3.4a.

29. *N.C.*, 2 Dec. 1871. *M.A.*, 27 Feb., 2 Aug. 1875.

breadwinners had died after a long illness and were left totally unprovided for. In addition, there were miners who were unable to work because of injury, occupational disease, or who had a permanent disability which prevented them from working regularly³⁰.

Therefore, by the late 1870s the colliery townships had set up their own system of social welfare to take care of the sick, the disabled, the widowed and orphaned. There was no definite provision for the other insecurities to which inhabitants were especially liable: lack of income in old age and underemployment. The decline in the coal industry from the prosperity of the 1870s and the gradual ageing of the population saw the modification of the original system and the emergence of new structures to cope with these problems. In addition, parts of the system which were not working satisfactorily were revised.

From 1875, when pay Saturday was introduced, all collieries officially worked six days one week and five the next, that is 22 days a month³¹. Declining trade meant the number of days work that was actually available rarely reached the maximum. Figure 3.2 shows that from 1880 to 1900 pits worked 20 days a month or ten per fortnight in only five years: 1883, 1884, 1886, 1898 and 1900. In 1893 the average was 11 days a month, that is, half time. The variation in the number of days worked at each colliery was such that some pits were working well below capacity when most were working nearly full-time. As a result, pockets of severe underemployment leading to the near starvation noted in chapter three arose. The response was to re-establish a well known institution among English miners, the relief fund. It involved setting up a committee, usually by the union, to solicit donations in cash and kind from all organizations and individuals who could afford to give. The committee then distributed the funds according to need³².

30. viz. *M.A.*, 13 Mar., 17 Nov. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 18 Mar., 20 Aug. 1900.

31. This was because of the introduction of the fortnightly pay Saturday holiday. See chapter six.

32. *W&PSun*, 19 Sept. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 14 Mar. 1881.

The gradual worsening of the employment situation in the colliery townships led to the demise of the relief fund by the mid 1890s. Formal charity and aid from local government replaced it.

The 1890s brought unemployment as well as chronic underemployment. Faced with large numbers of rate payers who could not pay rates unless earning fair wages, local councils applied for special grants to start public works, such as roads and drainage systems. They employed their ratepayers on these at five or six shillings a day. To give as much relief as possible no man was allowed to work more than two days a week, unless he had a large family³³. The councils, then, provided legitimate work and regulated the labour on it so that the chance to work and payment was in proportion to the financial burden that had to be met. Public works were equivalent to unemployment benefits with different rates for the single and those with dependents, but labour was required in return for payment.

The sharp drop in real wages in the 1890s meant the capacity for charity, never large in a low income area, contracted even further. The miners lodges, which had traditionally organized relief in slack times, were too poor and lacking in morale to solicit donations from their brethren. In addition, there was no money to be spent on patronizing fundraising concerts, which disappeared for a time. Increasing poverty in the Newcastle district in the last 20 years of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of charitable organizations run by the middle-class. In 1885 or 1886 the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society was established. Gradually it spread its operations to the colliery townships. It provided outdoor relief consisting of grocery tickets with 'no luxuries allowed' printed on them to the value of 2/6 a week, rent, if living alone, and free medical attendance³⁴. The society also built an asylum. The poverty of the unions forced them to turn from running their own funds in 1891 to asking the benevolent society to assist members. In

33. *W&PSun*, 27 Ap., 21 Dec. 1895.

34. R.C. on subsidized benevolent institutions, *Jnl. L.C.*, 1899(2) pt. 1, pp. 115-117.

1895 the Wallsend and Plattsburg miners approached the local branch of the benevolent society and asked it to assist their members³⁵. Those who had at first been able to organize their own charity were reduced to relying on help and direction from those outside the union.

The gradual ageing of the population meant that in the last twenty years of the century the elderly became an identifiable group among those who could not support themselves. Their straitened circumstances meant they were just as entitled to a benefit concert as widows, orphans and disabled miners. Thus by 1900 many of the benefit concerts were for the aged³⁶. The absence of any formal aid for the aged meant that the benevolent society, when it emerged, played an important part in helping this fast increasing group of needy people. The distribution of aid suggests most cases were elderly. The society gave more to families than single people. This led to distinguishing between single and family cases in details of assistance. Most of the single cases on outdoor relief, given the high marriage rate and tendency for young men to go away looking for work, must have been old people. Table 5.7 shows that 80 per cent of those relieved in 1897 and 1898 were 'single cases'. Thus the benevolent society was devoted primarily to the relief to those who were indigent because of old age.

The last years of the century also saw modifications of the pay day collection. This form of charity had never been very successful. There were frequent complaints that some always donated whilst others gave nothing³⁷. By the end of the century cases typically granted a collection in the 1870s were given a donation from union funds instead. The collection was reserved for cases where money was needed for special purposes. In 1900 the Sea Pit miners took up a subscription for a widow and her children to return to England. It was not uncommon to take up a special collection to buy a horse and cart for a disabled workmate, so that he could go into business³⁸.

35. *W&PSun*, 14 Sept. 1895.

36. *N.M.H.*, 28 Ap., 19 Sept. 1895.

37. e.g., *M.A.*, 7 Ap., 15 Sept. 1875.

38. *N.M.H.*, 7 Sept. 1900. 'Schools Files', Wallsend 1884 (P. 1796).

Table 5.7

Outdoor relief distributed by the Newcastle and
Northumberland Benevolent Society, 1897 and 1898

Year	Individuals				Cases			
	In Families		Single		In Families		Single	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1897	2580	71.5	1025	28.5	274	21.0	1025	79.0
1898	2175	66.2	1111	33.8	274	19.7	1111	80.2

Source: R.C. into subsidized benevolent institutions,
Jnl. L.C., 1899(2) pt. 1, p. 114.

Therefore, the provision of aid to the needy underwent considerable change in the 1880s and 1890s. The original components: the friendly society, colliery fund, collection and benefit concert remained. Charity was widened to include relief funds and the benevolent society, which catered for the new problems of lack of employment and old age. Local councils also expanded the sources of assistance by providing employment on public works. The established sources of charity were modified. The aged were included among those eligible for benefit concerts. The pay day collection was partially replaced by group donations.

By 1900 the agencies of social welfare in the district included the traditional self-help through the friendly and pit societies and charity through the benevolent society, benefit concerts, group donations, special collections and council assistance. That most

of the expansion and modification had occurred in the provision of charity suggests that self-help was less and less able to cope with the problems of the district.

Although the agencies of social welfare in the N.C.D. tried to cover the four threats to earning a living, they did not form a social welfare system naturally. While most agencies were organized and run by local inhabitants, the unplanned way they emerged to cope with threats to social security meant there was much scope for duplication and anomalies. Therefore, a set of overlapping institutions, conflicting rather than complementing each other in an integrated system, may well have arisen. We can speak, though, of a local welfare system, for the simple structure and small size of towns in the area meant conflict could be avoided.

All the agencies of social welfare which met the chronic distress in the district occasioned by frequent small-scale accidents, occupational diseases, old age or unemployment, were locally run and organized. Although usually affiliated at the colonial level, the friendly society lodge depended on local contributions and was administered by its members. The colliery funds and pay day subscriptions were collected from and run by local work groups, which also organized family relief funds and benefit concerts. Municipal councils provided work for the local unemployed. The benevolent society was organized into districts and its members were expected to raise funds necessary for relief in each area through local collections. Members invariably belonged to the town they 'visited'.

Possible duplications and anomalies between the more common self-help and charitable organizations in the colliery townships were a far more serious threat to the growth of an integrated system.

That many breadwinners belonged to a friendly society, as well as a colliery accident fund, meant they were obliged to pay twice

for the services of a doctor, even though payment through one organization would guarantee attention when needed. This problem was solved by the colliery fund hiring a doctor at so much a member per fortnight with the promise of an independent private practice in the town as well. Members of friendly societies who worked at the colliery paid for medical services through the pit fund, whilst others continued to pay into the medical fund of the friendly society to which they belonged, but were entitled to the services of the colliery doctor³⁹. In this way the doctor hired by the colliery fund became the town doctor, no one had to pay twice and duplication and competition were avoided. This was possible because of the simple employment structure of the district.

The variety of agencies of help in sickness, death and old age meant some could theoretically profit unfairly by getting help from all, while others got nothing. A widow could acquire considerable funds as a result of the death of her spouse, or a miner from his illness, if he or she got relief through the friendly society, colliery accident funds, a benefit concert and the benevolent society. Similarly, an aged miner could draw on benevolent society relief, as well as benefit concerts. This is not to say that all sources of aid might not have been necessary, but that there could be cases where an individual was receiving aid from several agencies, unknown to each other. In Sydney the multiplication of charities meant opportunities for what was described as 'systematic abuse' of charitable aid abounded. The Metropolitan Charities Association was founded to coordinate relief given in the various municipalities and by the many charitable societies in the metropolis⁴⁰. The small size of towns in the N.C.D. meant any duplication or overlap would be noticed quickly. If any old person or widow on relief succeeded in getting a benefit concert when not warranted, the very publicity associated with the event would alert the benevolent society. The simple social organization of towns also worked against anomalies. Most of the workforce was employed in the pits and so belonged to a colliery fund.

39. R.C. into friendly societies, *loc. cit.*, pp. 350, 355.

40. R.C. on public charities, *Jnl. L.C.*, 1898(2) pt. 1, pp. 2229-30.

Now it was the work group who arranged benefit concerts, payday subscriptions and granted donations⁴¹. Therefore, there was little chance of duplication or some getting more than their share of help.

In times of depression both work groups and the benevolent society were likely to be active, but the latter rose to prominence when the former was unable to cope⁴². As for council employment, benevolent society visitors were bound to ask how much was earned in casual work and men on public works were too prominent not to be noticed.

Therefore, despite the variety of organizations giving aid in the N.C.D., we can say that a local system of social welfare evolved. The agencies were all locally organized, funded and administered. The system had two main parts, self-help through friendly societies and colliery funds and charity. In addition, local councils provided work for the unemployed when this form of insecurity became widespread. Within and between the several agencies of the two main kinds of aid there were potential conflicts and anomalies, but they were either solved or avoided because of small town size or the simple social organization and employment structure of the district. Small size meant duplication between different charities was less likely. Simple employment structure and social organization prevented duplication between friendly societies and colliery funds and overlap between colliery funds, benefit concerts, donations and subscriptions. The recognition and attempt to provide for the various kinds of need that arose and the elimination of discrepancies between the various welfare agencies led to the development of a common and integrated set of institutions, that is, a system of social welfare. The establishment of a local system of social welfare contributed to the growth of a common way of life. That many of the institutions and customs which made up the system were derived from English working-class culture, more particularly the culture of the industrial north of England, added to the distinctiveness of the N.C.D.

41. *M.A.*, 24 Feb. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 19 Dec. 1891, 20 Jan. 1900.

42. see pp. 168-69 above.

Although the various agencies of welfare formed a system which contributed to the growth of community in the colliery townships, the social composition of the individual organizations did little to bridge fundamental cleavages of occupational status, age, nativity and religion. Certain parts of the system, like friendly societies, were calculated to create further division because of their organization into numerous orders which competed for members.

The social composition of friendly societies, pit funds and the benevolent society emphasized the divisions of class and occupation in the colliery townships.

Table 5.8, which gives the occupations of known friendly society members in the N.C.D., shows that manual occupations dominated and that overall they were even stronger than their distribution in the workforce. 92 per cent were manual workers and only 5 per cent members of the bourgeoisie. Foremen, clerks and miners were over represented in proportion to their distribution in the workforce. Tradesmen were equal to their strength in the workforce and labourers generally under represented. This distribution is very like that of cooperative societies, which consisted of the better off members of the working-class. Clearly, this form of self-help also had no appeal for the bourgeoisie and was beyond the reach of many labourers. Once again, the differences between bourgeoisie and workers, better off workers and labourers were emphasized by membership and non membership of voluntary associations.

The organisation of colliery accident funds according to work group meant that they emphasized the same cleavages as did trade unions. Although most began by containing all workmen, by the 1890s there were separate surfacemen's funds at Wallsend and the N.C.C.'s collieries.

From 1875 to 1886 A.A.Co. employees were split into miners and wheelers and daymen. It is difficult to find statements of reasons for these splits, but there must have been clashes of interest.

Table 5.8

Occupations of friendly society members in the N.C.D. (%)

Occupation	Protestant Alliance N=5	Ancient Britons N=4	Foresters N=7	Grand United N=35	Friendly Society				Rechabites N=40	Manchester Unity N=81	All Friendly Societies N=642
					Yearly Funds N=33	Free Gardeners N=374	IOOF N.S.W. N=25				
Professional	40				0.26						0.6
Business				3.0	0.26						0.5
Shopkeeping			14.2	8.5		2.1	4.0	12.5	8.6		4.2
Clerical				14.2		0.53	4.0		3.7		1.7
Skilled	20			5.7	6.1	10.1		7.5	12.3		10.5
Miner	40	100	85.7	65.7	78.7	72.1	88.0	72.5	67.9		71.0
Labourer				5.7	12.1	14.4	2.6	5.0	7.4		11.3

Sources: As for table 7 plus, Protestant Alliance Friendly Society, *Minutes and Proceedings*, 1874-87 (PAFSoc., Elizabeth Street, Sydney).

Electoral roll of N.S.W., 1894, 1900-01.

Accidents were most common among miners. So, a fund where they predominated was more likely to become unfinancial. The miners' response to this was to raise contributions, but the daymen could not afford this. The former were best served by a fund with higher premiums, which they could afford, whilst the latter could manage on lower contributions, which they could better afford⁴³. The separation into miners' and daymen's funds separated the two lowest occupational groups, as did the cooperatives, trade unions and friendly societies. These social differences, which were bound up with differences in income, occupation and dependence on accident funds, eventually expressed themselves in open discrimination and antagonism. The daymen's society, like the miners' union and friendly societies, contributed to the Wallisend Hospital. Therefore, it was entitled to nominate representatives to the hospital committee. In 1900 the Wallisend colliery Daymen's Accident Fund protested at the way they were treated in the elections. Although theirs were the first nominations received after the retiring committee's names, they were put at the bottom of the list and designated labourers, although those they had nominated actually held responsible positions at the colliery⁴⁴. In this way the daymen were made to feel their low status. The work based accident funds were an impediment to social cohesion.

Whilst the self-help organizations were the preserve of the working-class, charitable organizations attracted the middle-class. Membership of the benevolent society was almost exclusively upper-class. Table 5.9 shows that 11 of the 14 Wallisend committee members had husbands in bourgeois occupations. Although the others were miners' wives, their husbands were all current or former mayors of Wallisend or Plattsburg. While they did not have status by virtue of occupation, they had acquired respect and prestige by occupying the highest office to which they could be elected in the colliery townships. Thus the benevolent society was the exclusive preserve of those with above average status.

43. In 1852 the A.A.Co. manager reported that the daymen wished to separate from the miners because the latter wanted to raise contributions. 'Coal Papers' (1/59 JBW-B, no. 5).

44. *N.M.H.*, 20, 21 Ap. 1900.

Table 5.9

Occupations of husbands of members of the Newcastle
and Northumberland Benevolent Society in 1895

Occupation	No.	%
Professional	3	21.4
Large business, commerce	1	7.1
Shopkeeping	7	42.9
Clerical and supervisory	0	
Skilled	1	7.1
Miner	3	21.4
Labourer	0	

Source: *W&PSun*, 1895.

Electoral roll of N.S.W., 1894.

The benevolent society was run entirely by women. Although it was one of the few organizations in the colliery townships which allowed women to participate in town life, its exclusiveness meant it confirmed rather than transcended the sexual division of labour in the N.C.D. The other voluntary associations were run exclusively by males. The exception was the Southern Cross Ladies Temple, a branch of the Australian Order of Oddfellows. As the name indicates, it was, like the benevolent society, an organization for women alone. Thus the various agencies of welfare did little to overcome the barrier of sexual difference through their membership.

Certain of the friendly society orders were designed for, or appealed to, special groups. The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society clearly excluded Catholics, the Catholic societies excluded Protestants, whilst the Rechabite order was for those who did not drink alcohol. Ethnic preferences cannot be discerned without some general membership records. Except for the Wallsend lodge of the

Free Gardeners, these are not available. The birth places of members of this lodge suggest it was a Scottish order, for, of the foreign born, 60 per cent were from Scotland and only 16 per cent from England⁴⁵. However, these divisions on the basis of belief and nationality were less important than they might have been. The number of Catholics was so small that they had to go to Newcastle to join the Holy Catholic Guild or Hibernians. Thus, their societies were not really an identifiable 'special group' within the townships. The Protestant Alliance had only one lodge in the mining towns and this closed in the mid 1880s, having become unfinancial⁴⁶. Although there were ethnic preferences for certain orders, the desire of all societies to have a youthful membership meant the foreign born were gradually outnumbered by the Australian born, or those brought up in Australia. Whilst the Scots were 60 per cent of the foreign born in the Wallsend Free Gardeners, they were but 15 per cent of all members from 1886 to 1900. Three quarters were Australian born⁴⁷. Finally, the Rechabites did not become firmly established in the colliery townships until the late 1890s⁴⁸. Thus the oldest and most successful orders were those emphasizing neither religion nor temperance and their membership was such as to weaken affiliation with certain ethnic groups.

The emphasis on a youthful membership was in the financial interests of the friendly societies, but its effect was to bring together old and young. It was well known that the greater the number of older members, the larger the claims on sickness and funeral benefits. If members of a lodge aged without the recruitment of younger members, whose payments increased funds for disposal, then income might be seriously less than claims. Of course, it was also in the interests of young men to join because initiation fees were lower for them and they had some protection against mining accidents, which occurred regardless of age. The records

45. GUOFG, 'Records of the Royal Oak lodge, Wallsend', 1886-1900 (NUA).

46. Protestant Alliance Friendly Society, *op. cit.*, 1886. Although funeral notices suggest inhabitants of the colliery townships were in Catholic orders there was never any mention of a lodge in the towns.

47. GUOFG, *loc. cit.*

48. In this decade lodges were established at Merewether, Minmi, Broadmeadow and Wallsend.

of the Wallsend Free Gardeners show that over 50 per cent of members joined before they turned 25⁴⁹. Constant recruitment of young men, whilst others grew old, meant eventually a lodge, which was a convivial as well as self-help group, had members aged from 16 to 70⁵⁰.

Although the friendly society movement consisted of numerous orders who were bound by oaths of fellowship and secrecy, as well as mutual aid, their identical aims meant these loyalties did not create new divisions in society. To inhabitants of the N.C.D. the main purpose of a friendly society was to get protection against sickness and death. For this one order was as good as another, provided the benefits were near that usually paid and the local lodge was financially sound. As well, dual membership to increase security must have reduced the feeling that any one order was special and, by creating several loyalties, reduced attachment to any one. This general feeling that friendly societies all did the same job was expressed in joint activities like sports days and excursions. On such occasions members identified with the order to which they belonged but presented a united front. The Wallsend friendly societies' sports in 1886 began with a procession headed by the local band, behind which about 300 members of Grand United, the Ancient Britons, Foresters, Druids and Independent Order of Oddfellows of N.S.W. paraded the streets under their respective banners⁵¹. Hospital Sunday was run by the friendly societies and involved a similar parade⁵². Whilst the demonstrations proved to ordinary members that they supported the same causes, the planning of such activity must have encouraged social mixing between office bearers of the orders.

The friendly societies may have avoided fresh rivalries and brought together men of all ages, but they and other voluntary associations concerned with social welfare cut along rather than

49. GUOFG, *loc. cit.*

50. see MUIOOF, *op. cit.*, 1890-1901 under age distribution of members.

51. *W&PSun*, 2 Ap. 1886.

52. see chapter four.

across cleavages of class and status. This is not to say there was no cooperation between persons of different occupation and sex in social welfare. The coordination of the different agencies into a system and the involvement of so many groups in it meant that they had to communicate and cooperate with each other.

The institution in the local welfare system which did most to unite the population was the benefit concert. Its success depended on the cooperation of a variety of interest groups, voluntary associations and individuals. When a committee of miners was appointed by the union to organize a concert for someone judged to be in distress, they had to find a suitable hall and arrange a programme. This involved a large number of people in the project. The hall owner usually gave free use of the premises as a donation⁵³. All the local voluntary associations associated with entertainment: the choir, band, drama society and minstrel troupe would be asked or volunteered to contribute, along with talented individuals who sang or recited. Other organizations that would add colour to the event were also asked to participate. For example, the fire brigade and Volunteers, both of which had uniforms, might form a torchlight procession to follow the band, which played around the town before the concert to attract attention⁵⁴. Finally, the success of the concert depended on a good attendance of residents, which was usual at benefits. This means of raising funds for the needy, then, brought together members of a variety of voluntary associations and inhabitants at large to achieve a common purpose.

Relief funds were started and administered by a working-class organization. Support came principally from the bourgeoisie, who could better afford to give. Of the 80 individuals who donated to the Cooperative Family Relief Fund in 1891 and whose occupation is known, nearly 83 per cent were middle-class. Of group donations, over half were from local businesses (table 5.10). This probably underestimates their contribution, since storekeepers often gave in kind. For example, in 1876 the collection for the New Lambton miners included £143 cash plus promises of 19 tons of flour, two

53. *M.A.*, 7 June 1875.

54. viz. *W&PSun*, 29 Nov. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 12 Nov. 1891.

Table 5.10Contributors to the Cooperative Colliery Family Relief Fund, 1891

a) Individuals

Occupation	No.	%
Professional	11	27.5
Large business, commerce	3	7.5
Shopkeeping	14	35.0
Clerical and supervisory	5	12.5
Skilled	3	7.5
Miner	4	10.0
Labourer	0	

b) Groups

Type	No.	%
Trade Unions	5	29.4
Voluntary associations	2	11.7
Business houses	9	52.9
Others	1	5.9

Sources: *W&PSun*, 1891.

Electoral roll of N.S.W., 1894.

boxes of tea, 630 loaves of bread, 30 lb of butter, two cwt. of potatoes and four sheep⁵⁵. Thus the bourgeoisie and the manual workers were joined in a common purpose through the relief funds and contact across status groups occurred.

The integrated nature of the social welfare system also brought working-class men from the union and middle-class women from the benevolent society into contact. We have already noticed communication between the miners' union and the Wallsend branch of the benevolent society in 1895. In the same year the Wallsend miners gave the benevolent society a substantial sum for the widow of an overman whose case it had already taken up⁵⁶. However, contact did not consist entirely of the union seeking help from and aiding the benevolent society. That year the union received

55. *N.M.H.*, 2 Nov. 1876.

56. *W&PSun*, 10 Aug. 1895.

complaints of partiality in the distribution of outdoor relief and asked the local branch to send a deputation to a committee meeting to justify its actions, which it did⁵⁷. Thus the two agencies in the social welfare system of opposite sexual and class composition worked together and so helped bridge fundamental cleavages.

The only group which did not participate in the local welfare system, as it evolved, were the colliery managers. Traditionally they had provided charity as part of their general role as benefactors. In the N.C.D. they continued this role but never extended their patronage to the general system of welfare arrangements that developed to cope with the chronic insecurity occasioned by frequent small-scale accidents, occupational diseases, old age or unemployment. The mining companies had no definite policy on aid to those injured or the families of those killed in accidents. The decision to give at all depended very much on the inclinations of the colliery manager, was never enough and did not extend to all cases of need occasioned by work in the pits.

When a man died in a colliery accident the company might give the widow a donation. In 1878 Croudace told his superiors he intended paying the funeral expenses of one victim and donating £20 to his widow. Another widow was given an annuity⁵⁸. Serious accidents which were not fatal also merited a manager's attention. In 1867 J.B. Winship asked permission to put £5 on the pay sheet for a man who had had a leg amputated after an accident. The company also paid the doctor's bill for recutting the leg⁵⁹. Sometimes they even assisted in times of underemployment, although not without ulterior motives. In 1864 Winship donated two guineas for himself and Merewether to two men collecting donations. He told Merewether it was a good idea

as the miners have had a great down upon you
and I thought it was a good opportunity of

57. *ibid.*, 27 Jy. 1895.

58. T. Croudace to R.A.A. Moorehead, 25, 29 Jan. 1878, 'Letter book', 1875-86. Short to Moorehead, 19 Oct. 1878, *ibid.*, 1878-91.

59. Winship to Merewether, 13 Feb. 1867, 'Coal Papers' (1/62 JBW-L).

showing them that we could feel for them in their need and assist to the best of our ability ... Our contributions were much larger than the rest⁶⁰.

The correspondence of the A.A. and Scottish Australian companies contains few incidents such as these. Clearly they did not give in every case of underemployment, death, or severe accident. Croudace had to fight hard in 1878 to get funeral expenses and £20. His letter makes it clear that Moorehead, the company superintendent, had objected and asked how much the company was bound to pay. Croudace had to point out that the couple had only been married three months and probably had many expenses, since they were just starting life⁶¹. When a company gave a large donation it was hardly full compensation. In 1870 SAMCo decided to give the widow of a man killed in the pit £100. Certain inhabitants encouraged her to ask for £300 and serve a writ for £1,000 damages if it was not granted. The company told the widow that the cost of fighting the case would be deducted from the £100 promised. Faced with the risk of no compensation, the woman's lawyers settled for £100, which the reaction of inhabitants suggests was inadequate⁶². Finally, fatal and severe accidents were not the only problems in the colliery townships. Occupational diseases, old age and minor accidents were just as devastating. The colliery managers gave nothing to people with these problems, and the amount given in serious accidents was arbitrary and comparatively small.

The only cases in which the companies did contribute liberally were the pit disasters which took many lives. Whenever a 'disaster' occurred, a fund similar to the 'family relief fund' for the under-employed began. Whereas the latter was run by the union, the accident relief fund was administered by the colliery management. The appeal set up after the A.A.Co's pitfall in 1889 raised enough money to set up a trust fund for the families of those killed. The idea was proposed by the A.A.Co. directors, who constituted all the

60. Winship to Merewether, 3 Sept. 1864, *ibid.*, (1/59 JBW-D no. 28).

61. Croudace to Moorehead, 29 Jan. 1878, 'Letter book', 1875-86.

62. Croudace to Moorehead, 18 May 1870, *ibid.*, 1864-74.

trustees, save three local men. Ways of investing funds were subject to the approval of the company superintendent, who could also choose not to pay the money to any widow or child he did not believe to be leading a 'well ordered' life⁶³.

Although such schemes were of inestimable benefit to those they helped, the number of large-scale disasters in Newcastle was too few for them to play anything but a miniscule part in providing for the needy. The A.A.Co pitfall in 1889 killed ten, the Stockton disaster in 1896, 11 and the Dudley explosion 15 in 1898, that is, 36 altogether⁶⁴. By contrast, the smallest number of cases known to be relieved by the benevolent society in any month was 45 in 1891. More often the figure was over 200. Family relief funds, which operated in 1876, 1878, 1880, 1881 and 1891 helped at least that number of families in distress and usually twice that figure⁶⁵.

More importantly, the relatively small contribution the colliery companies made towards meeting the various forms of insecurity in the district was in no way related to the local welfare system. They never consulted the townspeople as to their intentions when they gave donations, whilst the disaster funds were run by the company directors, who did not live in Newcastle. The small contribution they made in no way led them to fit into the local welfare system or to negotiate with its various agencies.

The nature of employment, dominance of one industry and generally low income inhabitants of the N.C.D. earned made sickness, death, old age and lack of employment either more widespread, or more difficult to cope with, than in areas where employment and income were more heterogeneous. The absence of state initiative in this area in the nineteenth century meant people had to find their own solutions to their common problems. The answers employed in the N.C.D. were largely based on working-class methods of meeting such problems in the industrial north of England: friendly societies, including yearly funds, pit funds,

63. 'Coal Papers' (1/62 CL-N).

64. Dept. Mines, *Reports*, 1889, 1896, 1899.

65. *N.M.H.*, 2 Nov. 1876, 2, 18, Feb. 1880, 12 Dec. 1881.

W&FSun, Sept. - Nov. 1891.

pay day collections and benefit concerts. However, municipalities were also drawn into the provision of welfare. The small size of the townships and importance of the work group in various forms of aid, like the accident fund, benefit concert, collection and relief fund, meant it was easy to avoid anomalies and overlaps. Although the voluntary organizations associated with aid separated the working-class from the bourgeoisie and the upper working-class from the labourers, the nature of many standardized arrangements, like benefit concerts and family relief funds, and the interlocking nature of the system meant people from all occupations worked together for the same purpose. The importance of working-class self-help and forms of charity and the very small contribution colliery managers made to the chronic welfare problems of the district meant they remained aloof from local aspirations and activities yet again. In the case of unions they were the enemy, when it came to local government they withdrew, but in social welfare they were largely irrelevant.

CHAPTER SIX

LEISURE

The people of the N.C.D. put great importance on leisure, that is, the opportunity to engage in activities not required by their daily needs. When the union was reborn in 1870 one of the first aggregate meetings discussed the need for a Saturday holiday and a limit on the number of hours worked a day in the pits. At the time, men were working up to 11 hours a day when there was work. They were expected to be available whenever needed. Thus the pit might be idle all week and start working on Saturday morning. There was no day, except Sunday, when festivities could take place. However, even holding Sunday school and church anniversaries on the sabbath drew censure from the middle-class with more leisure at their disposal¹. The prosperity of the coal industry in the 1870s enabled the miners to win concessions in the hours they worked, as well as their rates of pay. The aggregate meeting in 1871 proposed that the fortnightly pay Saturday be a general holiday in the district, as was the custom in Northumberland and Durham. It also carried a motion in favour of an eight hour day². In 1873 the union was locked out for five weeks on the issue of a ten hour (nine working hours) day and came out victorious³. References to pay Saturday in the *Miners' Advocate* in 1875 indicate that by that time they had also won this concession.

The value placed on leisure and the early, successful battle to secure more of it meant the activities which took up this time played a large part in local life. For this reason they deserve examination in great detail. This chapter will deal with leisure in general in the N.C.D. and show its largely recreational and popular character. The next chapter will deal with the one organization in the colliery townships which was intended to provide opportunities for self-improvement during leisure, the Mechanics Institute, and how it reflected and was modified by the factors which caused most leisure to be spent in recreation rather than serious pursuits.

The late nineteenth century was a period of great change in the nature of leisure. The growth of factories where, in contrast to rural occupations, work and leisure were separated, led to demands

1. *N.C.*, 9 Mar. 1871.

2. *ibid.*

3. Gollan, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-2.

that more time be set aside for recreation. This and a gradual rise in wages enabled the beginnings of a mass entertainment industry in both sport and theatre. People could afford some commercial entertainment rather than always having to make their own fun. Better transport allowed them to travel far afield rather than staying home on holidays. The decline in manpower and growth of machine power in work prompted a switch from animal oriented games to those involving human exertion, especially team sports. The middle-class had modified many of these so that instead of being rough, crude, dangerous and socially unacceptable, they were regulated by formal and precise rules, which made them safe and respectable⁴. Increasing free time, higher wages and the development of sports led to the growth of formal sporting clubs dedicated to specific games.

While the N.C.D. experienced similar changes in the nature of leisure, the peculiar ethnic composition and nature of industry marked off leisure pursuits there from the Australian culture generally, with which it still had much in common. These differences contributed to a sense of identity whilst the tying of leisure activities to the needs of society contributed to the development of an integrated life style. That most recreation divided people on the basis of age, sex, religion or class did little to bridge these fundamental cleavages. Nevertheless, there were some leisure activities that, regardless of these divisions, enhanced local pride and identity.

When the N.C.D. began in the early 1860s, the amount of leisure available and the ways in which it was spent were very traditional. The only days on which recreation was possible, apart from Sundays, were days when there was no work and public holidays: Christmas, Boxing, New Year's and Anniversary days, Easter and the Queen's Birthday. There being no regular day on which it was acceptable

4. For accounts of changes in leisure habits in the nineteenth century see W. Mandle, 'The games people played: cricket and football in England and Victoria in the late nineteenth century', *H.S.*, v. 15, no. 60 (1973), pp. 511-535. Asa Briggs, *Mass entertainment, the origins of a modern industry* (Adelaide, 1960). B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians, the temperance question in England, 1815-1872* (England, 1970), pp. 300-331.

to organize sports, celebrations were informal and spontaneous. As in rural England, they took place around the pub and were animal oriented, crude and even cruel. In 1861 Thomas Dent of the Burwood Inn provided on Boxing day 'a day's sport to lovers of fun', including quoits, sackraces and footraces. In 1871 the proprietor of the Queen's Arms at Hamilton had a running ground next to his hotel, where games were held on Anniversary day. They included many animal sports, such as a live cock race, greasy pig race and 'duck in the hole'. The non-specialized nature of the day's events was further indicated by a notice that there would be music for dancing⁵. The only hints of specialized sport were race meetings, which were held at the new year. Descriptions of events suggest even they were not the singleminded affairs they are today. They always included light relief in the form of a special 'miners purse' for horses belonging to miners for at least three months. There were other amusements for those not interested in the races. In 1871 the Wallsend Jockey Club races included 'duck in the hole' and the local band played all day for dancing⁶. In form and content the holiday pastimes of inhabitants were traditional.

The granting of a fortnightly Saturday holiday in the form of pay Saturday and a ten hour day in the mid 1870s provided regular hours each day and week for leisure. This led to an initial intensification of old customs and the gradual development of more organized recreations, in particular those acceptable to bourgeois critics.

Although those who advocated pay Saturday meant it to be used in 'mental and moral improvement'⁷, it was impossible to change habits overnight. Naturally people turned to traditional amusements to fill in their leisure hours, whilst publicans, who had promoted recreation on their premises to increase trade, did their best to secure custom during the extra hours of leisure. Every pay Saturday they offered facilities for games such as quoits, handball, bowling, skittles, marbles and footracing. They also gave prizes

5. *N.C.*, 12 Dec. 1861, 7, 24, Jan. 1871.

6. *ibid.*, 17 Dec. 1862.

7. *ibid.*, 9 Mar. 1871.

for the winners⁸. Whilst the entrants played, the onlookers drank and bet on the proceedings. When the stakes were high enough these pay Saturday amusements caused pandemonium. At Lambton in 1875 there was such excitement at one quoit match that the publican had to rope off the playing area to give the contestants a fair go. When play began on Saturday morning there were 200 spectators, but by the time they resumed play after lunch there were 600. Housetops, fences and every elevation were closely packed. When victory was declared at three o'clock that afternoon, the heavy consumption of alcohol and the large sums of money that had been bet on the match led to 12 hours of rioting. It was estimated that more than £500 changed hands. Some lost as much as £80 and others won nearly £100. One man had the back torn out of his Sunday coat. Another broke his leg. Although three policemen had been stationed at Lambton for the event, they could not keep up with the pace at which fights broke out⁹.

Pub oriented and promoted sport continued in the N.C.D. throughout the late nineteenth century. In the late 1880s publicans were building gaslit running tracks on which they held 'novice handicaps'. In 1891 Thomas Hopkins of the Metropolitan Hotel, Plattsburg, was preparing a pony racing tack on which the Northumberland Pony Racing Club held meetings¹⁰. However, by the 1880s and 1890s pub based sport was a minor part of leisure activities. The availability of a definite day which could be devoted to the new team sports: cricket, football, baseball and tennis, encouraged their growth. More time for leisure also facilitated the development of sports involving greater precision, such as rowing and sailing. None of these fitted easily into the realm of the publican. Team sports did not lend themselves so easily to gambling, whilst rowing and sailing had to take place on Lake Macquarie, several miles away.

The provision of spare time other than on Sunday enabled those who frowned on the rough, traditional pastimes, but shrank from

8. e.g. *M.A.*, 28 Jy., 25 Sept., 6, 30 Oct. 1875.

9. *ibid.*, 17, 27 Nov. 1875.

10. *N.M.H.*, 20 May, 2 Nov. 1891. *W&PSun*, 15 Ap., 13 June 1891.

desecrating the sabbath with any form of amusement, to establish more genteel leisure habits. Sunday school picnics and church excursions could now be held, thus cultivating the habit of outdoor amusement beyond the public house. The establishment of a ten hour day meant people were fit to do more than eat and sleep in the evenings. Thus it became possible to form choirs, bands and drama clubs and to attend concerts. Since people also had more time to cultivate their gardens, agricultural and horticultural shows were now feasible. Finally, the gradual improvement in transport enabled private parties to travel to the Newcastle beaches of Lake Macquarie to picnic and to fish.

Although recreation in the N.C.D. became increasingly respectable after the mid 1870s, it was overwhelmingly popular culture. Much of it continued to be sporting and conducted outdoors.

It is difficult to assess satisfactorily the importance of different leisure activities. The problem lies not so much in classifying them, but coming to some conclusion, given the variety of activities in the district. There were animal sports, like horse racing, pigeon shooting, pigeon flying, pony racing and greyhound racing. There were pub oriented sports, like quoits, bowling and handball. Individual pursuits included sailing, athletics, pistol shooting and gardening. Team sports covered bowls, cricket, tennis, baseball and football. The performing arts included concerts, both amateur and commercial, acting, the choral society, minstrel troupes, bands and dancing. There were miscellaneous pursuits like joining the reserve army, or volunteers, and illegal ones, such as two-up and cock fighting. Other games suited to gambling included quoits, handball and foot races. As well, there were private activities like picnics, balls, suppers, excursions and socials, which did not necessarily involve formal organization. Finally, all these activities were carried out to different degrees in eight towns over forty years.

It was decided to exclude informal picnics and dances from any analysis because there was no way of determining how many occurred. A further problem arose as to how to compare activities conducted

through and outside voluntary associations. For instance, it can be assumed that a cricket or football club arranges periodic matches, but pub oriented sport, such as quoits, occurred at the whim of publicans. Although the number of advertized matches for the latter seemed enormous, it is doubtful if they were more frequent than cricket matches. Moreover, particular pub sports were concentrated in one town, where there was an enthusiastic publican with the appropriate facilities. Similarly, advertizements for benefit concerts and commercial entertainments appeared whenever they were to occur, but not for choir or band practices. It was decided that the only way to solve this problem was to give credit for the existence of a particular kind of event, regardless of the number of times it occurred in each town. This was done for the years 1871, 1875, 1881, 1891 and 1900. Since there were eight towns, the highest score possible for any activity in any of these years was eight.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show scores for individual and various classes of activity in the colliery townships. To facilitate comparison of different kinds of pursuits, the total score for all activities in each year was calculated and groups of pastimes expressed as a percentage of it in table 6.2. It is clear from this table that sports of all descriptions were generally the most popular organized activities in the N.C.D. As a result, nearly 60 per cent of leisure was taken outside, apart from picnics and excursions, which were excluded from the analysis. Although team games constituted over half the sporting activity in the district by 1900, for most of the period individual, pub or animal sports were dominant. Until 1900 over half of all sports provided opportunities for gambling.

Artistic activities made about up 40 per cent of all organized leisure. Very little of it, however, made any claim to be 'high culture'. Commercial entertainment, locally organized benefit concerts and minstrel troupes, which constituted about half of the performing arts, were unmistakeably popular culture. Commercial performances consisted of minstrel shows, comedy and variety troupes, circuses, phrenologists, magicians and similar acts by travelling shows. There was a strong emphasis on the bizarre and the wondrous.

Table 6.1

Organized recreations in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century

Activity	Colliery townships observed in				
	1871	1875	1881	1891	1900
1. Sporting					
a) team sport					
cricket	6	4	2	8	7
football	0	0	1	7	6
tennis	0	0	0	2	1
bowls	0	0	0	0	1
baseball	0	0	0	0	1
b) animal					
horseracing	1	1	2	1	1
ponyracing	0	0	0	1	0
coursing	0	0	4	1	0
homing pigeons	0	0	0	1	1
pigeon shooting	1	1	2	3	0
gun club	0	0	0	1	1
c) pub games					
quoits	3	5	5	5	3
bowling	0	2	3	2	0
handball	1	0	5	5	1
d) other					
athletics	3	5	5	4	3
regatta	0	0	2	2	2
2. Artistic					
choir	3	3	4	5	6
band	4	4	5	5	4
drama club	0	1	2	3	3
dance club	0	0	0	2	4
minstrel troupe	0	1	0	4	0
benefit concert	2	4	7	7	8
commercial entertainment	3	3	4	5	3
eisteddfod	0	2	2	3	2
3. Convivial					
freemasons	0	0	1	7	7
calcedonians	0	2	2	2	4
4. Other					
volunteers	0	0	0	3	3
agricultural show	2	2	0	4	3

Note: 'Bowling' refers to the traditional pub sport, 'bowls' to the team sport on greens which developed in the late nineteenth century.

Source: *N.C.*, 1871. *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.

Table 6.2

Popularity of different types of recreation in the N.C.D.
in the late nineteenth century

Type of activity	Recreations included	Popularity Score*				
		1871	1875	1881	1891	1900
Sport	team, animal, pub, athletics, regatta	52	45	53	46	37
Artistic	choir, band, drama, dance, minstrels, benefits, commercial entertainment, eisteddfod	42	45	42	37	40
Serious	eisteddfod, choir	10	13	11	8	12
Outdoor	all sport, band, agricultural show	72	60	61	56	47
Convivial	freemasons, caledonians	0	5	5	12	20
Team sport	cricket, football, baseball, tennis, bowls	21	10	5	18	21
Gambling	all animal and pub games, athletics	31	35	44	26	13
Animal sport	horse and pony racing, coursing, homing pigeons, gun club	7	5	14	7	7
Pub sport	quoits, bowling, handball	14	18	21	13	5

Note: Figures are compiled from table 6.1. Each type of activity is expressed as a proportion of the total score for all activities in any year as given in table 6.1.

Sources: As for table 6.1.

In 1875 there was a monster sawfish show and in 1881 a leopard boy, card playing dog and an impressive trio consisting of a 'dwarf, giant and magnetic lady'¹¹. Apart from the occasional sacred concert organized by the non-conformist churches, the style of the locally produced concert was 'popular', being very much that of the travelling 'combination troupe'. Typically they consisted of comic and sentimental solos and duets, recitations, sketches, farces and dances. Sometimes these were organized into a continuous performance as a minstrel show. In 1891 these were fashionable, with formally organized companies at Wallsend-Plattsburg, Adamstown and Merewether. The songs had a strong music hall element. This is clear from examining the notebooks of Charles Noble, an overman from Lambton, who sang throughout the district. The songs are mostly comic and of the 'verse-spoken piece-chorus' format, with the spoken lines leading into the chorus. The words border on impropriety and vulgarity. In 'Oh what a lark we are having' two men on a spree take two girls to a fair where they are embarrassed to meet their wives. The 'Belle of the Ball' tells of a man who slowly learns that his partner at a dance had false teeth, a glass eye and is bald¹². In all, only about a quarter of leisure was devoted to high culture.

The reasons for the popular, outdoor, gambling oriented character of leisure lie in the nature of the district. Observers of work and leisure have noted that fulfilling work leads to similar leisure activities. Those doing tedious and boring jobs tend to seek leisure in no way connected with their work or which compensates for its deficiencies, that is, recreation. Greenberg has argued that the sharper and more exclusive the separation of work and play and the higher the standard of efficiency needed, the more, by compensation, leisure becomes a flight from all purposefulness and consists of rudimentary entertainment¹³.

11. *M.A.*, 20 Mar. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 22 Aug. 1881.

12. 'Notebook kept by Charles Noble' in the possession (1977) of Mrs. Gwen Hunter, 37 Watson St., New Lambton.

13. C. Greenberg, 'Work and leisure under industrialism', in E. Larrabee and R. Meyersohn (eds.), *Mass Leisure* (Illinois, 1958), pp. 38-42.



PLATE V

First miners' picnic committee, taken
at Toronto, Lake Macquarie

Reproduced by permission of Newcastle
Public Library

Since most of the workforce did hard, manual work and had to exercise considerable care to avoid accidents, which were inevitable anyway, it is not surprising that the most favoured pastimes were those that diverted and gave immediate enjoyment, rather than imparting intellectual improvement. Given that miners worked underground, without fresh air, it is arguable that the preference for outdoor sports stemmed from a desire to take in fresh air when possible.

It is more difficult to explain the prevalence of gambling in leisure. This was much greater than table 6.2 suggests because this only refers to the gambling which accompanied sports. There were also purely gambling games, like two-up and cock fighting, the illegal nature of which rendered their occurrence secret. Finally, there was a variety of bizarre contests of strength, seemingly unique to the district, which were an excuse for betting. In 1881 one Lambton blacksmith challenged any man in Lambton or Waratah to shoe a horse faster than he could. In the same year George Penman of Minmi challenged John Patrick or John Bothwell to eat porridge for £5 a side¹⁴. A similar competition had occurred at Lambton several years before, when two friends competed for £5 a side and the best of 20 plates of stiff, tough porridge. 200 people filled the long room of the Goldminers Arms, where the competition started by pistol shot at 8 p.m. The band was there and played while they ate. When one man gave up after the 12th plate, the other was carried shoulder high through the town and proclaimed champion porridge eater¹⁵.

Many have noted the dominance of gambling in miners' leisure. Some have also tried to explain it. Zweig has remarked that the same love of gambling exists among soldiers, who also have a high death risk. Henriques, Dennis and Slaughter rationalize gambling in terms of the lack of chances of upward mobility, which mean only luck can allow a miner to climb out of the pits¹⁶. Zweig's explan-

14. *N.M.H.*, 9 Jy., 2 Sept. 1881.

15. Charles Noble, *op. cit.* J.M. Freeland, *The Australian pub* (Melbourne, 1966), p. 137.

16. F. Zweig, *Men in the pits* (London, 1948), p. 114. Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

ation is unsatisfactory, since it is more an observation of a relationship than an explanation. The Henriques, Dennis and Slaughter theory rings truer, especially since there was little upward mobility in the district. More recently, sociologists and psychologists have turned their attention to the prevalence of gambling in working-class leisure generally and pointed out its cathartic value in enabling persons in boring jobs, with little opportunity for exercising judgement, to use their minds. When they win they secure some recognition of their cleverness and a means of self-assertion. In short, they argue that gambling provides a compensatory outlet for those in boring, dead end jobs¹⁷.

It is difficult to choose between these explanations of gambling, apart from that of Zweig, which is not really an explanation. However, the remaining two theories, one of which stresses lack of mobility and the other lack of challenge in work, have one thing in common: they explain leisure in terms of work. Thus it is most likely that the emphasis on gambling in leisure in the N.C.D. stemmed directly from its economic base, which rendered most of the workforce manual labourers in a dangerous job in an area with downward or no social mobility.

Even though the nature of leisure in the N.C.D. was tied to the distinctive economy of the district, this did not render it unique. The popular, outdoor, gambling character of recreation conformed to the Australian tradition in leisure, which emphasises outdoor pursuits, especially sport, and outdoes the British in expenditure on gambling¹⁸. In detail, however, the nature of leisure in the colliery townships was distinctive.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show that team sport did not really become popular in the N.C.D. until the 1890s. Cricket was played from the 1860s and regular teams appeared in the 1870s. Football, as an organized game, did not achieve any prominence until the 1880s. In 1881 a meeting to form a club was convened at Wallisend and by 1886

17. D.M. Downes, B.P. Davies, M.E. David, P. Stone, *Gambling, work and leisure: a study across three areas* (London, 1976), pp.25,27-28.

18. see K. Dunstan, 'Our sporting obsession', in T.D. Jacques and G.R. Pavia (eds.), *Sport in Australia, selected readings in physical activity* (Sydney, 1976), pp. 1-23.

there were regular Saturday afternoon matches. It was not until the 1890s that other team sports: baseball, bowls and tennis, were played. They were never widespread, being confined to several towns at the most. Since the three codes of football played in Australia were drawn up before the 1870s and Australians became skilled in team sports in the 1870s, the N.C.D. appears to have lagged behind in this area¹⁹. Why this was so is hard to say, but contemporary students of leisure in English mining areas have observed that miners are not particularly fond of team sport²⁰. Although team games were the most popular sports in the N.C.D. by 1900, there may have been more resistance to them than elsewhere in Australia.

The codes of football preferred in the N.C.D. also rendered it distinctive. The dominant game in the colliery townships in the 1880s and early 1890s was Australian rules. Its supporters claimed it was superior to the soccer and rugby played in the rest of N.S.W. and took pride in it as Australia's national game²¹. Why the colliery townships received it so well, when the rest of N.S.W. spurned 'the Victorian game', is puzzling. The answer may well lie in the close links between the N.C.D. and Victoria and the fact that Australian rules was less dangerous than rugby.

The failure of Australian rules to take on in N.S.W. has been explained in terms of the later arrival of football in N.S.W. It did not become popular in N.S.W. until the 1870s, by which time rugby and soccer had been codified. In the N.C.D. football, as an organized team sport, did not begin until the 1880s. Thus one would expect the colliery townships to adopt these codes, rather than Australian rules. However, at this time Australian rules was also played in Sydney. There had always been strong links between the colliery townships and Victoria. Many miners had either migrated originally to the goldfields, or gone there from Newcastle. In the early 1870s the influx from the Victorian goldfields to Wallsend was so great that a part of the town was called New

19. Mandle, *op. cit.*, p. 511. Dunstan, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

20. L.M. Fish, 'The folk-lore of coalmining communities in northern England' (Ph.D., University of Indiana, 1974), p. 132.

21. *W&P Sun*, 13 May 1893, 13 Mar. 1894.

Ballarat. These men and their sons would all have come in contact with the game on the goldfields. That there was less chance of injury in Australian rules than rugby, of which Union was the only variant at that time, may also have made it popular among miners, who must be fit to work. Friendly societies did not pay benefits to those injured while playing sport.

Australian rules could not have continued in the colliery townships without a heavy influx of people who had lived in Victoria, for the survival of any game depends on having enough teams to play against. This is hard to achieve in a minority sport. The growing popularity of rugby in N.S.W. eventually drew players from Australian rules because it had more kudos. In 1893 some A grade players at Wallsend asked to change to rugby because several clubs had notified that they were giving up Australian rules and there would not be enough clubs to play against. A year later Wallsend failed to get a team from Sydney to play them on the Queen's Birthday holiday. This match had been customary for about five years²².

Meanwhile, soccer had been established in the district. There were teams at Adamstown, Merewether, Wallsend, Minmi and the outer colliery township of West Wallsend. It is most likely that the English migrants were behind its establishment. The proportion of English born in the N.C.D. at the 1891 census was 23 per cent. At Adamstown, where soccer alone was played, 30 per cent of the population had been born in England. At Merewether, which played both Australian rules and soccer, the English born were 27 per cent of the population. It would appear that less resistance was offered to the newest code in these towns than where the proportion of English born was less. At Wallsend the number of English born was only 23 per cent and at Plattsburg 12 per cent. This and the initial strength of Australian rules meant soccer supporters had to struggle to get their game accepted. In 1893 William McIlroy wrote to the *Wallsend and Plattsburg Sun* complaining of the refusal of the trustees of Wallsend Park, all long established residents, to allow the Wallsend

22. *ibid.*, 22 Ap. 1893, 31 Mar. 1894.

and Plattsburg Rovers to play on the football ground there because the soccer matches would conflict with the Australian rules matches, which had always been played there. One trustee of the park expressed the opinion that

no matter what the merits or demerits of British football may be, the native Australian has no right to play it ²³.

By 1900 Australian rules had disappeared, except in social matches. However, soccer, not rugby, was the dominant code. In that year all the towns that used to have Australian rules teams, that is, Wallisend, Plattsburgh, Merewether and Hamilton, had rugby teams. So did Lambton, which had always played that game. The old Australian rules towns also had soccer teams, as did Adamstown. Minmi did not field a team that year but had always played soccer and had won the premiership more than any other team. West Wallisend was also prominent in soccer. In all, one town played rugby alone, four soccer and rugby and three just soccer. The district soccer association was in a better position than the rugby one. The annual general meeting drew a good attendance and it was decided to run one competition for seniors and two for juniors ²⁴. The rugby association annual meeting could not get a quorum and had to abandon its senior competition because only a few clubs were organized to play in it. The year before senior matches had attracted little attention. At the annual meeting it was predicted that the association would not do much better in 1900 because its credit was only £3.19.4 ²⁵.

Thus football in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century was always a little different from that played in the rest of the colony. Until the 1890s Australian rules dominated, whilst surrounding areas played rugby. Although Australian rules had disappeared by 1900, soccer, which was more popular than rugby in British working-class areas, was the favourite game. These differences may well have been

23. *ibid.*, 13 May 1893.

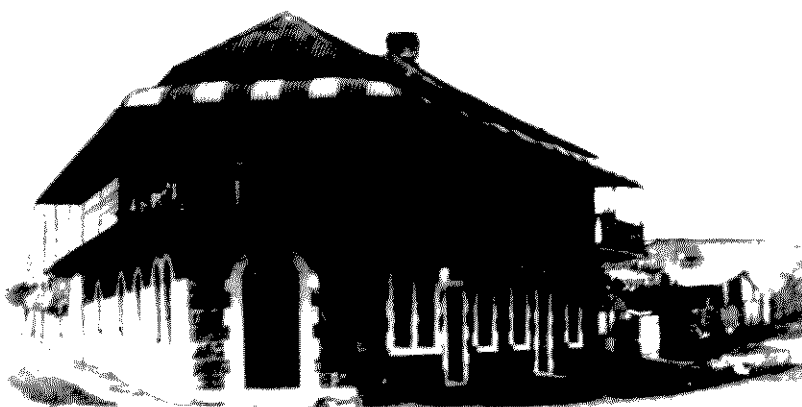
24. *N.M.H.*, 11 Ap., 5 May 1900.

25. *ibid.*, 7 May 1900.



Prince of Wales Hotel,
Merewether

Railway Hotel,
Wallsend



Reservoir Hotel,
North Lambton

PLATE VI

Hotels of the colliery townships

Photographs reproduced by permission of Newcastle Public Library

related to the need for miners to avoid injury, which would have led to preference for the codes with a lower risk of injury. The same problem among work-class rugby players led at the turn of the century to the development of the less dangerous League code. As well, strong links among early settlers with Victoria and a large influx of British born to certain towns in the 1880s, may have influenced the football codes in the N.C.D.

Many of the non team games that dominated sport in the colliery townships had greater affinity with British mining areas than the new land. Cockfighting was a traditional favourite among Northumbrian and Scots miners. Greyhound racing, popular in Northumberland and Durham in the late nineteenth century, was conducted from the 1880s. Pigeon flying, which took on among Geordie miners at the same time, was enjoyed, too. The quoit matches played at hotels every pay Saturday were a favourite among Geordie miners²⁶. In 1880 a visitor to the colliery townships noticed several unusual games being played. One, which consisted of hitting a ball as it was let out of a trap, can easily be identified as knurr and spell, common among English miners. He also noticed youths playing shinty, a sort of polo on foot. He remarked:

'with their fur head-dresses, Scotch caps and fustian habiliments they reminded me of long forgotten scenes on the village common in Scotland'²⁷.

It was not only the sports played in the N.C.D. that distinguished it from the rest of the colony. The song, dance and music of the colliery townships bore testimony to the regional origins of the population in Britain.

Dances performed at concerts included not just the Scots and Irish dancing common throughout Australia, but some forms from northern England, like clog dances and sword dances. The latter began as a fertility rite in European mining areas, where it was

26. Fish, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100, 102-105.

27. J. Inglis, *Our Australian cousins* (London, 1880), p. 276.

performed between Christmas and plough Monday, in accordance with the belief that metals grew in the earth. Gradually the ceremony lost its magical significance and was often seen largely as a fundraiser. This led to dropping the associated play and concentrating on the more spectacular features of the dance. It was in this form that the Northumbrian sword dance reached the Newcastle colliery townships, where it was very popular²⁸.

Although string and pipe bands were not unknown in the N.C.D., the most popular form of instrumental music was the brass band. This institution was a part of the culture of mining towns in northern England, where the colliery company often financed it²⁹. The first brass band in the N.C.D. began similarly, but eventually funds came from various sources. Between 1870 and 1900 every town in this study had a brass band which provided instruments and instruction for performers.

Choirs were traditional in all mining areas³⁰, although most cherished by the Welsh. As a result, they flourished in the district. By 1871, Wallsend and Lambton had large choirs. In 1891 every town except New Lambton had a general (as distinct from church) choir of some kind. The bigger towns specialized in large adult and juvenile choruses, whilst the smaller ones like Minmi produced glee parties. By the 1890s towns with large choirs could often produce a glee sized choir and male voice party as well. In 1891 Wallsend and Plattsburg had a choir, juvenile choir, glee party and male chorus. In 1900 Hamilton had a choir, juvenile choir and male voice party.

The most respectable forms of leisure in the district, that is, instrumental music, singing and speech, received support through the Eisteddfod, which the Welsh brought to the colliery townships. Even though it was at most a large village, Wallsend-Plattsburg

28. Fish, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 78-84. *W&PSun*, 21 Mar. 1891.

29. Fish, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

30. *ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

managed to conduct a successful annual Eisteddfod, which drew entries from all over the district.

Leisure in the N.C.D. fitted generally into the Australian tradition of popular culture, that is, sport, gambling and outdoor activities. Even so, it had distinctive features. There was less interest in team sport and many of the other games were easily identified as part of British mining culture. When it came to the performing arts, the traditions of British miners in singing, dancing and instrumental music were also evident.

As well as being distinctive, leisure in the colliery townships was closely integrated into the rest of local life. Much recreation was enjoyed within voluntary associations devoted to local needs. Many formally organized leisure groups, especially the more artistic, aided other local organizations.

The increase in leisure time that occurred with shorter working hours and regular holidays enabled the formation of specialized leisure associations, like cricket and football clubs, choirs and bands. Even so, much leisure was also taken within the context of other voluntary associations. Every pay Saturday and public holiday there was a host of social activities, organized by a variety of clubs and societies, which provided recreation. Each friendly society lodge held an annual supper, ball, social, procession, or picnic to celebrate its foundation. These demonstrated solidarity at the same time as providing a means of recreation. Fortnightly lodge meetings provided convivial entertainment in order to attract members. To signify their anniversaries, churches conducted tea meetings, which included entertainment. They also arranged an annual picnic for the Sunday school. Temperance societies had a constant stream of social functions to keep their members interested and on the narrow path of abstinence. Trade unions held annual picnics and cooperative societies held teas for the enjoyment of members. Since the number of trade unions, churches, cooperatives and friendly societies in each town far outnumbered the number of associations devoted specifically to leisure, most recreation was tied to the purposes of organizations devoted to other causes.

Many of the associations devoted to a particular use of leisure also fitted into the needs of society at large. Specific leisure associations like bands, choirs, drama societies, minstrel groups and sporting clubs taught particular skills. These could be put to good use raising the money needed by inhabitants for new buildings, special equipment and for the needy. They also provided entertainment simply to amuse the population.

When discussing the provision of utilities in the N.C.D., we noted how the funds to start and maintain hospitals and fire brigades were raised through concerts, plays, demonstrations, balls and sporting fixtures. In describing the social welfare system of the area, we noted that choirs, bands, drama societies, minstrels and talented individuals gave their services at benefit concerts. The hospital, fire brigade and charity were no exception.

Very few performances by drama societies were not devoted to raising funds for local causes in need of money. A list of the plays performed would suggest their purpose was to raise funds rather than cultivate dramatic talent. In February 1891 Sample's Amateur Drama Co. gave two performances for the Wallsend-Plattsburg fire brigade. In March it gave a benefit concert at Wallsend and in June one at Lambton. In September it performed in aid of the Lambton Mechanics Institute building fund and the Adamstown fire brigade³¹. At no time was it advertized to perform for no particular cause, or for free. Other companies were similarly generous. In 1875 and 1886 drama clubs at Wallsend gave concerts for the agricultural society. Other artistic groups were supported too. The Minni drama society performed to raise funds for the prize fund of the Wallsend and Plattsburg eisteddfod and the Wallsend and Plattsburgh Thespian Society played for the local band in 1881³².

Minstrel groups, which engaged the leisure time of their members and entertained the rest of the population, rarely demanded

31. *W&PSun*, 25 Feb., 18 Mar., 9 June, 10 Sept. 1891.

32. *M.A.*, 9 Sept. 1875. *W&PSun*, 26 Mar. 1886. *N.M.H.*, 21, 23 May, 15 Oct. 1881.

entrance money for themselves. In 1891 the Adamstown Spectre Minstrels gave concerts for the needy at Adamstown and Lambton and the local fife and drum band³³. Although the aim of the Wallsend and Plattsburg minstrels was to give entertainments in aid of the hospital, their itinerary in 1891 also included three benefit concerts and a performance for the Cooperative Miners' Relief Fund³⁴. The Merewether company gave concerts for the fire brigade, the local branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars and the brass band, as well as giving two benefit concerts. The Merewether minstrels also staged one performance for themselves, to supply the necessary props and music³⁵.

Bands rarely gave concerts by themselves, but they assisted the efforts of others. They always led the torchlight processions before concerts, be they in aid of the fire brigade, the needy or Mechanics Institutes³⁶. They attracted crowds and encouraged gaiety by playing at church bazaars and fairs³⁷. Occasionally they performed indoors at concerts. In 1881 the Wallsend band assisted at a Thespian Society performance and the Lambton band played several overtures in full uniform at a benefit concert³⁸.

Choirs, which had a liking for classical and sacred music³⁹, did not have the mass appeal of minstrel shows, plays, or brass bands. As a result, they were not used extensively for popular entertainment. They were attractive fundraisers for more serious and respectable groups, like Mechanics Institutes and churches. In 1881 the Wallsend and Plattsburg Choral Union gave one concert in aid of the Plattsburg Mechanics Institute and another for the Wallsend School of Arts. The Minimi Glee Party gave a concert in aid of the local Congregational church, while at Lambton the choir sang to clear off the debt on the English Congregational church⁴⁰.

33. *N.M.H.*, 21, 29 May, 6 Aug. 1891.

34. *ibid.*, 16 Sept., 10, 30 Oct., 22 Nov. 1891.

35. *ibid.*, 23 Feb., 4 Mar., 20 Ap., 30 May, 13 June, 7 Nov., 31 Dec. 1891.

36. *W&PSun*, 25 Feb., 16 Sept. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 23 Ap., 17 Nov. 1900.

37. *N.M.H.*, 16 May, 25 June 1891, 21 Ap. 1900.

38. *ibid.*, 16 May, 9 Sept. 1881.

39. e.g. *N.C.*, 22 Jy, 23 Sept. 1871.

40. *N.M.H.*, 25 June, 30 Jy., 20, 29 Aug. 1881.

GRAND BENEFIT DRAMATIC * ENTERTAINMENT

In aid of

ROBT. JEFFRIES AND FAMILY.

Mr. Jeffries has been a long sufferer from Asthma, and has for years been unable to follow his employment, and being long a resident of Wallsend, is deserving of support.

THE WALLSEND & PRATTSBURG AMATEUR

Dramatic Society

AND YOUNG AUSTRALIAN STRING BAND

Will present the Popular COMEDY

"DOING FOR THE BEST,"

In the SCHOOL OF ARTS, WALLSEND, on

FRIDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1898.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Dick Stubbs, a Carpenter—Afterwards D. Stubbs, Esq.
 Harry, his Son—A woman, afterwards Captain
 Bill Hawkins, a Bricklayer—
 Mr. P. Chment, a Lawyer

Mr. J. Richards
 Mr. J. R. Houston
 Mr. G. Watkins
 Mr. D. S. Thompson

Thomas, Footman to Dick Stubbs, Esq.
 Betty Stubbs, the carpenter's wife—Afterwards a Lady
 Jane Stubbs, the daughter
 Emily, daughter of Dick Stubbs

Mr. C. Hogg
 Mrs. Richards
 Miss Longbrugh
 Miss M. Long

Followed by the Screaming FARCE

"NURSEY CHICKWEED."

Jonathan Chickweed, Town Crier and Bell Ringer
 Harriet, the Miller
 Mr. Walton, an Agent from London

Mr. J. R. Houston
 Mr. J. Richards
 Mr. G. Hogg

Mr. Horatio Mount-Sorrell, a Gentleman of London
 Mrs. Mount-Sorrell
 Kelly, daughter of Mount-Sorrell, left in charge of Chickweed

Mr. S. Morris
 Mrs. Richards
 Mr. E. Tiplady

The Young Australian String Band will Perform the following Musical Selections:

Overture—Richard Wraith, Carl Feltz, Grand March—"Cambridge," T. B. Wright, Waltz—"Swiss & Swiss," H. Brown, Quick & March—"Footman's Parade," J. A. Long
 Quadrille—"Hound & Quadrille," (On Mr. J. R. Houston's Song) & Tyrol, March—"Pierrot & Arise," J. F. Fitter

PIANO: F. TAYLOR, Organist, and J. R. HOGG, Accompanist. AUDITORIUM: J. TAYLOR, Organist, and J. R. HOGG, Accompanist.

NEW COSTUMES! NEW SCENERY!

The whole produced under the Stage Management of Mr. JOSEPH RICHARDS
 Admission
 FRONT SEATS, 1s 6d. BACK SEATS, 1s.

Tickets Everywhere! Curtain will rise at 8 sharp. Carriages at 11 p.m. Special Trains to and from Newcastle
 D. S. THOMPSON, Secretary.

This sect was not alone in favouring choral concerts. In 1900 the Hamilton choir gave a grand concert for the Presbyterian Sunday school. Smaller singing groups could be suitable for popular performances. The Hamilton Male Voice Party sang at benefit concerts in 1900⁴¹.

Other skilled persons were less prominent in fund raising, but occasionally they performed in aid of others. The Hamilton Football Club arranged an exhibition match in aid of the Mechanics Institute in 1891. Dancing groups from all parts of the British Isles, such as Ireland, Scotland, Northumberland and Durham, were a great draw at any concert⁴².

As well as giving performances in aid of other groups, bands, by their presence, added to the success of recreation which was not devoted specifically to fundraising. They were engaged for picnics, excursions, demonstrations, sports days, agricultural shows and race meetings, not to mention dances and balls. In 1881 they attended the Lambton and Wallsend Roman Catholic schools' picnic, the Good Templars demonstration, Minmi races, Lambton athletic sports, a cricket match and the Oddfellows demonstration and sports. Their role was to add colour and noise and provide music for listening and dancing. They also entertained inhabitants at large by playing through the streets or in other public places⁴³.

Although the nature of work in the N.C.D. meant more leisure was spent in popular recreations, the pastimes in which people indulged were made to serve the purposes of more serious organizations and needs in the colliery townships. This contributed to the development of an integrated life style.

Whether taken in formal groups devoted to special leisure activities, informal groups, or as part of another voluntary association, leisure in the N.C.D. encouraged communication between residents because of its home made, participatory character.

41. *ibid.*, 22 Feb., 11 Dec. 1900.

42. *ibid.*, 12 Sept. 1891. *W&PSun*, 13 Oct. 1886, 21 Mar. 1891.

43. *N.M.H.*, 4 Jan., 8 Mar., 25 May, 1 Aug., 24 Sept., 9 Nov. 1881.

The last years of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of a commercial entertainment industry in the growth of music hall and large scale sporting competitions. However, the increasing facilities for passive entertainment through professional theatre, phonographs (the first record players) and sporting stadiums barely touched the colliery townships.

Commercial entertainment provided by travelling shows was only a very minor part of the performing arts. The years 1871, 1875, 1881, 1891 and 1900 saw about 104 commercial shows in the colliery townships, that is, about three in each town a year. There was a similar number of benefit concerts, 104, over the same years. Table 6.3 shows that commercial entertainment was usually restricted to the larger or outlying population centres like Wallsend-Plattsburg, Lambton and Minmi. Towns that were smaller, and/or closer to the port, like Adamstown, Merewether, New Lambton and Hamilton, were totally dependent on the local talent, which gave its services through fundraising concerts, for theatrical entertainment.

All the other amusements in the colliery townships had to be provided on local initiative. Unless inhabitants organized them, there were no football or cricket matches to watch, choirs or instrumental music to listen to, agricultural shows to visit, musical competitions, dances, race meetings or regattas to attend. Nearly every organized activity in the district involved local people coming together to arrange or produce it.

When kin, friends or neighbours gathered together, at home or at the local pub, there was no record player, radio, or T.V. So, people made their own music. In 1871 the Wallsend correspondent for the *Newcastle Chronicle* claimed almost every dwelling had a musical instrument of some kind. Mr. Richard Ford, who grew up in New Lambton in the 1890s, wrote that many homes had their own music, usually a piano and violin, and recalled that singsongs at home with neighbours and friends were a common form of entertainment⁴⁴. Hotel patrons amused themselves in the same way. In 1886 the *Wallsend and Plattsburgh Sun* noted that the singing in the Car-

44. N.C., 25 Nov. 1871. R. Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Table 6.3

Commercial entertainment and benefit concerts in the
colliery townships, 1871-1900

208.

Town	Year				1900	
	1871	1875	1881	1891	Commercial Benefit	Commercial Benefit
Adamstown			1	6		4
Hamilton			1	4	1	11
Lambton	2	16	1	4	3	7
Merewether				11		12
Minmi			1	3	3	1
New Lambton			4			5
WallSEND-Plattsburg	2	39	8	15	2	4

Sources: N.C., 1871.
M.A., 1875.
N.M.H., 1881, 1891, 1900.

rington Hotel was enjoyed as much by those nearby as the participants. Miss Elsie Patrick, who also grew up in the 1890s, can remember four Welshmen who spent every Saturday at the hotel and, before going home, gathered together just outside her home and sang songs in parts⁴⁵.

Because the entertainment people sought in leisure had to be provided locally, by inhabitants themselves, little of it was created or enjoyed in solitude. As a result, leisure activities were potentially important in drawing together people from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. However, much leisure was taken in groups that cut along rather than across fundamental cleavages of age, sex, ethnicity, religion and class.

Women were largely excluded from organized leisure. Team sport, save tennis, which was not played until the 1890s, and even then to a limited extent, was for men. The pub and gambling oriented sports were also a male preserve, there being severe social pressures against respectable women going near public houses⁴⁶. The brass band and minstrel companies were composed entirely of men. Volunteering was a male occupation. Associations devoted to conviviality and fellowship, like the freemasons and Caledonians, were strictly for men.

Certain leisure activities could not function without women. Choirs and dances required equal numbers of both sexes. Drama societies needed women for female parts. Many women were talented singers, reciters and instrumental performers. As such they were welcome additions to any benefit concert and given as many solo competition sections at the Eisteddfod as men. Even so, organizations devoted to music discriminated against women. They may have been official accompanists, but they were never conductors unless the choir was for children. No woman held an executive or committee position in any musical or dramatic society.

Apart from choirs, dances and drama societies, the only leisure activities open to females were family oriented: socials, tea

45. *W&PSun*, 22 Feb. 1886. Miss Elsie Patrick, *loc. cit.*

46. Miss Elsie Patrick, *loc. cit.*

meetings and picnics. They also formed part of the crowd at football matches and race meetings⁴⁷. None of these activities involved membership in an organization devoted to a specific leisure activity. Women were eligible to attend the social functions run by voluntary associations as spouses, not because they were members themselves. They went to sporting events as spectators, not participants. Informal social outings, like trips to the beach or the lake, were organized around primary groups, and so did not extend social horizons.

Inevitably many recreations also separated inhabitants on the basis of age. Those over the age of 40 were less able to participate in sporting activities, while certain very vigorous pursuits were the preserve of adolescents. It was very hard to identify most of those in football teams on electoral rolls. This suggests that a good proportion were under 21 years of age. Among indoor activities there was also a tendency for the young and old to separate. Good choirs needed young voices and they were sought eagerly. In 1881 the Lambton choir consisted of 50 to 60 'young ladies and gentlemen'⁴⁸. It was the young, too, who were most enthusiastic about dancing. At Wallsend in 1895 all the members of the Federal Dance Club were under 21. In the same year it was the young people who got up and danced after a concert for the agricultural society⁴⁹. There were also activities which the old thought good for the young, but which did not interest them. In 1891 the Wallsend Show was poorly patronized. When opening it Alexander Brown gave his opinion that the young men of the district spent too much time in exercise of a muscular and aquatic character⁵⁰, to which there were cries of 'hear, hear' from the gathering⁵⁰. Therefore, much of what appealed to the young could not include the old. Activities that attracted the old did not attract the young and vice versa. This meant much leisure was taken in groups of a similar age.

47. *W&PSun*, 15 Sept. 1886, 28 Aug. 1891. *N.M.H.*, 29 May, 17 Aug. 1891.

48. *N.M.H.*, 25 Nov. 1881.

49. *W&PSun*, 26 Oct., 26 Nov. 1895.

50. *ibid.*, 31 Oct. 1891.

The strong links between many recreations and regional cultures in Britain meant that they encouraged ethnic cleavages, even though they lent distinctiveness to the area. We have noted that the Irish, Scots and north eastern English all had their own songs in dialect, not to mention their own sports. The eisteddfod was traditionally held in the Welsh language. Thus there were barriers of language and culture which could separate the Scots, Geordies, Irish and Welsh into separate groups in their leisure. However, these ethnic divisions did not divide society as they might have.

The culture of small minorities like the Welsh could not survive unless the population at large adopted them. The first eisteddfods in the district were exclusively Welsh, even the advertizements for them⁵¹. By the late 1870s they were advertized in English, but still smacked strongly of the Welsh sense of cultural superiority. In 1881 the eisteddfod at Wallsend was reported as held by the Welsh in the district. The addresses and proceedings were in the Welsh tongue. Most of the competitions were for the Welsh speaking: essays, recitations and speeches. The day's proceedings were claimed to be 'tolerably successful', but the details of each event suggest failure. There was only one entry in the choral competition and that was a church choir with a strong Welsh component. Several events fell through for want of competitors. Entries for the literary sections, such as prepared and impromptu speeches and original poetry, were especially poor⁵².

It was not until the organization and character of eisteddfods changed that they succeeded. In 1889 interested persons at Wallsend and Plattsburg founded a Musical and Literal Society with membership open to all, regardless of race, to conduct annual eisteddfods. The event was no longer run by the Welsh or mainly for the Welsh⁵³. There were still some Welsh language sections, but most were open to all-comers. In addition, the emphasis changed to meet the interests of the district. Creative writing competitions, which

51. see *N.C.*, 2 Nov. 1861, 11 Oct. 1862.

52. *N.M.H.*, 27 Dec. 1881.

53. *W&PSun*, 8, 17 June 1895.

had always met with a poor response, disappeared and the choral and musical sections were extended. Whilst the 'tolerably successful' 1881 eisteddfod consisted of essays, original poetry, speeches, recitations and one choral competition, the 1891 competition, where there was a record number of entries and visitors came from all over the district, had no creative writing section, some recitations, a large number of solo vocal and instrumental competitions and four choral contests. These last were for children, church choirs, male chorus and large choirs. Eighteen choirs, mostly from the colliery townships, competed⁵⁴. Perhaps the best indication of the adoption of the eisteddfod by all ethnic groups was the donation of a prize for the best songs in Northumbrian dialect in 1892. In 1881 one Geordie had referred derisively to the eisteddfod committee as the 'steadfast committee'⁵⁵.

Other regional customs, which were less dependent on verbal communication, spread to those from other cultures more easily. Dancing was an attraction at concerts and outdoor demonstrations. Any family who bought a ticket to a fundraising concert would probably see at least two of an Irish jig, highland reel and a clog dance⁵⁶. In this way people were exposed to different cultural traditions from their own. Evidence that people came to appreciate traditions other than their own comes from a benefit concert at New Lambton in 1900, where the same person executed the Irish and clog dancing. Those who did Scots dancing also tended to do Irish dancing⁵⁷.

Public exhibitions like highland games also found relatively ready acceptance within the population. These sports now have an official place in the field events of modern athletics, which indicates their general appeal. It is not surprising, then, that the first highland games at Wallsend was watched with great interest by the younger portion of the crowd⁵⁸. Some of the events were

54. *ibid.*, 1 Ap. 1891.

55. *ibid.*, 20 Ap. 1892. *N.M.H.*, 29 Sept. 1881.

56. *viz.* *N.M.H.*, 26 Sept., 19 Oct. 1891, 5 Nov. 1900.

57. *ibid.*, 2 Jy., 5 Nov. 1900.

58. *M.A.*, 2 Jan. 1875.

incorporated into general sports days by the mid 1880s. The Wallsend Athletics Club meeting in 1886 included the high jump and hop, step and jump from the highland games, as well as foot races, old fashioned games like quoits, a football place kick and throwing a cricket ball at the wicket. In 1900 the Minmi friendly societies and caledonians held a combined sports day which was a similar mixture of the old and new, Scottish and English. Quoits and traditional novelty events like the three legged and potato races, which were part of old fashioned British holiday fun, remained. There was also a soccer place kick competition. Among the traditions from the highland games were the high jump, tug of war, highland dancing and piping competitions. The West Wallsend Brass Band played for non competitive dancing as was the custom on traditional English days of fun⁵⁹.

Although regional customs were accepted by inhabitants in general and so did not lead to the maintenance of differences in birthplace, religious attitudes to recreation did create divisions in the population. The ethnic basis of much religious affiliation meant that sometimes this created hostile groups united by both nativity and creed.

Most nonconformist churches disliked both drinking and gambling. They also disapproved of dancing. Theoretically, this prevented about half the population from attending dances, pub oriented and animal sports, on which there was always betting, and pure gambling games. Although nonconformity cut across some regional groups like the Geordies, religion and ethnicity were almost identical for the Welsh and the Scots. Among the former, those who took religion seriously found nothing to attract them in race meetings, where the principal pastimes were gambling and dancing. Thus, it is not surprising that the 1881 eisteddfod and Christmas race meeting were both held on Boxing day. From the time the Musical and Literary Society was formed in the late 1880s, the eisteddfod was held at Easter, thereby coinciding with the Wallsend Jockey Club Easter races. That

59. *W&PSun*, 3 Oct. 1886. *N.M.H.*, 12 Mar. 1900.

this was the direct intention of the eisteddfod committee is clear from comments at an end of year social function held by the Musical and Literary Society in 1891. Daniel Rees, a Welshman, described eisteddfods as 'competitive gatherings that kept people from horse and track racing of all descriptions'⁶⁰. The opposition of the Welsh to race meetings drew allies from all the non-conformist churches, who threw their weight behind counter attractive activities like the eisteddfod. The Rev. J.B. Penman of the Primitive Methodist Church praised the Welsh because

they always tried to amuse young people in eisteddfods and never went in for horse racing and gambling like the English.

At Minmi the Primitive Methodists organized their own eisteddfod⁶¹.

Society was polarized into supporters and opponents of gambling. This found expression in an institutionalized clash between the eisteddfod and race meetings at Wallsend. Although the pitting of the eisteddfod against the races had ethnic origins, it became a symbol of the struggle between committed nonconformists and the rest of the population as to what was acceptable behaviour.

Historians of leisure have noted that many recreations have a class based appeal. Lawson has observed that in Brisbane in the 1890s rowing and bicycle clubs, which involved expensive equipment, were middle-class activities, the hunt club, golf and lawn tennis were for the wealthy, whilst athletics, which involved little special equipment, was largely a working-class sport⁶². Malcolmson has noted that gambling, wrestling and animal sports, like cock fighting, cut across class lines in English society between 1750 and 1850, but that gentlemen played a prominent part as patrons as well as participants. More than any other sport, cricket, most believe, drew all occupational groups together⁶³.

60. *W&PSm*, 29 Ap. 1891.

61. *N.M.H.*, 22 Ap., 14 Nov., 28 Dec. 1891.

62. Lawson, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-206.

63. R.W. Malcolmson, *Popular recreations in English society, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 40-49, 57. K. Elford, 'Sport in Australian society: a perspective', in Jacques and Pavia, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Table 6.4

Occupation and involvement in organized leisure
activities in the N.C.D., c. 1880-1900

Activity/Club	No.	Occupation %	
		Bourgeois	Workingmen
Freemasons	73	45	55
Caledonians	14	21	79
Musical and Literary Society	49	39	61
Choir	48	52	48
Agricultural Show	109	41	59
Cricket	294	30	70
Football	204	32	68
Gun Club	14	36	64
Volunteers	62	7	93
Athletics	31	71	29
Minstrels	49	20	80
Drama	36	28	72
Wallsend Jockey Club	72	81	19
Wallsend Amateur Turf Club	24	33	67
Tennis	7	57	43
Bowls	10	80	20
Regatta	99	36	64

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.

N.S.W. Electoral roll, 1894, 1900-1.

Table 6.4 sets out the proportion of persons from bourgeois and manual occupations who were office bearers or active members in recreational organizations for which such evidence is available. It shows that three sporting clubs were largely middle-class organizations, in that bourgeois supporters were at least double the number from blue-collar occupations. These were athletics, the Wallsend Jockey Club and the bowling club, of which there was only one, at Hamilton. As one would expect in an area where 85 per cent of the workforce were tradesmen, miners, or labourers, twice as many activities were dominated by the working-class: the caledonians, cricket, football, the volunteers, minstrels and drama. Many of these divisions along class lines are hardly surprising. Football, for instance, has always been more popular with the working-class and minstrel shows were very much a part of popular culture. In the late nineteenth century bowls was a middle-class activity. It is interesting to note, however, that athletics, which is usually said to attract the working-class, had a large middle-class following. Cricket, which is supposed to have a universal appeal, was dominated by the working-class. This is not surprising for a popular sport in an area with an overwhelming majority of blue collar workers. A number of activities had roughly even numbers from bourgeois and manual occupations, that is, neither had twice as many members as the other. The occupations of persons involved in organized leisure activities in the N.C.D. suggest that, overall, about half of these pursuits encouraged social mixing across class lines and half along them.

However, within occupationally 'mixed' clubs and societies, supporters were divided functionally, according to occupation. Most associations had three kinds of supporter: actual participants, who played or performed, committees, which ran activities, and patrons and vice-presidents, who funded them. Table 6.5a, which classifies those involved in 'occupationally mixed' organized leisure associations according to function, shows most patrons and vice-presidents were from bourgeois occupations. On the other hand, most committee members were manual workers. This division along class lines, especially the fact that the manual workers did the hard work required of committees and the bourgeois provided 'capital', reinforced socio-economic divisions.

Table 6.5

Occupation and function in certain organized
leisure activities in the N.C.D., c. 1880-1900

a) Activities which attracted those in manual and non manual occupations

Activity	Occupation (%)					
	Committee Member			Patron/Vice-president		
	N=	Bourgeois	Worker	N=	Bourgeois	Worker
Musical and Literary Society	37	30	70	12	67	33
Choir	36	42	58	12	83	17
Agricultural Society	85	29	71	24	86	14
Regatta	71	18	82	28	82	18

b) Activities which attracted those in either manual or non manual occupations

Activity	N=	Occupation (%)							
		Participant		Committee Member			Patron/Vice-president		
		N=	Bourgeois Worker	N=	Bourgeois	Worker	N=	Bourgeois	Worker
Cricket	205	20	80	15	33	67	74	58	42
Football	135	6	94				69	83	17
Athletics		n.a.		18	50	50	13	100	0

Sources: As for table 6.4.

The division of apparently all-class activities into blue collar workers and white collar patrons is not the only indication of class cleavage in leisure activities. Table 6.5b shows that even organizations apparently devoted to middle or working-class activities had the same division. For example, although most persons involved in football clubs were working-class, there was the same functional division between working and middle-class that occurred in clubs which seemed to be dominated by neither. Of the 135 football players whose occupation was known, only 6 per cent were middle-class. As a result, working-class players were over represented, despite their large majority in the workforce. Among the football vice-presidents, the proportions were almost reversed, with 17 per cent blue collar and 83 per cent white collar. Table 6.4 shows that Wallsend had two race clubs, the Wallsend Jockey Club and the Wallsend Amateur Turf Club. The former operated from 1871 to 1900 and the latter in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Under 20 per cent of the jockey club officials were working men, but two thirds of the amateur turf club officials were blue collar workers. This suggests that the existence of two racing clubs at Wallsend-Plattsburg reflected dissatisfaction among the workers with the way the bourgeois dominated jockey club was being run.

More particularly, the functional division into workers and benefactors meant the colliery managers and manual workers, although involved in the same activities, could avoid social mixing. We have already noted that the colliery managers and other large landowners gradually withdrew from municipal activities and positions of social status. These included positions of patronage in leisure associations. Of the 12 managers of large collieries or other large estates, like the Merewethers, two had nothing to do with any recreational associations in the district. These were Turnbull of the A.A.Co. and Croft of the N.C.C. Of the others, James Thomas and E.C. Merewether confined themselves to the support of serious uses of leisure in Mechanics Institutes. Table 6.6 shows the others were involved in a variety of activities. Nevertheless, few individuals were involved in many organizations. Only the older Wallsend and Cooperative managers, Neilson, the Fletchers and Ross, were involved as more than benefactors. Of these, only Ross was there in the 1890s. In the

Table 6.6

Involvement of colliery managers in organized recreation
in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900

Club/Society	Benefactor	Position	
		President	Committee
Agricultural	J. Fletcher sr. (1875)	J. Neilson (1886)	
	J. Fletcher jr. (1886)	A Ross (1891, 1900)	
	R. Thomas (1891)		
Band	J. Neilson (1886)		
Choir		J. Fletcher jr. (1881)	
		J. Neilson* (1886)	
Volunteers		J. Neilson* (1886)	
Cricket	J. Barr (1900)		
	E.A.M. Merewether (1900)		
	J. Neilson (1881)		
Athletics	T. Croudace (1871, 75)	J. Fletcher sr. (1875)	
		J. Fletcher jr. (1886)	
Regatta	J. Barr (1900)		
	J. Fletcher (1891)		
	A. Ross (1900)		
Football	J. Barr (1900)	J. Fletcher jr. (1886)	
Racing			J. Fletcher jr. (1881-6)
Gun Club	E.A.M. Merewether (1900)		

Notes: Benefactor refers to patrons, vice-presidents, donors of trophies.
 Neilson was a trustee of the band and lieutenant in the volunteers.

Sources: *N.C.*, 1871. *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.
W&PSun, 1886.

last decades of the period the colliery managers either withdrew altogether or became distant benefactors. During the years when the cleavage between employer and employee was being increasingly shorn of social contacts that would soften it, the colliery managers, if they were involved in local life at all, retired to a function which relieved them of having to get too close to their workmen.

Although the membership and division of functions in many organized activities enhanced fundamental cleavages, some of these recreations in themselves aided local pride and solidarity. Since most organized activities centred around individual towns, any competitions between them pitted one town against another. Cricket and football matches, which were played every Saturday of their respective seasons for a trophy, involved a struggle as to which town was superior. In 1891 an Australian rules match between Hamilton and Merewether attracted more than 2,000 spectators. There was considerable rivalry between the teams and the barrackers were said to have done as much work as the players. The match took place at Hamilton, but the noise could be heard as far away as the city⁶⁴. When teams went out of the district to play, great interest was taken in how they fared. In 1886 an army of followers accompanied the Wallsend team to Sydney for a match there⁶⁵. We have already noted how cricket teams became municipal clubs in the 1890s, with heavy patronage from aldermen. In 1891, when Lambton won the district competition's Raysmith Cup, the Mayor, who was also president of the cricket club, gave a banquet⁶⁶.

Certain cultural activities also encouraged local pride. The chief choral competition, which involved mass choirs organized around towns, never failed to produce excitement at the eisteddfod, especially when the choirs were evenly matched⁶⁷. Any success meant great local rejoicing. When Wallsend scooped the pool at the Newcastle Eisteddfod in 1891, the band and fire brigade turned out to welcome the choir at the railway station when members returned.

64. *N.M.H.*, 17 Aug. 1891.

65. *W&PSun*, 17 Jy. 1886.

66. *N.M.H.*, 19 Sept. 1891.

67. *ibid.*, 2 Feb., 28 Dec. 1891, 30 June 1900. *W&PSun*, 20 Ap. 1895.

A procession, headed by the fire brigade and the brass band, formed and made its way to the Agricultural Hall where the victors were greeted with cheers. There were still 200 there celebrating at midnight⁶⁸. Bands produced a similar pride. There was no district competition, but invitations to perform elsewhere were an occasion for self-congratulation. In 1875 the Wallsend band was invited to play in Sydney. The local correspondent for the *Miners Advocate* claimed this would

show them that even in the coalmining districts, of which some of them appear to know so little, we are not incapable of appreciating good music⁶⁹.

The activities which proved the excellence of a particular town provided occasions on which the bourgeoisie and workers could share the glory of victory. In those organizations where the bourgeoisie and manual workers were separated according to function, such as the cricket club, football club or choir, they were still united in the common cause of proving their town's superiority. Thus they could congratulate themselves and each other when they succeeded.

That leisure in the N.C.D. was devoted to popular culture, emphasising sport, gambling and outdoor activities, did not make it distinctive in N.S.W., even though it can be related to the nature of work in the district. Many individual amusements gave the district a unique character within the Australian tradition. This involved playing games popular among English miners, emphasis on Australian rules football before and soccer after the mid 1890s, and the emphasis given to brass bands and choral music among artistic activities. Although most recreations in the colliery townships at this time were still home made, and so largely participatory, the people organized leisure associations drew together were not usually involved in recreation that cut across fundamental cleavages. Most clubs and societies consisted entirely of men and many appealed to a restricted age group. Religion polarized the

68. *N.M.H.*, 28 Jan. 1891.

69. *M.A.*, 31 Mar. 1875.

town into gambling and non gambling factions. The bourgeoisie and workers had different recreations, or their functions were separated within the same organization. The only cleavage which leisure pursuits surmounted was that of ethnicity, from which stemmed much of the distinctiveness of the district. Perhaps the greatest contribution of leisure in the N.C.D. to the development of community was its integration into local life. Few groups with a fundraising potential had an independent existence, with no relationship to the purposes and needs of other voluntary associations, or the local welfare system. Those that represented the skills and ability of inhabitants to the rest of the world were the focus of local sentiment and pride.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MECHANICS INSTITUTES

The miners who spoke on behalf of a pay Saturday and an eight hour day at the aggregate meeting in 1871 had more in mind than the popular, largely outdoor amusements that characterised the N.C.D. They pointed out that hewing took mental as well as bodily strength. Under the present 11 hour day system they were not fit to indulge in any intellectual improvement when they finished work¹. In the nineteenth century the accepted agency of self-improvement was the School of Arts, or Mechanics Institute. By 1881 the electorate of Northumberland, which contained most towns of the N.C.D., had more Mechanics Institutes than any other in N.S.W. At that time there were five, at Lambton, Wallsend, Plattsburg, Adamstown and Merewether². In the electorate of Newcastle there was the Hamilton Mechanics Institute. All were established between 1864 and March 1881³. Except at Lambton, where the colliery manager was the founder, they began with public meetings of interested townsmen, who decided it was time to start a Mechanics Institute. In the 1880s the inhabitants of Minmi and New Lambton also began Mechanics Institutes⁴, giving every town in this study such an organisation. By the end of the century two more had begun among the inhabitants of peripheral, but populous parts of the Municipality of Hamilton: Broadmeadow and Junction.

Upper-class British philanthropists had founded Mechanics Institutes in the 1830s to provide workingmen with an elementary scientific knowledge through classes, lectures and libraries. The aim of such education was to improve performance at work, strengthen religion, combat the spread of objectionable political views and develop a taste for rational enjoyments⁵. Although these organisations spread throughout England, they did not attract the kind of people or pursue the activities their founders intended. The middle-class rather than the working-class joined. Social and cultural pursuits, such as chess, excursions and theatricals replaced lectures⁶.

1. N.C., 9 Mar. 1871.

2. Glebe and Burwood Mechanics Institute became the Merewether School of Arts after the two settlements were incorporated as the Municipality of Merewether.

3. Lambton began in 1864, Wallsend in 1870, Hamilton in 1872, Plattsburg in 1876, Adamstown in 1880 and Glebe and Burwood in March, 1881.

4. Both of these collapsed and were resuscitated in 1891. New Lambton had to be revived yet again in 1900.

5. R. Altick, *The English common reader, a social history of the mass reading public* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 188-9.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Before 1850 philanthropic upper-class colonists had brought Mechanics Institutes to N.S.W. Here stress was more on the moral and social benefits of knowledge than providing scientific instruction, which was less necessary in the colonies⁷. The Institutes, also known as Schools of Arts, spread throughout N.S.W., encouraged no doubt by the government aid of ten shillings for every pound donated. By 1897 there were over 250 of them. Even towns with less than a hundred inhabitants could boast a Mechanics Institute⁸. As in England, they did not turn out as intended. The respectable working-class could not be attracted and activities gradually lost their educational character⁹.

These institutes of learning did not, therefore, have a history that augured well for their success in the colliery townships. Their original educational aim, if carried out, was conservative. The people it attracted were not workingmen, who were the bulk of the population. If working people were attracted, the decline in educational activities meant they would not be able to improve themselves, as the proponents of shorter hours hoped. Nevertheless, we have already noted that every town had at least one Mechanics Institute. Most survived once they began.

The story of Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. is one of general importance. It shows how a particular region could adopt a seemingly hostile structure and make it conform to its ideals and interests. It also shows that when this happened certain sections of the working-class became enthusiastic supporters of Mechanics Institutes. The problems encountered in trying to provide intellectual activities in a poverty stricken rural area indicate why the Mechanics Institute movement has been judged as failing to fulfill its actual mission.

Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. made serious attempts to provide the education they were designed to give. The purpose of such

-
7. M. Whiting, 'The education of adults in the Mechanics Institutes of the colony of N.S.W.', 1883-1901 (M. Ed., University of Sydney, 1973), p. 11.
 8. This conclusion was reached on the basis of the calculations done in creating table 7.3.
 9. Whiting, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-56.

education was to provide a means to upward mobility and the political advancement of the working-class. This was a long way from the intentions of the early nineteenth century founders of Mechanics Institutes in England, who saw them as a means of keeping workmen contented with their station in life. The lofty goal of the Institutes appealed to the most ambitious, respectable and best off members of the working-class in the colliery townships. They ran them in conjunction with the middle-class, to whom, as elsewhere, the Mechanics Institute had strong appeal. This elite was not enough to maintain Schools of Arts and so the organisers had to make considerable concessions to the level of recreation that most of the population could cope with after a hard day's work. Although an organisation with minority appeal, the Mechanics Institute played an important part in local life. It did little to overcome cleavages of sex and age, but it did provide a meeting ground for the bourgeoisie and the working-class elite. Many colliery managers were also actively involved in the earlier years. The building itself played an important part in the social life of the district by providing a meeting place for other voluntary associations and a status symbol. Thus the Mechanics Institute contributed to the development of community through its distinctiveness, integration into local life and contributions to social cohesion.

The general aims of the Mechanics Institute movement in N.S.W. were to spread knowledge and in this way raise the moral tone of society. The new morality was to come through knowledge itself and the fact that it created a taste for 'rational' enjoyment. Inhabitants interpreted these goals in the light of local problems and aspirations.

One of the main concerns of people in the colliery townships was to ensure that the knowledge acquired at school was not lost in the pits. Boys who left school even as late as 13 or 14 forgot much and literacy often disappeared without some inducement to maintain it¹⁰. Mechanics Institutes could provide the means to keep the intellectual faculties of the population in order¹¹. They were also to further the local goal of upward mobility. Poverty prevented

10. *M.A.*, 3 Mar. 1875. 'Progress report of the select committee on children', *loc.cit.*, p. 913.

11. *M.A.*, 3 Mar. 1875.

children from staying on at school to acquire the education necessary for them to rise above the status of their parents. The alternative avenue for those who wished to do better was as a self-made man. Supporters of Mechanics Institutes believed they would equip working-men to do this. Armed with outstanding examples, like Sir Henry Parkes and their own James Fletcher, both of whom had spent much time in Mechanics Institutes, supporters continually argued that in Australia the humblest could reach the highest places in the state¹². Founders of Mechanics Institutes had wished to make the working-classes better at the jobs it was their lot to work in, but in the colliery townships people reversed their role to fit in with their aspirations and the opportunities they believed the new land provided.

Mechanics Institutes were also to spread the scientific knowledge that people in the N.C.D. believed had to be provided in Australia. The diffusion of scientific knowledge was a goal of the founders, but received little emphasis in N.S.W. Coalmining, on which the whole district depended, was even then a highly technical field. Safety and prosperity depended on knowledge in geology, mineralogy, chemistry, geometry and mechanical drawing. Therefore, these subjects had to be taught. The spread of scientific knowledge was also essential to the kind of economy the colliery townships wanted in Australia. The district was a protectionist stronghold in free trade N.S.W., because it favoured native industry¹³. Thus Mechanics Institutes could

place within the reach of all the most useful and reliable works on science and art ... of the utmost importance in a young country where there was an urgent need to foster new industries¹⁴.

53 per cent of inhabitants were nonconformists. This meant the moral aim of Mechanics Institutes to encourage 'rational' pursuits was uppermost in the minds of many. Those supporting the foundation of Mechanics Institutes in the district had observed that most boys aged 12 to 20 spent their leisure playing billiards and bagatelle and

12. *N.M.H.*, 26 Jy. 1880, 9 Aug. 1881, 18 Jy. 1885, 26 Mar. 1886, 6 Oct. 1891.

13. See chapter nine.

14. *N.M.H.*, 14 Nov. 1891. See also *ibid.*, 27 Jy. 1880.

gambling. These were 'a worse curse than public houses and dancing saloons'¹⁵. In 1870 the president of the Wallsend School of Arts described their effects in a way that catches the real horror felt for such games. He asked his audience:

could any sensible person imagine a more humiliating scene than a boy, fresh from the good influences of school and the pure moral atmosphere of a virtuous home, enter for the first time one of these dens of youthful pollution, crowded with young men, watching and applauding in the coarsest language ... In a few minutes ... the poisonous atmosphere of the place has done its work on the morals of the boy ...¹⁶

The Mechanics Institute was put forward as a means of providing 'agreeable employment for our young men in their leisure time' which kept them from 'seeking doubtful or dangerous amusements'¹⁷.

The educational goals gave a distinctive character to the activities and facilities Mechanics Institutes offered: debates, lectures, classes, visual aids and libraries.

Debates were popular because they developed the skills of reading, research and public speaking that were important for those aspiring to the oft-quoted public office. People usually saw this as the position of member of parliament, with the occupant representing their interests. As was customary at the time, debates were conducted along 'parliamentary lines'. This meant that, of the two teams chosen, the positive side was the 'government', captained by a 'premier', and the negative side the 'opposition', led by the 'leader of the opposition'. A loss by the positive side represented a defeat for the 'government', whereupon the 'leader of the opposition' formed a new 'ministry'. This custom was more than a matter of form. In 1891, when the introduction of payment of members enabled local men to stand for parliament, the aim of training parliamentary representatives became quite explicit. There was a general increase in debating classes with the intention of discussing measures introduced in parliament. Topics covered issues important to the district,

15. *N.C.*, 3 Dec. 1870.

16. *ibid.*

17. *N.M.H.*, 30 Nov. 1872. See also *N.M.H.*, 26 Mar. 1886.

such as the relative merits of bargaining and arbitration in settling industrial disputes. In this way inhabitants ensured that would-be politicians were well informed on them¹⁸.

The desire for education to be scientific and related to the needs of industry led to a strong technological bias in lectures and classes. Lectures in literary, abstract and historical topics drew bad houses. Hardly anyone attended a lecture on Robert Burns at Hamilton and none turned up for a lecture on Governor Macquarie at Plattsburg¹⁹. On the other hand, those on earthquakes, mineralogy and chemistry were usually well attended. After the establishment of a branch of the Technical Education Department in Newcastle in 1885, Mechanics Institutes successfully applied for classes to be held in their buildings, or, if they did not have room, the local public school²⁰. These classes were oriented towards the interests of practical miners, being mostly in mineralogy, coalmining, mine surveying and geology. At Minmi classes in mathematics and applied mathematics were started in the interests of miners²¹. After 1890 the classes equipped men to sit for coalmining certificates, which allowed to improve their position in their own industry. In addition, local doctors held ambulance classes at Wallsend, Plattsburg, Merewether and Minmi²². They were extremely relevant to practical miners because they taught them how to care for those injured at work before the doctor arrived.

Mechanics Institutes in the colliery townships also put heavy emphasis on visual aids which conveyed scientific information, such as diagrams, specimens and exhibitions. The desire for mining information led to special coalmining collections at Merewether and Plattsburg. These consisted of sectional plans of coal strata in the coalmining districts of N.S.W. and samples from coal mines²³. At

18. *ibid.*, 1 June, 7 Aug. 1891.

19. *ibid.*, 28 Aug. 1881. *W&PSun*, 28 Nov. 1891.

20. Applications for classes are in Dept. Ed., 'Correspondence of the technical education department' (N.S.W.A.A. P. 1190, 1194).

21. This conclusion is based on information in 'Tech. ed. correspondence' (P. 1190, 1194, 1197), *Reports of the minister for Public Instruction, 1885-1900* (M.L.).

22. Their proceedings were reported in the *W&PSun.*, 1891 and *N.M.H.*, 1891, 1900.

23. *N.M.H.*, 1 Feb. 1890, 17 Jy. 1889, 25 Jan. 1894.

Plattsburg this interest extended to other Australian resources. By 1891 it had specimens of most minerals in N.S.W. and by 1894 the Institute had collected 132 samples of native timber²⁴. Hamilton fostered the spread of technological information and skill by holding scientific and industrial exhibitions with prizes for the best work from amateurs and apprentices²⁵. All the towns used scientific charts and diagrams available free from the department of Education²⁶.

The desire for upward mobility also influenced the kind of material in the libraries of the Institutes. On average they had a higher proportion of reference works than those attached to Mechanics Institutes in N.S.W. generally (Table 7.1). The catalogue of the Merewether School of Arts for 1895 suggests these works were of two main kinds. First there was political material. This included works like the *Statutes of N.S.W.*, Coghlin's *Wealth and Progress of N.S.W.*, reports of conferences on federation, capital punishment and trade, as well as parliamentary inquiries. Then there were books on geology and mining, such as *The Colliery Manager's Handbook*, *Mine Engineering*, *Notes and Formulae for Mining Students*, *Blasting* and *Theory and Practice of Ventilating Coal Mines*. Clearly this reference library was designed to educate aspiring politicians and colliery managers²⁷.

The emphasis on serious learning in many Mechanics Institute activities, in an area where the tension and tedium of work made most unfit for anything except light amusement, meant they never attracted many members. Table 7.2 shows membership per 100 inhabitants at dates for which there are population and membership statistics. It was rare for more than 5-6 per cent of the population to belong,

24. *ibid.*, 1 Feb. 1900. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts' (P. 3684).

25. *N.M.H.*, 18 Jan. 1891, 24 Jy. 1893, 28 Nov. 1898. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', (P. 3681).

26. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', (P. 3681, 3683, 3686).

27. Rules and regulations of the Merewether School of Arts in *ibid.*, (P. 3684). Other Institutes held similar material. Wallsend and Lambton kept N.S.W. parliamentary papers, Lambton held Government Statutes and the reports of the department of Mines. Minmi had the *N.S.W.S.R.*, Records of the Geological Survey of N.S.W. and Etheridge's works on palaeontology. *N.M.H.*, 2 Aug. 1882, 17 Jan. 1881, 22 Jy. 1881, 14 Nov. 1891.

Table 7.1

Reference works in Mechanics Institute libraries in N.S.W.
and the N.C.D. in the 1890s

Place	Total	Books	Reference (%)
Adamstown	2807		2.7
Broadmeadow	210		0
Lambton	2408		8.7
Merewether	2272		5.2
Minmi	385		0
Plattsburg	2559		6.4
Wallsend	2100		6.1
N.C.D. ($\bar{x}$)	1790		4.2
N.S.W. ($\bar{x}$)	1323		3.0

Note: There were no returns for Hamilton or Junction.

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1898.

Table 7.2

Mechanics Institute membership per 100 inhabitants in the colliery
townships for certain years, 1880-1900

Year	Town	Total	Membership Per 100 inhabitants
1881	Lambton	67	3
	Plattsburg	268	6
	Adamstown	50	9
1891	Lambton	70	2
	Plattsburg	120	4
	Adamstown	130	5
	Minmi	120	5
1897	Lambton	88	3
	Plattsburg	411	13
	Adamstown	107	5
	Minmi	68	3
	Merewether	189	4
	Wallsend	223	6
1900	Hamilton	116	3

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900.

N.S.W.S.R., 1898.

whereas the average for Mechanics Institutes in N.S.W. in 1897 was 8.1 per cent²⁸. The latter is not the best comparison, because there was a general relationship between town size and Mechanics Institute membership: the smaller the town, the larger the proportion of inhabitants in the School of Arts (table 7.3). If we compare the colliery townships with similarly sized settlements in N.S.W., we see that Wallsend and Plattsburg attracted more people than towns of the same size, but that Mechanics Institutes in the other colliery villages attracted fewer than usual (table 7.3).

Even though membership was small, Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. did attract the workingmen that could not be persuaded to join in other places. Table 7.4 gives the occupational distribution of members of Schools of Arts in the N.C.D. An overwhelming majority of all committee members were tradesmen, miners or labourers. Except for the Wallsend School of Arts, this group also dominated individual institutes. The ability of Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. to attract mechanics and lower classes of workingmen made them unique.

Nevertheless, the composition of Mechanics Institutes was still highly respectable. The true bourgeoisie, that is, professionals, businessmen and shopkeepers, were overrepresented in relation to their strength in the population. The clerical and supervisory group were out of all proportion to their numbers in the workforce. Labourers, as usual, were grossly underrepresented. Thus, the better off blue-collar workers, that is, tradesmen and miners, made up most of the working-class majority. As with municipal councils, the miners actively involved were more respectable. A cursory glance at their names showed many were also active in other areas which were the preserve of the better-off miner, such as trade unions, co-operatives and local government. This suggests that the miners in Mechanics Institutes were the most respected, wealthy and ambitious. Closer examination showed that over 75 per cent of miners active in the Mechanics Institute could be identified as respectable by virtue of a position as a trade union official or alderman, co-operative society membership or freehold ownership. Of those who lived in

28. Calculated using returns in *N.S.W.S.R., 1897, Census of N.S.W., 1891, 1901*. Population in 1897 was calculated arithmetically.

Table 7.3

Town size and Mechanics Institute membership:
N.S.W. and the colliery townships in 1897

Town Population		Membership per 100 inhabitants	
		N.S.W.	Colliery Townships
0	500	13	
500	1,000	9.1	
1,000	2,000	5.5	
2,000	3,000	5.1	Minmi: 3
			Adamstown: 5
3,000	5,000	4.8	Lambton: 3
			Merewether: 4
			Plattsburg: 13
			Wallsend: 6
5,000	10,000	3.7	Hamilton: 3
10,000	100,000	3.3	
100,000	and over	2	

Note: The Hamilton figure refers to 1900.

Population estimates were calculated arithmetically.

Sources: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1898.

Census of N.S.W., 1891, 1900.

Table 7.4

Occupations of members of Mechanics Institute committees in the Newcastle colliery townships: c. 1870-1900

Occupation	Adamstown		Hamilton		Lambton		Merewether		Town		New Lambton		Plattsburg		WallSEND		Total	
	N=60	M.I. Pop.	N=67	M.I. Pop.	N=69	M.I. Pop.	N=91	M.I. Pop.	N=26	M.I. Pop.	N=30	M.I. Pop.	N=81	M.I. Pop.	N=88	M.I. Pop.	N=528	M.I. Pop.
Professional	5	1	15	6	9	3	2	1	15	2	17	2	12	4	23	4	11	3
Business	2	2	3	2	0	2									6	0.5	2	1
Shopkeeping	3	7	12	15	14	10	9	7	15	7	7	4	9	13	20	9	11	
Clerical	7	1	7	1	16	0.1	7	0.3					7	0.3	8	0.1	7	0.4
Tradesmen	12	10	24	18	10	8	17	9	8	6	7	7	16	10	9	8	14	10
Miner	65	64	31	31	48	65	56	58	54	69	63	72	48	57	31	62	47	57
Labourer	7	15	8	24	3	12	9	23	8	16	7	14	7	14	3	15	6	18

Notes: Figures are in percentages.

'Pop.' column refers to proportion of total workforce.

Hamilton includes Broadmeadow Mechanics Institute.

Sources: N.C., 1871-74.

M.A., 1875.

N.M.H., 1881-1900.

N.S.W. Electoral roll, 1894, 1900-1.

freehold towns, 67 per cent were land owners, whereas about 30 per cent of all electors in these towns held this qualification²⁹. They constituted 58 per cent of those who served as aldermen.

The appeal of Mechanics Institutes to the middle-class meant that, unlike the co-operative and the friendly society, where the working-class, especially miners, also dominated, Schools of Arts did contain more than negligible proportions of the bourgeoisie. In three towns, Hamilton, Lambton and Wallsend, there was a rough balance between white and blue collar occupations. In the other towns they were at least overrepresented in relation to their strength in the workforce (Table 7.4). Although notable for the preponderance of blue-collar workers, Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. were not exclusively working-class institutions. What is more, there was none of the functional division that occurred in other leisure associations. Although Mechanics Institutes had vice-presidents and patrons, they were not as common. The vice-president was meant to be the president's deputy and expected to take an active part on the committee. Table 7.5 shows that most known presidents and vice-presidents were middle-class. Even so, in Mechanics Institutes they were expected to work with the rest of the committee.

Although this balance between members of the bourgeoisie and working-class was similar to that on local councils, the composition of the bourgeoisie differed. Table 7.6 shows the percentages of professionals, businessmen and shopkeepers in local government and Mechanics Institutes. Whereas shopkeepers were the most overrepresented group from the middle-class proper in local government, in Mechanics Institutes it was the professionals. This is partly explained by the fact that this group was the most educated section of the population. The Mechanics Institutes were the only places in the colliery townships which could in any way cater for their interests.

Certain sectors of the professional group were especially drawn to Mechanics Institutes rather than local government. School teachers

29. Based on electoral rolls for 1875 and 1891. For details of the distribution of electoral qualifications in these years see table 4.5.

Table 7.5

Occupations of presidents and vice-presidents of
Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900

Mechanics Institute	N=	Occupation	
		Bourgeois (%)	Blue Collar (%)
Adamstown	16	50	50
Broadmeadow	2	50	50
Hamilton	8	50	50
Lambton	9	33	67
Merewether	20	25	75
Minmi	2	100	0
New Lambton	7	57	43
Plattsburg	18	67	33
Wallsend	13	69	31
Total	98	50	49

Note: Details may not add to totals owing to rounding.

Sources: As for table 7.4.

Table 7.6

Composition of the bourgeoisie on municipal councils and
Mechanics Institute committees in the N.C.D., c. 1870-1900

Occupation	All electors (%)	Aldermen (%)	Mechanics Institute (%)
Professional	3	4	11
Business	1	3	2
Shopkeeping	11	26	11
Clerical	0.4	4	7

Note: Figures are expressed as percentages of all electors, aldermen or committee members.

were a natural choice for a School of Arts committee and many were presidents or vice-presidents. As public servants they were not eligible for municipal office. So, the Mechanics Institute, rather than the council chambers, was where the teachers mixed with the local population.

Colliery managers also had a special concern for Mechanics Institutes. As employers they had a vested interest in an intelligent, well-conducted workforce and the aim of the founders of the movement had been to serve this goal. Thomas Croudace founded the Lambton Mechanics Institute in 1868 and remained its president throughout the century. He donated liberally, giving books, fire coal in winter and gravel for the pathway in front of the new building. He also secured the support of his company, which donated cash and books from time to time³⁰. At Wallsend and Plattsburg Neilson and James Fletcher sr. were active participants in everything the Wallsend School of Arts did in the 1870s. So too was Alexander Ross, then deputy manager of the Wallsend colliery, who succeeded Neilson when he died in 1889. Fletcher sr. was behind the establishment of the Plattsburg Mechanics Institute. When he entered parliament in 1880 his son took over his role. At Minmi Richard Thomas took a leading part in the activities of the School of Arts³¹. Perhaps no institution was so profoundly affected by the growing bitterness between employer and employee from the late 1880s. Mechanics Institutes were founded on the assumption that education would promote a more manageable labour force. The increasing tension between labour and capital proved them wrong, especially since trade union officials constituted at least 45 per cent of the miners in Mechanics Institutes³². Consequently the mine managers withdrew from an active part in Mechanics Institutes. Croudace remained president of

30. *N.C.*, 26 Dec. 1871. *M.A.*, 26 Dec. 1874, 31 Jy. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 26 Jan. 1877, 26 Feb., 29 Jy. 1880, 17 Jan. 1881, 18 Jy. 1885, 24 Jan. 1894. Young to Grainger, 6 Nov. 1868, SAMCo., 'Superintendent's letters', 1863-9 (no. 164).

31. see Chapter 4, p. 23.

32. This is a conservative estimate, since union elections were not always reported in local papers.

the Lambton and New Lambton institutes, but never attended meetings. James Thomas, the New Lambton vice-president, behaved similarly. The only colliery manager who remained active in the 1890s was Alex Ross of Wallsend.

In the N.C.D. Schools of Arts were the places where the town elite met: representatives of the bourgeoisie proper, the intermediate class of white collar wage earners and supervisors, the skilled tradesmen and the better off miners. In particular, the Mechanics Institute brought the local teacher into contact with the rest of the population. Colliery managers attended in the earlier years, but retired from active participation as the cleavage between employer and employee grew deeper and deeper. In this way they sharpened this division even further. Mechanics Institutes became the meeting place for the elite among the townspeople, not the townspeople and the mine managers.

Mechanics Institutes needed more than the support of the small bourgeoisie and the cream of blue collar workers, if they were to survive. Institutes received government assistance in proportion to funds raised, most of which consisted of subscriptions. To attract subscriptions committees developed a two tiered policy in the organisation of activities and services. The first part, which we have already described, involved serious learning. The second was an extension of the popular culture which characterized leisure in the colliery townships. However, in keeping with the general goal of Mechanics Institutes of raising the moral tone, they provided harmless but proper entertainment to socialise people into good habits.

Although the number of reference works in libraries was larger than at most Mechanics Institutes in N.S.W., so too was the proportion of fiction (table 7.7). Over three quarters of the books in the average library were of this class, whilst the N.S.W. average was under 56 per cent. Usually novels were an even higher proportion of circulation (table 7.8). What is more, a large number of these works were light, escapist literature. In 1895 under 8 per cent of novels in the Merewether library were by what contemporary critics consider major nineteenth century English novelists. Nearly 35 per cent were by minor English writers of the time. These were the

Table 7.7

Works of fiction in Mechanics Institute libraries
in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in the 1890s

Area	Total	Books Fiction (%)
Adamstown	2,807	79
Broadmeadow	210	100
Lambton	2,408	57
Merewether	2,272	68
Minmi	385	92
Plattsburg	2,559	56
Wallsend	2,100	58
N.C.D. ($\bar{x}$)	1,790	78
N.S.W. ($\bar{x}$)	1,323	56

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1898.

Table 7.8

Circulation of library books at Mechanics Institutes
in the N.C.D. for certain years, 1876-1900

Figures are half-yearly unless marked with an asterisk

Institute	Year	Circulation	Fiction borrowed as % of circulation
Lambton	1876*	1180	64
Wallsend	1879	756	76
	1880	1105	75
	1882	1800	33
	1894	1400	69
	1900*	9470	98
Plattsburg	1881	967	64
Merewether	1896	4825	95
Hamilton	1893	950	88
	1894	1179	92
	1900	1302	91
Adamstown	1900	1063	85

Sources: 'Return of Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts',
V&PLA, 1875-6, V. 5, pp. 291-300. 'Correspondence with
 Schools of Arts', (P. 3686, 3687). *N.M.H.* 24 Jy. 1879,
 30 Jy. 1880, 22 Aug. 1881, 7 Aug. 1882, 14 Jan. 1886,
 25 Jy. 1893, 26 Jy. 1894, 27 Jy. 1896, 14 Jy. 1900.
W&PSun, 9 Feb. 1895.

authors who specialised in the sensational best sellers of the Victorian era: Wilkie Collins, Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard, Miss. Braddon and Mrs. Henry Wood. Another 12 per cent were by American, Australian, French and Russian authors, or pre-nineteenth century English novelists. The rest were either too inferior to be identifiable, or not identifiable,

Presumably they were by third class authors; since they have never been listed as first or second class³³. The comments critics made about such of these as were identifiable justify this classification. There were 16 by the Rev. Silas K. Hocking, one of whose didactic novels had been described as a 'mixture of sensationalism, sentiment and religious teaching'. Seventeen were by E.J. Worboise, whose novels were 'popular concoctions of blameless sentimentality, examples of the trials and temptations of life and religious teaching'³⁴. This second and lower class fiction, dealing with the 'aristocracy of wealth or blood whose lives were crowded with crises and no little sin', was the preference of the mass reading public that grew up with the expansion of elementary education, because it was an escape from their own lives³⁵.

Reading rooms testified both to the lowly occupations of inhabitants and their lack of education. Nearly 30 per cent of identifiable newspapers and periodicals kept by Mechanics Institutes and over 62 per cent of all periodicals were produced for the mass market (table 7.9). These were the London evening and sporting papers, the illustrated London journals and the popular 'family' monthlies and weeklies. London evening papers grew up to cater for the mass

33. Books and their authors were identified by consulting the following: F.W. Bateson (ed.), *The Cambridge bibliography of English literature*, v. 3, 1800-1900 (Cambridge, 1940); A. Baker, *A guide to the best fiction in English literature* (London, 1913); Altick, *op.cit.*

34. Baker, *op.cit.*, pp. 159, 269.

35. Altick, *op.cit.*, pp. 360, 289-93. All available evidence suggests a similar emphasis in fiction elsewhere in the N.C.D. In 1875 Hamilton was completing the works of Lord Lytton, a minor novelist of sensational crime. In 1891 the Minmi library began with 105 books, mostly novels by Dickens, Mrs. Henry Wood, James Grant and Miss Braddon. All except Dickens were prolific minor nineteenth century novelists. *M.A.*, 11 Aug. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 14 Nov. 1891.

Table 7.9

Newspapers and periodicals kept by Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D.,
c. 1870-1900

Unidentified	10
Newspapers	
A. Australian	
'national' dailies and weeklies (produced in capital cities)	16
local	5
country	5
B. Foreign	
'national'	2
London evening papers	3
London sporting papers	1
regional	8
Periodicals	
serious or specialist	9
illustrated London journals	4
popular family monthlies	2
popular family weeklies	9

Sources: R. Altick, *op. cit.*

F.W. Bateson, *op. cit.*

S. Morrison, *The English Newspaper* (Cambridge, 1932).

reading public with limited time to digest news and other interests besides politics. For instance, *The Star*, held at Minmi, gave sporting news priority and contained much unpolitical material on housekeeping and fashion. It was one of the first papers to use headlines so that readers could pick out the important items quickly³⁶. The illustrated London journals and popular periodicals contained large numbers of illustrations for those barely literate or too tired to read. For those educated and alert enough to keep up concentrated reading there was plenty of light fiction, mostly by the same authors whose sensational and romantic works filled the libraries³⁷. By the 1890s popular periodicals based on the 'titbits' formula, such as *Answers*, and *Pearson's Weekly* and *Referee* had reached the district. These were filled with anecdotes, jokes, excerpts, riddles and short stories suited to the average workman incapable of sustained reading, yet alone concentration³⁸. Although these publications were a smaller proportion of newspapers and periodicals than second and lower class novels were of fiction in the library, they were of a lower standard and reflected even more the position of most people in the district.

Supporters of Mechanics Institutes in the colliery townships were workingmen, or close enough to large numbers of them to be more realistic about them than Brougham and the other middle-class founders in Britain and the colony. Since youths were seeking amusement, not learning, in dubious places, they were unlikely to flock to an institution that edified rather than entertained. So, the committee of the Wallsend School of Arts provided 'chess, draughts etc. to at first [*italics mine*] amuse and attract'³⁹. For the same reason the Plattsburg Mechanics Institute held evenings of readings, recitations and musical items called social harmony evenings. These activities gave people the chance to become used to respectable amusements. If they performed at the evenings of entertainment, they developed their talents in the social skills of the day. Although introduced as a

36. S. Morrison, *The English newspaper* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 273, 289, 291.

37. viz., Mrs. Southwark, Mrs. Henry Wood, Ainsworth. Altick, *op.cit.*, chapter 15 generally.

38. Altick, *op.cit.*, pp. 363, 369.

39. *N.C.*, 30 Dec. 1870.

temporary measure to attract people, this 'social education' became an accepted part of Mechanics Institute activities. Thus the social work the English founders had in mind was done by means other than they had prescribed.

The provision of counter-attractive social activities, as if it was a legitimate part of the work of Mechanics Institutes, was not altogether a conscious rejection of their educative role. To many in the mining townships this socialisation was as much education as intellectual learning. The program of the 'Grant Educational Tournament', held by Hamilton Mechanics Institute in 1895, gave 76 prizes for music, elocution, handwriting, art, flower arrangement and plain and fancy needlework. The last mentioned included awards for the best dressed doll, best knitted socks and best six button-holes. In 1881, Plattsburg Mechanics Institute started a choral society 'to put the finishing touches on the education of youth'⁴⁰. This attitude to education meant many did not question the cultivation of the accepted social graces of the day as proper work for Mechanics Institutes. However, this was not what the English founders meant by education and the result was the separation of the moral from the intellectual goal and achievement of a better moral tone through socialization.

Until the 1890s Mechanics Institutes gave about equal emphasis to intellectual and social education. The former catered for the few who sought intellectual improvement. The latter kept people away from the billiard table, in so far as they joined the Institutes. The majority who sought entertainment swelled receipts from membership fees and thus the government grants. With this money it was possible to erect fine buildings and provide good facilities which attracted more members.

The depression of the 1890s, by creating financial difficulties, upset this balance and signalled a victory for lowbrow but morally acceptable counter-attractive leisure. Institutes claimed that many of their best members were among those who left the district because

40. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts' (P. 3683). *N.M.H.*, 17 June 1881. See also *N.M.H.*, 9 Mar., 30 Jy. 1900.

of the state of the coal trade⁴¹. Receipts from renting lodge rooms and halls dropped. In 1890 the secretary of Plattsburg Mechanics Institute claimed rents from halls largely supported Mechanics Institutes and were the only hope of clearing the current overdraft. By 1894 rents were under 8 per cent of income at Plattsburg and subscriptions over 36 per cent⁴². In the same year interest rates on bank loans rose from 7½ per cent to 8½ per cent. The Hamilton committee, faced with £533 to pay on an overdraft of £650 and stationary membership, negotiated a private loan of £700 at 6½ per cent, repayable in seven years. At the end of 1897 the debt was equal to the original overdraft. Yet between 1888 and 1891 the committee had raised over £300 a year⁴³. Clearly policy had to change to avert bankruptcy.

To attract people hitherto uninterested in Mechanics Institutes, committees introduced amusement on an unprecedented scale. They conducted numerous tournaments in chess, draughts, cards and cribbage. By 1897 cricket teams had been organised and were competing for a trophy. Socials, which included tea, supper and dancing, were introduced for members and their families. It was at this time that the Wallsend committee procured two of the most lowbrow popular periodicals, *Pearson's Weekly* and *Answers*⁴⁴. The new policy worked. At the end of 1892 Merewether had 90 members. During the next six months 17 members left. However, another 63 joined, attracted specifically by the new chess and draught tournaments and the cricket club. Plattsburg membership soared to 411 in 1894 and by 1900 was at its highest ever at Wallsend, 316. As one committee member noted, 'efforts to popularise the institution had proved successful'⁴⁵.

At the same time as amusements expanded, intellectual activity declined. Enrolments at classes did not fall just because so many were leaving the district. Those who stayed could not afford to

41. *N.M.H.*, 24 Jy. 1893, 20 Jan. 1894, 6 Jan. 1896.

42. *ibid.*, 1 Feb. 1890. *W&PSun*, 9 Feb. 1895. In 1891, before depression really set in, 46 per cent of the Wallsend School of Arts income was from rents and 22.7 per cent from subscriptions. *W&PSun*, 19 Aug. 1891.

43. *N.M.H.*, 20 Jan. 1894, 28 Jan. 1898, 6 Oct. 1891.

44. *ibid.*, 30 Jan., 31 Jy. 1893, 6 Jan. 1896. *W&PSun*, 9 Feb. 1895. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts' (p. 3684).

45. *N.M.H.*, 31 Jy. 1893, 14 Jy. 1900. *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1897.

attend classes because of the low wages and lack of work⁴⁶. In some places classes disappeared altogether. Public lectures, as distinct from classes providing intensive tuition, were held occasionally. However, it had always been difficult to make them frequent⁴⁷. There were no debates. Mechanics Institutes in the N.C.D. became places given over entirely to counter-attractive amusement. The general character of recreation in the area triumphed over the one organisation devoted to serious use of leisure.

The victory did not subvert the original moral goals of Mechanics Institutes in the district. At the time billiards were being introduced into Mechanics Institutes all over N.S.W. on a large scale. In the N.C.D. the strength of nonconformity, probably helped by the prohibitive cost of a table in comparison with a pack of cards, ensured that billiards were kept out. The exception was Lambton, which did have a table for a while. Its introduction caused several prominent townsmen to withdraw support. Some of them who were aldermen used their position to prevent the usual annual donation being made to the Mechanics Institute until the table was sold in 1891⁴⁸. To survive the 1890s the Mechanics Institutes had to come to terms with the character of the district as composed almost entirely of manual workers. Their intellectual aims became pious hopes until prosperity returned in 1900. It was still possible to carry out their moral goal, although by promoting acceptable amusements, not learning. The refusal to give way to the billiard table meant that they went against the trend in N.S.W. in the 1890s.

When we discussed the occupational distribution of Mechanics Institute committee members we noted that labourers were grossly underrepresented. This added yet another strand to the division between this group and the rest of the population, which also occurred in co-operatives, friendly societies, local government,

46. *Reports of the minister for Public Instruction*, 1895, p. 183. In 1894 Alfred Edden, M.L.A. for Kahibah, tried unsuccessfully to get the fees of the Adamstown mining class abolished because the slack trade 'made even a few shillings important'.

47. See p. 257 below.

48. *N.M.H.*, 2 Oct., 12 Nov., 23 Jy. 1891.

unions and occupationally based benefit societies. The Mechanics Institutes also failed to bridge other fundamental cleavages like sex and age.

Mechanics Institutes had little success in acquiring female members. There were 'some' as early as 1872 and 1874 at Wallsend and Lambton, none at Merewether until 1894 and little mention of them elsewhere⁴⁹. The only precise numbers ever stated were for Merewether in 1896. They constituted 58 out of 207, or 28 per cent of members⁵⁰. This was despite inducements like half-price subscriptions payable a month in advance and plenty of romantic novelists, like Miss Braddon and E.P. Poe, in the library⁵¹. Such a low proportion hardly approximates the rough balance of the sexes the N.C.D. had achieved by 1900⁵². Part of the explanation may lie in women's lower literacy than men in the area. The gap existed mainly between adult men and women and grew from 3 per cent in 1861 to 9 per cent in 1891 (table 7.10). Another possible explanation is that women asked others to bring books home for them. This would have saved paying out two membership fees in one family.

Even when women did join Mechanics Institutes, they were isolated and their participation restricted. Most 'respectable' libraries in the nineteenth century provided a separate reading room for women, or at least screened off part of the main room for their exclusive use, to protect them from the coarse language of male readers⁵³. The colliery townships took similar steps to 'provide for their comfort'⁵⁴. Most classes were designed to meet the needs of the male workforce. Although there was much talk of the benefits of cookery classes for women, they were never introduced. Even if they had been held, they would hardly have been open to men. At Minmi, where women did join the ambulance class, they were taught separately⁵⁵. Women were not

49. *N.C.*, 2 Nov. 1872. *M.A.*, 26 Dec. 1894. *N.M.H.*, 20 Jy. 1894.

50. *N.M.H.*, 20 Jy. 1896.

51. Rules and regulations of the Merewether School of Arts, *loc.cit.*

52. In 1891 there were 1.01 men to every woman. Calculated from *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.

53. Altick, *op.cit.*, p. 238.

54. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', (P. 3684).

55. *N.M.H.*, 27 Jy. 1880, 15 Feb. 1900.

Table 7.10

Literacy among adult males and females in the N.C.D.
in the late nineteenth century

Year	Literacy (%)	
	Male	Female
1861	61	58
1871	77	66
1891	91	82

Notes: Literacy refers to stated ability to read and write.

Adult means persons 21 years or over.

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1861, 1871, 1891.

expected to take an active part in the direction of the Institute or its more intellectual activities. There was never any talk of them serving on committees, although, since so few joined, this is understandable. At lectures and debates they were to be seen and not heard. They were not even there for their own edification. Committees encouraged their presence

being convinced that their personal interest in institutions for the mutual, moral, social and intellectual improvement add [ed] tone and prevented degeneration into rowdiness⁵⁶.

Thus, even if women had joined in large numbers, social attitudes would have ensured that they remained separate and passive.

56. *N.C.*, 24 Oct. 1871. This 'policing' role has been interpreted as a common theme in Australian history. See A. Summers, *Damned whores and God's police, the colonization of women in Australia* (Melb., 1975).

Older members of the population saw Mechanics Institutes as largely benefiting 'the young men'. They were the ones who would be saved from the billiard and bagatelle tables and make their way up the social scale as self-made men⁵⁷. As with other non muscular activities, like exhibits for the horticultural show, 'the young men' expressed little interest. Many of the lighter activities, like chess, draughts and evenings of entertainment, were put on to attract youth. Subscriptions, as for women, were at half-price. At Adamstown, the one place which gave exact figures, they were never even a third of members⁵⁸. Yet the older generation never lost hope of attracting them. After years of failure in neighbouring towns, the New Lambton members naively expressed surprise that so few young men had turned up to their inaugural meeting⁵⁹. There is some evidence that even those who joined were loathe to participate. In 1881 one Plattsburg committee member tried in desperation to get a resolution passed to organise impromptu speeches 'to encourage the young men to speak'⁶⁰. It was not until the 1890s, when cricket clubs were introduced, that they joined in large numbers. At Plattsburg the cricket team brought in a large number of young men who read books and papers and played games, instead of loitering on street corners. At Merewether enough joined to elect an under-age secretary⁶¹.

Over three quarters of committee members known to be active in a church were nonconformists (table 7.11), but they were just over 50 per cent of the population. Given the express aim of Mechanics Institutes to raise the moral tone and the success of those in the N.C.D. in keeping out billiard tables, this is not surprising. That the nonconformist denominations ranged from genteel Presbyterianism and Wesleyanism to the radically evangelical Baptists and minor Methodists must have helped break down

57. *N.M.H.*, 26 Jy. 1880, 18 Jy. 1885, 26 Mar. 1886.

58. In 1887 there were under 26 per cent, in 1890 25 per cent and in 1891 30 per cent. *N.M.H.*, 12 Jan. 1887, 19 Jan., 9 Jy. 1891.

59. *ibid.*, 4 Sept. 1891.

60. *ibid.*, 1 Mar. 1881.

61. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', (P. 3684).

Table 7.11

Religious affiliation of known church members on Mechanics
Institute committees in the colliery townships, c. 1879-1900

Denomination	Committees (%) (N=103)	1891 Census (%)
Anglican	17	31
Roman Catholic	8	10
Presbyterian	19	13
Wesleyan	16	8
Primitive Methodist	23	19
United Free Methodist	7	1
Lay Methodist	3	3
Baptist	3	4
Congregational	5	3

Note: Census figures do not add to 100 because only denominations to which committee members belonged were included.

Sources: As for table 8.11, plus *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.

religious divisions. Moreover, Anglicans and Roman Catholics were not absent from committees. The latter were close to their strength in the population, mainly because there was a surfeit of Irishmen among the teachers. Thus many committees included supporters of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic faith, as well as strong nonconformists. Table 7.12 shows that in 1891 the Hamilton committee contained three Anglicans, one Catholic and three Wesleyans. In the same year the Minmi committee brought together two Primitive Methodists and two Catholics. The express forbidding of any sectarian discussion in Mechanics Institutes, although it testified to the strength of religious illfeeling, cleared the way for Catholics and Protestants to get on with each other as fellow human beings.

Table 7.12

Religious affiliation of known church members on certain
Mechanics Institute committees in the N.C.D. 1871-1900

Town	Year	C/E	R/C	Denomination						Bap.	Cong.
				Pres.	Wes.	P.M.	U.F.M.	L.M.			
Adamstown	1891	1				3		2			
Hamilton	1891	3	1		3						
Hamilton	1900	2	1	3							
Lambton	1900		1			2					
Merewether	1891					1	3			1	
Merewether	1900					2	1				
Minmi	1891		2	3		2					
Plattsburg	1881	2		3		2					
Plattsburg	1891		1	1					1		
Wallsend	1871			3	2	2	2				
Wallsend	1875	1			2	3	1			1	
Wallsend	1891	1	1	1	7						
Wallsend	1900	2			1				2		

Note: Only committees where several churchmen could be identified were included.

Sources: As for table 7.11.

Mechanics Institutes went further than promoting social cohesion by bringing the bourgeoisie and working-class elite and the various religious denominations together. They played an important part in the integration of local life and development of local sentiment.

The very existence of a School of Arts in a town had a symbolic function in a district with a strong sense of inferiority because most inhabitants were manual workers. Just as bands showed to the people of Sydney that the people of the colliery townships were capable

of appreciating good music, the existence of a Mechanics Institute showed that 'although they were compelled to live by the sweat of their brow, they still possessed resolution and vigour of mind'⁶².

The symbolic importance of the Mechanics Institute was expressed in the construction of a substantial edifice to house its activities. This, as the secretary of the Minmi School of Arts put it, would be

a public building worthy of being pointed to as an example of the intelligence and energy and liberality of the people⁶³.

The original buildings, if not rented rooms, were small, single storied structures, built as quickly and cheaply as possible. However, everyone insisted that the second building be a monument. The first building at Hamilton cost £150, but one stage alone of the new building cost £1,600⁶⁴. Whilst most buildings in the colliery townships were weatherboard, the ideal Mechanics Institutes, as at Hamilton, Wallsend and Plattsburg, were two story brick buildings⁶⁵. Thus they could vie with emporiums and hotels, which were often substantial structures. That they had to be centrally situated for the convenience of members⁶⁶ enhanced their status as public buildings. If a Mechanics Institute was in poor condition, it drew criticism. Besides the billiard table, one of the features of the Lambton Mechanics Institute which displeased the aldermen who revoked the customary rebate in 1891 was the dilapidated state of the building. This, they argued, was a discredit to the town and so undeserving of a rebate⁶⁷.

Since the Institute was considered a public building, the whole town co-operated to help it reach this position and celebrated when it was achieved. We have already noted that local councils refunded

62. *N.M.H.*, 9 Aug. 1881.

63. *ibid.*, 14 Nov. 1891.

64. *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 6 Oct. 1891.

65. *N.M.H.*, 22 Feb., 1879, 27 Jy. 1880, 6 Oct. 1891. In the 1891 census 81 per cent of buildings in the colliery townships were wooden and 15 per cent stone or brick.

66. In 1891 the president of the Minmi School of Arts claimed that the old Mechanics Institute had failed because it was not centrally situated. *N.M.H.*, 15 Aug. 1891.

67. *N.M.H.*, 29 Oct. 1891.

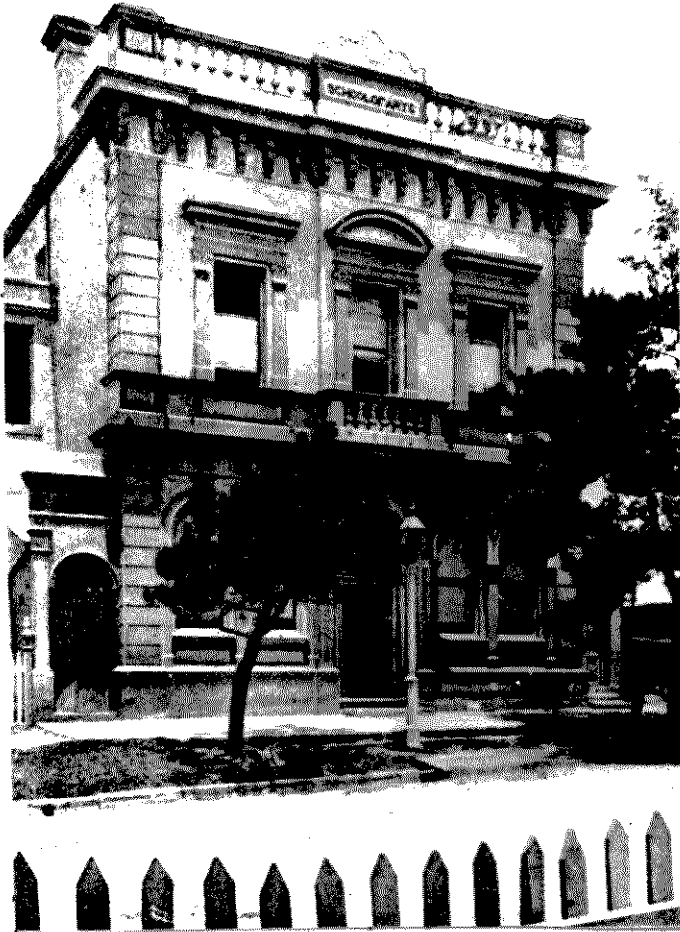
rates and other sections of the population, such as drama groups and choirs, gave performances for the building fund⁶⁸. The laying of a foundation stone or opening of a new building was a public affair, marked by the presence of dignitaries, noise and colour. Prestigious persons, such as members of parliament and even the premier, officiated. The mayor was present. Crowds gathered and children wore their holiday clothes. Streets and the site were hung with decorations. When the foundation of the new building at Wallsend was laid the local brass band headed a procession of local friendly societies, including the Druids, Protestant Alliance and Sons of Temperance, along with the Independent Order of Good Templars, which encircled the ground⁶⁹.

In return Mechanics Institutes were expected to serve more than their own needs. The low earnings of most of the population meant it was very difficult for inhabitants other than publicans to build public halls. Since the latter always placed their buildings next to the public house, they were unacceptable for churches, temperance societies and activities requiring a quiet atmosphere. If inhabitants built a Mechanics Institute the government would help pay for it. This partly explains the desire for a good Mechanics Institute: it could provide, more cheaply, amenities for the activities of other voluntary associations. Consequently the main hall at Plattsburg was built like a theatre with a 'wide and well adjusted state and semi-circular gallery'. The smaller rooms were intended to house friendly society lodges and committee meetings, as well as Mechanics Institute classes. One was built as the office of the council clerk. One of the reasons why Wallsend built a new School of Arts in 1879 was because the old building was too small for entertainments. The new hall not only had extra seating, but also a stage and dressing room. Churches also made sure they were considered. In 1894, Thomas Hetherington, a prominent Primitive Methodist at Merewether, got a resolution passed to include facilities for cooking and boiling water in improvements to the School of Arts⁷⁰. These were needed for church anniversaries and socials.

68. see chapter six.

69. *N.M.H.*, 14 Dec. 1880, 9 Aug. 1881, 11 Aug. 1886, 12 Sept., 11 Oct. 1891.

70. *ibid.*, 22 Feb. 1879, 27 Jy. 1880, 11 Oct. 1894.



Wallisend School of Arts

Hamilton
Mechanics
Institute



Plate VIII

Mechanics Institutes

Photographs reproduced by permission of Newcastle Public Library

Table 7.13 lists the events that took place in the Mechanics Institute buildings at Wallsend, Plattsburg, Hamilton and Merewether in 1886 and 1891. All were hired for dances, concerts, church and friendly society socials, bazaars, flower shows, public meetings and church services on special occasions, when the congregation would be too large to fit into a chapel. When theatrical groups gave fundraising concerts for other organisations, Mechanics Institutes were the scene of co-operation between several voluntary associations. A most complicated set of relationships occurred when the Merewether School of Arts agreed to let the Merewether Minstrel troupe and the juvenile choir give a concert to raise money for the fire brigade. The same two groups also gave a concert for the Adamstown and Merewether brass bands, who needed money to travel to the N.S.W. band competitions. Without Mechanics Institutes these group activities which needed large halls with stages may have been curtailed.

The Mechanics Institute, then, provided vital services for other voluntary associations and activities related to the needs of the colliery townships. It must be emphasised here that these events were in no way part of Mechanics Institute activities. Those who have studied Schools of Arts in N.S.W. have concluded that they were social rather than educational centres on the basis of reports of social events that occurred there. For example, Matheson has cited the use of the hall of the Bombala School of Arts for theatrical performances as evidence of its 'social orientation'⁷¹. If what happened in the colliery townships is any indication, the absence of any other suitable hall probably led to hiring of the School of Arts for the performance. If this was the case it was not part of School of Arts activities. In the N.C.D. Mechanics Institutes were built to accommodate other town activities, the users contributing to income through hire and rental charges. They were not allowed to disturb Mechanics Institute proceedings such as lectures and classes⁷². If it is borne in mind that all that occurred at Mechanics Institutes need not have been part of their curriculum, the assessment of their operation in N.S.W. might well be kinder.

71. I.T. Matheson, 'In search of respectability, secular and religious influence on society in N.S.W. 1863-1900' (Ph.D., ANU, 1970-71), p. 295.

72. *N.M.H.*, 30 Oct. 1900.

Table 7.13

Voluntary associations and ad hoc groups using the Mechanics Institute buildings at
Wallsend, Plattsburg, Hamilton and Merewether in 1886 and 1891

This list was compiled by going through the advertisements in the *Wallsend and Plattsburg Sun*, a bi-weekly, for 1886 and the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, a daily, for 1891. The list under-states users and uses, especially at Hamilton and Merewether in 1891, by which time the *Newcastle Morning Herald* was publishing fewer and fewer advertisements for activities in the colliery townships.

Wallsend School of Arts, 1886

Lodge rooms, freemasons, Independent Order of Good Templars

Concerts: temperance (1)
charity (2)
farewell (1)
complimentary (1)

Public meetings: (2)

Church activities: Sunday school anniversary (1)
bazaar (1)
lecture (1)

Private dancing classes on a regular basis

Plattsburg Mechanics Institute, 1886

Lodge rooms: freemasons, Independent Order of Good Templars, local (Cooperative Colliery) miners' lodge.

Concerts: temperance (1)
renovation fund of the United Free Methodist church (1)
by Primitive Methodist church choir for organ fund (1)
by Wallsend and Plattsburg Amateur Drama Club for Horticultural, (1)
Poultry, Pidgeon and Canary Society
charity (1)

Church activities: Congregational church anniversary
reopening services of United Free Methodist church
social for Church of England library fund
see also under concerts

Social functions: masonic lodge (2)
balls (3) by local volunteer company, Grand United Order of Free
Gardeners and private individuals (a calico dress ball)
see also under church activities

Hamilton Mechanics Institute, 1891

Concerts: Presbyterian church (2)
 Hamilton public school (2)
 Church of England (1)

Public Meetings: (1)

Church activities: bazaar (1)
 flower show (1)
 see also under concerts

Social functions: masonic lodge (2)
 Grand United Order of Free Gardeners (1)
 Hamilton Quadrille Club (regular dances)

Merewether School of Arts, 1891

Concerts: by Merewether Minstrel Troupe and juvenile choir for fire brigade (2)
 by Merewether Minstrel Troupe for Paragon lodge of Independent Order of
 Good Templars (1)
 by Merewether Minstrel Troupe for Adamstown and Merewether Brass Band (1)
 charity (1)
 organ fund of Welsh Baptist church (1)

Church activities: bazaars (1)
 flower shows (1)
 social by Church of England (1)

Social functions: Burwood cooperative society (1)
 anniversary of Loyal Junction Lodge, Manchester Unity Independent
 Order of Goodfellows (1)
 see also under church activities

Other: practices of Merewether Choral Union

The use of Mechanics Institutes for non-educational activities is not the only facet of Schools of Arts in N.S.W. on which a study of those in the N.C.D. may shed light. Their experiences suggest that lack of intellectual activity did not always stem from apathy. It has been pointed out that 'scientific' lectures alone drew good houses. However, even after the department of Technical Education came to the district, it was hard to find experts to speak on the subjects about which people wished to hear. The exception was first aid, where local doctors provided the expertise. Otherwise, the best any committee could manage was consecutive lectures on unrelated topics, as at Lambton in 1885, when two were on chemistry, one on mineralogy and one on shorthand⁷³. This was because of the way members of the department of Technical Education were employed. Either they were full-time teachers of classes leading to a certificate, and only had time for occasional lectures, or itinerant lecturers, expected to travel all over the colony. There were too few of the latter to meet the demand for their services⁷⁴. If the colliery townships, where there was a branch of the Technical Education Department, were in difficulties, other areas that could only draw on itinerant lecturers must have been far worse off. Thus, Mechanics Institutes might not have been wholly to blame for their inactivity. It would have been financially foolish to hold lectures on subjects which did not interest people, just for the prestige of holding lectures.

Finally, the ability of many social activities to achieve the moral goal, which was most important in the colony, has not been appreciated. As a result, non-intellectual pastimes have been seen as pure amusement, rather than a means of socialisation. It is also possible that people outside the colliery townships saw education in respectable social skills and use of leisure time as an important part of education, especially since sewing, art and music were all taught formally in schools.

Mechanics Institutes in the colliery townships made important contributions to the development of community. The emphasis on

73. *ibid.*, 18 Jy. 1885.

74. *Report of minister for Public Instruction*, 1894, p. 183.

practical scientific knowledge distinguished them from similar institutions in the rest of the colony. That most of their members were manual workers, albeit better off ones, makes them an exception in both the British and Australian experience. Although the need to survive led to the provision of social activities, the strength of nonconformity prevented the introduction of the billiard table, which occurred in the rest of N.S.W. The aims and physical existence of a Mechanics Institute were thoroughly integrated into the rest of local life. They kept alive the ideal of upward mobility as a self-made man and provided the scientific instruction that inhabitants thought necessary for the economic welfare of the colony. They facilitated the operation of a variety of activities and causes that inhabitants thought important by providing lodge rooms and concert halls. Their existence was a focus for local sentiment in that they proved mining people were intelligent and provided a public building of which all could be proud. They helped bridge fundamental cleavages between the bourgeoisie and blue collar workers which most voluntary associations maintained. They also drew together on the same committees committed church members from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and nonconformist churches. Some divisions which other leisure associations did little to bridge, they also confirmed. There was the same gap between what the old thought was good for the young and the young wanted to do. Women were largely absent, accommodated separately and without equal status when it came to participation in running the Institutes. Although they did something to bring the bourgeoisie and the working-class elite together, there was the same absence of labourers that occurred in most other voluntary associations. They also failed to retain colliery managers as active members in face of the increasing tension between employer and employee. Consequently they aided the reduction of this relationship from a total to a largely economic one.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CHURCHES

Churches, be they sects or denominations, were the most prolific voluntary associations in the N.C.D. in the second half of the nineteenth century. Whereas no town had more than four friendly societies, there were never less than four churches and two had as many as 10 (figure 8.1). Although this variety of religious affiliation might lend character to the area, it could have been disastrous for its growth as a community. Many churches, all seeking to win souls and render those born into them faithful followers, could have meant constant emphasis on differences between inhabitants and the fostering of several rather than one social life in a town. Taking their origins from diverse regions of the British Isles, many churches cut along rather than across ethnic lines and so could have enhanced a sense of difference. That some churches attract specific classes of people could also have reinforced fundamental cleavages. Finally, the importance of sectarianism in the politics of nineteenth century N.S.W. meant towns could be split into Catholic and non Catholic or, taking account of origins, Orange and Green. Thus the very diversity of churches in the N.C.D. meant they had the power to destroy the sense of community, built up through other agencies, by emphasizing class, ethnic and theological differences.

In practice the churches were less destructive than they might have been, whilst their contribution to the distinctive life style of the district was important in making it an unique region. Sectarianism, though rife in the first 20 years, simmered down after a generation of close living. Awareness of common problems and ideals overcame any sense of rivalry and competition fund-raising activities might have engendered. Among the protestant churches, especially the nonconformist, ecumenism was fashionable and the end of the century saw the organic union of most branches of Methodism. The peculiar regional origins and working-class character of inhabitants made for a distribution of religious adherence, pattern of commitment and problems in the churches quite different from the rest of N.S.W.

Table 8.1 sets out religious adherence in the N.C.D. and N.S.W. in 1891, the year in our period when census categories were most

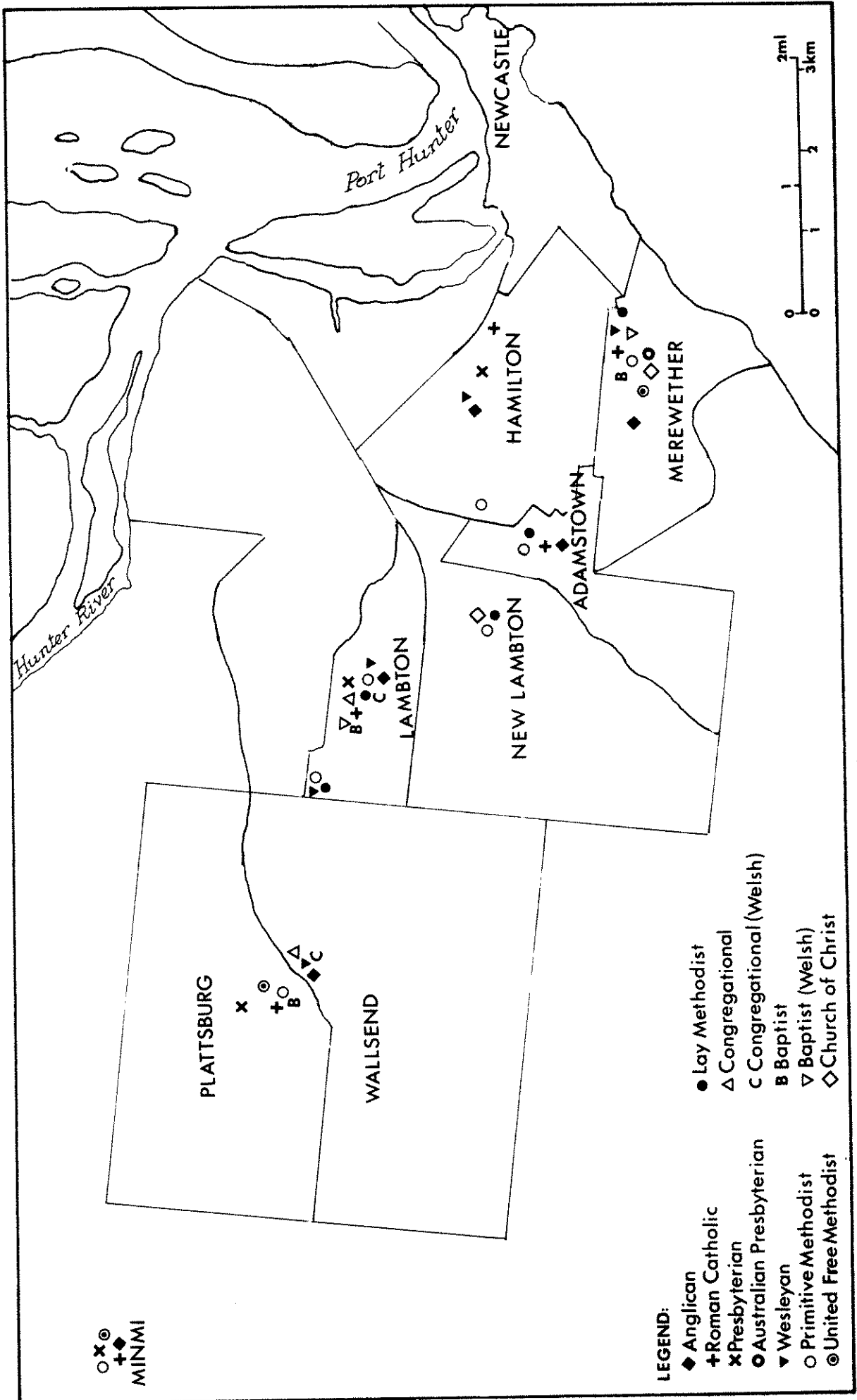


Fig. 8-1 Churches in the Newcastle colliery townships in 1900

Table 8.1

Religious adherence in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in 1891

Denomination	Proportions		Critical ratio N.C.D.
	N.C.D.	N.S.W.	
Church of England	31.1	45.3	-46.1
Wesleyan	8.4	7.7	3.8
Primitive Methodist	19.0	1.8	65.7
United Free Methodist	1.1	0.2	12.9
Other Methodist	2.6	0.5	19.8
Presbyterian	13.3	9.9	15.1
Congregational	3.2	2.2	8.5
Baptist	4.0	1.2	21.5
Other Protestant	1.2	1.7	-6.9
Salvation Army	2.0	0.9	11.8
Roman Catholic	10.3	25.9	-7.2
Others	3.8	2.7	8.6
All Methodists	31.1	10.1	68.4
Nonconformist	52.8	25.9	81.0

Note: The critical ratio shows the extent to which a given population deviates from the total population, taking account of the numbers and proportions in the given area to avoid chance alone differences. At a critical ratio ± 4 there is a chance alone possibility of deviation of 10,000:1. Thus all deviations of 4 or more have been judged significant. This measure is used by Waldersee in *Catholic Society in N.S.W.* The formula is

$$CR = \frac{\delta}{\sigma} \text{ where } \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{po(100 - po)}{t}}$$

where δ = deviation = $pe - po$
 pe = average proportion
 po = regional proportion
 t = total persons in region
 σ = standard error of deviation

Sources: *Census of N.S.W., 1891.* J. Waldersee, *Catholic Society in N.S.W., 1768-1860* (Sydney, 1974), p. 110.

detailed. Next to the proportions are critical ratios which measure significant differences between a specific and total population. Clearly, the colliery townships had a pattern of affiliation quite different from the rest of the colony. Whilst Anglicans were 45 per cent of all New South Welsh in 1891, they were less than a third of colliery township inhabitants. Roman Catholics were about 10 per cent of the population in the N.C.D., but over a quarter of the colony. Nonconformists were over half the population of the colliery townships, but only a quarter of all New South Welsh. Critical ratios show that these differences were significant. They also suggest that the churches most responsible for the strength of nonconformity in the N.C.D. were the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist. Of these the Methodist proportion was furthest away from the colonial average. However, the Wesleyan critical ratio differed little from the rest of N.S.W. It was the Primitive, United Free and other Methodists who were so much stronger than in the rest of the colony, with the highest critical ratio among the Primitives. Therefore, if we take this measure as an index of distinctiveness, it was the Primitive Methodist Church which was most responsible for the unique religious character of the colliery townships.

The reasons for the peculiar religious character of the area lay partly in the distinctive origins of inhabitants. Table 8.2 shows that there were significant differences among the British born of N.S.W. and the N.C.D. There were more English, Scots and Welsh, but fewer Irish in these colliery townships. This must have contributed to the greater number of Presbyterians and less Catholics. It was also partly responsible for the higher proportion of Baptists and Congregationalists, the most popular sects among Welsh nonconformists. The prominence of Primitive Methodism cannot be explained by reference to the census, for whilst their strength in England was highly localized, regional origins are not given in the census. However, among the English born belonging to this sect who gave their country of origin in the marriage registers, nearly 60 per cent came from Northumberland and Durham. The strength of this regional group, famous for Primitive Methodism, in the other branches of the Methodist church was about 35 per cent (table 8.3).

Table 8.2British born in N.S.W. and the N.C.D. in 1891

Birthplace	Proportion		Critical ratio N.C.D.
	N.S.W.	N.C.D.	
England	13.3	23.1	35.2
Wales	0.5	3.2	23.3
Scotland	3.3	7.6	24.7
Ireland	6.7	2.4	-42.7

Source: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891.Table 8.3English born in the Methodist churches
of the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Birthplace	Branch of Methodism (%)		
	Wesleyan N=82	Primitive N=61	United Free N=48
Northumberland or Durham	35	57	38
Staffordshire	16	15	10
Cornwall	13	8	4
Elsewhere	35	20	48

Source: Marriage register survey.

Thus the peculiar nativity of habitants in comparison with the rest of N.S.W., that is, more Welsh, Scots and Geordies and fewer Irish, made for the relative insignificance of Roman Catholics and comparative strength of the Primitive Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches.

Except in the cases of Presbyterianism and Roman Catholicism, religious adherence in the N.C.D. was not just a matter of origins. The strength of the Baptist, Congregational and Primitive Methodist churches was due partly to their image. This was totally responsible for the strength of the United Free Methodists and relative insignificance of the Wesleyans.

Although founded to clean up the decadence of the Church of England in the eighteenth century, the Wesleyan Church gradually became a challenge to it. The evangelical methods and displays of enthusiasm appealed to working people who also saw the new church as a way of expressing opposition to the established order. With time the Wesleyans took on a more respectable tone and began to prohibit such 'vulgar' expressions of religious fervour as camp meetings. As well, the strongly centralized and authoritarian organization of Wesleyanism, which meant no local autonomy and very little lay participation, began to irk the working man, who was fast espousing ideals of democracy. The structure of the Wesleyan church and its gradual drift from enthusiastic religion were responsible for the secessions which became the Primitive and United Free Methodist churches. The primitive secession took place in 1811 over camp meetings. The next 30 years saw multiple secessions from the Wesleyan body because of its undemocratic structure and limited scope for the laity. In 1857 these joined to form the United Free Methodist church. The new denomination offered workingmen the participation and local self-determination denied in most other churches and also, at the time, politically. Although the *raison d'être* of the Primitive church was the appeal to the working-classes of enthusiastic and spontaneous evangelism, the constitution was more democratic than the Wesleyan in that lay people were allowed

more responsibility¹. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Wesleyans quickly lost ground among the coalminers of Northumberland and Durham², heavily imbued with chartism, and that the Primitive and United Free churches were so popular in the N.C.D., where most of the population were radical members of the working-class.

In Wales the Baptist and Congregational churches were to the Established Church what the Methodist sects were in England. They came to Wales as part of the nonconformist revival there in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The appeal of nonconformity was to the Welsh tenants, for it enabled them to express their opposition to anglicized landlords who belonged to the Established Church. The most popular sects were the Congregational and Baptist, which, like the Primitive and United Free churches, offered the largest amount of lay participation. In addition, because Welsh was the tongue of the nonconformist chapel, they became important in the preservation of Welsh life, the expression of nationalism and anti-English feeling³. Given the orientation of Welsh nonconformity to the poorer sections of society, it was inevitable that it was the form of religion Welsh miners brought to the N.C.D.

Although religious affiliation in the colliery townships differed from the rest of the colony, the numbers committed to church affairs did not. As in the rest of N.S.W., church attendance and membership fell in the last two decades of the century. Nevertheless, the unusual pattern of affiliation and the working-class character of religion in the district were evident in the variation in commitment to the different churches and the importance of Sunday schools.

-
1. Discussions of the differences between the branches of Methodism are found in W.J. Townsend, *A new history of Methodism* (London, 1907), v. 1, pp. 515-537, 560-79. K.S. Inglis, *The churches and the working classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963), p. 12.
 2. E. Welbourne, *The miners of Northumberland and Durham* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 57.
 3. T. Brennan *et al.*, *Social change in south west Wales* (London, 1954), pp. 17-19, 113. Frankenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 257. J.H. Morris and L.J. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

From 1870 to 1890 Sunday church attendance among adult adherents fell in all churches in N.S.W. In 1870 nearly 59 per cent of those over 15 years who claimed to be adherents went to church. The corresponding figure for 1900 was 45 per cent. The fall was largest in Sydney, but also considerable in rural areas⁴. Statistics for attendance in the N.C.D. are restricted to the Anglican and Presbyterian churches. Both suggest a large drop in the attendance of adult adherents from 1870 to 1900 (table 8.4).

Table 8.4

Sunday attendance at the Anglican and Presbyterian
churches of the N.C.D., 1871-1901

Year	Attendance of adherents (%)	
	Anglican	Presbyterian
1871	34.7	47.3
1891	-	37.8
1901	28.0	27.3

Note: Attendance was calculated as a proportion of adult adherents whose number was estimated by multiplying the number of adherents in the relevant census by the proportion of the total census population over 15 years. The Anglican figure for 1901 and the Presbyterian for 1891 refer to those on the church roll rather than Sunday attendances. These were included because they indicate those sufficiently committed to be known as adherents.

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

Presbyterian Church of N.S.W., *Blue Books*, 1871, 1891, 1901 (FML).

Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, *Diocesan Synod*, 1871, 1891, 1901 (M.L.).

4. W.W. Phillips, 'Religious profession and practice in N.S.W., 1850-1901: the statistical evidence', *H.S.*, v. 15 (1972), p. 245. I am indebted to this article for methods of calculating adult adherents and children of Sunday school age used in this chapter.

For the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Primitive and United Free churches there are estimates of church sittings and attendance in the 1890s. These suggest a considerable fall from an earlier period when the churches were built. At most they were only half full (table 8.5).

Table 8.5

Accommodation and attendance at certain churches in
the N.C.D. in the 1890s

Denomination	Sittings	Attendance	Attendance as a % of sittings
Presbyterian	1180	510	43.2
Wesleyan	975	527	54.1
Primitive Methodist	2230	1090	48.9
United Free Methodist	250	20	8.0

Sources: Presbyterian Church of N.S.W., *op. cit.*, 1901.

Methodist Church of N.S.W., *Report of Federal Council
on Methodist Union for 1895* (Sydney, 1896).

All churches distinguished between the broader mass of adherents and the smaller number of truly committed members. In the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches these can be identified through the number of communicants. In the nonconformist churches they are those designated members. Membership or communicant figures, although not common before 1900, point to the same trend. Apart from the Church of England, where only a very small number of adherents were ever communicants, and the Wesleyans, members as a proportion of adherents dropped in all denominations in the 1890s. The Wesleyan figure in 1900, although a rise on 1890, was only half that of 1871 (table 8.6).

Not only did all the churches in the N.C.D. suffer a drop in commitment, but the proportion truly involved in them was very

Table 8.6Membership and communicants at churches in the N.C.D., 1871-1901

Year	Membership (as a percentage of adherents)						
	C/E	Pbryn.	Cong.	Bap.	Wes.	P.M.	UFM
1871	4.3	-	-	-	24.7	-	-
1891	5.4	17.1 ⁴	32.9	33.5	8.9	22.1	34.8
1901	6.7	11.5	23.8	25.7	12.1	10.9	33.9

Note: Method of calculating membership is the same as for calculating the proportion at Sunday services. See table 8.4.

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1871, 1891, 1901.

Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, *loc. cit.*

Presbyterian Church of N.S.W., *op. cit.*, 1891, 1901.

Congregational Union of N.S.W., *Year Book*, 1891, 1902, (UCRS).

Independent, 5 Oct. 1902 (UCRS).

N.S.W. Baptist Association, *Yearbook*, 1901, 'Minutes', Sept. 1900, p. 239.

N.S.W. Baptist, 10 Oct. 1893, 10 Oct. 1899.

Methodist Church of N.S.W., *Minutes of Conference*, 1871, 1891, 1901 (M.L.).

Burwood UFM Church, 'Minute Book', 26 Mar. 1891, Jan. 1901 (UCRS).

Burwood P.M. Circuit, Dec. 1891, Dec. 1900 (UCRS).

Wallsend P.M. Circuit, 'Notes on Wallsend Circuit' (papers held at Wallsend Methodist Parsonage, Metcalf Street, Wallsend).

small at any time. The highest was in the United Free Methodist church, where one third of all adherents were members in 1901. Most churches in the colliery townships drew much fewer adherents into their committed circle than this. The numbers were similar to or lower than those in the rest of N.S.W. in 1901 (table 8.7)

Table 8.7Church members and communicants in the N.C.D., c. 1900

Denomination	Membership (as a percentage of adherents)	
	N.C.D.	N.S.W.
Anglican	6.7	9.1
Presbyterian	11.5	14.7
Congregational	32.8	1.4
Baptist	25.7	27.0
Wesleyan	12.1	18.0
Primitive Methodist	10.9	11.0
United Free Methodist	33.9	32.9

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1901.

N.S.W.S.R., 1900.

Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, *op. cit.*, 1901.

Presbyterian Church of N.S.W., *op. cit.*, 1901

Congregational Union of N.S.W., *Yearbook*, 1902.

N.S.W. Baptist Association, *Yearbook*, 1901, 'Minutes'
Sept. 1900, p. 239.

N.S.W. Baptist, 10 Oct. 1899.

Methodist Church of N.S.W., *Minutes of Conference*, 1901.

Burwood UFM Church, 'Minute book', Jan. 1901.

Burwood P.M. Circuit, 'Minutes', Dec. 1900.

Wallsend P.M. Circuit, *op.cit.*

the proportion of members or communicants in the Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan churches was only about three quarters of the colonial figure. Those of the more radical sects were about the same, that is, within 10 per cent of the N.S.W. proportion. This is in keeping with the general thesis that in the nineteenth century the working-class was largely uncommitted to the churches, regardless of their outlook and organization⁵.

5. This is the theme of Inglis's book cited above. See also E.R. Wickham, *Church and people in an industrial city* (London, 1957), pp. 134-6, 158.

Table 8.8

Rank order of church membership and communicants in
the N.C.D. and N.S.W., c. 1890-1900

Rank	Membership and communicants			
	N.C.D. Church	Members (%)	N.S.W. Church	Members (%)
I	UFM	34.4	UFM	32.9
II	Bap.	29.6	Bap.	27.0
III	Cong.	28.4	Wes.	18.0
IV	P.M.	16.5	Pbytn.	14.7
V	Pbytn.	14.3	P.M.	11.0
VI	Wes.	10.5	C/E	9.1
VII	C/E	6.1	Cong.	1.4

Note: Membership for the N.C.D. in 1891 and 1901 was averaged. This was thought necessary because the figures for each year often came from different congregations and so was possibly not representative of the area at large. This was not done for N.S.W. because the statistics cover all congregations in a denomination and membership figures were not collected by the government in 1891.

Sources: For N.C.D. as in table 8.6. For N.S.W., *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1900, *Census of N.S.W.*, 1901.

Membership figures show, however, that working-class commitment was not uniformly small. Within the overall low memberships there was a definite preference for the more radical churches. Table 8.8, which ranks church membership for each denomination in N.S.W. and the colliery townships in the 1890s, shows that the more democratic churches, that is, the minor Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists, had the highest commitment. The more authoritarian churches had the least. Such an order of preference is not evident for N.S.W. as a whole. Therefore, although few in

the colliery townships were sufficiently attached to the churches to be members or communicants, the most popular denominations were the more radical ones. This was what distinguished commitment to the churches in the N.C.D. from that in the rest of N.S.W.

The mining towns further demonstrated their working-class character and distinctiveness through their commitment to Sunday schools. Founded by the Wesleyans and retained by the seceding churches, these became an important means of proselytizing among children and were taken up by all churches except the Roman Catholic. The Methodists continued to attract many children from other denominations⁶. The importance attached to Sunday schools varied with class and denomination. Table 8.9 shows the proportion of children in Sunday schools of any denomination in N.S.W. was rarely proportional to its strength in the population. Sunday schools were also far more popular among the working than middle-class⁷.

The percentage of children enrolled at Sunday schools was much larger in the N.C.D. than in the rest of N.S.W. Whilst about 40 per cent of all children aged 5-15 in N.S.W. in 1901 were enrolled in Sunday schools, the corresponding figure for the colliery townships was over 80 per cent. There was little variation between region and colony as to which church attracted proportionately more or less children. The Anglicans and Presbyterians always had less than their share, Congregationalists and Baptists about the same and Methodists more. Even though the proportion of Methodist Sunday school enrolments was far greater than that church's strength in N.S.W., the proportion of children enrolled at Anglican Sunday schools was still larger. By contrast, the Methodist church in the N.C.D. attracted about 46 per cent of all Sunday school enrolments and the Anglican 16 per cent, even though both claimed 31 per cent of adherents (table 8.9). That is, the Methodist churches in the colliery townships had on their rolls more than half the 83 per cent of children who attended

6. At both the colonial and regional level Methodist Sunday school enrolments always exceeded the estimated number of children 5-15 years in these churches.

7. Inglis, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

Table 8.9

Distribution of Sunday school enrolment and adherence among churches
in the N.C.D. and N.S.W., c. 1890-1900

Denomination	Sunday school enrolment (%)		Adherents (%)	
	N.C.D.	N.S.W.	N.C.D.	N.S.W.
Anglican	16	18	31	47
Presbyterian	12	6	13	10
Wesleyan	13	10	8	8
Primitive Methodist	24	2	19	2
United Free Methodist	9	0.3	1	0.1
Congregational	4	3	3	2
Baptist	6	1	2	1
All Methodist	46	12	28	10.1
Total children at Sunday schools	84	40.3		

Note: Sunday school enrolment was calculated as a proportion of all children aged 5-15. N.C.D. figures relate to all such children in areas for which there are enrolment figures in 1891 or 1901. The 1891 census was used for the distribution of adherents in the colliery townships because the 1901 census gives no breakdown among the various branches of Methodism.

Sources: *Census of N.S.W.*, 1891, 1901.

N.S.W.S.R., 1900.

Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, *op. cit.*, 1901.

Presbyterian Church of N.S.W., *op. cit.*, 1901.

Congregational Union of N.S.W., *Yearbook*, 1890, 1902.

Independent, 15 Oct. 1891.

N.S.W. Baptist Association, *Yearbook*, 1901.

Methodist Church of N.S.W., *Minutes of Conference*, 1891, 1901.

Wallsend P.M. Circuit, *op. cit.*, 1900.

N.M.H., 26 Mar., 9 Ap., 7 May, 4 June, 19 Oct. 1891, 11 Ap., 3 May, 7 Nov. 1900.

Sunday school. Not only did the Methodist churches have far more adherents in the colliery townships than in the rest of N.S.W., but their influence, through the Sunday school movement, was even greater. The higher proportion of children at Sunday schools than in the rest of the colony distinguished the district not only as working-class in its attitudes, but as an area where Methodist values and influence were paramount.

It was not just the nature of affiliation, commitment to and influence of the various churches in the N.C.D. which distinguished it. Strong nonconformity in a working-class area created special problems. The solutions to them further marked it out and, along with working-class preferences and attitudes, created tensions between certain churches and their adherents in the colliery townships. This contributed to the sense of being different, which, by delineating the boundaries between inhabitants and the rest of the colony, enabled them to maintain a separate identity.

According to the principles of nonconformity, adherents were responsible for the stipends of their pastors. Although more than half the population in the colliery townships belonged to the nonconformist churches, none was very large. This made provision of a stipend difficult in good times, let alone in the bad, when people could hardly keep themselves alive.

The United Free Methodist church was continually behind with its pastor's salary. In the early 1880s the amount was never more than £20, but the depression of the 1890s put them further and further behind. In June 1891 the Burwood circuit recorded £9.8.9 owing, but by December the amount had risen to £61.8.1. A flurry of bazaars and other fundraising activities in 1893 restored to the departing minister his dues, but by January 1898 the circuit was £101.2.6 behind with the next minister's salary⁸. Other churches

8. Burwood UFM church, 'Financial book', 1878-1900 (UCRS). The same indebtedness existed in the Minmi circuit. See Minmi UFM church, 'Treasurer's book', 1888-92, 'Account book', 1890-1900 (Wallsend Methodist parsonage).

had trouble in guaranteeing the minister a stipend at all.

In 1865 the Wallsend Presbyterian church asked for a catechist because it could not afford a minister. Even after the church had advanced sufficiently to support a minister, it was constantly reverting to the charge of the Church Extension Fund or receiving help from the Sustentation Fund to provide a stipend⁹. Similar problems in the tiny Congregational and Baptist churches meant the pastorate was often vacant. From 1875 to 1900 the Wallsend Congregational church was without a pastor for 13 years and Lambton for 11. The Wallsend Baptist church was without a minister for nine years between 1870 and 1890¹⁰.

Financial problems led to tension between laity and clergy which disrupted church work. In 1883 the Presbyterian minister at Hamilton complained he could not live on the 'miserable pittance of £250 a year' and that the local committee could have done much better. His statement almost led to blows between him and one committee member who observed he had heard 'nothing about the glory of God from the Rev. Gray, but all the cry was money, money, money'. The Minister then left and once more the congregation had to look for a pastor¹¹.

The colliery townships tried to solve their problems in several ways: cooperation between towns, securing clergymen who were willing to keep themselves by secular work and just managing without a minister at all. Although ostensibly formed because of small congregations, it is clear that joint pastorates were inevitable in the nonconformist churches, if they were to keep a minister. The second solution, working ministers, was favoured in the Baptist church. In 1870 the Wallsend minister earned his living in the local pit, receiving just 10/- a week from the congregation. David Young, Particular Baptist minister at Lambton, was originally a miner and

9. Presbytery of the Hunter, 'Minutes', 14 Nov. 1866, 19 May, 17 Ap. 1872, 21 Ap. 1890 (FML). Hamilton Presbyterian church, 'Minute book', 12 Jy. 1897 (Scots Kirk, Hamilton).

10. These conclusions are based on items in the *Independent* (UCRS), *Congregational year book* (UCRS), *N.S.W. Baptist* (Baptist theological college, Eastwood, N.S.W.), *Wallsend Baptist Chapel, Centenary souvenir*, p. 11 (Baptist theological college).

11. Hamilton Presbyterian church, *op. cit.*, Ap. - May, 1883.

continued to work in the pits after his ordination¹². The last solution, continuation of the cause without a minister, was the only choice when unable to keep a pastor. From 1880-86 and in 1897 lay preachers kept the Plattsburg Baptist church going. In the 1890s the Wallsend Congregational church was run by a local auctioneer¹³. Other churches who could only keep a clergyman with difficulty seriously considered doing without one. In 1898 the Merewether United Free Methodist church resolved:

that we do not invite a minister for the ensuing year as we could not see our way clear to maintain him for ... the way in which we had to raise the minister's salary by concerts and Christmas trees etc. was retarding the work of the church.¹⁴

The effect of these solutions was to increase the importance of lay preachers. Whilst an obvious part of the last choice, this was implied in the other two. If a minister worked he had less time for pastoral work. If he had to keep up services in several churches, lay help was essential if there was to be more than one service each Sunday. In the joint Congregational pastorate of Wallsend and Lambton in 1883 the Lambton evening service began at 6.30 and was followed by a meeting in charge of a layman. Meanwhile, the minister rode to Wallsend and at 7.45 took over from the layman who had opened the service¹⁵. Such arrangements distinguished the operation of these churches by making them more like the Primitive Methodist church, which was so strong in the district and had always maintained a large number of lay preachers to assist the pastor.

Working-class attitudes and the solutions inhabitants adopted when unable to keep clergymen created tensions between churches in the colliery townships and in the rest of the colony. This made people in the district feel different. Local Baptist churches often

12. *M.A.*, 1 May 1875. Lambton Baptist church, *Centenary souvenir* (NPL).

13. Wallsend Baptist chapel, *loc. cit.* *N.S.W. Baptist*, 2 Ap. 1897.

14. Burwood UFM church, 'Minute book', 5 Oct. 1898 (UCRS).

15. *Independent*, 15 Oct. 1883.

wanted to ordain as ministers members of their own congregation who were already settled in the district and earning a living, regardless of their lack of education and training in preaching. The preferring of relative unknowns, who would keep themselves, usually provoked a cautious response from the N.S.W. Baptist Association, who wanted further proof of character, education and preaching ability. Having decided to ordain their chosen pastor, the local congregation was not easily persuaded to delay. In 1875 the Lambton church, unable to get David Young's credentials approved, approached the only Strict or Particular Baptist Minister in N.S.W., who ordained him. The congregation then left the Association and stayed outside it until Young died in 1901. In 1894 the Baptist church which had grown up among adherents at Merewether applied for admission to the N.S.W. Baptist Association. The application was deferred because the 'qualities' of the church's leader, whom it wished to be ordained, were unknown. The congregation responded by withdrawing their application to join the Baptist Association¹⁶. It was not just attitudes to clergy and problems of keeping them that separated Baptist churches in the colliery townships from those in the rest of the colony. Political attitudes made it clear that they were of a different class. In 1894 one member of the Wallsend-Plattsburg congregation understandably took offence at a letter on strikes in the N.S.W. church newspaper. The writer had asked 'if workingmen would ever learn by what they suffered' and referred to 'the poor ignorant miners'. In reply the man from Plattsburg pointed out that workingmen were as wise as other classes, infinitely superior in character to so-called 'free labourers' and more in need of bread than wisdom. Although printed, the editor severely criticized the Plattsburg letter as irrelevant and unchristian¹⁷. That fellow churchmen were so unsympathetic to the problems and attitudes of those in the mining townships must have increased the sense of isolation they felt.

The difficulty of supporting a pastor in a predominantly working-class area and the preference of such people for enthus-

16. N.S.W. Baptist Association, 'Minutes', 1873, p. 110, Sept. 1894, pp. 50-53, 100, 103, 114, 120, 155, 1901, p. 315 (Baptist theological college).

17. *N.S.W. Baptist*, 1 Aug. 1894.

istic religion finally produced, in the 1880s, a new church known as Lay Methodist. While not specified as a denomination in the 1891 census, they made up most of the 'other' Methodists in the colliery townships, who were 2.6 per cent of the population. Although it began as a symptom of problems and attitudes in the district, the new church became a symbol of its special difficulties and outlook.

It has been claimed that the Lay Methodist church began in 1889 after a dispute as to whether the Wallsend Primitive Methodist circuit, which included Lambton, New Lambton, Waratah, Wallsend, Plattsburg and Minmi, should be divided and a second minister maintained¹⁸. However, the first congregation appears to have been set up in 1887 at Adamstown. According to the jubilee history of Methodism in Adamstown, part of the Primitive Methodist church seceded and joined the Burwood United Free Methodist circuit after a violent disagreement with the rest of the Newcastle Primitive circuit. That this is no hearsay is clear from the minutes of the United Free church, which record the foundation of 'a cause' at Adamstown in 1885 and its secession two years later. Speeches at the Adamstown Lay Methodist church anniversary in 1891 confirm these dates¹⁹. Therefore, the secession in the Wallsend circuit, which produced the Lay Methodist congregations in Lambton and New Lambton, followed a pattern already established. In 1894 there was a breakaway from the Burwood Primitive Methodist church to form the Junction Lay Methodist congregation. Thus the movement eventually covered half the mining towns.

No account of the Lay Methodist church admits that the movement was prompted by the difficulty of keeping clergymen, but the confused and obscure descriptions of the beginnings of the church, along with the statements of leading members, show that this was behind it. The Adamstown church disagreed with the rest of the circuit over the appointment of a third clergyman. In his account

-
18. John Hughes, 'The Lay Methodist church', *Australian Methodist historical society, jnl. and proceedings*, no. 73 (1957), p. 984.
 19. Adamstown Methodist church, *Jubilee souvenir, 1874-1929* (Newcastle, 1924), p. 8 (UCRS). Burwood UFM church, 'Financial book', 31 Dec. 1884, 26 Mar. 1887.

of Lay Methodism, Hughes has associated the secessions at New Lambton and Lambton with the decision to split the circuit because bad times would make it difficult to keep another minister²⁰. The exact reason for the Burwood secession in 1894 to form the Junction church is not known. However, the minutes of the Burwood circuit in the early 1890s reported that the Lay Methodists were causing discontent. In December 1892 financial conditions were so bad that a motion was put to do without a minister for six to nine months but lost 5-11. Just over a year later, January 1894, the Junction Lay Methodist church began. Thus, the secession was preceded by at least a year of discontent over the payment of a minister²¹. The words of Alfred Edden, a foundation member of the Adamstown Lay Methodist church and future M.L.A., indicate that the payment of clergy was behind the movement. 'If there were people who believed they should be preached to by educated men', he said, 'let them, and pay them well'. He did that while he could afford it, but when he failed he 'shut up shop'²². Gradually, though, practical necessity was elevated to theory. 'Servants of God', it was claimed, 'should not expect payment for their labours in his vineyard and those who would not work for God without pay were not acting according to the scriptures'²³.

Although the reason for secession was the upkeep of clergy, the comments and actions of Lay Methodists suggest that the new church attracted those dissatisfied with the performance of the more established sects and denominations. Their criticisms show they had been antagonized by clergymen who were so obsessed by the next life that they ignored conditions in the present or,

20. He went on to say that the breakaway occurred when certain members, who asked for a quarter day meeting where the matter would be voted on to be delayed, because it clashed with a miners' aggregate meeting were ignored. It is doubtful, though, that holding the meeting in the absence of some delegates could, by itself, cause the formation of a new church. *op. cit.*, p. 984.

21. Burwood P.M. circuit, 'Minutes', 26 Nov., 15 Dec. 1892 (UCRS). Junction Lay Methodist church, 'Minutes', 16 Jan. 1894 (UCRS).

22. *N.M.H.*, 11 Mar. 1891.

23. *ibid.*

because of a middle-class background, could not communicate with working-class people. They were accused of not studying the leading questions of the day and 'preaching hell-fire to a starving people'. 'Christianity', the Lay Methodists argued, 'should be taken to the people in one hand and a loaf of bread in the other'²⁴. In addition, preachers 'should make a constant endeavour to have a sympathy between pulpit and pew'²⁵. Although scornful of evangelical ministers who stressed personal reform and neglected the social order, the Lay Methodists preferred the enthusiastic religion usually associated with evangelism. They held camp meetings, prayer and class meetings, when these were becoming less popular in the Primitive church. The minutes of the Lay Methodist church record 'good and stirring' or 'telling and pathetic' addresses at their camp meetings and a 'soul stirring' or 'real earnest' time at services. As well, the church 'missioned the streets' in Salvation Army fashion, with band and singers before camp meetings and services²⁶. This use of so-called 'vulgar' methods and open enjoyment of emotional religion is akin to the form of worship preferred by the first Primitive Methodists. Thus, the Lay Methodist church can be seen as a late nineteenth century reaction to an increasingly respectable church, very much like the Primitive Methodist secession 80 years before. The similarity of circumstances was not lost on the Lay Methodists, one of whom claimed they should not be discouraged by their problems

for if they read the history of the Primitive Methodist Church they would find that body had had its troubles²⁷.

The importance of the Lay Methodist church lies not in the successful maintenance of a lay church by working-class people, but its characteristics. These were the main features of churches in the mining towns. First, there was the problem of paying the clergy. That the Primitive Methodist church had a large number of lay preachers and more lay participation probably meant any secession

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*

26. *op. cit.*, 27 Mar., 1, 15, 22 Ap., 29 Jy. 1894.

27. *N.M.H.*, 11 Mar. 1891.

from it was more likely to succeed, but the actual problem was common to all nonconformist denominations in the colliery townships. The exclusive use of lay preachers was an exaggeration of the generally prominent role they played in the district. The experience of outsiders being unsympathetic to them and their problems with the current social order occurred in other churches. Finally, there was the preference for a non-educated clergy and enthusiastic religion. There was less likely to be emotion in worship conducted by an educated man, while those with little education, as a *N.S.W. Baptist* editorial noted when discussing its problems with the Newcastle churches, were often more enthusiastic and vital²⁸. In opting for a poorly educated clergy and primitive evangelism the Lay Methodist church reflected the preferences of the churchgoing population of the colliery townships. Nevertheless, its very foundation added to the distinctiveness of the area.

Although the churches in the N.C.D. contributed strongly to the unique character of the area, they were a serious threat to its cohesion. Behind the distinctive pattern of affiliation were ethnic and class factors which meant some denominations split along rather than across those fundamental cleavages. That there were so many churches meant that inhabitants could be split into numerous interest groups, each believing it held the key to salvation. During the second half of the nineteenth century there were deep antagonisms between Protestants and Roman Catholics in N.S.W. Even so, the churches were not entirely a desintegrative force. Neighbourliness overcame sectarianism and rivalry. The latter was also subdued by a general goodwill towards all Christians and the fact that many had had to join another church where their own had not existed. Although generally excluded from public life, women had more opportunity to participate and take responsibility in the churches than most other voluntary associations in the colliery townships.

The different ethnic bases of churches would have been of little consequence if they had not emphasized it. Their activities show

28. *N.S.W. Baptist*, 5 Sept. 1887.

they were a focus for such sentiment. The Roman Catholics tended to celebrate St. Patrick's day and the Presbyterian social evenings and fundraising events were often devoted to Scottish music, literature or history. The Primitive Methodists held social evenings described as 'Grand Geordie Pie and Coffee Suppers'²⁹. The Lay Methodists, just as many of whom were born in Northumberland or Durham, provided after one of their camp meetings

a real Geordie's tea ... where the sons of Adam
may satisfy their mortal appetite for the sum
of one shilling.³⁰

The most culturally exclusive were the Congregationalists and Baptists, who had their own Welsh speaking churches in the towns where the proportion of Welsh was strongest: Wallsend, Lambton and Merewether³¹. Since in Wales they had been linked with Welsh nationalism, it is not surprising that their social and fundraising events, as well as their services, were exhibitions of Welsh culture, with a heavy emphasis on choral singing and ending with the Welsh national anthem³². Because of what they stood for, these churches tended to draw Welsh from all over the district, rather than local inhabitants. They were the centre of many Welsh cultural events which bore no relationship to religion, or the colliery townships. In 1900, for example, the Merewether Welsh Baptist church gave a social to the Welsh seamen in port³³. The emphasis on Welsh culture in these churches meant ties of birthplace were stressed at the expense of integration into local life and needs.

That the strength of many churches in the N.C.D. was a function of their appeal to working-class people meant some denominations

29. *M.A.*, 18 Mar. 1875. *N.M.H.* 12 Feb. 1881. *Presbyterian*, 29 Mar., 16 Aug. 1884 (FML). *N.M.H.*, 1 May 1891.

30. *N.M.H.*, 21 Mar. 1891. The marriage register survey showed that 68 per cent of English-born Lay Methodists who stated their county or origin were from Northumberland or Durham.

31. In 1891 the Welsh were 3.2 per cent of the population of the N.C.D. The proportions at Wallsend, Lambton and Merewether were 3.8, 6.9 and 4.8 per cent respectively. In the early part of the period there was also a Welsh Congregational church at Minmi.

32. *Independent*, 15 Ap. 1884. *N.M.H.* 13 Mar., 16 Dec. 1891, 2 Oct. 1900.

33. *N.M.H.*, 2 Oct. 1900.

confirmed rather than cut along class cleavages. The general effect of this was to maintain the division between employer and employee, render the more radical churches working-class institutions and further exclude labourers from local life.

Table 8.10 shows that in most churches the different occupational groups were represented roughly in accordance with their strength in the population. The exceptions were the very low proportion of shopkeepers in the United Free and Lay Methodist churches, disproportionate number of the clerical group in the Wesleyan church in comparison with other denominations and the small number of skilled labourers among Roman Catholics. In addition, labourers were below their strength in the population, save for the Roman Catholic and Lay Methodist churches. This roughly proportional distribution of occupations meant the number of working and middle-class people in any denomination approximated that of the total population. The exceptions were the United Free and Lay Methodists where the working-class proportion was more than 90 per cent.

Table 8.10

Religion and class in the N.C.D., 1860-1900

Occupation	District proportion	Denomination						
		C/E	R.C.	Pbryn.	Wes.	P.M.	UFM	L.M.
Professional	3.0	4	2	3	3	1	3	0
Business	1.0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0
Shopkeeping	11.0	7	9	5	8	7	3	2
Clerical	0.4	3	2	3	7	3	1	2
Skilled	10.0	17	2	16	19	9	20	14
Miner	57.0	56	68	63	49	66	68	62
Labourer	18.0	13	17	10	13	14	6	19
Middle-class	15.4	15	13	12	20	11	7	4
Working-class	84.6	85	87	88	80	89	93	94

Sources: *Electoral roll of N.S.W.*, 1894
Marriage register survey.

The distribution of adherents is not an accurate indicator of social mixing. Many people never went near a church, let alone became active members. Table 8.11, which gives the occupations of known active members, shows a very different pattern to that of table 8.10. Clearly certain churches attracted the top occupational groups and others the lowest. The professional class was overrepresented in the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan churches and underrepresented in the United Free and Primitive Methodist churches. The large representation of Roman Catholics was due to their concentration in the professions like teaching and law. Large businessmen were also overrepresented in the Anglican and Wesleyan churches, but quite absent in the Roman Catholic, Baptist, United Free and Lay Methodist churches. The lower middle-class of shopkeepers and clerical workers demonstrated that they were, nevertheless, respectable, by overrepresentation in all churches. The exception was the relative underrepresentation of shopkeepers in the Roman Catholic and United Free churches. The clerical and supervisory group demonstrated its conformity by identification with the established church in particular. The skilled workers were overrepresented in the more conservative denominations: Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Wesleyan, and underrepresented in radical sects like the Lay Methodists. Once one descends as far down the social scale as the miners, preferences change dramatically. This group was underrepresented in the churches in which skilled workers were overrepresented and overrepresented in the working-class oriented Baptist, Primitive, United Free and Lay Methodist sects. Unskilled workers were underrepresented in all except the Roman Catholic church. The general effect of this occupational distribution was to divide churches in the N.C.D. into what might be called 'miners' and 'mixed' churches. In the latter, which included the Roman Catholic, Church of England, Presbyterian, Congregational and Wesleyans, the balance between the bourgeoisie and manual workers was 60-40, or more, either way. In the 'miners' churches: Baptist, Primitive, United Free and Lay Methodist, at least 70 per cent of all members belonged to the working-class. Although some churches fostered vertical integration, those which most distinguished the area were dominated by manual workers.

Table 8.11

Class and commitment to churches in the M.C.D., 1860-1900

Occupation	District proportion	Denomination								
		C/E N=96	R.C. N=41	Pbtyan. N=100	Cong. N=49	Bap. N=41	Wes. N=95	P.M. N=225	UFM N=57	L.M. N=63
Professional	3.0	8	12	4	0	2	7	1	0	3
Business	1.0	7	0	2	2	0	3	2	0	0
Shopkeeping	11.0	21	10	27	26	12	24	14	11	21
Clerical	0.4	22	15	7	10	0	4	4	8	5
Skilled	10.0	20	24	13	8	12	18	9	11	5
Miner	57.0	14	17	43	53	68	35	61	65	61
Labourer	18.0	8	20	4	0	5	8	8	5	6
Total Middle-Class	15.4	58	37	40	38	14	38	21	19	29
Total Working-Class	84.6	42	61	60	61	85	61	78	81	72

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 owing to rounding.

Sources: *Electoral roll of N.S.W.*, 1894, 1901.

N.C., 1861, 1862, 1871.

M.A., 1875.

W&PSun, 1886, 1891, 1895.

N.M.H., 1881, 1891, 1900.

Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, *op. cit.*, 1870-1900.

Presbytery of the Hunter, 'Minutes', 1865-1902, 2 vols. (FML).

Hamilton Presbyterian church, 'Minutes of committee of management', 1866-1900, 3 vols.,

'Minutes of Kirk Session', 1883-96, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 1889-97

(Scots Kirk, Hamilton).

Australian Witness, 1874-87. *The Presbyterian*, 1874-87 (FML).

Presbyterian Record, 1890 (Scots Kirk, Hamilton).

Congregational Union of N.S.W., *Yearbook*, 1870-1900. *Independent*, 1875-1900.

N.S.W. Baptist Association, 'Minutes', 1867-1900, 4 vols.

N.S.W. Baptist, 1887-1900.

Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 1869-1900 (UCRS).

Wallsend-Waratah Wesleyan Circuit, 'Minutes of quarterly meetings' (Methodist parsonage, Wallsend).

Hamilton Wesleyan church, 'Trustees minute book', 1880-1900 (UCRS).

Wallsend Wesleyan church, 'Trustees minute book', 1892-1900 (Wallsend parsonage).

Lambton Wesleyan church, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 1894-1900 (UCRS).

Burwood UFM church, 'Minute book', 1879-1900, 'Financial book', 1878-1902 (UCRS).

Minmi UFM church, 'Treasurers book', 1888-92, 'Account book', 1890-1900 (Wallsend Methodist parsonage).

Burwood P.M. Circuit, 'Minute book', 1886-1900 (UCRS).

Newcastle P.M. Circuit, 'Minutes of quarterly meetings', 1858-79 (ML).

Adamstown P.M. church, 'Financial book', 'Minute book', 2 vols., 1888-1900,

'Sunday school teachers meetings', 1891-96, 'Sunday school teachers register', 1881-91, 2 vols. (UCRS).

Lambton P.M. church, 'Sunday school teachers register', 1886-90, 'Seat rent book', 1872-3, 1888-9, 1890 (UCRS).

Burwood P.M. church, 'Sunday school teachers minutes', 1889-1906 (UCRS).

Northern Light, 1 Feb., 1893. *Primitive Methodist*, 7 June, 1899 (UCRS).

Junction L.M. church, 'Minutes', 1894-1900 (UCRS).

The attraction of the professional group to the conservative and the miners to the more radical churches meant that the colliery managers and other large land owners and miners rarely came together in religious activities. Most colliery managers and their like were active members of the established church: Croudace, Neilson, Winship, Croft and Merewether. Either because of the presence of such persons in the local Anglican church, or because their inclinations were to more fundamentalist religion, miners were grossly underrepresented among active members of this denomination. Of the other colliery managers, Alexander Ross was a prominent member of the Wesleyan church, where miners were only about half their strength among the minor Methodists. The only manager who definitely belonged to a 'miners' church was Richard Thomas of Minmi, who was an active member of the Primitive Methodist church³⁴. Church membership did nothing to bridge the growing gap between employer and employee.

Whilst miner and colliery manager attended different churches, few labourers were actively involved in church affairs at all. Only in the Roman Catholic church were they represented in proportion to their strength in the population. As in other voluntary associations in the colliery townships, they were largely absent, including from the minor Methodist and Baptist churches in which miners were so strong.

Sectarianism, in the form of a division between Roman Catholic and Protestant, was one of the fundamental cleavages in N.S.W.

34. James Fletcher has frequently been claimed as a member of the Primitive Methodist church. While it is indisputable that he married into a prominent Primitive Methodist family, the Birrells, and was a good friend of the Rev. J.B. Penman, a P.M. minister, there is absolutely no indication that in his heyday at Plattsburg (1870-1880) he was a member or even adherent of that sect. The only source saying anything specific about his religious affiliations suggests he had none. When reporting the denominations of new school board members in 1871, inspector Alpass wrote: 'The precise denomination to which Mr. Fletcher belongs cannot be very easily ascertained as he is said to profess no particular form of religion at all - at least none of those established in the neighbourhood'. Cl. Ed., Plattsburg 1871 (1/881).

society in the late nineteenth century. The Roman Catholic church saw Protestants as joining with the forces of darkness, because they supported secular education and held heretical beliefs. Protestants identified the Roman Catholic church with ignorance, treason, irreverence for the sabbath and drunkenness. That most Roman Catholics were Irish meant Irish nationalism and Catholicism joined forces on one side and Protestantism and Orangeism, especially through the Loyal Orange Lodge, were linked on the other. In the N.C.D. the minority Irish Catholics and majority nonconformists were at first eager to and did do battle. The conflict was never as fierce as it seemed and, with time, almost disappeared.

There were Orange lodges in all colliery townships except New Lambton from the late 1870s and early 1880s. At first they celebrated July 12th noisily. Protestants were even suspicious of Roman Catholics teaching in state schools. In 1880 the Minmi colliery manager asked for the removal of the new Roman Catholic infants' teacher and the appointment of a Protestant, because the school board believed attendance would fall if the Catholic teacher stayed³⁵. The vigour of the Orange lodges and strong support for free, compulsory and secular education in the district in the 1870s evoked strong counter responses from the Catholics. Bragget has already pointed out that many Catholic schools set up in the coalmining district in the 1870s were a response to the formation of Public School Leagues in so many towns³⁶. The Roman Catholics held impressive counterdemonstrations. In August 1875 an O'Connell Centenary Celebration was arranged at Lambton, where 500 sat down to dinner. The organizers secured as guests many persons of note in the area: miners' officials, doctors, members of parliament and colliery managers. The event was an unqualified success, in contrast to an Orange counterdemonstration at Wallsend³⁷.

This division into hostile camps was less definite than the demonstrations and counterdemonstrations suggest and gradually

35. *N.C.*, 17 Jy. 1871. *N.M.H.*, 20 Jy. 1881. 'Schools Files', Minmi 1880 (P. 1745).

36. E.J. Braggett, 'The development of state aided education in Newcastle, 1858-1880', *JRAHS*, v. 54 (1968), pp. 311-316.

37. *M.A.*, 11, 18 Aug. 1875.

decreased with time. Although most Roman Catholic children withdrew to their own schools in the 1870s, some continued to attend the local public school. At the same time, Roman Catholic schools were not exclusive. In 1876 the Lambton school had 10 Anglicans, three Wesleyans and 27 from other denominations among its 163 enrolments. The Plattsburg school had 13 Anglicans and five others³⁸. Marriages between Catholics and non Catholics were 19 per cent of all marriages solemnized at Catholic churches in the colliery townships³⁹. From the 1880s the Orange lodge, although still active, was much less demonstrative. So, in response, were Catholics. This was in line with general trends in N.S.W., which saw a peak in Orange lodge membership in the early 1880s and the dying down of sectarianism by the 1890s⁴⁰. However, the colliery townships were not part of the sectarian strife that was revived in 1895 with Cardinal Moran's bigoted remarks about Protestant missions. In 1900 Wallsend and Plattsburg decided to give a quarter of the proceeds from their hospital Sunday demonstration to the Roman Catholic School for the Deaf at Waratah. The Newcastle branch of the Loyal Orange lodge demanded a public boycott of the event, but got a hostile reaction. Although several churches tried to persuade people not to participate, the estimated crowd was 10,000 and nearly all friendly societies were represented, 'due no doubt to the move made to bring in sectarianism'⁴¹. That neighbourly feeling and living together for more than a generation had overcome doctrinal and cultural divisions is clear from a letter to the *Newcastle Herald* from a Plattsburg Protestant who asked people

to allow their good sense and cool judgements to prevail ... and live on good terms with their Catholic friends, regardless of Bishops' squabbles⁴².

38. *Report of the Council of Education on denominational schools, 1876 (M.L.). Report of the Council of Education on the condition of public schools, 1875, 1876 (M.L.).* By 1876 Wallsend-Plattsburg, Lambton and Hamilton had Roman Catholic schools.

39. Marriage register survey.

40. R. Broome, 'Protestantism in N.S.W. society, 1900-14' (Ph.D., University of Sydney, 1974), pp. 375, 434.

41. *N.M.H.*, 20, 22, 23 Oct. 1900.

42. *ibid*, 20 Oct. 1900.

The failure of the revival of sectarianism in the late 1890s to affect the colliery townships was due to the absence of those socio-economic tensions that enabled it to flourish in Sydney. Broome has drawn attention to the many factors dividing urban Catholics and Protestants which fanned sectarian fires. As well as ethnic differences, the lowly occupations of Catholics and more middle-class occupations of committed Protestants meant there were class and residential differences. Before the 1890s, Protestants were largely free traders and Catholics, in response, protectionists. Thereafter the working-class Catholic population was strongly affiliated with the Labour Party⁴³. These differences did not exist in the colliery townships. The predominance of the working-class in the district meant that the class composition of Roman Catholics was not significantly different (table 8.10). As a result, residential differences were unlikely, even if they were feasible in towns of less than 6,000. Finally, the N.C.D. was a protectionist stronghold before and labour area after 1891. The multiple cleavages between Catholic and Protestant in Sydney simply did not exist in the colliery townships. If the Newcastle Loyal Orange lodge had not interfered in 1900, the threat of sectarianism would not have arisen at all and, as it was, was largely ignored.

Although sectarianism divided the colliery townships at first, the hostility of the two camps was not as intense as their propaganda suggested. With time living in the same place and the absence of social, economic and political differences meant bigotry had less and less of an impact on inhabitants.

Interdenominational feeling did not stop at rational tolerance. Curiosity and good will meant many church occasions were attended by members of various denominations. In addition, there were strong shared interests between the nonconformist churches. Among the Methodists, separated by procedure rather than dogma, ecumenism eventually ended in organic union. The pioneering nature of the colony meant many in the smaller denominations had at some time been

43. Broome, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-330, 435.

forced to join another church, rather than go without religious consolation. This involvement in the affairs of other churches must have dampened prejudices.

Churches followed rather than kept pace with new settlement in nineteenth century N.S.W. The setting up of a new congregation depended on its potential size, enthusiasm and the availability of clergymen. So, it was often a long time before the smaller denominations founded churches and some never established themselves in smaller towns. In this situation, many went without religion, but others, realizing that all worshipped the same God, joined the most congenial church. One member of the Hamilton Wesleyan church had been born into Primitive Methodism in Durham. On going to the Australian goldfields in the 1860s he joined the Wesleyans, because there was no Primitive church, and stayed with them when he came to Newcastle. The obituary of a prominent Lambton Congregationalist tells of how he joined the Wesleyan church in one town he lived in before settling in Newcastle, because there was no Congregational one⁴⁴. *The Australian Witness* reported in 1876 that, for want of their own church, the large Presbyterian population at Minmi was 'becoming fast absorbed into the Methodist bodies'. In 1880 a number of Presbyterians at Hamilton threatened to take seats in the Wesleyan church because the A.A.Co. had stopped its Sunday waggon to Newcastle and it was quite impossible to walk there in summer⁴⁵. Thus, there were many who permanently or temporarily joined another church because of circumstances. This must have broadened their horizons.

Common difficulties drew the churches together. All were trying to establish themselves in a new land in the face of formidable problems, such as lack of funds and equipment. This could have led to rivalry and competition, but engendered cooperation instead. The opening of the Plattsburg Roman Catholic church in 1875 saw a large attendance of all denominations. Those from other churches were thanked especially after a fundraising concert in that

44. Hamilton Wesleyan church, 'Trustees' minute book', 1893-1900 [enclosure] (UCKS). *Independent*, 15 Sept. 1893.

45. *Australian Witness*, 15 Ap. 1876. Hamilton Presbyterian church, 'Minutes of committee of management', 2 Oct. 1880.

town in 1895⁴⁶. Talented members of one church were happy to help others raise money. One lady from the Wallsend Anglican church sang at fundraising concerts for both the Roman Catholic and Baptist churches. Another sang at Primitive Methodist functions. A female member of the Lambton Congregational church sang at Primitive Methodist, Congregational, United Free Methodist, Baptist and Church of England concerts. Those playing orchestral instruments, or who were good conductors, were in special demand. In 1891 two violinists played at Primitive Methodist, Congregational and Baptist functions. One conductor belonging to the Primitive church also conducted Lay Methodist and Wesleyan Sunday school anniversaries. Another, who seems to have been a Baptist, assisted at Primitive, Presbyterian and Wesleyan functions⁴⁷. Occasionally even official church groups offered their services. In 1884 the Lambton Church of England choir sang at the Congregational church anniversary⁴⁸. The financial problems of depressed times also made cooperation expedient. In 1891 the Anglican, Primitive, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Baptist and Welsh and English Congregational churches at Wallsend held a combined Sunday schools picnic, because it would cost less than individual treats⁴⁹.

Among the Protestant churches, especially the nonconformist there was more to draw them together than good will and sympathy. Their belief in the importance of the bible in spreading Christianity led to the formation of branches of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which brought together ministers and prominent laity from the Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational and all Methodist churches⁵⁰. The nonconformist churches shared evangelism, temperance and a dislike of gambling, which made united services possible. One such service organized by the Baptist, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Congregational, Primitive and United Free Methodist churches was held at Wallsend in 1888. It

46. *M.A.*, 28 Ap. 1875. *W&PSun*, 1 June 1895. Similar thanks were extended to those attending the New Lambton P.M. church anniversary in 1875. *M.A.*, 26 June 1875.

47. These conclusions are the result of a study of talented amateurs known to be active members of a church.

48. *Independent*, 15 Oct. 1902.

49. *W&PSun*, 11, 21 Nov. 1891.

50. The names of committee members include prominent members and ministers of these churches.

included meetings in aid of social purity, 'Gospel Temperance' and the suppression of gambling⁵¹. The similarity of much doctrine and the emphasis on ethics meant it was easy for nonconformist ministers to address each others' congregations. Possibly because of their common ethnic background, there was a strong bond between the Baptist and Congregational churches. In 1884 a Baptist minister preached at the Lambton Welsh Congregational church anniversary and in 1887 at the Wallsend Congregational church anniversary⁵². The local Primitive Methodist minister spoke at the Wallsend Congregational anniversary in 1886 and in 1880 Presbyterian and United Free ministers addressed a Wesleyan church anniversary⁵³. Although they disapproved of clergymen, the Lay Methodists found the Particular Baptist minister, who worked for his living, acceptable and he preached at one of their camp meetings⁵⁴. The close cooperation and exposure to other churches involved in united services and listening to preachers of another faith in one's own church must have reduced suspicion and shown the similarity of their causes.

Relations between the Methodist churches were even stronger than those between them and other nonconformist bodies. The differences between the Wesleyan, Primitive and United Free churches involved method and organization, not doctrine. Thus there was no problem in preachers of one branch of Methodism giving sermons in another. Exchanges of pastor on special occasions were common, even before the prospect of organic union. The Methodist churches also had common auxiliary societies, such as Christian Endeavour and the Young People's Movement which, because of identical structure and interest, found joint activities suitable⁵⁵. By the end of the period interaction had been transformed from good feeling to a prelude to something higher. From 1889, joint committees on

51. *Weekly advocate*, 4 Aug. 1888 (UCRS).

52. *Independent*, 15 Sept. 1884, 15 June 1887. The latter reference does not say the minister was a Baptist, but he can be identified as such from Baptist records and newspapers.

53. *W&PSun*, 17 Ap. 1886. *Weekly advocate*, Nov. 1880. *N.M.H.*, 21 Mar. 1891.

54. *N.M.H.*, 21 Mar. 1891.

55. see *ibid.*, 10, 19 Dec. 1900.

Sabbath observance and temperance, united meetings and interchange of pulpits were official policy in the Wesleyan church, with a view to formal union. Although this did not occur until 1902, the decisions in its favour were all taken in the 1890s⁵⁶.

Strongest support for the 1902 union came from the so-called minor Methodists, Primitive and United Free⁵⁷. Since they were the ones who had originally seceded, why they pressed so hard for union is puzzling. In answering this question, the attitudes of the United Free and Primitive churches in the N.C.D. cannot be ignored. They represented a large proportion of N.S.W. Primitive Methodists. Of the three United Free circuits in N.S.W. two centred on the N.C.D. Yet it was here, where the working-class clearly preferred these churches to Wesleyan, that support for union was greatest. In 1894 the Burwood United Free Methodist church adopted the proposed basis of union and in 1897 and 1899, when the Wesleyans were prognosticating, asked the Primitive Methodists if they would unite with them⁵⁸. When the final vote on union was held, four of the five Primitive Methodist circuits unanimously for it were from Newcastle⁵⁹. This support is hard to understand because the proposed constitution involved only minor alterations to current Wesleyan church laws regarding lay participation but meant a drastic change in the privileges of the minor Methodist laity. Whilst the basis of union allowed equal representation of clergy and laity at the annual conference and on the station committees, the Primitive and United Free Methodists were used to far stronger lay representation⁶⁰.

56. Methodist church of N.S.W., *Minutes of conference*, 1889-1901 (M.L.).

57. E.G. Clancy, 'The struggle for Methodist union in N.S.W.', *AMHSJ&P*, Sept. 1975, pp. 1360-1378 *passim*.

58. Burwood UFM church, 'Financial book', 10 Ap. 1897, 7 Jy. 1899. Burwood P.M. circuit, 'Minute book', 2 Dec. 1899.

59. Clancy, *op. cit.*, p. 1374. These four circuits would have covered the whole of Newcastle.

60. cf. proposed constitution in Australian Wesleyan Methodist church, *Minutes of general conference*, 1894, pp. 56-73, *Laws of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church* (Melbourne, 1885). See also Clancy, *op. cit.*, p. 1368.

Definite answers to why the Primitive and United Free Methodists in the N.C.D. favoured a union that denied much of their original reason for existence are impossible. It is very likely, though, that some of the reasons for union seemed particularly appropriate in the colliery townships. In addition, the Wesleyan church in the colonies was rather different in its approach from its English parent body and the nature of the minor churches was changing.

Motions and statements on the desirability of union noted that the Christian cause in N.S.W. would operate much more efficiently if all Methodists in one place shared the same church building and minister⁶¹. Not only would this alleviate the shortage of clergy, but make it easier for poor or small districts to support a pastor. All three branches of Methodism operated in many colliery townships, but the small congregations and overwhelming working-class composition of the minor Methodists made this a hard task which must have become increasingly difficult as the proportion of committed adherents fell in the late nineteenth century. The United Free Methodists were in constant difficulty over payment of clergy, which matter also precipitated the Lay Methodist secession from the Primitive church. Thus the United Free and Primitive Methodists were probably more aware of how multiplication of Methodist churches hindered their work.

Colonial Wesleyanism was much closer to Primitive Methodism than the English variety. From the start they had adopted a more evangelical style and, by the late nineteenth century, had altered their church laws so that laymen and clergy had to be represented in equal numbers at the annual conference⁶². Therefore, the failures of Wesleyanism which prompted secession had been changed. On the other hand, Primitive Methodism had certainly become more

61. viz. Methodist church of N.S.W., *loc. cit.*, 1893, pp. 86-7, 1901, p. 86. Report of federal council for Methodist union (Sydney, 1896), p. 5 (M.L.).

62. K. Elford, 'Church, state, education and society: an analysis of eastern Australian society, c. 1856-72' (Ph.D., University of Sydney, 1972-3), p. 514.

respectable in its methods. There is also some evidence that there were fewer lay preachers among Primitive Methodists in the new land. In 1890 the Australian ratio of ministers to local preachers was 1:6 and that of the colliery townships 1:6.5. The English ratio was 1:15. This suggests there was less desire for lay participation in the colony. Hints that the Australian born were loathe to become preachers support this contention. In 1891 the Lambton Lay Methodist church felt the need to emphasize that one of its preachers was *an Australian* [italics mine]⁶³.

So, for many the issues which caused secession in the early nineteenth century no longer commanded such support, whilst the Wesleyans in Australia were less objectionable. In addition, the particular difficulties of the minor Methodists in the colliery townships in keeping a minister must have made union look far more necessary to them than those in more affluent or populous areas.

The good feeling that existed between the nonconformist churches in the N.C.D. culminated for the Wesleyans, United Free and Primitive Methodists in organic union. Although this was a N.S.W. wide movement, the minor Methodists of the colliery townships, because of their poverty, were outstanding in their support for it. The problems of being a low income area helped overcome divisions brought from the old world and furthered unity among the numerous churches in the area.

Although the churches of the N.C.D. often emphasized the fundamental cleavages of nationality and class, their contribution to overcoming the gap between the sexes was much greater than that of other voluntary associations. This is not to say that women played a part equal to that of men, but that there were more opportunities for them to develop their talents and, in some churches, their chances were unusual for the times.

63. *The Australian Primitive Methodist yearbook* (Adelaide, 1890), pp. 11, 33, 39.

To the Christian churches the souls of men and women were of equal worth. Nevertheless, their spheres of activity in the church were divided so that they mirrored relationships in the rest of society. To men went the right to preach and be a church official or trustee. The roles of women were subservient. The Primitive Methodist practice of allowing women to preach did not throw up female preachers in the colliery townships. Until the passage of a new married women's property act in 1893 women in N.S.W. were excluded from positions of responsibility for property because there were doubts as to whether they were allowed to enter contracts on their own behalf⁶⁴. This meant they could not become trustees of church property. As a result, they had no say in if a bazaar or church anniversary to raise funds was to be held, but were expected to fall in with such suggestions and provide the goods and labour. They had no say in the distribution of the money they raised, for it was appropriated by the all male committee of management or trustees. Nor was it the woman's role to decide if a house to house collection was to be made, but she was expected to do it. What is more, although elections were usually held for official church positions and committees, the minister was often empowered to choose his own female helpers, or they were nominated by the committee of management⁶⁵. Even in their own 'sphere' much of the possible decision making was denied to women.

Other aspects of church work offered women wider scope for decision making and initiative. Because of the belief that men should teach men and women should teach women, female Sunday school teachers were sought eagerly. So, women committed to the churches had an opportunity of self-expression beyond that of home and kitchen, if not children. The number of female Sunday school teachers in comparison with men suggests this opportunity was very attractive to women. In the Wallsend Presbyterian charge female

64. see J. Mackinolty, 'Married women's property acts' (paper delivered at Women and Law conference, Sydney, Sept. 1978), p. 8.

65. viz. Burwood UFM church, 'Minute book', 14 Mar. 1883, 2 Mar. 1889. Hamilton Presbyterian church, *op. cit.*, 20 June 1878, 6 Aug. 1883. Wallsend Wesleyan church, 'Trustees' minute book', 15 Jan., 9 Jy. 1900 (Wallsend Methodist parsonage).

Sunday school teachers outnumbered males over half the time from 1880 to 1900 and almost always in the Hamilton charge (table 8.12)⁶⁶.

Table 8.12

Sunday school teachers at Presbyterian churches in the N.C.D.
in the late nineteenth century

Year	Wallsend		Hamilton	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1880	7	7		
1881	7	6		
1882	5	8		
1883	2	7	6	6
1884	9	10	5	7
1885	9	10	7	8
1886	16	17	6	5
1887	15	15	6	10
1888	15	17	8	9
1889	17	14	9	12
1890	20	15	7	14
1891	20	21	11	17
1892	10	7	3	14
1893	9	8	15	17
1894	7	10	11	22
1895	-	-	8	20
1896	4	10	8	20
1897	5	7	9	20
1898	8	14	8	18
1899	-	-	-	-
1900	12	15	10	18

Note: dash denotes not available.

Source: Presbyterian church of N.S.W., *op. cit.*, 1880-1901.

66. Occasional reference to Sunday school teachers in other denominations suggest a similar situation. See *N.S.W. Baptist*, 6 Oct. 1894, 8 Oct. 1897. Burwood P.M. church, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 4 Ap. 1898 (UCRS).

This does not mean women teachers held the same status as men. Like other female adherents, they were expected to cater for social occasions and were never office bearers. At any intellectual discussion they were silent. The minutes of the Hamilton Presbyterian Sunday school teachers' meetings only record men as joining in such discussions⁶⁷. Nevertheless, the Sunday school offered women a sphere away from their traditional one of cooking and sewing, which bazaar and catering work did not, even though they were not treated as equals of their male colleagues.

By the end of the century, possibly because of a decline in male commitment to churches, women had advanced to holding official positions and running their own committees. Whereas in 1881 the Wallsend church of England Parish Council called a meeting of 'interested ladies' when they wanted to hold a bazaar, by 1900 a separate ladies committee to manage all such business was elected at the same time as male officials⁶⁸. All except the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches had female Sunday school secretaries and treasurers. 1900 saw female secretaries elected at Lambton and Plattsburg Primitive Methodist, Merewether United Free Methodist, Lambton Baptist and Wallsend Congregational Sunday schools⁶⁹. Not even the office of superintendent was beyond female grasp. In the same year the Wallsend Anglican school was run by a woman⁷⁰. By this time other offices, hitherto reserved for men, were also being occupied by women in the more radical churches. In 1900 there were female choir conductors at the Lambton Congregational and New Lambton Lay Methodist churches⁷¹. In 1896 a married woman was elected church secretary at Burwood United Free church. At this church quarterday delegates in the 1890s were often women. The Plattsburg Baptist church had a woman delegate to the annual N.S.W. conference⁷². Although

67. Hamilton Presbyterian church, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 10 Ap. 1893.

68. *N.M.G.*, 19 Ap. 1900.

69. *ibid.*, 26 Ap., 7 June, 29 Sept. 1900. *Congregational yearbook*, 1893-1900.

70. *N.M.H.*, 3 Ap. 1900.

71. *ibid.*, 12 Sept., 10 Dec., 1900.

72. Burwood UFM church, 'Minute book', 2 Jan., 14 Oct. 1896, 5 Jan., 18 Ap. 1898 (UCRS). *N.S.W. Baptist*, 22 Oct. 1898.

it was still rare for women to hold high offices in the 1890s, and they were far from becoming trustees or lay preachers, precedents had been established.

Throughout the period, then, the churches offered women opportunities for participation in voluntary associations not available through other organizations in the colliery townships. By the 1890s these chances included responsible offices with some authority. That these positions did not require them to fulfill traditionally female roles, and they were expected to stand as equals with their male co-office bearers, meant that they were one of the rare instances in which women were integrated into the public life of the colliery townships. In this way the churches made a singular contribution to the bridging of fundamental cleavages in the N.C.D.

Despite their divisive potential, the churches were a less serious threat to the growth of community in the colliery townships than they might have been. Friendly and sympathetic feelings existed between all denominations. The protestant churches were united by many common interests and held numerous joint activities. In the case of Methodists this led to organic union. The churches were also far more successful at involving women in public life as equals instead of auxiliaries. The nature of religious adherence and commitment, along with the problems of churches in the N.C.D., added to its distinctive character. The pattern of affiliation was quite different from that in the rest of N.S.W.; as was the strength of commitment to the different denominations. The custom of sending children to Sunday school was twice as strong as in the rest of N.S.W. The dominance of Methodist Sunday schools meant the influence of this form of Christianity was far greater than in the rest of N.S.W. Poverty and the preference for 'enthusiastic' religion finally expressed themselves in the formation of a new church, which further distinguished the area.

Behind the unique character of religion in the colliery townships and much of the churches' contribution to cohesion lay the nature of the district. The origins of the population helped make

the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Primitive Methodists strong and Catholics weak. The working-class character of inhabitants made the Congregational, Baptist and minor Methodist churches far stronger than in the rest of N.S.W. It was also responsible for the poverty and preference for fervent evangelism which made supporting clergymen difficult and the laity more important. Poverty also encouraged much of the cooperation between churches, like Sunday school picnics and Methodist union. Ethnic origins and class were therefore the important factors in the character of religion in the N.C.D.

There were certain social divisions in the colliery townships which the churches failed to overcome. Religious affiliation frequently coincided with ethnic and cultural groups, thereby restricting mixing of people from different regions of Britain. The preference of miners for more democratic sects with 'enthusiastic' methods meant some churches were, like the union, cooperative and friendly societies, working-class institutions. The attraction of the more respectable churches for the colliery managers meant devout church goers from this group rarely worshipped with their employees. The general lack of appeal of church membership for labourers meant that they lived apart from this field of social mixing, as well as many others created by voluntary associations. The social divisions between bourgeoisie and manual worker, employer and employee, miner and labourer, were largely reinforced.

CHAPTER NINE

POLITICS

Most of the organisations devoted to improving the way of life in the Newcastle colliery townships were run by local residents with little dependence on outside bodies. Friendly societies, co-operatives, trade unions and leisure associations were fully autonomous. Municipal councils and Mechanics Institutes, although not independent of outside aid, relied basically on local initiative. While much of daily life could be run without reference to the rest of the world, there were ideals, facilities and improvements which could not be achieved in the self-governing colony of N.S.W. in the late nineteenth century without involvement in parliamentary politics. Government was responsible for education, legislation on mining, friendly societies and trade unions and economic policy. It also gave grants for improvements and Mechanics Institutes. All this government activity vitally affected local life. Government also had the power to enact new legislation which would help solve problems people in the district faced. Therefore, participation in colonial politics was an essential part of making a better life for inhabitants.

Political goals in the N.C.D. reflected closely its needs and problems which were in turn related to class and economic structure. In the years before 1890 the character of the N.C.D. gave rise to a distinctive political creed and style. That most of the population and all occupational groups espoused it meant that political activity was a unifying force. In the 1890s the emergence of the labour party and the federation question weakened this solidarity. The labour party provided an alternative creed which largely agreed with, but differed from the local one on a few crucial issues. That the new creed appealed to the working-class, but not the bourgeoisie, linked class with political belief. In particular, the emergence of a labour party furthered the already growing estrangement between colliery management and employee. The introduction of payment of members in 1889 enabled local inhabitants to stand for parliament and acquire a status which would enable them, along with those elected to local government, to replace the colliery manager in the local system of social status. From the 1890s politics hindered the development of community in the N.C.D. by fostering divisions between old and young, employer and employee, bourgeoisie and manual worker.

Before the late 1880s, the parliamentary system of N.S.W. reflected the geographical isolation of many country areas rather than differences in class or occupational interest¹. The greatest need was for roads, bridges and other services dependent on government money which could not be secured without pressure and keeping a watchful eye on the government estimates. Accordingly, the M.L.A. was chosen not so much for his opinion on issues of the day as his dedication to solving local problems. The N.C.D. must have felt it had as much need of roads and bridges as other areas, but was remarkable for the early emphasis on issues which reflected class interest. This stemmed not so much from a wider world view as the homogeneity of the population which made issues related to class and occupation relevant to all inhabitants. As a result, the N.C.D. had a unique political style in this period.

The colliery townships developed a set of beliefs which reflected their social and economic circumstances in that they were concerned with getting a better deal for the working man. This involved the abolition of assisted immigration, Chinese immigration and school fees, the improvement of mining legislation, an eight hour day, compulsory arbitration and fiscal protection.

Although trade unions could do something to protect and improve wages and working conditions locally, they had no direct say in government legislation as made in parliament. Yet, government policy clearly affected working conditions. Large-scale assistance to intending immigrants was a government decision, but could have disastrous effects on wages by flooding the labour market. Aware of this threat to their bargaining position and standard of living, the colliery townships adopted a policy of restricted immigration. In 1875, when the government was proposing to spend £400,000 on assisted immigration, there were mass meetings and petitions to protest against the scheme as 'uncalled for in the present circumstances of the colony' and 'designed to impoverish the working-class'². The role of government

-
1. P. Loveday and A.W. Martin, *Parliament, factions and parties, the first 30 years of responsible government, 1856-1889* (Melbourne, 1966), p. 97.
 2. M.A., 2 June 1875.

in immigration policy made the attitude of candidates to assisted immigration important to electors³.

Widespread conviction that British standards of work, leisure and wages could never be appreciated by 'uncivilised' non Christians also meant support for racially restricted immigration. Many coal miners had spent some time on the gold fields in the 1850s and may well have absorbed their antipathy to the Chinese there. By the 1880s the Chinese had moved into non mining areas. This caused white workers generally to think themselves threatened. The willingness of the Chinese to accept below union rates led to specific industrial incidents and a general fear they would destroy the standard of living if allowed to continue entering Australia⁴. In the N.C.D. there were only a few Chinese, mostly market gardeners, but the fear of them pouring in and taking over jobs in the mines was universal. Thus miners joined the rising clamour for the exclusion of Chinese that occurred in the 1880s. Mass meetings were held where, underneath the rampant racism of the main speakers, there was a firm belief that Chinese, like large scale European migration, threatened the position of labour. Many claimed the Chinese would supplant the European population, whilst one Wallsend man was convinced that they did not come voluntarily, but were deliberately brought in to cheapen labour and reduce European wages to starvation point⁵. Restricted immigration, inhabitants believed, was essential if the higher standard of living, in the interests of which they had come to N.S.W., was to be maintained. In the policy of candidates they attached to the abolition of Chinese immigration as much importance as ending assisted European immigration⁶.

Whilst an important aspect of the standard of living, wages were not the only ingredient. The hours and conditions of work affected the capacity of workingmen to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Improved mining legislation was sought from the 1860s. Although miners could and did give evidence to committees enquiring into

3. All candidates from 1880 on expressed themselves against assisted immigration. See *N.M.H.*, 26, 27, 28 Ap. 1880, 2, 5 Jan. 1882.

4. A.T. Yarwood (ed.), *Attitudes to non European immigration* (Melbourne, 1968), pp. 70-72.

5. *N.M.H.*, 6 May 1881.

6. e.g., *N.M.H.*, 26, 28 Ap. 1880, 2 Jan. 1882, 14 Oct. 1885, 16 Feb. 1887.

conditions, without an M.L.A., committed to emphasising the need for better and more effective legislation, there was no way of securing inquiries in the first place. By the late nineteenth century the eight hour day was the reform most desired and much time and energy was devoted to getting it. Newcastle miners were advocating shorter hours from the 1870s and by the 1880s had annual eight hour day demonstrations to publicise the need for government legislation on this matter⁷. Although the eight hour day could have been won through industrial bargaining, there was no permanent achievement without government legislation with power of prosecution for non-compliance. In the 1870s, when shortage of labour made the bargaining position of the miners' union good, they used it to secure shorter hours and an agreement with employers to submit all disputes to independent arbitrators⁸. This was not the state system of arbitration as now established in Australia, but an agreement to settle disputes by calling in a third party instead of engaging in a trial of strength. By the 1880s the weakened position of the union made it clear that the only way to secure shorter hours and arbitration permanently was through state intervention. Accordingly, the eight hour day and compulsory arbitration joined improved mining legislation as part of the local political ideology from 1885⁹.

By 1875 inhabitants were beginning to realise that the local economy, devoted as it was entirely to coal-mining, provided little employment for adolescent boys who had left school. Not all could be accommodated in the pits as trappers and wheelers before they were old enough to go on the coal. This meant not only that the family income was not supplemented by adolescent labour as expected, but there was a severe social problem in hundreds of boys with nothing to do¹⁰. The obvious solution was to introduce manufacturing, but the high cost of labour and establishment meant the products could not compete with imports. Increased employment opportunities could only be provided by protection for native industry. Realization that expansion of industry would reduce under and unemployment and low wages by increasing the demand for coal, as well as providing work for their sons, led inhabitants to return protectionists, in preference to free traders.

7. Gollan, *op.cit.*, pp. 49, 69.

8. *ibid.*, p. 52.

9. *N.M.H.*, 13, 14 Oct. 1885, 15, 16 Feb. 1887.

10. *M.A.*, 12 May 1875.

or those uncommitted on the fiscal issue, from 1880. By 1887 protection had become a panacea for the problems of the working man and free traders had little chance of a hearing. Sir Henry Parkes, who visited Wallsend to speak on behalf of the Northumberland free trade candidate met with a hostile reception. The candidate was quite howled down and the platform almost collapsed because of the excited, jostling crowd¹¹.

Although they wanted manufacturing employment for their sons, some residents also hoped that they would have the opportunity to become more than workingmen. Education was seen as the door to better things and free, compulsory and secular education given strong support. In 1880 the passage of an act purporting to provide such instruction did not satisfy them. School fees were still required from those thought able to pay. Moreover, they increased with the level of education. In the fifth class of primary school, which equipped students to sit for the Junior, Senior and Civil Service examinations, the passport to non manual employment, there were special fees of seven shillings a month. High schools charged fees of 2 Gn. a term, which was quite beyond the working man¹². These omissions in the 1880 act, which contributed to the lack of upward mobility noted in chapter two, were quite intolerable to those inhabitants who realised school fees were stopping clever children from climbing up the social ladder. Furthermore, many parents were embarrassed by not being able to pay even primary school fees in times of strike or underemployment. One Plattsburg man wrote:

'It is anything but pleasant to have ... the school visitor coming around to the house and for parents to have to advertise their poverty as they have to do under pressure when called before school boards¹³'.

People also resented interference in the way they ran their affairs. In 1888 a local newspaper alleged that officers lectured parents on the fact that they

11. *N.M.H.*, 14 Oct. 1887.

12. C. Turney, 'The history of education in N.S.W., 1788-1900' (Ph.D., Sydney University, 1962), pp. 1475, 1498.

13. *N.M.H.*, 20 Mar. 1891.

'should have been able to pay fees when they could afford to have pictures on the walls and other ornaments which go to make the home more pleasant'¹⁴.

Truly free education was as vital to the self respect of residents as the upward mobility many desired for their children. Attitudes to education were as important as those to immigration, compulsory arbitration and other measures affecting workingmen¹⁵.

The corollary of these demands to better the position of the working-class was adequate representation, for without this there would never be sufficient opportunity for their views to be expressed or pressure to implement them in legislation. Now in the eyes of the colliery townships there were severe defects in the parliamentary system of N.S.W. Although all males over 21 who had been living in the same place for six months were entitled to vote, those owning land had suffrage in every electorate where they held it. This favoured the wealthy, whilst the poor, who were more likely to be workers constantly on the move, were disadvantaged. That members of parliament had to be self-supporting meant workingmen could not represent their own interests and the N.C.D. had to rely on wealthier persons from elsewhere for M.L.A.s. Finally, the powers of the upper house, full of large landowners, professionals and businessmen, including colliery proprietors, meant reforming legislation drafted in the lower house, such as that on coal mines, was delayed, or key clauses in it altered by the Legislative Council¹⁶. To improve their power to influence colonial legislation, the colliery townships elected persons who believed in one man one vote, reform of the upper house and payment of members¹⁷. The last was the most important issue before 1890. Miners were not seasonal workers and reform of the Legislative Council did not become urgent until the 1890s, when the working-class was sufficiently represented to draft legislation which threatened upper house interests.

14. *The radical*, 1 Dec. 1888 (M.L.).

15. e.g., *N.M.H.*, 26 Ap. 1881, 7 Jan. 1882, 19 May 1884, 12 Oct. 1885, 24 Jan. 1889.

16. Gollan, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

17. *N.M.H.*, 26, 28 Ap. 1880, 12, 14 Oct. 1885, 15 Feb. 1887, 24 Jan. 1889.

The colliery townships were not happy with representation by outsiders with different class interests and blamed many failures of the government to take note of their wishes on the absence of working-class M.L.A.s. In 1876 the general secretary of the miners' union claimed at a mass protest against the government's immigration scheme that the only way to stop such treatment of workingmen was to stop putting capitalists into parliament and to work for the payment of members¹⁸. By 1881 inadequate handling of a variety of issues related to the interests of inhabitants led one miner to write to the *N.M.H.* about the

'thousands of oily tongued capitalists who call themselves liberals and profess very liberal principals ... especially when seeking election'.

He went on to claim that if there had working men in parliament there would not now be Chinese immigration, surplus skilled labour because of immigration and they would have had free, compulsory and secular education long ago¹⁹. The general dissatisfaction in the mining towns led to the formation of an association to work for the payment of members in 1881. Many of those who spoke on behalf of the idea referred to the miners of Northumberland, England, electing Thomas Burt to parliament and supporting him there²⁰. However, the failure of the association to survive and take action to maintain representatives suggests that the N.C.D. preferred government support of all M.L.A.s. For this they had to wait almost another ten years. Meanwhile, they only returned candidates who supported payment of members.

In arguing that the N.C.D. was distinctive in its emphasis on matters of class interest, it is necessary to demonstrate not only support for issues related to class, but that inhabitants attached more importance to them than those matters usually considered local affairs, such as roads, bridges and railway routes. The colliery townships gave proof of this not just by their preference for those

18. *M.A.*, 2 June 1875, 2 June 1876.

19. *N.M.H.*, 2 Nov. 1881.

20. *ibid.*, 20 Aug., 3, 15 Nov. 1881.

with the right ideas on class issues. They also supported outsiders rather than electing local men whose ideas were not in close agreement with theirs.

In 1880 the electorate of Northumberland returned to parliament Ninian Melville, a Sydney man who was a confirmed protectionist, opposed to Chinese and assisted immigration and school fees and in favour of one man one vote, an eight hour day, elective upper house and payment of members. He was 309 votes ahead of Joseph Creer from Newcastle. Creer stood specifically as a local man and dealt at length with local issues, such as water supply and railway routes. He was against assisted immigration, in favour of an elected upper house, but committed to neither free trade nor protection. Creer was returned consistently from 1885 to 1891, but by that time he had become a strong protectionist²¹.

The 1882 bye-election was another opportunity for the colliery townships, which made up nearly all of the electorate of Northumberland, to choose between a local and non local man. There were two candidates, William Grisdale, who owned property in the district, and Thomas Hungerford, whose assets were spread all over northern N.S.W. The former, having announced that there were no leading topics of the day to discuss and he was purely a local man, launched into a speech that was heavily against Sydney and for the upgrading and improvement of Newcastle. Both had 'proper' attitudes to immigration and school fees, neither was a protectionist and Grisdale wavered on payment of members. Hungerford was chosen in preference to the 'local man', Grisdale²².

In 1884 there were four candidates in a bye-election, only one of whom, R.B. Christie, lived in the Newcastle district. Like the candidate eventually elected, R.C. Luscombe, secretary of the N.S.W. Protection and Political Reform League, Christie was against assisted immigration and school fees, but did not emphasise protection. Luscombe was preferred, despite his claim that, if transport was up-

21. *ibid.*, 26, 28 Ap., 1 May 1880, 15 Feb. 1887.

22. *N.M.H.*, 2, 6, 7 Jan. 1882. Actually, Grisdale 'changed his mind' on the matter when his opposition to it produced a hostile response from electors. His opportunism did not escape them.

graded, there would be no need for local government, for everyone could go to the great centre, Sydney²³. Although Luscombe was defeated in 1885, when Creer was elected, that year saw the introduction of a third member for Northumberland. Another Sydney man with radical protectionist policies, Thomas Walker, was elected to the position rather than J.A. Gorrick, the free trade candidate who recommended himself as a local man and against centralisation²⁴.

Therefore, whilst in the early 1880s the colony was still concerned with roads and bridges, the N.C.D. was concerned with broader issues. Its political programme of arbitration, abolition of assisted and Chinese immigration, protection, payment of members and reform of the upper house was identical with that of the Protection and Political Reform League. This was one of the few political groups in the colony which was committed to a series of reforms affecting the whole colony. While in the early 1880s the workingmen of Sydney, as represented by the Trades and Labour Council, were refusing to become involved in any political programme²⁵, the people of the N.C.D. were identifying issues important to them that could be solved through politics and returning persons who were identified with the Protection and Political Reform League, or its proposals. At least three representatives, Melville, Luscombe and Walker, were prominent members of the League.

The attention paid to politics and the class orientation of the dominant ideas in the N.C.D. meant this activity, having drawn together most of the adult male population, could then divide them. Elections, decided on a majority of votes, leave minorities, small or large, unrepresented. While most of the population was working-class, there was a middle-class minority who might not have thought their interests served by the dominant ideology. If support for candidates cut along class lines, it would have reinforced class cleavages. In reality the nature of politics in the N.C.D. until the 1890s was not such a threat to cohesion. Most of the population supported the dominant ideology. Although fundamental cleavages like

23. *N.M.H.*, 19 May 1884.

24. *ibid.*, 13 Oct. 1885.

25. B. Mansfield, *Australian democrat, the career of E.W. O'Sullivan 1846-1910* (Sydney, 1965), pp. 46-47.

class and religion were factors in the support given different candidates, those in favour of the dominant creed and minority views came from all occupational groups. That most persons eligible to vote did so and supported the same principles, regardless of occupation, meant politics in the N.C.D. before 1890 encouraged unity.

Voting was taken seriously by most of those entitled to do so. It is likely that as many as 90 per cent of males aged 21 and over in the N.C.D. were enrolled (table 9.1), whilst voting turnout was higher

Table 9.1

Electors as a proportion of those entitled to vote in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century

Note: Those eligible to vote were all resident males aged 21 and over.

Town	Electors as a proportion of those eligible to vote(%)	
	1894	1900-01
Adamstown	96	91
Hamilton	104*	90
Lambton	91	95
Merewether	82	95
New Lambton	82	90
Plattsburg	93	94
Wallsend	99	92

* This error stems from calculating annual intercensal population increases arithmetically. Clearly the proportion enrolled was very high.

Sources: *N.S.W. electoral roll*, 1894, 1900-01.
Census of N.S.W., 1891, 1901

than elsewhere. Table 9.2 shows that, although general elections in N.S.W. between 1872 and 1891 could never entice more than 64 per cent

Table 9.2

Voter turnout in general elections in the late nineteenth century:

N.C.D. and N.S.W.

Year	Electors Voting (%)	
	Northumberland	N.S.W.
1872	64.5	47.8
1874	78.4	54.6
1877	72.6	51.5
1880	77.1	64.4
1882	71.0	58.2
1885	not recorded	
1887	75.1	57.9
1889	64.7	59.8
1891	72.5	64.4

Note: The electorate of Northumberland represented all the colliery townships in this study except Minmi and part of Hamilton. Since these two areas were but small parts of other electorates, and there was no breakdown of turnout within electorates, they were left out.

Source: *N.S.W.S.R.*, 1872-1891.

of all electors to the polls, the lowest turnout in the N.C.D. was 65 per cent and it was usually over 70 per cent. This mass participation contrasts markedly with the involvement in voluntary associations, such as Mechanics Institutes and co-operatives. Whilst this commitment must put parliamentary politics among the most important group activities in the district, that such a large part of the population was involved could have created strong tensions between

opposing sides.

Support for the various candidates seems to have been related to differences of occupation and religious belief. Table 9.3 shows the occupations of those who were actively involved in campaigning for the three members who were returned continuously for the electorate of Northumberland from 1885 to 1891. Middle-class support was strongest for Melville and out of all proportion to the strength of middle-class occupations in the workforce for both him and Creer. By contrast, only 7 per cent of the support for the rather colourful Thomas Walker came from this section of the population. Instead, his following consisted almost entirely of tradesmen, labourers and especially miners. There was a similar variation based on religious commitment. 60 per cent of those who campaigned for Ninian Melville, a believer in local option without compensation, were leaders, or prominent members, of local churches. The support from this group halved in the case of Creer and was even smaller for Walker, who was well known as a non believer²⁶.

Campaigning for different candidates did not necessarily imply support for rival political creeds in N.S.W. before 1894. Provision was made for extra representation of an area because of population growth not by creating another electorate, but increasing the number of members in the electorate. Under the electoral act of 1881 Northumberland, which included all colliery townships in this study except half of Minmi and half of Hamilton, was entitled to two representatives. By 1885 population had risen sufficiently for a third. The three members who were returned in the late 1880s were not opposed in ideology, all being radical protectionists.

Throughout the 1880s the support for radical protection was so widespread that there was little basis for the development of tensions and rivalry, as would occur between two fairly evenly matched parties struggling for control. Table 9.4 shows that protectionists won over 70 per cent of all votes in 1880 and had increased their share to 93 per cent by 1889. A strong minority party which could try to become a majority was out of the question.

26. See article on Walker by F.B. Smith in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 6 (Melbourne, 1976).

Table 9.3

Class and involvement in the campaigns of protectionist M.P.s in the
Northumberland electorate to 1891

Occupation or class	Support for Candidate (%)		
	N. Melville (N=32)	J. Creer (N=40)	T. Walker (N=28)
Professional	6	3	0
Business	0	3	0
Shopkeeping	25	10	7
Clerical	6	10	0
Skilled	13	10	11
Miner	47	63	75
Labourer	3	3	7
Middle-class	37	26	7
Working-class	63	76	93

Note: Those defined as taking an active part in campaigns were:
 proponents of motions, nominators and members of committees
 in support of a candidate.

Details may not add to 100 owing to rounding.

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1880-91. *W&PSun*, 1886, 1891.

Table 9.4

Voting and the major factions at general elections in the electorate
of Northumberland in the 1880s

Year	Protection	Year (%)	
		Free Trade	Other
1880	71	30	0
1885	76	14	10
1887	91	9	0
1889	93	7	

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1 May 1880, 17 Oct. 1885, 19 Feb. 1887, 5 Feb. 1889.

The solid support for radical protection could still have allowed class cleavages. If the tiny group of free traders consisted of shopkeepers and the radical protectionists entirely of miners, tradesmen and labourers, political activity would emphasise class differences. In practice, however, support for both free trade and protection came from most occupational groups, so that neither could be identified with a particular class or occupation. Table 9.5 gives the occupational distribution of those who were active supporters of protectionist and free trade candidates in elections for Northumberland before 1894. Clearly most groups were represented in either faction. This meant that the dominant creed, protection, drew support from all sections of the population, from professionals to labourers. It also bridged the gap between employer and employee because many colliery managers and proprietors were prominent protectionists. James Fletcher, who had managed the Co-operative colliery, entered parliament as a member for Newcastle firmly committed to protection of industry. George Dibbs, who led the Protectionist Party in the late 1880s, was part owner, with Alexander Brown, of the New Lambton Coal Company. The appeal of protection to all sectors of the population reflected the character of the movement as an alliance of those with similar grievances²⁷. While working-class support for protection stemmed from the belief that it would solve the problems of the working man, the expansion of manufacturing would also increase the local population and so the custom of storekeepers. Payment of members would have benefited them just as much, whilst compulsory arbitration would have reduced losses from strikes. Protection was as attractive to manufacturers and colliery proprietors as workingmen because it promised to expand local industry and the demand for raw materials. At a time when other factors were dividing the manual worker and bourgeoisie, or colliery manager and miner, politics held them together.

Finally, the organisation of electoral representation at this time could encourage co-operation between persons who, because of class or religious belief, might campaign for different protectionist candidates. The election of two or more representatives for the same electorate, especially if they held similar political beliefs, meant united action on local problems and wider political issues was

27. Mansfield, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-101.

Table 9.5Class and involvement in the campaigns of free trade and
protectionist candidates in the N.C.D. before 1894

Occupation or class	Protection (%) N=96	Free Trade (%) N=15
Professional	4	0
Business	1	7
Shopkeeping	9	13
Clerical	5	0
Skilled	9	7
Miner	67	67
Labourer	4	6
Middle-class	19	20
Working-class	80	80

Note: Details may not add to 100 owing to rounding.

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875.

N.M.H., 1880-91.

W&PSun, 1886, 1891.

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1894.

inevitable. In the 1887 campaign Melville noted the joint efforts he and Creer had made to get a fair settlement of the commonage issue. In 1885, when Thomas Walker first stood for Northumberland, Melville claimed he was 'not fit to sit in the company of respectable men'. By 1889 he was asking electors to vote for him²⁸. This kind of mutual support between candidates was feasible because electors had as many votes as there were local members. Northumberland electors, then, could vote for three candidates from 1885. By 1889 general

28. *N.M.H.*, 14 Feb. 1887, 28 Jan., 4 Feb. 1889.

satisfaction with the performance of Creer, Melville and Walker led to requests on nomination day that electors give all three a share of their votes²⁹. The possibility of supporting more than one candidate without prejudicing any of them meant many persons publically supported two or all of the sitting members. James Richardson, former mayor of Plattsburg and a constant campaigner for Melville from 1883, supported a motion of confidence in Walker in 1887. In 1889 he did the same for Creer. Henry Evans of Adamstown in 1891 supported motions on behalf of all three sitting members³⁰. Despite the preference for the three members on the basis of religion and class, supporters were not mutually exclusive and hostile groups.

Politics in the N.C.D. before the 1890s encouraged the growth of community. The political demands of the majority of the population were closely tied to local needs and problems. That this particular programme was more concerned with broad political problems than purely local needs made the area unusual in N.S.W. in the early 1880s. Mass participation, overwhelming support for radical protectionists and the chance to elect more than one candidate united persons otherwise separated by class or religion in support of the same ideals.

Large-scale changes in the nature of politics in N.S.W. in the 1890s put an end to the solidarity which had grown out of political activity in the previous decade. The achievement of key points in their political platform, reorganisation of electorates, the emergence of a workingman's party pledged to sink the fiscal issue and the depression of the early 1890s wrought changes in the nature of politics which disrupted the social cohesion of the area.

The passage of the payment of members bill in 1889 gave the N.C.D., for the first time, the chance to elect as their representatives men from their own ranks. Whilst this meant the achievement of a long standing goal, it also meant the stability of the late 1880s, when Creer, Melville and Walker were returned with large majorities, was likely to go with the entry of new candidates. Such a situation created for voters conflicts of loyalty between their own class and

29. *ibid.*, 2 Feb., 1889.

30. These observations are based on accounts of the campaigns of the 1880s in the *N.M.H.*

the men who had given good service since 1885, whose policies were similar to those of the new workingmen candidates.

Such conflicts of loyalty would have caused enough trouble by themselves, but were exacerbated by the emergence of a labour party pledged to the election of workingmen to represent workingmen, whom it was determined to unite by sinking the fiscal question that dominated N.S.W. politics from 1885. Now it is clear from the Trades and Labour Council activities in the 1880s and the troubles of the Political Labour League in the 1891-3 parliament that many working men saw their interests as closely linked to protection. Few, though, were in the position of the electors of Northumberland to return three radical protectionists during the 1880s³¹. The enthusiasm, bordering on hysteria, for protection in the area, and the insistence that it was the only logical policy for working men, meant it was asking rather much of electors to turn around and sink the fiscal issue. This was especially so after their treatment of Josiah Wright, the Northumberland free trade candidate in 1889. On the hustings Wright, who had been selected to contest the electorate because he had been a 'working man', claimed the fiscal issue was unimportant and it was essential to return men 'who would advocate the rights of labour and not the false cry of protection'. In one town he was greeted with boos and groans and could not get a hearing. At Wallsend a crowd of 3,000 received him without applause and at the end of the meeting gave three enthusiastic cheers for protection. Jesmond actually passed a motion of no confidence and at Minmi he had trouble even getting a chairman³². Thus the payment of members and emergence of a labour party created more problems than it solved in the colliery townships.

In 1891 the structure of electoral representation and the fact that protectionism had not yet been tried and found wanting enabled the N.C.D. to compromise with the conflict payment of members and the PLL created. That nine out of ten electors favoured protection enabled the local Political Labour Leagues to go against the decision of the TLC in Sydney that they should sink the fiscal issue and choose

31. The only protectionist elected in a purely working-class area was W.F. Schey who in 1887 became member for Redfern.

32. *N.M.H.*, 29, 30 Jan., 1 Feb. 1889.

candidates who were protectionists. Both Alfred Edden and James Thomson, the two they chose, emphasised their support for protection when addressing electors³³. At Wallsend, the League altered its title to fit in with the traditional policy of the district, styling itself the Wallsend Labour and Protection League³⁴. When it came to electing candidates, that voters could choose more than one enabled them to avoid having to choose between loyalites to class and old retainers. Of the three radical protectionist and two PLL candidates, they returned two of the former and one of the latter.

By 1894 it was impossible to stay loyal to the old and new politicians. The electoral act of 1893 created out of the old seat of Northumberland three new electorates: Wallsend, covering the outermost colliery townships, Waratah, the middle of the district and Kahibah, the southern towns. Each electorate was entitled to one representative. So, all had to choose between the old radical protectionism and the new PLL. If preferences for the old and new had stayed as they were in the 1891 election, when the three protectionists polled 55 per cent of the votes (table 9.6), the 1894 election would have seen the maintenance of the *status quo* in terms of district ideology, with the emergence of a strong minority, potentially a majority, to create conflict and rivalry. However, the performance of the protectionist Dibbs Government, formed in late 1891, in coping with the depression and industrial unrest meant many electors began to question the alleged identity of interest between labour and protection. Wages fell, unemployment rose and Dibbs and his supporters showed 'sympathy' for the working man by sending strike breakers to Broken Hill in 1892³⁵. As a result, local policy changed on the fiscal issue. The 1894 election saw the defeat of radical protection, which linked the welfare of labour to the protection of industry, and the adoption of PLL policy, which denied such a connection³⁶ (table 9.7).

The performance of the three labour men elected in 1894, Edden (Kahibah), Watkins (Wallsend) and Griffith (Waratah) and labour party policy generally were sufficient to maintain the new trend, especially

33. *ibid.*, 16, 26 June 1891.

34. *W&PSun*, 20 May 1891.

35. *N.M.H.*, 5 Jy. 1894.

36. Support for protection was still strong and PLL candidates were always questioned closely on their fiscal attitudes. Both Edden and Watkins, when questioned, indicated that they favoured protection, but they put labour solidly before it.

Table 9.6Polling in the 1891 general election: electorate of Northumberland

Candidate	Party	Formal votes No.	polled %
N. Melville	Protection	2892	19
T. Walker	do.	3686	24
J. Creer	do.	2089	14
A. Edden	PLL	3879	26
J. Thomson	co.	2551	17

Source: *W&PSun*, 27 June 1891.Table 9.7Polling in the 1894 general election in the N.C.D.

Party	Electorate and formal votes polled (%)		
	Wallsend	Kahibah	Waratah
Labour	51	73	49
Protectionist*	45	25	36
Free Trade	4	2	15

Notes: Protectionists include independent labour candidates, all of whom refused to sink the fiscal question. The figures for Waratah include Hamilton and Lambton only. The distribution of votes between Labour, Protection and Free Trade for the whole electorate, which included Waratah and the Hunter River islands, was respectively: 44, 37 and 19 per cent.

Source: *V&PLA*, 1894-5 (1), pp. 1031-1059.

since the performance of the protectionists was so poor. In 1894 that party lost what urban radical support it had and became a party largely controlled by its rural and manufacturing sectors, which were very conservative. The loss of a popular base meant the radical protectionist left in the party, such as E.W. O'Sullivan, were powerless to advocate new reforms³⁷. On the other hand, the labour party, especially through local members, showed itself highly sensitive to

37. Mansfield, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

local needs.

From 1891 the PLL was committed to a new coalmines regulation act in the interests of more safety. It made several attempts to get such an act passed, culminating in the coal mines regulation act of 1896. The expertise of local members for the colliery townships who had been practical miners, like Edden and Watkins, was publicly acknowledged as particularly useful in formulating the bill³⁸. Local members were also tireless in advocating compulsory arbitration of disputes, which the colliery townships had wanted for years³⁹.

Although the mining towns tried to cope with the poverty that widowhood, old age and disability created, there was no hope of restoring the standard of living enjoyed when good wages were earned. Since friendly society benefits in sickness or death hardly amounted to a pension, widows had to get what they could through washing, sewing, or keeping a small shop. According to reports of the school attendance officer, this never brought in much⁴⁰. Some disabled miners tried a change of occupation but were often too crippled to earn much. One man, who, through a special collection, secured a horse and cart for selling fruit and vegetables, was too weak to carry on the business. Another, who tried the same solution, was still unable to provide his family with food and clothing through his labour⁴¹. The charity which supplemented self-help could do little more than prevent starvation. Since they relied on residents who were earning, the funds raised by benefit concerts, pay day and benevolent society collections, were limited by the low average income of a working-class region. This meant those receiving aid were the worst cases and the benevolent society was always looking for ways to lower expenses. These could involve considerable loss of freedom for those on relief. In 1895, in an attempt to reduce expenditure on rent allowances, the Wallsend branch decided that two widows should live together on the grounds of 'company and economy'. Luxuries, which

38. See B. Nairn, *Civilizing capitalism, the labour movement in N.S.W. 1870-1900* (Canberra, 1973), p. 73.

39. *N.S.W.P.D.*, ser. 1 1895 vol. 82, p. 361; 1897 vol. 90, p. 3548, vol. 91, p. 3341; 1898 (2) vol. 95, p. 2802, vol. 96, pp. 3323, 3878; 1899 (2) vol. 98, p. 286.

40. 'Schools files', Adamstown 1884, Hamilton 1886 (p. 1786, 1831).

41. *ibid.*, Wallsend 1884, 1888 (p. 1796, 1840).

included currants, raisins and whisky, could not be bought with grocery tickets⁴². The charity which was part of the social security system in the colliery townships simply kept people from starving.

The failure of the local system of social welfare to cope with the demands on it, along with the intolerable burden the provision of funds placed on a low income area, led to agitation for permanent institutions for coping with the poverty of the disabled, widowed and aged. As early as 1875 the miners had tried to set up a permanent relief fund, with contributions from employers and miner' lodges, to support those who were made invalids, widowed or orphaned through pit accidents. A similar scheme had existed in Northumberland and Durham since 1863⁴³. Negotiations broke down and were not revived until around 1890. From 1894 Watkins, Edden and Griffith put constant pressure on the government to pass legislation to set up such a fund⁴⁴. By the 1890s the increasing numbers of old people in the colonial population and world wide discussion of the right of aged citizens to some reward for their labour led to the inclusion of old age pensions in the 1896 PLL platform⁴⁵. The members for the colliery townships were especially vocal in pointing out the need for such measures in their own area⁴⁶.

Thus, it is not surprising that electors were generally pleased with the men they elected in 1894 and continued to return them in the general elections of 1895 and 1898 with an increased majority (table 9.8).

While politics in the N.C.D. before 1894 was marked by solidarity behind one ideology, the final years of the century saw the emergence of conflict between two parties of almost equal strength with about

42. *W&PSun.*, 2 Mar. 1895. 'R.C. into subsidized benevolent institutions', *loc.cit.*, p. 115.

43. Gosden, *The friendly societies*, p. 87. *M.A.*, 22 Sept., 30 Oct., 6 Nov., 1 Dec. 1875.

44. *N.S.W.P.D.*, ser. 1, 1895 vol. 82, p. 591, vol. 84, pp. 2154, 2158; 1898 vol. 92, p. 527; 1898 (2) vol. 94, pp. 1262, 1264; 1899 (3) vol. 100, p. 1031; 1900 vol. 103, p. 565.

45. Jill Roe, 'Old age policy with special reference to Australia' (paper delivered to Economic History Association congress, Edinburgh, 1978), pp. 6-7.

46. *N.S.W.P.D.*, ser. 1, 1895 vol. 82, p. 843.

Table 9.8Polling in the 1895 and 1898 general elections in the N.C.D.

Party	Wallsend	Formal votes polled (%)				
		1895 Kahibah	Waratah	Wallsend	1898 Kahibah	Waratah
Labour	65	-	54	61	64	54
Protection	35	-	40	39	36	46
Free Trade	nc.	-	6	nc.	nc.	nc.

Notes: A. Edden elected unopposed for Kahibah in 1895 (PLL candidate). Waratah refers to Hamilton and Lambton only. In 1895 Labour, Protection and Free Trade polled 53, 42 and 5 per cent of all votes respectively. In 1898 the distribution was very close with Labour polling 50.5 and Protection 49.5 per cent of votes. n.c. indicates party did not contest the election.

Sources: *V&PLA*, 1895 (1), pp. 493-522.

N.M.H., 25 Jy., 1895, 28 Jy. 1898.

50-60 per cent of voted going to labour and 40-50 percent to protection. Political belief now divided rather than united the population. This was not the only blow the new politics dealt to the development of community in the region. The nature of allegiance to the old and new creeds sharpened class cleavages and revealed a wide gulf between the thinking of the older and younger generation.

Despite variation in support for the old radical protectionist candidates on the basis of class and religion, the ideology attracted bourgeoisie and workingmen in numbers proportionate to their strength in the district. The PLL destroyed this balance. Table 9.9 shows that, from 1894, the Labour, Free Trade and Protectionist parties had varied success in attracting the working-class, especially the largest group, miners. Over 90 per cent of PLL members and others

Table 9.9

Class and political allegiance in the N.C.D.
before and after 1894

Occupation	Allegiance (%)				
	Before 1894		1894 and after		PLL N=103
	Protection N=96	Free Trade N=15	Protection N=32	Free Trade N=9	
Professional	4	0	0	11	1
Business	1	7	0	22	0
Shopkeeping	9	13	16	11	7
Clerical	5	0	9	11	2
Skilled	9	7	16	44	9
Miner	67	67	50		75
Labourer	4	6	9		7
Middle-class	19	20	25	55	10
Working-class	80	80	75	44	91

Note: Details may not add to 100 owing to rounding.

Sources: *N.M.H.*, 1880-1900.

W&PSun, 1886, 1891, 1894, 1895.

People and collectivist, 1898-1900 (M.L.).

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1894, 1900-01.

who gave support during campaigns were working men. Of those who helped the Free Trade party, less than half were workingmen and none of them were miners or labourers. The PLL had little to offer the bourgeoisie, with whom it believed the interests of labour were incompatible. Therefore, their strength among protectionists and free traders grew. Instead of two parties with roughly equal support from both classes and, in particular, from coal miners, the district now had three parties appealing to different sections of the population. The PLL was clearly the party of the working man. Free Trade was largely the party of the middle-class minority. Among protectionists the upper group of professional and businessmen disappeared, but the middle ground of shopkeepers, clerical and supervisory workers and skilled tradesmen were grossly overrepresented in relation to their strength in the population. Absent of course from the new majority party, labour, were the colliery managers who hitherto had joined with their employees to support protectionist candidates. The last years of the period, then, saw increasing alignment between class and support for different political creeds.

There was also an increasing correspondence between age and political affiliation. During the 1894 campaign protectionist and labour candidates implied that their support came from different age groups. At the declaration of the poll, David Watkins, the PLL candidate for Wallsend and a confirmed fiscal sinker, thanked 'all those young men who rallied around ... and worked so hard' for his return. The same, he added, 'could not be said of the elder electors'⁴⁷. When campaigning in the Waratah electorate for the Protectionist Party, Melville implied a similar situation when he noted the strong opposition of younger electors to him in parts of the constituency⁴⁸. An analysis of post 1894 support for protection and the PLL suggests this age division was generally true. Whilst 27 per cent of post 1891 protectionists were known to identify with that cause before 1894, less than 10 per cent of PLL supporters were prominent in any political activities before 1891. The significance of age is further illustrated through an examination of the union officials who supported either party. Nine of the 16 miners who were

47. *N.M.H.*, 21 Jy. 1894.

48. *ibid.*, 18 Jy. 1894.

well known post 1891 protectionists had been, or were, union officers. Of these nine, four had held office in or before 1881 and seven (78 per cent) in or before 1891. Nineteen of the 43 miners who were prominent labour supporters also held official positions in the union. Only one (5 per cent) held office in or before 1881 and three (16 per cent) in or before 1891. Many of the protectionist supporters who were not miners were old identities. William T. Dent had first been elected to Lambton council in 1877, when Watkins, who was born in 1863, was about 14 years old. At least three others were prominent in town life in the early 1870s. Among PLL supporters who were not miners, none was prominent in local life in the 1870s.

The generation gap in support for protection and the labour party after 1894 reflected a difference in outlook. From 1875 to 1890 ideas of the relationship between capital and labour changed from that of co-operation to hostility. At the 1875 miners' picnic, the district chairman of the union told miners that labour must not expect to get all things to its liking since capital had its rights⁴⁹. James Fletcher, manager of the Co-operative colliery, also addressed the meeting, thus indicating the good will between labour and capital. The agreement between the union and the proprietors, which enabled high wages and profits in that decade, lent weight to the idea that both labour and capital could prosper if the two sides would only co-operate. The lower wages and the colliery companies' rejection of co-operation in the 1880s, when men like Estell and Watkins were in their twenties and Edden arrived in the N.C.D.⁵⁰, produced a marked change in attitudes. In the 1888 strike miners' officials alluded to the unequal distribution of wealth in society⁵¹. During the 1891 election many letters to the editor were devoted to expressing or denouncing the growing antagonism between labour and capital. Alfred Edden commented, while campaigning at Wallsend, that it was not surprising the churches were empty when some were rolling in wealth and others starving. He also noted that a good capitalist was rare⁵². The old creed of protection and the new ideology of labour

49. *M.A.*, 12 May 1875.

50. For biographical details of Estell, Watkins and Edden see A.W. Martin and P. Wardle, *Members of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W. 1856-1900* (Canberra, 1959).

51. Gollan, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.

52. *N.M.H.*, 16 June 1891.

reflected the difference between political attitudes in 1875 and 1890. The protectionist party, like the miners' chairman in 1875, assumed there should be labourers and capitalists and argued both would benefit if they co-operated to secure protection of native industry. Loveday has noted that working-class leaders with 'protectionist notions' believed strongly in class co-operation⁵³. By contrast, the issue which finally set the PLL in motion was the Maritime Strike, which cast doubt on the idea that class co-operation was possible. The gap between the political ideas of the younger and older generation reflected experiences in their formative years and the growing estrangement between employer and employee in the district.

The federal referenda of 1898 and 1899, where electors voted 'yes' or 'no' to the proposed constitution for a united Australia intensified the new divisions between bourgeoisie and working men, old and young.

Electors in the colliery townships were almost evenly divided between 'yes' and 'no' in the referenda. Table 9.10 shows that opinion was divided into a small majority, usually against, and a substantial minority in favour of the bill. Thus, like elections in the 1890s, the referenda of 1898 and 1899 created a situation where there were two almost evenly matched groups fighting for victory. This was far from the solidarity of political belief before the 1890s.

Class assumed an even greater significance in the referenda than it did in the parliamentary elections of the 1890s. Table 9.11 shows that professionals, businessmen and shopkeepers were over-represented among the vocal supporters of the bill. So, too, were the clerks, non working foremen and overmen in the intermediate 'clerical' group. None of this group or the professionals were among those against the bill. Shopkeepers were in proportion to their

53. P. Loveday, 'New South Wales' in D.J. Murphy (ed.), *Labour in politics, the state labor parties in Australia 1880-1920* (Qld., 1975), p. 21.

Table 9.10

Voting at the federal referenda of 1898 and 1899 among electors
in the N.C.D.

Town	Voting (%)			
	1898		1899	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Adamstown	40	60	39	61
Hamilton	47	53	54	46
Lambton	43	57	44	56
Merewether	49	51	55	45
New Lambton	28	72	31	69
Minmi	50	50	58	42
Plattsburg	56	44	54	46
Wallsend	37	63	38	62
All towns	45	55	48	52

Source: *Jnl. L.C.*, 1899 (2) pt. 1, pp. 35-68, 1899 (3)
 pt. 1, pp. 213-246.

Table 9.11

Class, occupation and attitude to the federation bill in the N.C.D.
in 1898 and 1899

Occupation or class	Workforce Distribution (%)	Billite (%) N=45	Anti-billite (%) N=26
Professional	3	13	0
Business	1	6	8
Shopkeeping	11	19	12
Clerical	0.4	7	0
Skilled	10	7	15
Miner	57	44	50
Labourer	18	4	15
Middle-class	15.4	45	20
Working-class	85	55	80

Source: *N.M.H.*, 1898, 1899.

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1894, 1900-01.

strength in the population. Manual workers, be they tradesmen, miners or labourers, were underrepresented among billites and overrepresented, or equal to their strength in the population, among anti-billites. The strong opposition of the working-class to the bill and middle-class support for it led to rival groups marked by very different class composition. Whereas only 19 per cent of anti-billites were from the bourgeoisie, 44 per cent of billites were from this class. In colonial politics the only party where the middle-class were close to half the supporters was the minority free trade group (table 9.9).

The decision of the working-class to vote 'no' stemmed from their allegiance to the PLL. The objections to the proposed bill were equal representation of states in the senate regardless of size but taxation in proportion to population, the very existence of an upper house and its power over money, and the two thirds majority and majority of states required to change the constitution. These were the objections of the PLL. This party, in the persons of local members, campaigned strongly in the colliery townships⁵⁴ and inhabitants supported it in N.S.W. elections. In addition, the talk of transferring the proposed old age pension bill to the federal parliament was regarded as an attempt to shelve it⁵⁵. So, the 'no' vote was a vote by the working-class in support of the party that claimed to represent them and their needs.

The referenda also further emphasized the political generation gap that emerged after 1891. Support for the bill came from various political groups: free traders, protectionists and even some labour supporters. In the N.C.D. the traditional strength of protectionism and the adherence of labour members to party policy meant debate over the bill was yet another battle between the rival creeds of protection and labour solidarity, that is, the old and the new.

54. See especially *N.M.H.*, 4 June 1898.

55. *N.M.H.*, 28 May 1898.

Before the 1898 referendum there was very little public debate in the colliery townships on the advantages of voting 'yes'. Local labour members were very active in putting the 'no' case, but the Federal League, which held so many noisy meetings in the port, made no attempt to win over the mining towns. At Adamstown electors were anxious to hear both sides, but could not persuade the Federal League to send a speaker. They were in the ironic position of having to appeal to Edden, who was against the bill, but brought in Ferguson, one of the few PLL billites. At Wallsend the local correspondent, who clearly favoured the bill, noted that the town had been remarkably 'free from the infliction of peripatetic politicians both of the parochial as well as the national type'⁵⁶. It was not until the bill was soundly defeated in the colliery townships that the billites realized they had made a serious mistake in neglecting to gain support there⁵⁷. Federal leagues were established and speakers sent. As a result, most of the debate over the federation bill in the colliery townships occurred during the 1898 general election, which followed closely on the referendum. Support for the bill in the N.C.D. stemmed from the belief that it would facilitate the protection of Australian industry. Therefore, George Reid, the premier of N.S.W. and a free trader, whose equivocation over the bill was largely blamed for its defeat, was a natural scapegoat. This meant that in the 1898 general election billites argued their case largely in terms of the evils of free trade and George Reid for N.S.W. and Australia in contrast to federation and protection.

Thus the federation debate in the N.C.D. lined up the protectionist diehards against the new labour party, most members of which opposed the bill. Although the billites included both free traders and protectionists, of those whose political affiliation is known, over three quarters were protectionists. Among the anti-billites who were identifiable as PLL supporters, there was only one who had been active in local life in the 1870s. This was James Curley, who was a union official from 1879 and won a seat in the electorate of

56. *ibid.*, 3 Mar., 6, 9, 17 May 1898.

57. *ibid.*, 28 June 1898.

Newcastle in 1889. By contrast, 38 per cent of billites had been prominent in public life in the 1870s. Many, in fact, had not been heard of for years. Thomas Walker, who as a radical protectionist had represented Northumberland until 1894, was brought back to speak in favour of federation and protection⁵⁸. Symbolic of the old style ideology of many of its supporters, the Wallsend Federal League chose William, one of the sons of James Fletcher, as their anti Reid, pro federation, protectionist candidate in the general election. Fletcher's speeches had all the characteristics of the old radical protectionism. He was in favour of federation because he was a protectionist. Federation meant protection for native industry against the outside world which would make Newcastle the 'Birmingham of Australia'. He was in favour of free, compulsory and secular education. Although not a member of a labour league, he was familiar with the wants of workers and as well able to advocate them as any member of such⁵⁹. Clearly those who supported his candidature still believed in class cooperation. The conflict, therefore, was very much a clash between the ideologies of the young and old.

The political events of the 1890s, which intensified cleavage of class and age in the N.C.D., also helped provide suitable persons to fill the status gap the withdrawal of colliery managers from public life created. This was largely because of the introduction of payment of members.

Payment of members of the Legislative Assembly from 1889 meant the colliery townships could at last elect persons from their own ranks to represent them. Successful parliamentary candidates, like mayors, testified to and enhanced their social status. They were chosen because they were worthy of representing the electorate. As members of parliament they earned the princely sum of £300 a year, without having to worry about slack times. They had the status and income required to patronize voluntary associations and other important occasions.

58. *ibid.*

59. *ibid.*, 18, 23 Jy. 1898.

Consequently, members of parliament were expected to serve in the same official capacity as mayors and aldermen. In 1891 David Watkins had no greater claim to fame than that he was secretary of the Wallsend miners and manager for the campaign of PLL candidate, James Thomson, in the general election. In 1895, a year after his election, he was vice-president of the Agricultural and Horticultural society, cricket club and Musical and Literary society. In the last mentioned capacity he was asked to chair the Wallsend Eisteddfod. In 1900 he was again vice-president of the Musical and Literary society, as well as the boating club. He was patron of the soccer club and president of the regatta. Alfred Edden was president of the Adamstown Mechanics Institute, patron of the New Lambton Fire Brigade, vice-president of the Merewether Cricket club and chaired a concert for the New Lambton Mechanics Institute building fund. Arthur Griffith was not a local man, but when he first stood for Waratah in 1894 he promised that, if elected, he would settle in the district⁶⁰. By 1900 he had been drawn into the local system as vice-president of the Hamilton athletics club and Lambton cricket club. John Estell, as an M.L.C. from 1899-1901, was not paid for his services. However, the emergence of the PLL and the need to get progressive legislation through both houses forced Reid to broaden the composition of the upper house. Estell was one of those chosen to represent labour⁶¹. From the late 1880s he had led an active public life as alderman, mayor and chairman of the Amalgamated Miners' Association. In 1900 he rivalled the mayors of Wallsend and Plattsburg in status. He was patron of Plattsburg Mechanics Institute, president of the fire brigade, vice-president of the soccer club and boating club and chaired the Plattsburg public school concert. The new status group of parliamentarians helped strengthen the alternative status system that was emerging in the colliery townships.

Before the 1890s political life in the N.C.D. contributed to the development of a close knit society. The beliefs of the area reflected closely local needs and problems. Even so, they related

60. *ibid.*, 13 Jy. 1893.

61. Nairn, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

just as much to national issues. Until the late 1880s this was unusual in N.S.W., most elections still being fought in terms of parochial issues like roads and bridges. That nearly everyone voted for the same set of beliefs, be they colliery managers, shopkeepers or miners, meant politics, which often divides people according to class, united them instead. The 1890s, with the introduction of payment of members, rise of the labour party and new electoral law, upset this unity. The PLL, which emphasized class consciousness rather than cooperation, reflected the change in industrial relations and political ideas that occurred in the 1880s. The growing cleavage between employer and employee in other areas of life was eventually expressed in political ideology. That the PLL appealed to the manual worker, but not to the bourgeoisie, meant divisions between middle and working-class generally, not just employer and employee, were sharpened. That the new beliefs reflected the formative experiences of the younger generation rather than the older meant a political division based on age also emerged. Politics, which formerly led to expressions of solidarity, now divided the townships into two almost even groups which fought bitterly in the hope of winning. As a period of transition from solidarity behind radical protection to solidarity behind the Australian Labor Party in the twentieth century, politics in the 1890s added to the general instability created by the coexistence of two rival systems of social status. However, the coming of truly local members helped strengthen the alternative status system based on merit and achievement, thus hastening the transition to a society based on horizontal solidarity rather than traditional vertical integration. The net effect of politics in the 1890s, however, was to destroy the unity and cohesion which political life had, until then, contributed to the growth of community.

CHAPTER TEN

MOBILITY AND IDENTITY

The people who inhabited the colliery townships, although living in a continuous area, did not live in isolation. To the east lay the port of Newcastle and the shipping towns of Wickham and Carrington. Next to Lambton was the former mining town of Waratah which became a residential suburb. North of Minmi were farming districts which had more in common with the rest of the Hunter Valley than the industrial mouth of the Hunter river. The colliery townships had a variety of economic, administrative and social ties with these neighbouring areas. These were not sufficient to weaken their identity with other mining towns. The poverty of the district meant that, although it was possible to travel for occasional shopping trips and on public holidays, most leisure activities centred on the home town. Although separation of work-place and residence became increasingly common, those who went elsewhere to work usually travelled further west or south, so that they still worked in that area devoted almost exclusively to coalmining, if not in the original colliery townships. Population turnover in individual towns was very high. However, many of those who changed residence moved to another colliery town. Consequently, people continued to live, work, play, marry into and share administrative boundaries with towns classified as colliery villages. High population movement within the district weakened identification with the any one town and must have hindered the work of institutions that encouraged town unity: family, kinship, neighbourliness and sporting associations. The selectivity of residential mobility left power and the development of local solidarity in the colliery townships in the hands of the better off miners.

The first colliery townships grew up around pits. This meant that those who settled there most likely had employment locally. While the towns became more and more established, the pits were gradually worked out. By the end of the 1870s the Waratah pit, which began in 1860, had finished. By the 1890s other mines which began about the same time, the Co-operative, Minmi, Wallsend and Lambton, had reached very thin seams. In 1900 some Wallsend miners were so far underground that they were taking up to three hours a day travelling between their places and the shaft¹. This gradual working out of

1. Croudace to Turner, 16 Oct. 1893, SAMCo., 'Managers Letters', 1890-1895. *N.M.H.*, 6 Sept. 1900.

the older collieries led to a major change in pit location in the mid 1880s. The increasing difficulty in working the established pits made it feasible to work the cheaper seams of coal under the harbour and southward along the coast, as well as the more distant but easily worked outcrops west of Wallsend and Minmi² (figure 10.1). The changes in pit location caused a growing imbalance between miners and employment available to them in different parts of the Newcastle coalfield. The number of underground workers employed at each pit in N.S.W., as reported by the department of Mines, is not exactly equal to the number of miners in the district. However, since most underground employees were miners and other underground workers were employed in proportion to the number of hewers, the proportions of miners and underground employment in each part of the Newcastle coalfield are comparable. Figure 10.2, which sets out these proportions, shows that by the 1890s the eight towns in this study contained 69 per cent of miners in the Newcastle district and only 56 per cent of underground employment. By 1900 60 per cent of miners still lived in the traditional colliery townships, but they offered only about 42 per cent of underground employment. The places most lacking in local employment were Adamstown, Hamilton, Lambton and New Lambton. By contrast, the inner city, western and southern pits had a greater proportion of employment than miners. This suggests that miners from towns which could not employ them were increasingly forced to turn elsewhere for employment.

Continual references in newspapers to miners working well beyond their home town suggest that this is what happened. Without extensive lists of miners in every town and where they worked it is impossible to provide as conclusive evidence on the relationship between workplace and residence as can be presented on residential mobility using electoral rolls. There are sources of information which can be used to fill out the impressions gained elsewhere. These are lists of union officials for each lodge, usually given in newspapers, and details of accidents in the annual reports of the department of Mines. The latter give the name of each victim and where he was injured. For

2. For a detailed discussion of pit location see M.G.A. Wilson, 'Changing patterns in pit location on the N.S.W. coalfields', *A.A.A.G.*, v. 58 (1968), pp. 78-90.

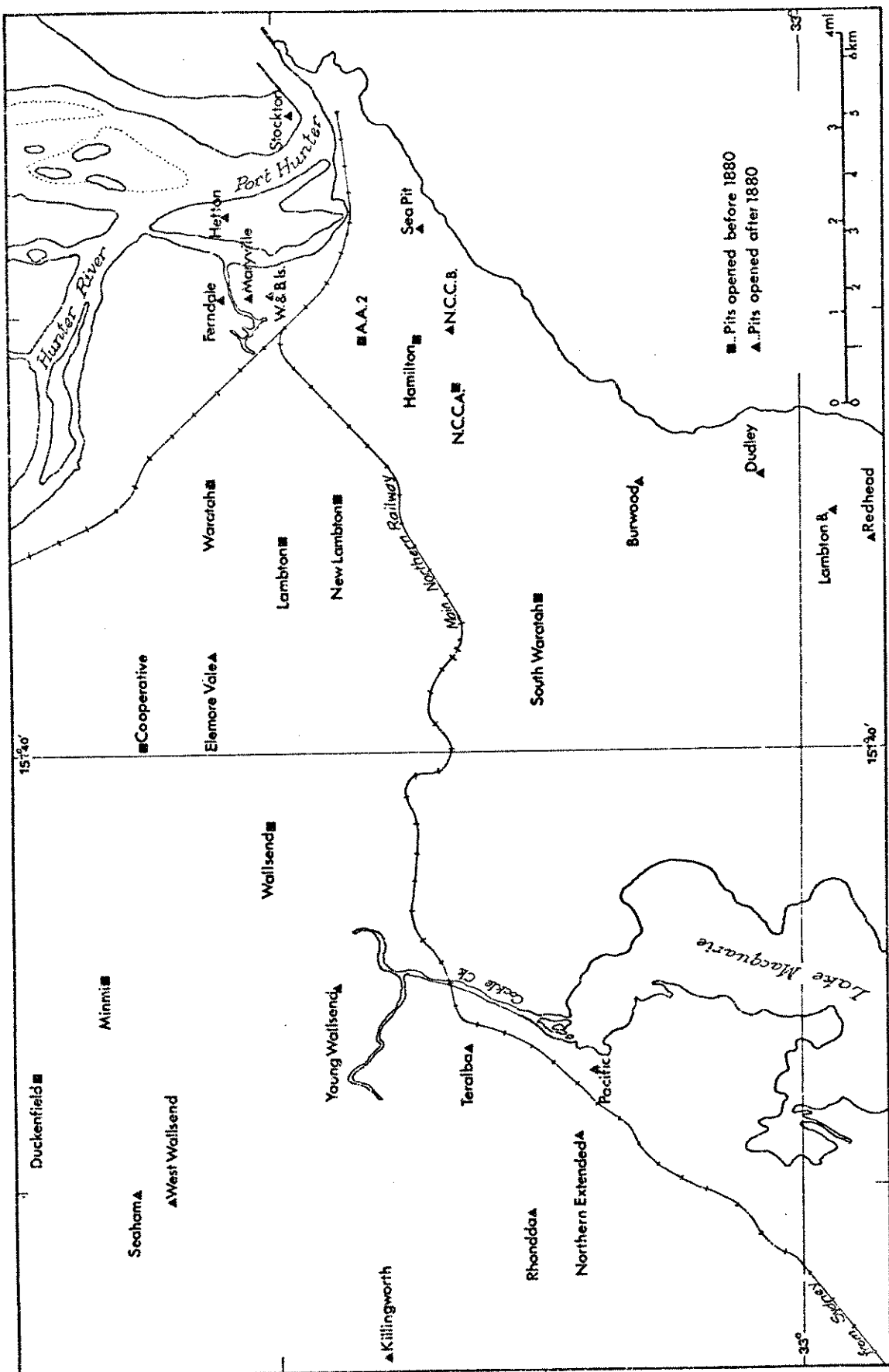


Fig. 10-1 Pit location (major workings) in Newcastle: 1860-1900

Source: M.G.A. Wilson, 'Changing patterns of pit location on the N.S.W. coalfields', A.A.A.G., v. 58 (1968), pp. 83-85.

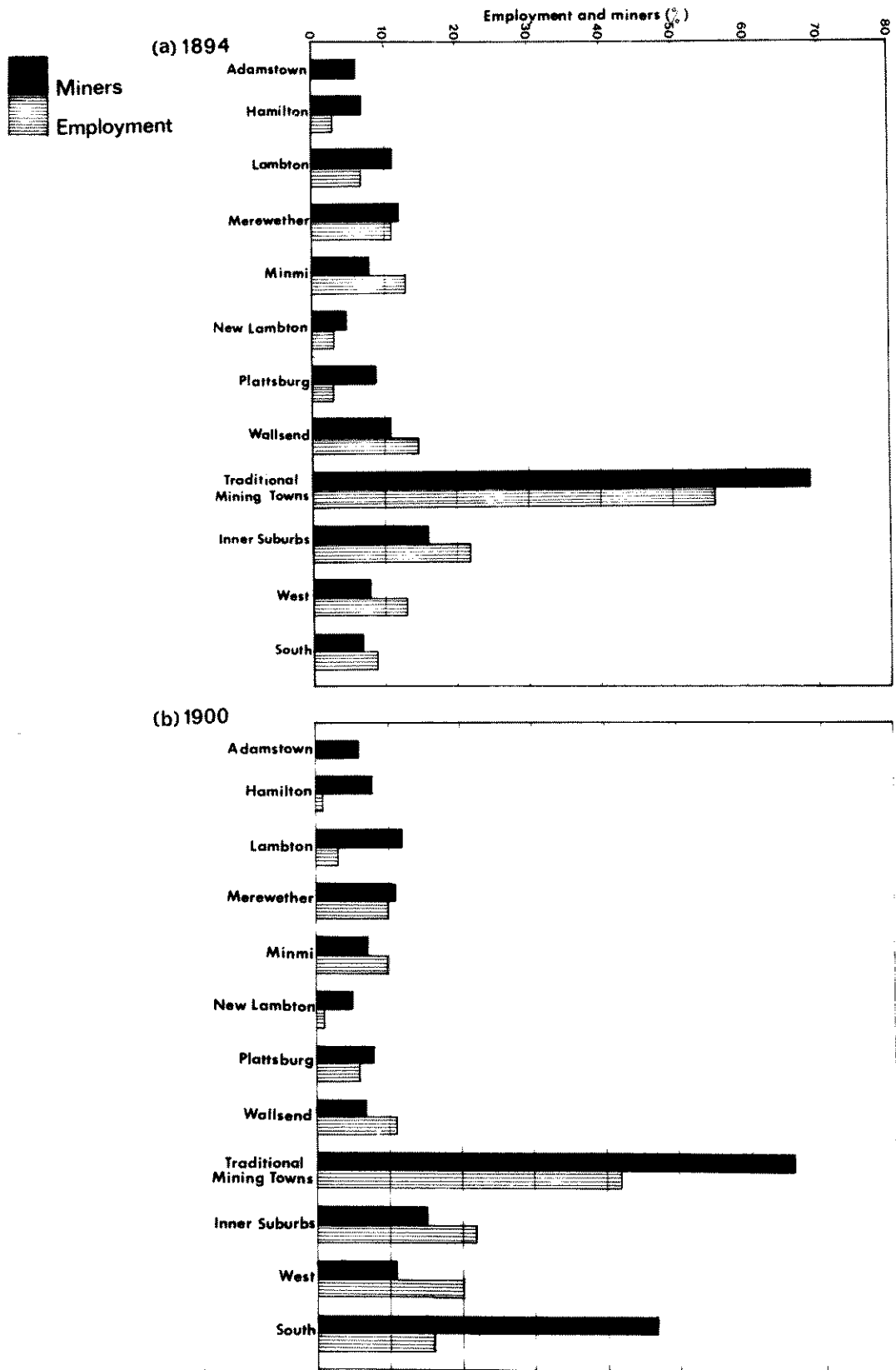


Fig.10-2 Distribution(%) of underground colliery employment and miners in Newcastle in 1894 and 1900

Notes: 'West' includes Seaham, West Wallsend, Young Wallsend, Kinningworth, Teralba, Rhondda, Northern extended, Pacific.

'South' includes South Waratah, Burwood, Dudley, Lambton B, Redhead, Wallarah.

'Inner city' includes Ferndale, Maryville, Hetton, Wickham and Bullock Island, Stockton, Sea Pit.

Sources: Dept. Mines, *op. cit.*, 1894, 1900. *N.S.W. electoral roll*, 1894, 1900-01.

the period 1871-80 most miners whose workplace could be identified were union officials. In the 1880s most were accident victims. In the 1890s there were varying numbers of both. However, in comparison with accident victims, far more union officials lived and worked in the same place. Since those who lived and worked in the same place would have had more time to become union officials, lists of these miners were rejected in favour of accident lists which seem more representative for this period.

Table 10.1 shows that pits in the N.C.D. never drew their workforce entirely from local residents. In the 1870s, when the traditional collieries were working well, at the most three quarters of miners employed were local residents. Moreover, there is no discernable trend from the 1870s to the 1890s. Some drew more of their workforce from local residents in the 1880s than the preceding or next decade. Others, like Wallsend, drew more of their employees from local inhabitants in the 1890s than the 1870s or 1880s. Such figures may be misleading because they show what proportion of workers at the local colliery were local residents, not what percentage of local miners worked at the local colliery. A small inner city colliery could draw most of its workers from a colliery township, while most of the miners in that town worked locally. Conversely, a small colliery in a mining town could draw most of its miners from the same area, while large numbers from the same town travelled elsewhere to work.

If we look at the residences of unionists in the 1870s and accident victims in the following two decades (table 10.2), a very different picture emerges. For Adamstown miners work place and residence were never identical because a pit was never sunk there. Therefore, they had to seek work at other collieries. In the 1870s there was little employment in Merewether and in the 1880s and 1890s, when the two pits sunk by the N.C.C. were in their prime, less than half the local miners found work there. At Lambton the proportion that worked locally was never large and had become very small by the 1890s. In Hamilton the numbers employed locally declined continually with the working out of the pits. Minmi, probably because of its isolation, was the only colliery to employ all or nearly all its

Table 10.1Miners employed in local pits in the N.C.D., 1870-1900

Pit	Miners living locally as a percentage of employees		
	1871-80	1881-90	1891-1900
AACo., Hamilton	50	41	-
N.C.C.	*	55	50
Lambton	58	50	40
New Lambton	35	42	6
Minmi	55	78	60
Cooperative	66	78	30
WallSEND	76	56	90

Note: N.C.C. did not begin until mid 1870s.

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875.

Dept. Mines, *Reports*, 1881-1900.

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1870-1900.

Table 10.2

Miners living in the Newcastle colliery townships who worked at
their local colliery, 1870-1900

Town	Miners working locally (%)		
	1871-80	1881-90	1891-1900
Adamstown	-	-	-
Hamilton	100	69	23
Lambton	27	42	15
Merewether	0	24	41
Minmi	100	75	100
New Lambton	100	42	0
Plattsburg	55	72	38
WallSEND	68	76	50

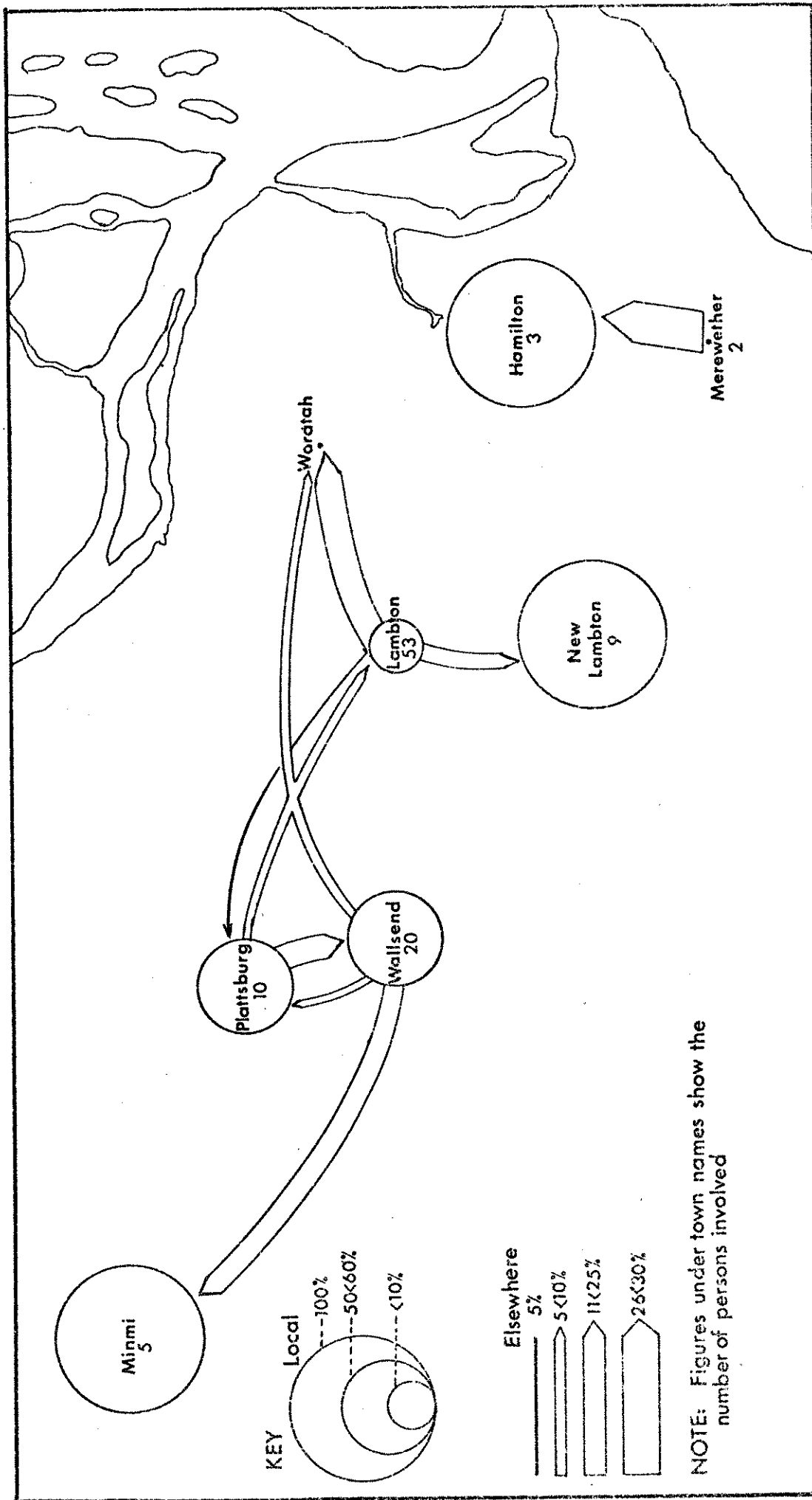
Note: There was no pit at Adamstown.

Sources: as for table 10.1.

workforce throughout the period. Wallsend always employed about half the local miners, but by no means all. What table 10.2 makes clear is that in the 1890s, by comparison with the 1870s and 1880s, the proportion who worked locally had in most cases declined. In the 1870s five of the eight traditional colliery townships employed most or at least half of their miners, in the 1880s, four and the 1890s, two. Clearly more and more miners were having to journey elsewhere to work.

Figure 10.3 shows that at the same time as the numbers who found work locally declined, the relationship between work place and residence became more and more complex. In the 1870s most who worked outside their own town found work in a neighbouring one. Most Lambton men went to Waratah or New Lambton. Those from New Lambton went to Lambton, Merewether to Hamilton, Plattsburg to Wallsend and Wallsend to Plattsburg or Minmi. In the 1880s the foundation of new pits and decline of old ones pushed miners further and further in different directions in search of work. With the working out of the Waratah and decline in the Lambton and New Lambton pits, many from Lambton were going to Wallsend and Plattsburg, or the new collieries under the harbour in Stockton, Wickham and Carrington. Miners from New Lambton were travelling south to the new mines there, west to Minmi and the new pits further out, and to the inner city. Adamstown miners travelled east to Merewether, west to New Lambton, south in large numbers and even to Stockton. By the 1890s the changing pattern of pit location was causing more miners to travel longer distances. Lack of local employment and the constant search for employment elsewhere led to increasingly complex work-residence patterns, not only between the traditional and new mining areas, but between the traditional colliery townships themselves.

Although increasing numbers of miners were travelling further and further to work, most went to towns which could be defined as colliery townships. In the 1880s only 9 (4 per cent) of the 200 accident victims who lived in the colliery townships in this study travelled to the inner city area which did not specialise in coal mining. Table 10.3 shows that even though they were all from Adamstown, Hamilton, Lambton, Merewether and New Lambton, they were not more than about one



NOTE: Figures under town names show the number of persons involved

Fig. 10-3a Work place of union officials in Newcastle colliery townships: 1871-1880

Sources: N.C., 1871. M.A., 1875. N.S.W. electoral roll, 1871-1880. A.A.Co., Memos of agreement with unions, 'Coal papers' (1/61 CM-B, no. 17).

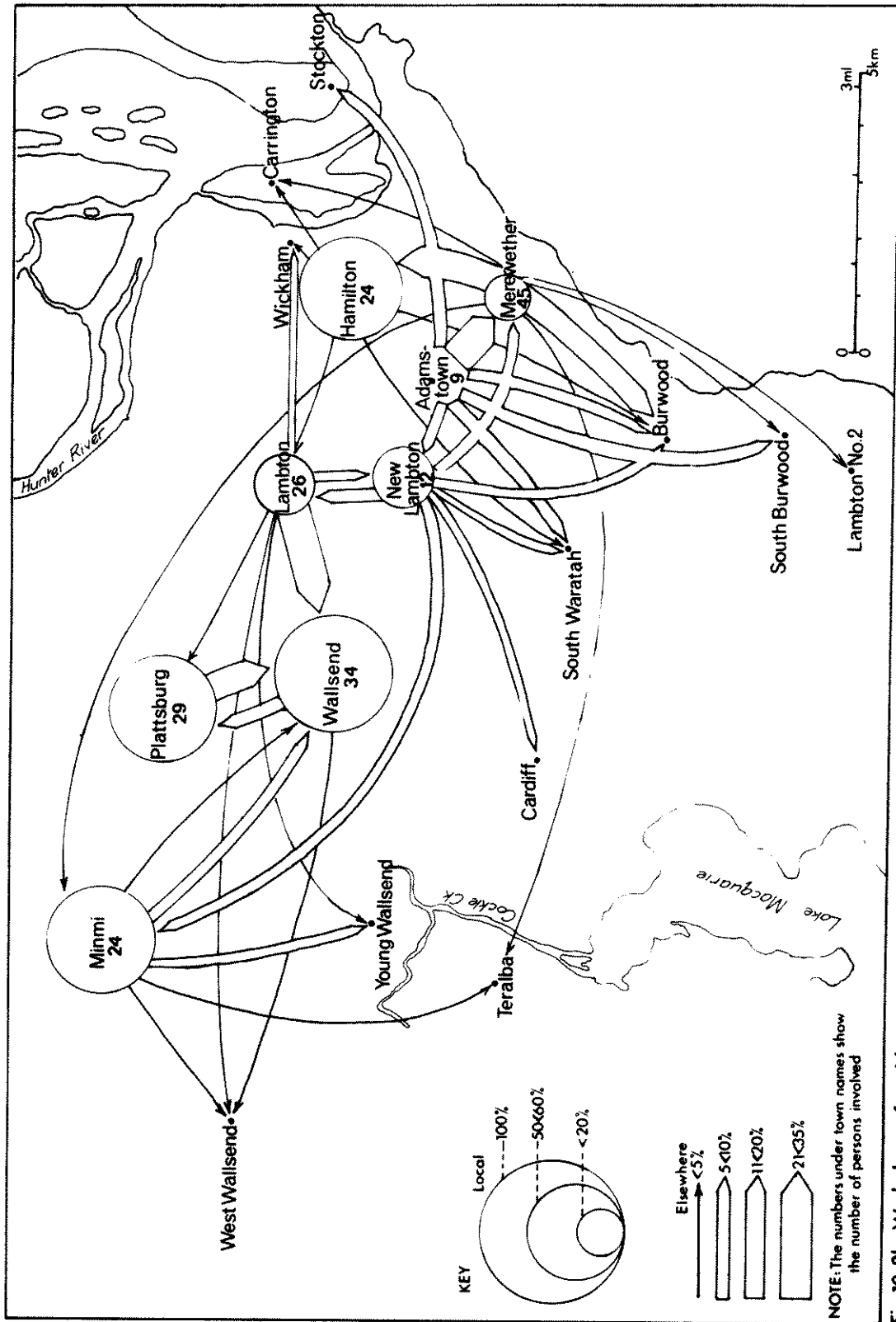
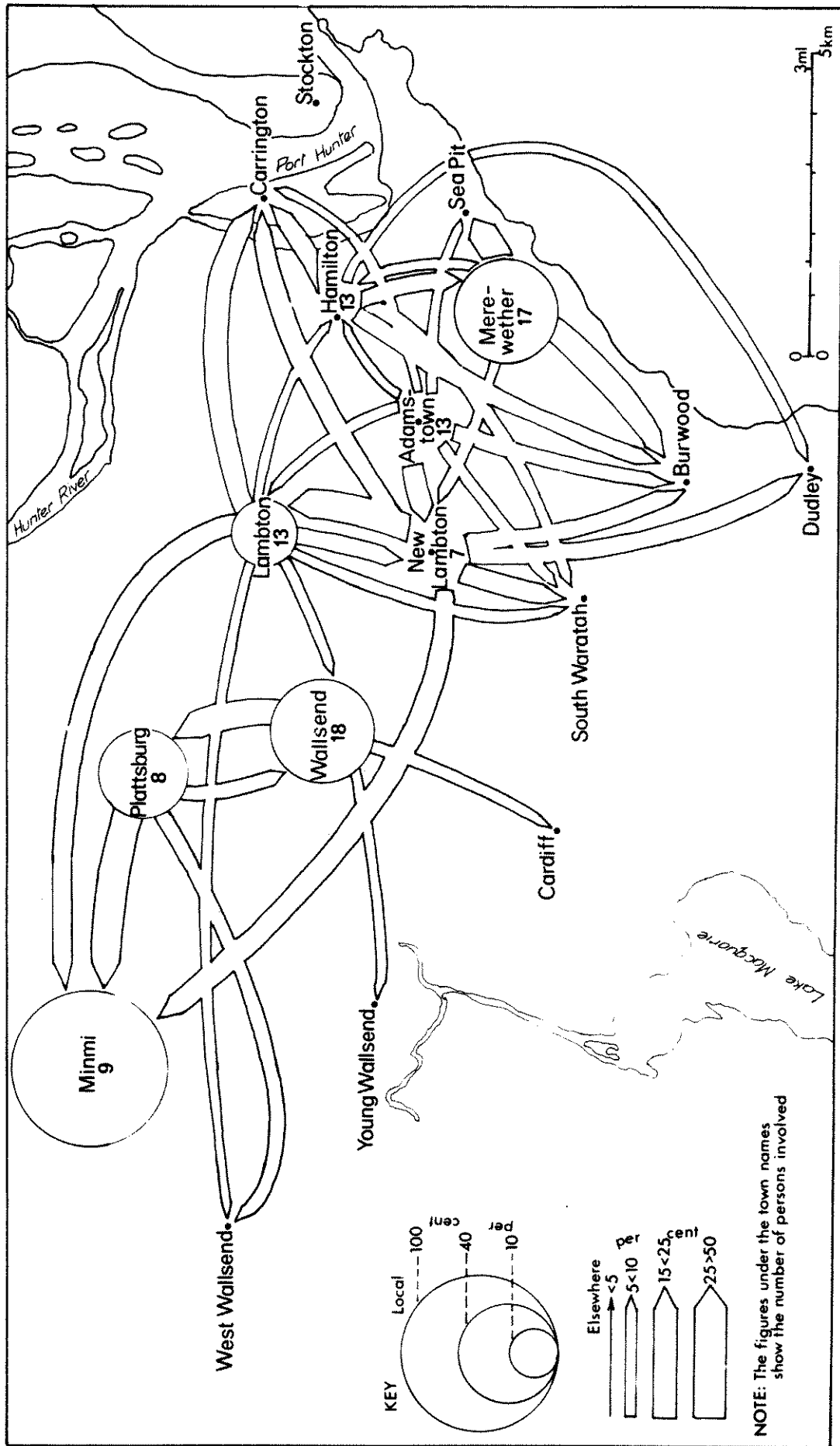


Fig.10-3b Workplace of accident victims living in Newcastle colliery townships: 1881-1890

Sources: Dept. Mines, *op. cit.*, 1881-1890. N.S.W. electoral roll, 1881-1890.



Sources: Dept. Mines, *op. cit.*, 1891-94, 1900. N.S.W. electoral roll, 1891-4, 1900-01.

Table 10.3

Accident victims from the colliery townships working at inner city
collieries in the 1880s and 1890s

Residence	Injuries			
	1881-90 Total	Inner city (%)	1891-1900 Total	Inner city (%)
Adamstown	9	11	13	8
Hamilton	24	8	13	23
Lambton	26	4	13	23
Merewether	45	4	17	0
Minmi	24	0	9	0
New Lambton	12	8	7	14
Plattsburg	29	0	8	0
Wallsend	34	0	18	0
Total	203	3	98	8

Note: For the 1890s only the lists of victims for years when the electoral rolls were reliable were used.

Sources: Dept. Mines, *op. cit.*, 1881-1900.

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1881-91, 1894, 1900-01.

in ten accident victims from any of these towns. In the 1890s those working in the harbour collieries were 8 per cent of all accident victims from the colliery townships. Even though their strength had increased in the towns where pits had declined, or did not exist, they were less than a quarter of the total accident victims from any traditional mining town. Given such a small number of cases, these figures cannot be taken as exact. Nevertheless, they suggest the increasing separation of workplace and residence did not significantly weaken the sense of belonging to a clearly identifiable region in the nineteenth century. For the most part, the places to which miners travelled

to work were those into which they also married (fig. 2.8). Therefore, they reinforced the already strong links kinship had forged between those in the area as against those in other parts of Newcastle.

While most inhabitants went to another colliery township when they journeyed to work, they were most anxious to travel to Newcastle for shopping, so that they could take advantage of the lower prices and greater variety of goods. Migrants from Northumberland and Durham, who played such an important part in the cultural development of the N.C.D., were used to being paid every Friday fortnight and going to the city on Saturday to do all their shopping and enjoy themselves³. It was possible to reestablish this custom in Newcastle because, even though roads were initially poor, there were always good rail links between the port and the mining towns⁴. The miners won the pay Saturday holiday in the 1870s. Despite the expansion of the public transport network in the late 1880s, there is no evidence that before 1900 shopping in Newcastle ever became more than the old Geordie habit of a fortnightly spree.

Daly has described the Newcastle to Plattsburg tramway, opened in 1886, as

the final achievement which crowned the purposeful efforts of Newcastle business men to link the two places⁵.

However, before the tramway a large number of private buses took residents who did not travel by train to Newcastle. By 1881 there were 10 buses plying between Wallsend and Newcastle, with one leaving Newcastle every 20 minutes. The reason local councils (not just Newcastle business men) asked for a tramway was not the lack of transport. The heavy bus traffic was ruining the roads they built⁶. The tram link was a new way of accommodating an old habit.

-
3. N.C., 9 Mar. 1871. 'R.C. into Saturday half holiday', *P.P.* 1909 (5), p. 207.
 4. J.W. Turner, 'The development of the urban pattern of Newcastle, a critique', *AEHR*, v. 11 no. 2 (1971), pp. 187-88.
 5. M.T. Daly, *The growth of Newcastle and its suburbs* (Newcastle, 1966), p. 23.
 6. N.M.H., 20 Jan. 1881.

Although the new facilities helped cope with the crowds, which had to increase with the expanding population, they did not change shopping habits. There was a definite rhythm to business in the Newcastle district, governed by the colliery pays. Pay Friday and the week after were characterised by heavy spending, be it in Newcastle, settling with local store keepers, or paying school fees. This was always the best time for local fundraising because people had money. Accordingly, most benefit concerts were held in pay week. That most miners did not finish work until late in the afternoon meant there was no opportunity for whole families, as was the custom, to go shopping any day of pay week but pay Saturday. By the time the alternate 'back week' came round transactions had dwindled. Those who had to buy did so on credit, which only local storekeepers would give, and the only town activities likely to draw good crowds were meetings and free concerts⁷. There was no money, or time, for shopping in Newcastle. In 1909 Newcastle shopkeepers testified that the pay Saturday spree was still traditional when they claimed the influx on that day made for takings out of all proportion to those on other days of the week⁸. Despite improved transport, miners still did not come into shop any more than fortnightly.

The new transport provided in the 1880s and 1890s did not lead to increasing interdependence between the port and the colliery townships in other leisure activities either. Certainly, many travelled to Newcastle on public holidays to the beach, races and other functions, but just as many went south to Lake Macquarie and, occasionally, from Newcastle to Wallsend for the races or eisteddfod. The cost of travelling and lack of time during the week restricted trips anywhere. This is best illustrated by the establishment of Junction Mechanics Institute. Ever anxious to prevent unnecessary expenditure, the government was loathe to see more than one School of Arts to a town. There was consternation when in about 1896 people at Junction set up a Mechanics Institute and applied for a grant, pointing out that Merewether was overcrowded and Hamilton too far away. Why, asked the government, could Junction people not use the Newcastle School of Arts, since it was on the Newcastle border? The people replied that

7. *ibid.*, 18 Mar. 1871. *M.A.*, 22 Jy. 1875. 'Schools Files', Lambton 1885 (p. 1801).

8. 'R.C. into Saturday half holiday', *loc.cit.*, *passim*.

Newcastle was altogether out of reach after work when they did not have the energy to go long distances for recreation. As the eventual report on the Institute said:

No labouring man would think of travelling nearly two miles for the purpose of spending an hour in the reading or games room⁹.

It follows that they must have been equally unwilling to travel to the city for choir or sports practices and regular meetings of other voluntary associations. Since Junction was the closest settlement in the N.C.D. to Newcastle, there can be no doubt that residents in the other mining towns had to depend on the town they lived in for their leisure throughout the period.

While lack of time and money prevented most from spending much of their leisure or joining voluntary associations in Newcastle, distances between the colliery townships were short enough for strong links of this kind to emerge. They were of three kinds. First there were 'joint' associations officially attached to two neighbouring towns. Then there were the friendly, informal links between branches of the same organisation in various towns. Finally there were relationships created by persons who joined an organisation in the next town because it did not exist in their own, or they lived closer.

Many leisure associations played an important part in the development of local unity by competing with other towns: sporting clubs, choirs and Mechanics Institute debates. However, lack of resources or members sometimes forced neighbouring towns to unite in order to secure an association at all, or to provide a better one. Wallsend and Plattsburg were natural partners in most activities. Together they staged an annual regatta, as well as having joint bands and choirs. In musical activities greater numbers usually produced a better performance. To this end Adamstown and Merewether had a joint band until 1891. In 1895 Adamstown and Hamilton combined to form a joint choir to compete in the Newcastle Eisteddfod. Since this provided 86 voices, they could enter the chief choral competition¹⁰. Because there

9. 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts', 1895 (P. 3685, 3687).

10. *W&F.S.M.*, 2 Jan. 1895.

were economies of scale in distribution, co-operative societies also lent themselves to joint associations. The Borehole-Wallsend society in the 1860s and 1870s covered Wallsend, Plattsburg, Lambton and Hamilton. The Lambton and Hamilton society joined together people in those two towns. The Wallsend-Plattsburg co-operative operated not just in those two towns but at Minmi. These organisations formally linked inhabitants of several towns in a common cause.

Where similar voluntary associations could attract enough members to survive in a single town, they often maintained friendly relations, which were manifest in 'visits'. In 1894 Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts founded a union. Although the main purpose was to press for larger government subsidies, the association also arranged games and debates between the Institutes in different towns. According to the president, these fostered 'friendly feelings' between them¹¹. The greatest payers of 'visits' were branches of the same friendly society order. They attended each others' anniversaries and organised official visits for social evenings¹². Temperance societies, such as the Rechabite friendly society and the Independent Order of Good Templars, took up the custom, organizing regular visits to other towns to attend socials and concerts¹³.

Sometimes the numbers from one town interested in a particular activity were too small to sustain even a joint society. In such cases those sufficiently enthusiastic could travel to another town. Although co-operative societies usually combined several towns, many joined from other towns where the society did not operate. The Pioneer Co-operative Society at Merewether included among its members persons from Adamstown and New Lambton. The Broadmeadow society had people from Adamstown in it and the Borehole and Lambton association included residents of New Lambton. Members of affiliated friendly societies often had strong emotional ties to them. If there were not enough persons interested in a local branch, they would join one in the next town if there was a lodge there. Thus the Hamilton branch of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows had members from Adamstown and

11. *N.M.H.*, 30 Jy. 1900.

12. *N.A.*, 26 Mar. 1875. *N.M.H.*, 10 Mar. 1891.

13. *N.M.H.*, 10 Jan., 21 May 1891, 15 Oct. 1900.

the Lambton one included men from New Lambton. In New Lambton there were no freemasons and so would-be members joined the Lambton branch. In the 1880s, when New Lambton could not maintain a Mechanics Institute, those who wanted this kind of activity joined the Lambton Mechanics Institute¹⁴. Before they got their own school in the late 1870s, New Lambton children attended school in Lambton.

All three kinds of interaction existed between the colliery townships from the very beginning. There is little to suggest that they increased with time. Often they decreased as population growth enabled towns to support their own choirs, Mechanics Institutes, or schools. In certain areas, however, joining voluntary associations in another town increased. By the 1890s the land between Newcastle and Hamilton and Wickham became largely built up. As a result many people in Wickham found it easier to join the choir, freemasons or friendly society lodge in Hamilton than Wickham. At the same time, large numbers of business people from Newcastle had moved to Hamilton because the port was becoming increasingly overcrowded and insanitary¹⁵. Having come from and still working in Newcastle¹⁶, they saw Hamilton very much as a dormitory suburb. In contrast to other traditional colliery townships, Hamilton began to see itself as and welcome the title 'suburban'. Its choir was known as the 'Suburban Choir' and included some Wickham residents. The Newcastle and Suburban Co-operative Society, which had its premises on the boundaries of Newcastle, Hamilton and Wickham, was run by people from Newcastle west as well as Hamilton.

Boundaries imposed by and in the interests of outside administrators forced the colliery townships to form links with the non mining areas of the district. This tended to weaken the identification of towns on the borders of the N.C.D. with the region to which, in terms of occupational structure, economy and functions, they belonged.

14. Persons joining a voluntary association in one town and living in another were identified through the electoral rolls in the years when they were most reliable, viz. to 1890, 1894, 1900-1. Only names which could be unquestionably linked to the relevant persons were accepted.

15. Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Report on the proposal for a sewerage works for Newcastle and suburbs', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1901 pt. 3, p. 947.

16. *ibid.*

Churches were more interested in the ratio of clergy to adherents than whether the towns supporting one pastor had anything in common. This meant a variety of suburbs and hamlets around Newcastle were at one time or another joint pastorates with colliery townships. In the 1890s Lambton Church of England parish stretched past New Lambton to Belmont, a fishing village on lake Macquarie. The Presbyterian charge of Hamilton and Lambton included Wickham, Carrington and Waratah, as well as colliery townships. The Burwood United Free Methodist circuit included a congregation at Cooks Hill in Newcastle. Hamilton was joined to Wickham in the Roman Catholic and Wesleyan pastorates. The Wallsend Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist circuits included Waratah. This attachment of non colliery towns to parishes otherwise associated with mining must have weakened the sense of being a distinct region.

Those who drew up parliamentary electorates had a similar disregard for the obvious identity of the N.C.D. Until 1881 all the colliery townships, plus Wickham and Carrington, belonged to the Northumberland electorate. The new act of that year gave Hamilton to the electorate of Newcastle and split Minmi down the middle so that a few residents were still in Northumberland and the rest in the rural electorate of West Maitland. Electors in both towns petitioned parliament. Minmi pointed out its identity of interest with the electorate of Northumberland and difference of outlook from the farmers of West Maitland. Hamilton also claimed identity with Northumberland because it was a mining town. Newcastle, to which it had been attached, was a port area. Both felt themselves effectively disenfranchised by the new boundaries¹⁷. The revised boundaries of 1894 were no better. Minmi continued to be part of West Maitland. This meant that their PLL candidate, Peter Curran, who polled most of the votes in Minmi, fought a losing battle in the rest of the electorate. Hamilton was now split in two so that the southern half belonged to the new electorate of Newcastle West and the northern half to the new electorate of Waratah. Waratah also included the middle-class Waratah and Lambton, which was still unmistakeably a colliery township. Hamilton, Lambton and Minmi, which shared borders with non

17. *Jnl.L.C.*, 1879-80 pt. 2, pp. 1059, 1063.

mining areas, were prevented from identifying completely with the N.C.D. in political activities.

The many different factors which encouraged or inhibited local and regional solidarity varied in their effect on each colliery township. This gave some a strong and others a weak sense of unity with the rest of the N.C.D.

Both Adamstown and New Lambton, situated as they were in the middle of the district, had strong ties with the rest of the colliery townships. Adamstown never had a local colliery and the New Lambton pits declined early. Therefore, most miners from these places worked in other parts of the N.C.D. Most of those who married outside their own town married into another colliery township. The small size of New Lambton meant it could not support many voluntary associations. The absence of Roman Catholic, Church of England, Congregational and Baptist churches, a Mechanics Institute, Freemasons and all friendly society orders except Manchester Unity, led to considerable dependence on Lambton. The absence of a co-operative society split inhabitants between the Merewether and Lambton-Borehole societies. At Adamstown the absence of a co-operative forced people to join the societies at Merewether or Broadmeadow. None of the administrative boundaries posed from without brought these two towns into conflict with other areas.

Lambton, on the other hand, had a high degree of local solidarity. The tendency to marry someone who lived in the same town was very high and it was largely self sufficient in voluntary associations. Where it co-operated with other colliery townships it was usually in a joint society, such as the Lambton and Borehole Co-operative. At the same time, the continued and increasing separation of workplace and residence gave this town links with the rest of the N.C.D. However, its common border with Waratah meant it was sometimes part of the same ecclesiastical unit or electorate.

Even though Merewether was very close to Newcastle, it had close links with the other colliery townships. Separation of workplace and residence was less than usual. Of those miners who travelled elsewhere, most worked in other parts of the N.C.D. Although marriage

into the rest of the Newcastle district was higher than average (fig. 2.8), the large number of marriages between residents meant most still married into the N.C.D. Like Lambton, Merewether was highly self-sufficient in voluntary associations. Any joint voluntary associations were with other colliery townships. Proximity to Newcastle meant Merewether often belonged to the same parish as Newcastle. However, it always belonged to an electorate dominated by colliery townships.

The isolation of Minmi meant it tended to have fewer links with other towns in the N.C.D. In more than any other, workplace and residence coincided. Distance also meant that more marriages were between residents and it had to be self-sufficient in voluntary associations. Inhabitants either had their own societies or did not join one at all. Its position at the northern end of the N.C.D. meant it could be separated from it and links with other colliery townships were less easy to achieve. Intermarriage with the rest of the N.C.D. was less than average and it usually belonged to a different electorate. Its links were mainly to Wallsend and Plattsburg through the hospital, co-operative society and church parishes.

Wallsend and Plattsburg had a high degree of solidarity between them and somewhat weaker ties with the rest of the N.C.D. Throughout the period, separation of workplace and residence was less than for most of the colliery townships. However, at Plattsburg, where the Co-operative pit was nearly worked out by the 1890s, it gradually increased. When miners went elsewhere to work, their journey usually consisted of an interchange between the two towns (fig. 10.3). A large proportion of marriages were between residents of these two towns. Most voluntary associations were joint organisations. Even though they were separate municipalities, there was a lot of co-operation in local government. Night solid disposal was under a joint sanitary committee and one inspector of nuisances served both towns. Even small items of equipment, like road rollers, were bought jointly to cut costs. The larger population of the Wallsend-Plattsburg area meant they could support more voluntary associations. So, residents did not have to travel elsewhere. Where Wallsend and Plattsburg were

involved with other areas, as for elections, the hospital and churches, their position at the western end of the traditional colliery townships, but next to the newer pits further west, meant their links were very definitely with the rest of the N.C.D.

The links between Hamilton and the rest of the N.C.D. were much weaker than for other towns. The gradual working out of its collieries meant that by the 1890s there was hardly any work for miners there. Although most miners living there worked in the N.C.D., the proportion who worked in the inner city area was far higher than for the colliery townships as a whole. Admittedly, the proportion from Lambton working in the inner city area was just as high. However, in the case of Hamilton these links were reinforced by other factors. Conurbation brought increasing numbers of people from Wickham into its voluntary associations. Inter-marriage with the rest of Newcastle was more frequent than for the other colliery townships, while marriage within Hamilton or into other mining towns was very much less than average. Proximity to Newcastle meant that it was very early pushed into the Newcastle electorate. Although Hamilton began as and was still identifiable as a colliery township in the 1890s, its links with the N.C.D. were competing with growing ties with the rest of Newcastle. This is clear from Hamilton's co-operative societies. The first co-operative in the colliery townships was at Hamilton. As the Lambton-Borehole society, it survived throughout the period. The late 1890s saw the establishment of the Newcastle and Suburban society. While the Lambton-Borehole society testified to Hamilton's traditional links with the N.C.D., the Newcastle and Suburban co-operative indicated the settling in Hamilton of large numbers of middle-class people, who came from, still worked in and identified with the port. If Hamilton had had any local solidarity in the early part of the period, it had certainly lost it, along with much of its ties with the other traditional colliery townships, by 1900.

Apart from Hamilton in the 1890s, the bulk of the allegiances of colliery township inhabitants were still to their own town or the N.C.D. as a whole, even though the boundary between them and non mining towns was sometimes a little blurred. Over three quarters of

all marriages occurred between inhabitants of the same or other towns in the N.C.D. If they travelled outside their own town to work, most went to another part of the mining district. Most of the interdependence created by voluntary associations was between colliery townships. Although administrative boundaries frayed the edges of the N.C.D. somewhat, most towns remained in electorates and parishes which were unmistakably composed of or dominated by coalmining people.

The sense of identity within individual colliery townships was considerably less than within the district as a whole. Ties of kinship and workplace often linked the district at the expense of the solidarity of individual towns. In addition, most towns had very high residential mobility.

Large scale population movement in the N.C.D. is evident from a study of electoral rolls. These are a fairly reliable indicator of population movement for this area. The six month residence qualification meant that settled residents alone were listed. Since all adult males were eligible to register, and most did in the colliery townships, the rolls are close to a full list of adult male residents who were not migratory workers. Checks on the accuracy of rolls, by tracing the deletion of persons known to have died or moved, showed that they were extremely reliable before the 1890s, in 1894, when the new electoral act was proclaimed and the rolls revised completely, and in 1900-1, when they were again revised, as a prelude to the preparation of commonwealth electorates¹⁸. Accordingly, samples of electors from the colliery townships were drawn from the rolls for 1875-6, 1881 and 1894. The movements of sampled electors over three yearly periods were traced until 1890-1 for the 1875 and 1881 samples. The complete unreliability of rolls between 1894 and 1900 meant that the 1894 sample could only be compared with the 1900-1 roll. Electors were identified according to whether they stayed in the same town, moved to another mining town, moved to another place in Newcastle, returned to their original town or left the Newcastle district. The last mentioned category included all those who disappeared from the Newcastle electoral rolls. In the absence of life expectancy tables,

18. For a full description of the conduct of the electoral roll survey see appendix two.

figures were corrected for mortality by applying the N.S.W. death rate for men over 20 years¹⁹.

The proportion of electors who continued to live in the same town, or persisters, as they have been termed, was very low. By 1890 only 28 per cent of the 1875 and 38 per cent of the 1881 sample who could have been expected to remain alive lived in the same town. Over the six years from 1894 to 1900 28 per cent of electors moved elsewhere. The annual rate of population loss from the rolls was quite stable, being 6 per cent a year from 1875 to 1890, 6.9 per cent from 1881-90 and 6.1 per cent from 1894-1900. A comparison of population persistence among the 1875 electorate during the first 10 years of that survey and the 1881 sample, which covered nine years, showed strong similarities in population mobility. In each decade or so, that is, 1875-85 and 1881-90, about 60 per cent of electors left the town they inhabited in the sample year²⁰. Furthermore, the pattern of departure was identical: in the first three years of each survey, allowing for mortality, nearly 40 per cent of electors left. Thereafter numbers dropped less steeply (fig. 10.4). These results have important implications. First, the almost identical rates of population movement or persistence in both decades suggests that this degree of mobility could be expected for much of our period. Second, that identical and substantial proportions of leavers took their departure in the first three years suggests the colliery townships had two kinds of resident: a large group of temporary inhabitants, who stayed less than three years and a smaller, more permanent group, which left slowly or remained.

19. For details see appendix two.

20. The actual proportion of departures was 60 per cent between 1875 and 1885 and 62 per cent between 1881 and 1890. That is, 40 per cent and 38 per cent respectively continued to live in the same town. These results are very close to those for the town of Hamilton in Canada in the decades 1851-61, 1861-71. Using manuscript census material, it has been shown that, corrected for mortality, 35 per cent and 39 per cent of males between 1851 and 1861 and 1861 and 1871, respectively, remained in the town. M. Katz, M. Doucet, M. Stern, 'Population persistence in a Canadian city', *Social science history*, v. 2, no. 2 (1978), p. 210.

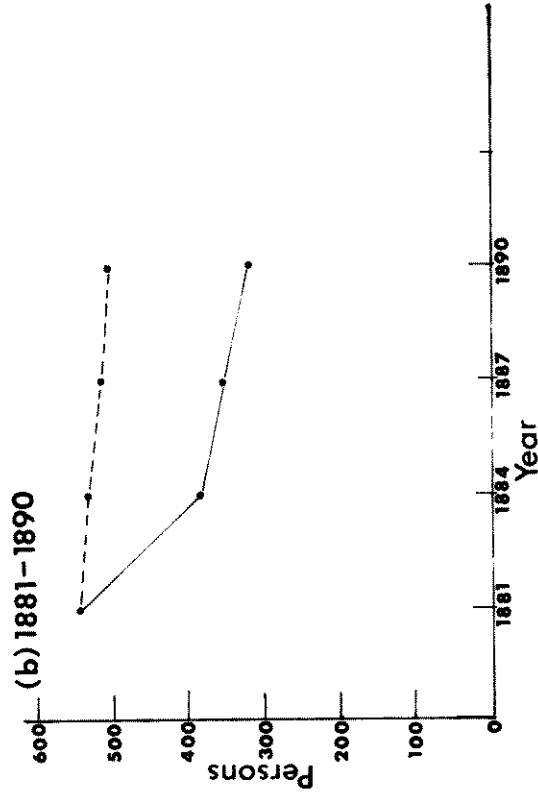
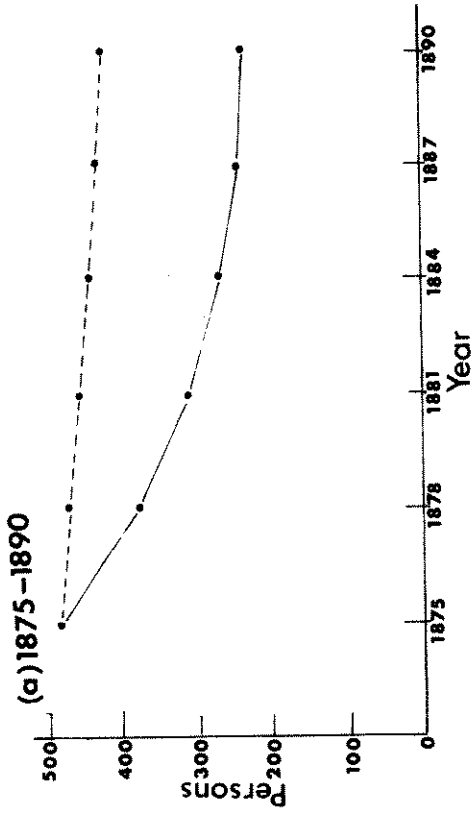


Fig. 10-5 Population movement from the Newcastle District

Source: As for fig. 10.4.

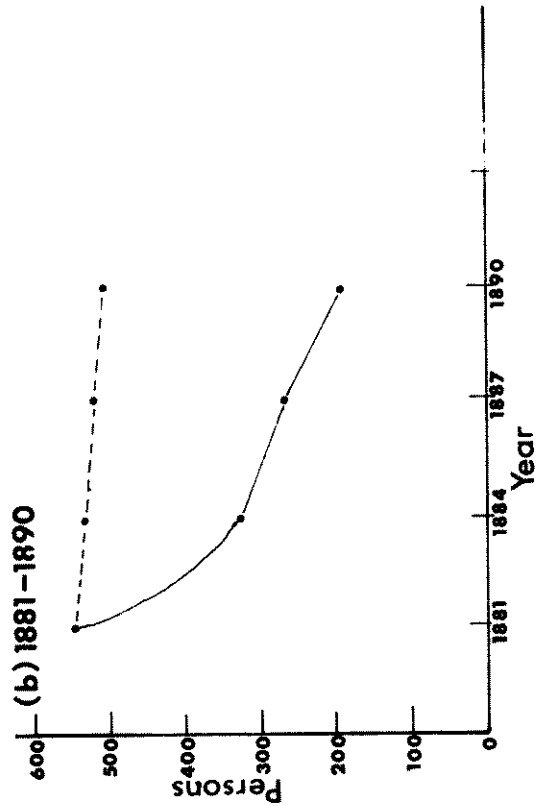
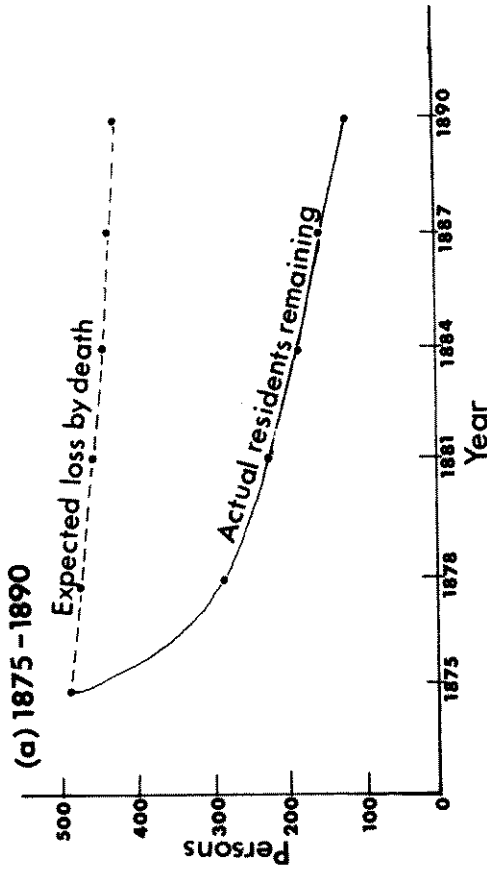


Fig. 10-4 Population movement from the Newcastle colliery townships

Source: Electoral roll survey, 1875-90, 1921-90.

Movement from the N.C.D. and Newcastle showed strong similarities. 46 per cent of the 1875 sample and 37 per cent of the 1881 sample had left the area by 1900 (fig. 10.5). However, the rate of movement for 1875-85 and 1881-90 were almost identical, for 40 per cent of the 1875 sample had left the Newcastle district by 1885. The very high residential mobility for individual towns, while less than half the population left the Newcastle district each decade, indicates that most movement was over short distances. The distribution of those who left the town they lived in at the time of sampling, but remained in Newcastle, between mining and other towns, suggests that most went to the former²¹. The high residential mobility of the colliery townships contributed to the unity of the N.C.D. at the expense of solidarity in individual towns. Consequently, the N.C.D. as a whole exhibited a stability far beyond that found in most studies of geographical mobility in new settlements in the nineteenth century²².

Local conditions were responsible for much of the mobility within and out of the Newcastle district. Fluctuating demand and the inevitably shifting location of extractive industry worked against stability. Lack of security of tenure meant that many people, especially those on the commonage and in other areas which could not obtain leasehold or freehold, had little to lose by moving. Movement was also selective in terms of class and occupation. The general effect of these factors was to make the better off working-class the stable population of the colliery townships. It was this group, therefore, which dominated their ideas and institutions.

That each colliery experienced its own fluctuations in demand and the industry as a whole suffered periodic slumps meant frequent departures of those who could not survive on the work available. Usually they went to the most promising coal or metal mines elsewhere. In 1871 miners left for the Gulgong diggings, Queensland copper mines

21. Financial limitations on computer work meant it was not possible to trace the movements of each person in the sample in detail. It was possible to work out what proportion in the population moved to other colliery townships, as distinct from the rest of the Newcastle district, for each three year period, as shown in table 10.4.

22. see Katz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 209, fn. 1, p. 228.

Table 10.4

Destinations of electors leaving the Newcastle colliery townships
for another part of Newcastle, 1875-90, 1881-90

Period	Destination			
	1875 sample Colliery township	elsewhere in Newcastle	1881 sample Colliery township	elsewhere in Newcastle
1875-8	77	13		
1878-81	29	8		
1881-4	22	8	35	18
1884-7	15	6	31	11
1887-90	33	8	58	8

Source: Electoral roll surveys, 1875, 1881.

and the Inverell area to prospect for tin. In the 1890s most went to the goldfields of W.A. and South Africa or the N.Zealand coalfields²³. Thus there was always a stream of men moving to other parts of Australia and the world in search of work.

While the shifting location of pits forced increasing numbers of miners to look for work beyond their own town, some moved house, rather than travel long distances each day. Some pits were so far apart that it may have been wisest to move to another town. One overman who worked at the Ferndale colliery in Wickham in 1885 had worked the previous three years as a miner at Wallsend. Another had worked at New Lambton, Minmi and Ferndale. Witnesses to the royal commission on coal mines in 1896 included men who had worked in numerous pits from New Lambton to Minmi, Stockton to New Lambton and Burwood to Minmi²⁴. The changing fortunes of pits were probably behind the

23. *N.C.*, 21 Jy., 4 Nov. 1871. *W&PSun*, 31 Aug. 1895. See also chapter seven.

24. 'Report of accident at Ferndale colliery', *V&PLA*, 1885-6, pp. 693, 718. 'R.C. into the coal mines regulation bill', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1896 pt. 2, pp. 845, 877, 924.

removal to another part of Newcastle of 18 per cent of the 1875 and 25 per cent of the 1881 electors by 1890 and the relocation of 9 per cent of the 1894 sample in other parts of Newcastle by 1900. It is interesting that the largest rate of movement was in the sample covering 1881-90, when the major change in pit location took place.

The decision to move from a town when times were bad, or the pit ageing, was influenced by tenure. Inhabitants of certain parts of the N.C.D. had no chance of security of tenure. At Minmi and New Lambton leasehold was rare and on the commonage there was no security of tenure at all until the late 1880s. Merewether did not have long leases until the late 1870s²⁵. That tenure was important can be seen by comparing movement from towns where freehold or long leases were available and other areas.

In the 1875 sample there was considerably more stability among those living in the freehold towns of Adamstown, Hamilton, Lambton, Plattsburg and Wallsend than the non tenured commonage, Merewether, Minmi and New Lambton. There were even greater differences in the 1881 sample between the freehold towns and Merewether, where long leases were by then available, and the rest of the district²⁶. These did not exist in the 1890s, by which time the commonage and New Lambton were freehold areas. There were still differences between Minmi, the only town where there was still no security of tenure, and the other settlements²⁷. The tendency to move to another part of Newcastle was also related to the availability of tenure. Residents of the commonage, New Lambton, Minmi and Merewether in 1875 were far more likely to settle elsewhere in Newcastle than their counterparts in the freehold towns. A similar situation pertained for the 1881 sample²⁸.

25. See chapter four.

26. Application of the chi square test to tenure and no tenure towns in the 1875 and 1881 samples showed these differences to be significant at the .001 level in both cases.

27. The differences between Minmi and the rest of the N.C.D. were significant at the .01 level.

28. The significance for the 1875 sample was .05, for the 1881 sample .001. There were no significant differences in the 1894 sample, very few electors from which moved to another part of the Newcastle district.

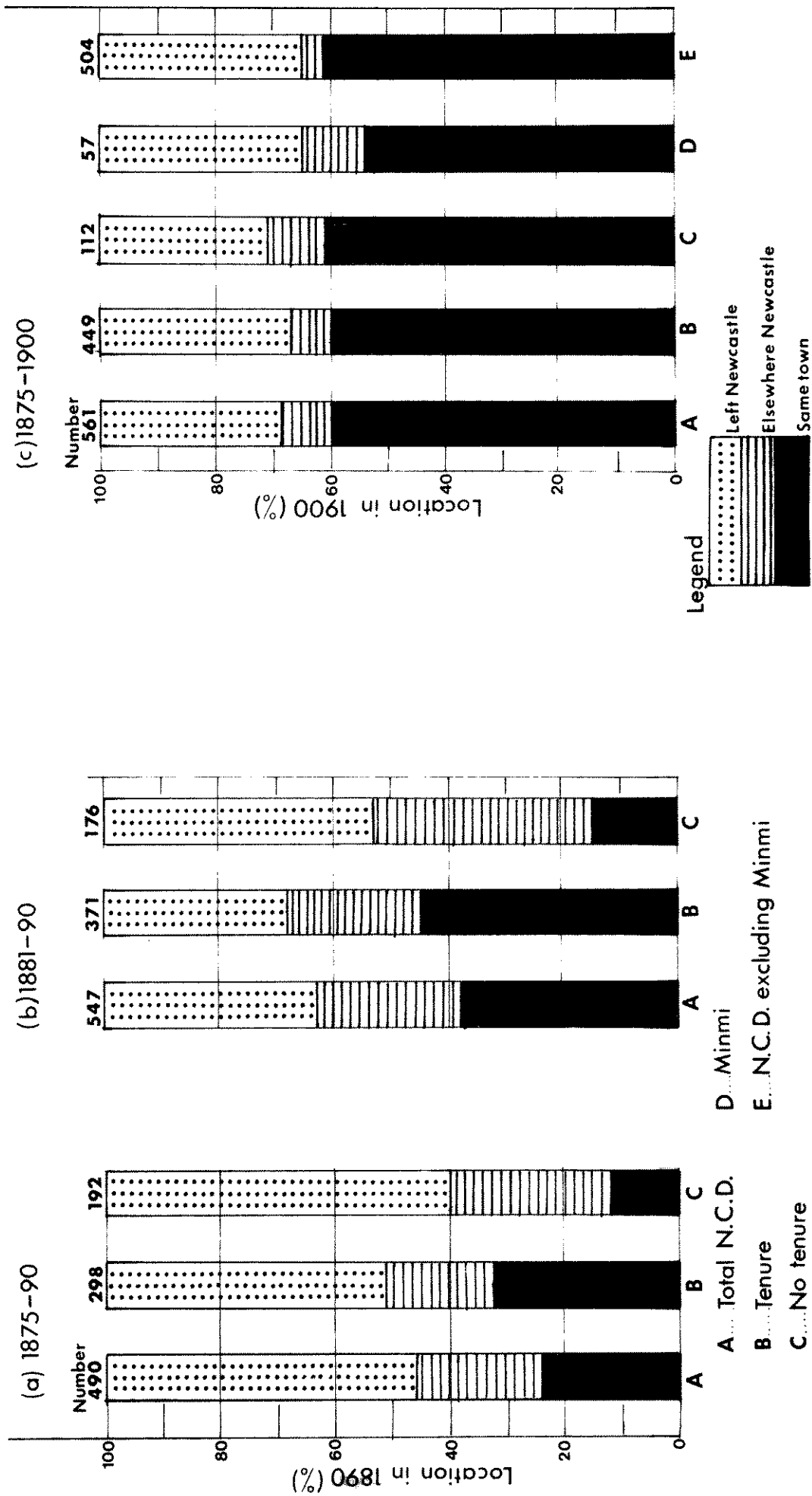


Fig.10-6 Population movement in areas of the N.C.D. with or without security of tenure:1875-1900

Note: For details of tenure and no tenure see text.

Source: Electoral roll survey, 1875-90, 1881-90, 1894-1900.

An analysis of movement according to electoral qualification confirms that it was those with tenure in the freehold and leasehold towns that gave them stability. Table 10.5 shows fewer freeholders and leaseholders left in 1875-1878 and in 1881-4²⁹.

Table 10.5

Population movement and tenure in the Newcastle colliery townships,
1875-8, 1881-4

Tenure	No. 1875	Persons staying in same town		No. 1881	There in 1884	
		There in 1878	No. %		No.	%
Freehold	95	72	76	98	75	77
Leasehold	27	20	74	32	24	75
Household	233	135	58	292	159	54
Resident	129	64	50	114	59	52
Freehold						
Elsewhere	3	1	33	11	7	64
Leasehold						
Elsewhere	3	1	33	0	0	0

Source: Electoral roll surveys, 1875-90, 1881-84.

Actual tenure was not the only determinant of who moved and who stayed in a town. Those who had a chance of acquiring tenure were less likely to leave than those who had none. Table 10.6 shows that of the 1875 householders and residents still in the same town in 1890 about half had become freeholders or leaseholders. For the 1881 sample the proportion was less. If, as the electoral rolls suggest, people acquired freehold gradually³⁰, this is to be expected over a

29. The differences in mobility between tenured and non tenured electors for both the 1875 and 1881 samples was significant at .001. A strong relationship between property ownership and stability has been noted in most studies of this kind. See Katz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

30. This became clear while tracing electors from year to year on the rolls. Only about 10 per cent, mostly Merewether residents, acquired leaseholds.

Table 10.6

Residents remaining in the colliery townships who had freehold
or leasehold tenure in 1890

Tenure in Base Year	Remaining residents with freehold or leasehold in 1890			
	1875 sample		1881 sample	
	No.	%	No.	%
Freehold	33	94	64	89
Leasehold	11	92	15	79
Household	20	49	25	28
Resident	12	57	17	29

Source: Electoral roll surveys, 1875-90, 1881-90.

shorter period and presumably many were in the process of buying their own land. That many who stayed had acquired tenure suggests a relationship between mobility and income. This becomes logical if one realizes that those most likely to move when work was scarce, because they could not make ends meet, were those with no savings on which to draw. Conversely, those with enough money to be saving to buy land or pay for taking out a lease would also have more to fall back on in bad times. Of the two kinds of resident in the colliery townships, the large group of temporary residents were poorer and the smaller, stable group wealthier.

Although tenure, especially freehold, implied greater wealth, this stable group was still within the working-class. The substitution of occupation for 'qualification' in the electoral roll of 1894 made it possible to correlate occupation and class with mobility from 1894 to 1900. Figure 10.7 shows that manual workers were considerably less mobile than the bourgeoisie proper or the intermediate super-

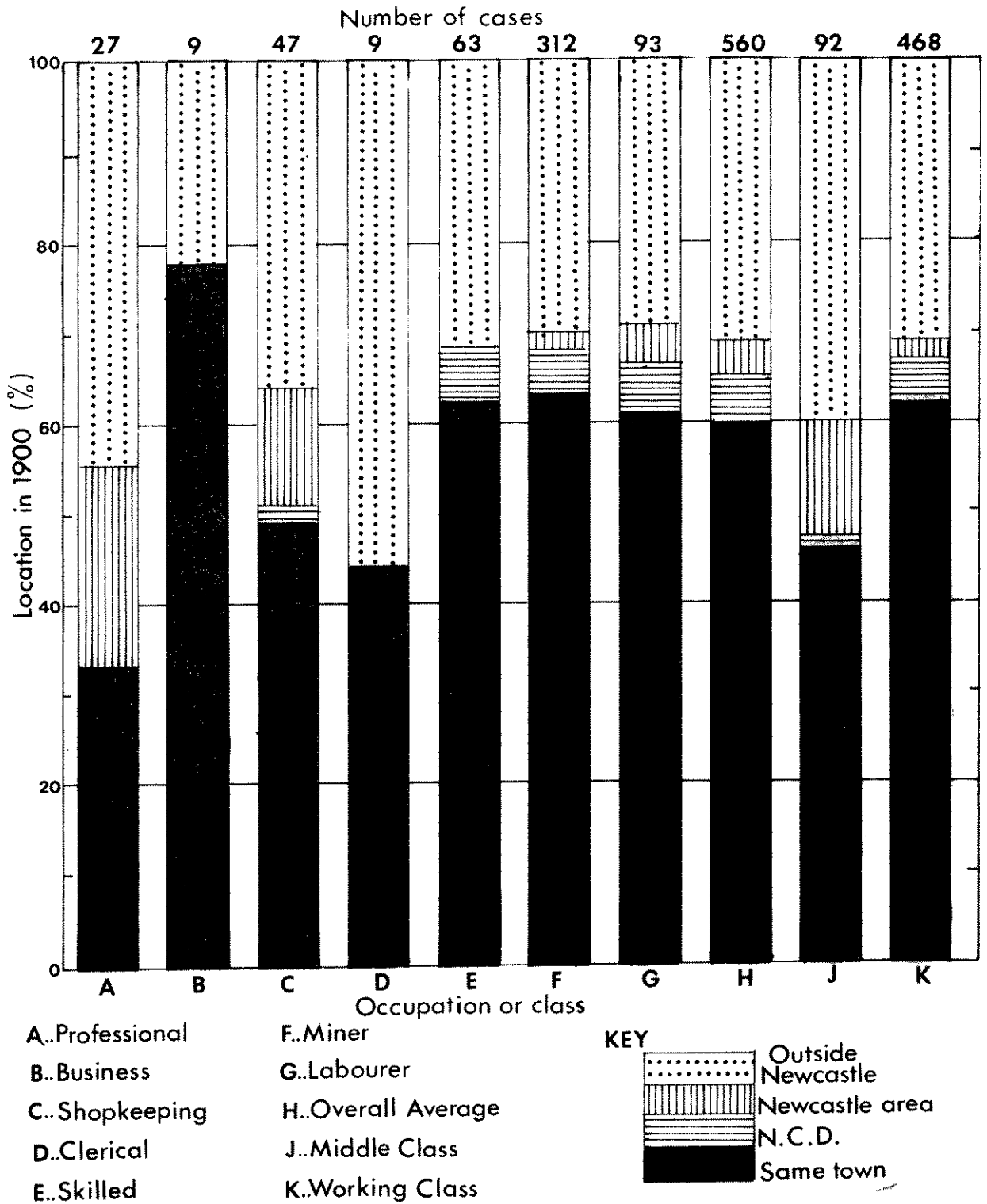


Fig. 10-7 Class, occupation and physical mobility in the N.C.D., 1894-1900

Source: Electoral roll survey, 1894-1900.

visory or clerical group³¹. Given the voluminous evidence of out-migration among miners in the 1890s, the smaller loss of population in this group is puzzling. It is quite clear, though, that many of those who went to W.A. in the early 1890s were returning by 1900³². That miners were less mobile in these years, when work at the pits was especially bad, suggests they were even less so before 1890. The better off freeholders who contributed to stability in the colliery townships were not generally from the bourgeoisie. They were most likely from the better off section of the working-class. Because of their occupational dominance most of them must have been miners. It is precisely this group, identified as miners with freehold, who were prominent in so many local institutions: the cooperative, local government and Mechanics Institutes. That they were the most stable group suggests that, besides having extra status by virtue of wealth, they were, as long term residents, more likely to become involved in and shape local life.

The miner who had acquired land and built a house was noticeably more stable than the rest of the population. So great was the difference that observers of one group or the other held completely contradictory opinions on the stability of inhabitants. In 1900 Alexander Lindsay, who rented out a large number of houses, which often became empty, on the Merewether Estate, was of the opinion that miners were constantly on the move³³. Those who gave evidence to a parliamentary inquiry on a proposed tramway between Plattsburg and West Wallsend argued that coalminers were a fairly settled population. It is clear, though that they were referring to the freeholders. One said:

-
31. The differences between the bourgeoisie, including the clerical group, and manual workers were significant at the .01 level. This is an unusual finding. Katz *et al.* found that the capitalist class, their definition of which corresponds extremely closely with occupations included in the 'bourgeoisie' in this study, were less mobile than the working-class. *Op. cit.*, pp. 224-5.
32. *N.M.H.*, 24, 26 Nov. 1900. The following factors must also be considered. The 1894-1900 survey excludes the exodus before 1894. Many of these who left were possibly not 21 years or over.
33. 'Report on sewerage works', *loc. cit.*, p. 1023.

If once a miner establishes a home, he sticks to it. To get another means a life time³⁴.

That those with no security of tenure were highly mobile suggests that those who travelled long distances to work instead of moving house were probably freeholders. Other evidence confirms this. The inquiry in 1904 into the proposed tramway from Wallsend to West Wallsend revealed that large numbers of miners had been travelling to collieries there from Lambton, Plattsburg, Wallsend and Minmi for the last 10 years. Witnesses claimed that most of the men had their own houses³⁵. The wealthier miners, who were the back bone of the colliery townships, were being forced to spend more and more time away from their own town.

Miners from Merewether and Adamstown who worked at the southern collieries did not have to go far and those from Adamstown could travel on the coal trains which passed through to these mines. For those in the more central towns, Lambton and New Lambton, to travel either west or south to work was very time consuming. The only way to get to the southern collieries was to take the tram to Broadmeadow and then catch one of the trains going down to the mines. These were irregular in their departures, left at inconvenient times anyway and often had to wait for freight trains to pass. As a result, miners often missed the tram connection at Broadmeadow on the way home. Throughout the journey they were hungry, tired and still in damp clothes. A delay of one and a quarter hours one Saturday led one to conclude that they would be better off without the day's work, rather than run the risk of catching cold and having to spend heavily on patent medicines³⁶. It was even more difficult to get to the western collieries. Beyond Wallsend there was no tram service. Many who had their own transport drove out, taking with them three or four others who paid for the horse's keep. Others stayed at the pit during the week and went home at the week end³⁷. Whether they spent a large part of the day travelling, or were away all week, these miners had less time to spend at home in local affairs.

34. Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Tramway from Wallsend to West Wallsend', *P.P.*, 1904 pt. 3, v. 2, p. 1424.

35. *ibid.*, pp. 1409-1418.

36. *ibid.*, p. 1424.

37. *N.M.H.*, 21 Aug. 1900.

The identity of individual towns in the N.C.D. was not as strong as it might have been. Although most inhabitants married into the town where they happened to be living, it is unlikely that they stayed there. Population movement from individual towns was high, especially among those who had no or little chance of security of tenure. Those who stayed in the same town because they owned their own home were increasingly forced to work elsewhere. Population movement from individual towns was largely to the advantage of district solidarity. Since most who moved house went to another colliery township, they retained their allegiance to the N.C.D. This strengthened district-wide ties, which were also encouraged by the separation of workplace and residence and marriage within the N.C.D. Whether they kept to their own, or established ties with another mining town, most inhabitants continued to live, work, marry and play in the N.C.D. The identity and survival of individual towns was guaranteed by the freeholding wealthier miners who shaped and maintained their institutions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

The people who settled in the N.C.D. between 1860 and 1900 brought with them much of the old world. They set up many institutions which had grown up among the working-class people of England, in particular those of the industrial north. The trade union, the cooperative and the friendly society were very early established in the N.C.D. and continued to function throughout the period. However, the way of life in the colliery townships was not a replica of English culture. Nor was it entirely static. There were institutions and practices more popular in the new land than the old which influenced the N.C.D. These included the establishment of municipalities, state intervention in education and Australian rules football. General movements, such as the growing tension between employer and employee, which stripped their economic relationship of other rights and duties, were also important.

These forces combined to make the N.C.D. an area subject to both tradition and change in the late nineteenth century. Against a solid background of trade unionism, cooperatives, friendly and pit societies, people re-established ties of kinship which eventually linked the district. However, traditional society could not really be re-established. Although in the early years colliery managers were willing to play the part of the '*grand seigneur*', patronizing schools, Mechanics Institutes, sporting associations and being mayor, this did not last. The behaviour of employers in industrial relations and self-interested attitude to problems of local government led to a growing belief among the working-class that there was no identity of interest between labour and capital. The gradual realization among the employing class that philanthropy, education and 'moral example' would not create a quiescent workforce, who subscribed to their own view of the social order, meant they became less and less interested in local life. The beginnings of this transition were probably laid in early nineteenth century England, when working men began to assert themselves and form trade unions, cooperatives and friendly societies for their mutual advancement and protection. It was at this stage that this development was transplanted to the N.C.D. Here colonial conditions, such as the greater role played by the state, made it easier for working-class people to assert themselves against their employers

and acquire the funds and status needed to manage their own affairs.

The gradual deterioration in relations between the employing and the working-class meant that the colliery manager no longer mixed with his employees at the Mechanics Institute, in local government, or on school boards. Nor did he support the same political candidates and measures. He had probably seen very little of the church going portion of his workforce since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when nonconformity provided an alternative to the established church. The working man could live out his life in a world where the colliery manager was irrelevant. He had nothing to do with the cooperative, the local welfare system, the church he attended, the political party he voted for, the Mechanics Institute or the local council. At most he was a distant patron of certain organizations who, through donations, enabled them to function better, and the employer who tried to reduce his wages and destroy the union. However, the transition from a traditional, vertically integrated society to one where employer and employee led totally separate lives was not complete. A new system of social status, in which the working-class accorded recognition to those who warranted it by virtue of wealth, municipal leadership, or being a member of parliament, had come into being, but had not entirely ousted the old ways. The working-class failed to cast off the old style deference completely and continued to seek the patronage of the colliery managers where they could.

The colliery townships did not have a system of social status recognized by all because they were in transition from one kind to another. This made for ambivalence in the attitudes of inhabitants as to what social status entailed. It also meant that towns were disunited because there were two conflicting systems of social status, neither of which commanded complete allegiance. High residential mobility meant that, despite the building up of kinship and neighbourly ties, the N.C.D. could not approximate the 'ideal-type' rural *gemeinschaft*. This is not to say the area may not have been in many ways close knit, particularly for a modern society. Beneath the conflict between the traditional and new status systems was a well

integrated set of institutions, a distinctive way of life and many close links between ordinary inhabitants.

There were many unusual features in the culture of the N.C.D. which gave it a distinct identity. The strong economic ties coalmining created between family members led to the multiple role-play usually attributed to stable rural societies, not to new settlements. Importance was attached to working-class institutions. The major group in the workforce was completely unionized from the 1870s and the district showed its support for trade unionism when it was threatened. Nowhere in the rest of N.S.W. did cooperatives do so well in the nineteenth century. Friendly societies were far more important than in the colony generally and there is no evidence of such well organized mutual benefit societies among other occupational groups in N.S.W. at this time. While leisure generally conformed to the Australian pattern, which emphasizes popular culture, many individual pastimes set the area apart and gave it more in common with mining areas in Britain: choirs, bands, the Eisteddfod, dance forms and games. Mechanics Institutes were remarkable for their determination to and success in providing serious and technical information, for their ability to attract the working-class and resistance to the billiard table. In religious matters the strength of nonconformity, especially Methodism, distinguished the area from the rest of N.S.W. However, members of the nonconformist churches had special problems which led them to differ from their brothers and sisters elsewhere in the colony. They gave a more prominent role to the laity and accorded little priority to paid clergy. Their political and social attitudes led to conflicts with ministers and other church members in N.S.W. Politically the district was early characterized by an emphasis on national and class, rather than purely local, issues. The N.C.D., then, was distinguished by many of its characteristics, attitudes and customs. These gave it an identity as a definite region.

The colliery townships developed, from the ways of the old world and the new, regular or standardized arrangements for coping with their needs and problems. The trade unions looked after wages and conditions. Friendly societies and charity saw that the sick and needy and old were cared for. Local government provided and

maintained public utilities and services. Special leisure associations and other voluntary organizations supplied recreation and churches arranged for worship. The district articulated its needs to government through political activity. Thus the townships catered for all the basic needs of inhabitants.

Many of these agencies had close links to each other. The problems of the aged, disabled, widowed, orphaned and unemployed led to a well knit social welfare system consisting of self-help through mutual benefit societies and charity. This, through benefit concerts, had strong ties with leisure activities. Many organizations devoted to specific forms of leisure, especially those in the performing arts, gave their services at or staged their own benefit concerts. They also helped raise funds for each other, the Mechanics Institute and the churches. The Mechanics Institutes, in their turn, provided facilities for friendly society and union meetings, church celebrations and fundraising concerts for the needy and other voluntary organizations. Their importance in local life led to formal support from local government in the form of an annual donation. Through its aldermen the municipal council also patronized most voluntary organizations. It also contributed to the social welfare system by providing public works to relieve unemployment and underemployment. The union, which also had important functions in its own right, played an important part in smoothing out possible anomalies in the social welfare system. The problems the union and the social welfare system could not solve by themselves, such as the poverty caused by accidents, occupational disease, old age and lack of adequate mining legislation, were reflected in political demands. The general political beliefs of the district, such as protection and the need for working-class representatives in parliament, were translated into practical measures in the Mechanics Institute. So, too, was the union wish that miners be well educated in the needs of their industry.

Figure 11.1 sets out these links between various organizations and agencies. Arrows indicate the direction of aid, patronage and support. Although the system is by no means completely interlocked and most relationships were one-way, they show that considerable

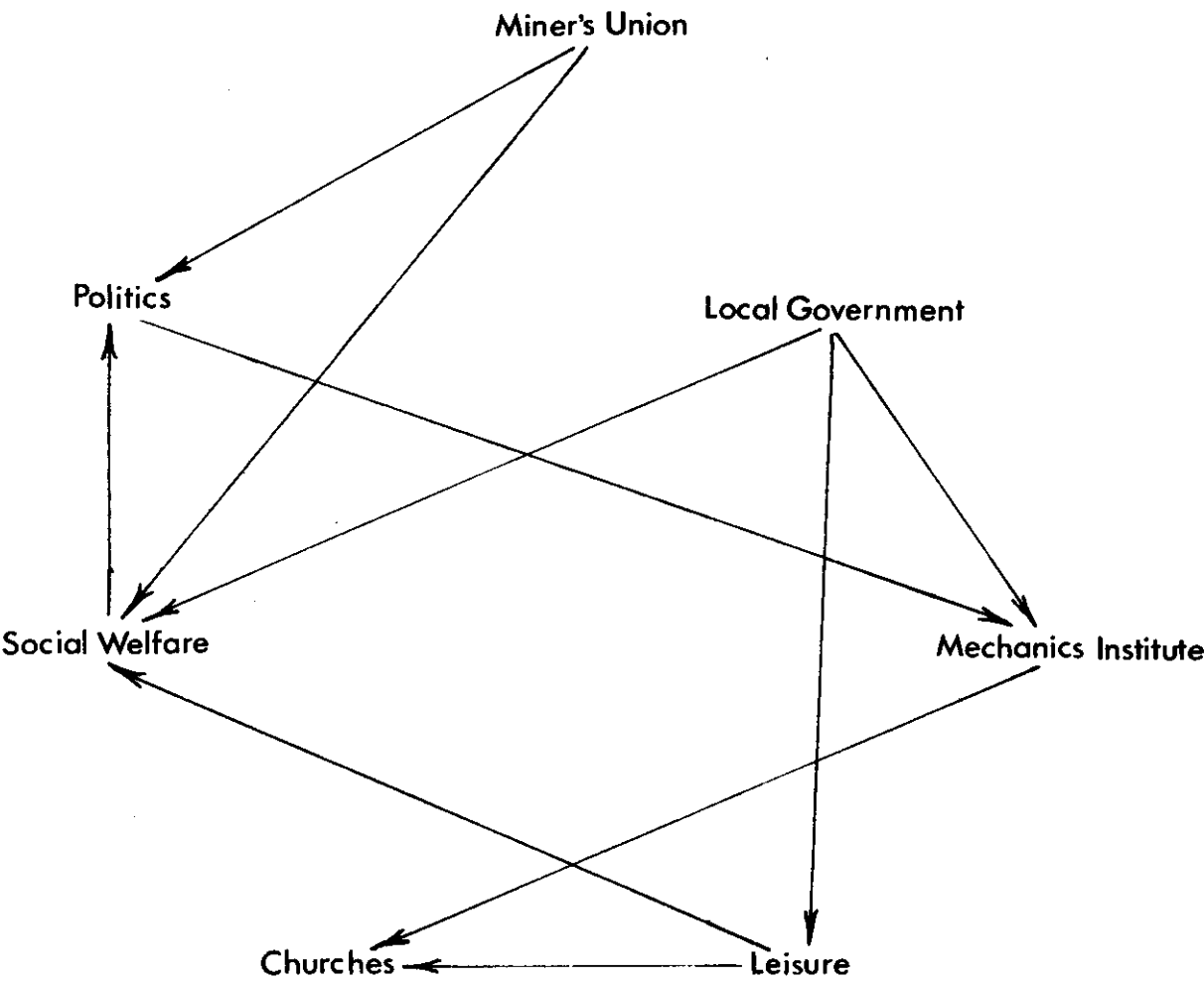


Fig. 11-1 Relationships between various institutions and agencies in the Newcastle colliery townships in the late nineteenth century

communication, cooperation and integrated thinking existed in the mining towns. By the 1890s much of this fairly tight system was superintended by a system of social status which linked most voluntary organizations. Its dominance was incomplete because of the lingering traditional system.

While the distinctive character and close organization of the colliery townships is obvious, their achievement in bridging fundamental cleavages is far less clear cut. As we have already noted, a new kind of society, in which employer and employee were tied to each other by no more than an economic relationship, was emerging. Given the masses of working people and small number of colliery managers, some of whom no longer lived in the N.C.D., this was not an important gap in the social cohesion of the district at large. However, local life was full of organizations which divided people according to birthplace, religion, occupation, class, sex and age.

Except for the churches and the benevolent society, women were denied participation in local affairs. For the most part they were not eligible for membership and, even where they were, as in Mechanics Institutes, choirs and dance clubs, they did not hold office. Age was also a recurring cleavage. The old and the young could never agree on what were acceptable leisure pursuits. By the 1890s they were beginning to agree less and less on politics. Churches helped maintain ethnic divisions, while religious attitudes on gambling divided inhabitants according to class or occupation. Friendly societies and cooperatives were the preserve of the better off working-class. In many leisure associations there was a functional division between the bourgeoisie and manual workers. The former provided the funds and the latter did the work, thereby carrying over the general economic division in its entirety. Many of the more radical churches were the preserve of the working-class. By the 1890s political belief was increasingly a function of class. The poorer working-class were constantly excluded from local life, or forced to form separate organizations. They could not afford to join the cooperative, the friendly society or the Mechanics Institute. They were rarely attracted to the churches. That they

did different work from the miners meant they did not qualify to join the union. Lower wages meant they were better off running their own accident fund. Society was divided into the bourgeoisie, the better off working-class, which sometimes included the intermediate clerical group, and labourers. Population turnover in individual towns was so high that very little solidarity could have developed. Those who stayed had to spend more and more time away from their home town travelling to work.

For all that, there were many situations that encouraged social cohesion. Although the churches encouraged cultural exclusiveness, most ethnic recreations were open displays which all could learn to appreciate. Committed members of various denominations belonged to the cooperative and the Mechanics Institute. Neighbourliness overcame the sectarianism which resurged in the last years of the century. Friendly societies brought together the old and the young. The lack of social mobility for much of the population meant the sharp generation gap encouraged by a change in class could not have been widespread. Despite their differences over leisure and politics, the old and the young had much to bind them together. If some voluntary organizations gave the bourgeoisie and the workers different roles, they could still both rejoice when their town won the cricket trophy or choral competition. The downward movement of the children of the bourgeoisie, their sons becoming manual workers and daughters marrying miners, meant that, even though these groups tended not to associate in clubs and societies, they were linked by the more fundamental ties of kinship. Although few continued to live and work in the same town, most people remained in the N.C.D., married into it, worked in it and spent their leisure in it. Even in voluntary organizations the division between working-class and middle-class was not total. While the bourgeoisie proper did not join cooperatives and friendly societies, the intermediate clerical and supervisory group was overrepresented in them. Aldermen and members of Mechanics Institute committees came from all sections of the bourgeoisie and the better off working-class. The latter, because of their aldermanic status, were as worthy of being chosen patron and vice-president

as the bourgeoisie. The more persistent division was between the lowest group on the occupational scale, labourers, and the rest.

Despite its transitional status, many divisions along the fundamental cleavages of age, sex, birthplace, religion, class and occupation and high mobility, it would be impossible to argue that the Newcastle colliery townships, and more particularly the district as a whole, did not hold together. There was a common and distinctive culture, the important aspects of which were closely tied together. While some institutions cut along differences of age, birthplace and religion, others did not. The N.C.D., if not individual towns, showed extraordinary stability and self-containment. Within the varying occupational composition of the many organized groups there was a common element in the better off working-class, typified by the freeholding miner. This group was the linchpin of society. Its members ran the union, the principles of which gained universal acceptance, and supported the cooperative, friendly societies and Mechanics Institute. As aldermen they patronized the many voluntary associations, including those devoted to leisure. As union officials they oversaw the running of the social welfare system. The reason for the dominance of the better off miner is not hard to find. Greater wealth meant not only that he could survive better in bad years but, because he could buy his own house, he could not move when the pits became worked out. Long residence meant he was most likely to shape the way of life in the colliery townships, while his comparative wealth and success gave him a status that could put him on the same footing as the bourgeoisie.

Whether or not the N.C.D. was unique in late nineteenth century N.S.W. in being a close knit society is hard to tell. The social structure and everyday life of rural areas has received little attention in most local and regional history. We do not know if there was a similar intermarriage in agricultural areas, or if these populations were more or less mobile than that of the N.C.D. Nothing has been written about how such groups coped with problems of sickness, old age, an adequate standard of living and provision

of utilities during this period. This is not to say that these problems have not been treated at all. The point is that how specific areas coped with them and the consequences for local society have not been thought worthy of examination. Until studies such as this are carried out for other parts of N.S.W. in the late nineteenth century, it will be impossible to say categorically whether the N.C.D. was more of a community than other areas and what specific factors were behind the emergence of such a society. The following are put forward tentatively as important influences.

The origins of many of those who came to the colliery townships were in the industrial areas of north eastern England and Scotland. This meant more importance was attached to trade unions, cooperatives and friendly societies than in the rest of the colony. That many came from the coalmining areas of England, Scotland and Wales had an important influence on the forms of leisure in the district which distinguished it from popular culture in general in Australia. The strength of nonconformity in Scotland, Wales, Northumberland and Durham made for a population which stood out in the rest of N.S.W. because of its adherence to these forms of religion.

Coalmining also contributed to the development of a closeknit society. The heavy, dirty work meant that early marriage was a decided advantage. Its dangers, which led to so much sickness and disability, made the development of a well run system of social welfare essential. The need for a high level of technical competence in the industry meant there were good reasons for stressing it in Mechanics Institutes. Since coal is usually discovered in distinct geographical areas, this leads, in hitherto unsettled districts, to the growth of large regions dominated by a single industry. This in turn produces a population that is homogeneous in both occupations and income. This had important implications for society in the N.C.D. The lack of alternatives to employment in the mines made the family a strong economic unit, bound to the male breadwinner. The absence of tertiary industry made for great stability among the working-class and downward mobility of the bourgeoisie. That most of the workforce

were miners meant it was easier for trade unionism to spread and be accepted than in more industrially and occupationally diverse areas. The early emphasis on class in political demands clearly stems from the predominance of one class in the area. Since most were manual workers, the small group of Irish Catholics could not be so easily singled out for sectarian discrimination. Without the generally low income, which made it difficult to maintain a clergyman and produced different attitudes to society, the problems which separated church goers in the N.C.D. from their brothers in the same denomination in the rest of the colony would never have emerged. Nor would the Lay Methodist church have been founded. The tendency for mines to be sunk and worked out over a continuous area meant that although people moved all over it looking for work, if they could get a job in coalmining they were unlikely to move out of the district. This caused the extraordinary stability of the district as a whole.

Although the N.C.D. was a large area, the actual colliery townships were small. This meant it was easy to coordinate the various institutions and practices devoted to the needs of inhabitants. The chances of overlap in the social welfare system were small. It was easy for those involved in associations devoted to the performing arts to be aware of the needs of others in the town. The residential segregation which facilitated sectarianism in suburban Sydney simply could not exist.

Besides factors unique to the district which helped make it a close-knit society, there were features peculiar to the age. The absence of state involvement in social welfare meant there was no alternative but to rely on the family or provide a local system of aid for those who, because of sickness, old age, lack of employment, or a combination of these, had no income. The revolution in mass entertainment had only just begun. As a result, amusement was still a matter for local initiative and cooperation. These aspects of life in the nineteenth century must have had an effect in other areas of N.S.W. and Australia. Whether they could have produced as close knit a society as developed in the N.C.D. in an urban or farming area, where the special circumstances of distinctive cultural origins or being a coalfield did not exist, remains to be seen.

The transitional character of many aspects of society in the N.C.D. by the end of the nineteenth century poses interesting questions about the social character of the colliery townships on the Greta seam in the early twentieth century. The Maitland mining district was populated largely by people from the Newcastle mining towns. The coal companies, such as J. and A. Brown, also established themselves in the area. The Greta seam, rather than the old colliery townships, which began to lose their identity with the decline of the pits and rise of alternative employment, seems the most fruitful area in which to look at how this society developed. It would be interesting to see if the new social status system, which was half established by the 1890s, became fully accepted in the twentieth century and what its implications were for relations between the union and colliery management. It would be interesting to see how events in the twentieth century changed the system and the implications of this for society in the colliery townships. The growing popularity of the labour party in the twentieth century, the inevitable death of the old protectionists and the removal of the federal issue from political debate suggest that politics may well have become a unifying factor once again. There is evidence that this was already happening in the 1901 general election. In that year David Watkins, M.L.A. for Wallsend, entered federal parliament. John Estell, who had been appointed to the Legislative Council two years before, contested the electorate. He argued that since the fiscal issue had now been taken over by the federal government, there was nothing to stop everyone voting labour. His victory at the polls was a landslide¹. At the same time, there were signs of the emergence of another struggle. The socialist party opposed Estell's candidature. Growing commitment to socialist solutions among miners in the twentieth century may well have brought forth further conflicts.

Many of the factors contributing to the development of a close knit society in the N.C.D. in the late nineteenth century were a function of the period. The twentieth century saw technological changes and social reforms which may well have changed the way of life and sense of unity in the colliery townships.

1. *N.M.H.*, 6 June 1901.

The coming of the motor car enabled people to spend more of their leisure away from home. Radio and films meant there was less need for recreation which involved active participation with others. This must have affected the role of leisure pursuits in bringing people together. Indeed, the Rev. Allan Walker noted that in Cessnock during the second world war there was a mass exodus of people to Lake Macquarie at weekends and holidays which made Cessnock just a place to work in, not to play in².

The twentieth century also ushered in many of the social reforms for which the Newcastle colliery townships had agitated, such as accident compensation and the old age pension. There was also an increase in the number of scholarships and high schools in N.S.W. The entrance of the state into social security may well have made considerable inroads into the system of social welfare which had been established. If so, it would have most likely affected the relationship between the social welfare system and leisure associations. Old age pensions would also have affected family relations. There would have been less need for parents to depend on their children. On the other hand, the old age pension may have allowed many to live with their children instead of going into an asylum. Increased educational opportunity may have increased social mobility and the generation gap between fathers and sons. Female suffrage gave women the chance to participate in politics.

For all the changes in the twentieth century that must have influenced society on the Maitland coalfields, or Greta seam, the unity of miners at this time is part of conventional wisdom. Discussing "the miners' heritage" as a background to the 1949 coal strike, Deering speaks of the total environment of the coalminers who lived and worked in a separate area, shared a history of struggle and conflict and for whom there was little social mobility³. He does not back up these contentions with any analysis. Whether or not the coalfields in the first half of the twentieth century were more or

2. A. Walker, *Coaltown, a social study of Cessnock* (Melbourne, 1945), pp. 92, 100, 122.

3. P. Deering (ed.), *Labour in conflict, the 1949 coal strike* (Canberra, 1978), p. 13.

less closely knit than those of the late nineteenth century remains to be seen. There can be no doubt, given the social changes occurring in the late nineteenth century and the technological and social reforms of the twentieth, that a different combination of factors contributed to the development of any community.

APPENDIX I

Marriage Register Survey

Marriage registers are a rich source of social information. In the absence of census enumerators' books or detailed regional statistics they provide useful information on ethnicity, age at marriage, occupational structure, religious affiliation and the relationships between these variables. In the absence of birth, marriage and death certificates, they are the only guide to social mobility.

Throughout the period covered by this study, the state required ministers of religion to fill out marriage certificate forms, one copy of which was forwarded to the registrar general and the other retained by the church. These certificates required clergymen to state the denomination in the rites of which the marriage took place, the birthplace, age, occupation and residence of the bride and groom and the occupations of their fathers. The certificates had to be signed by the couple either with a signature or mark and, naturally, carried the date of the marriage. For the most part clergymen filled in the details diligently and correctly. Occasionally, however, they showed a lack of understanding of what was required. One gave as the occupation of a bride 'miners' daughter', while the minister of St. John's Church of England, Newcastle, interpreted the age question to mean whether the parties were above or below the legal age for marriage. Unfortunately he stayed at this church, which serviced Morewether, for about 25 years. This clergyman also showed a marked lack of concern for occupations. Occasionally ignorance on the part of the bride or groom of birth place or father's occupation led to the insertion of 'not known' in the appropriate space. For the most part, however, the registers were filled in properly.

The set of registers for the Newcastle district used in this survey is far from complete. While the Church of England and Roman Catholic registers are the property of the local parish and by canon law cannot be removed, nonconformist clergy could treat their registers

as personal property which they took with them all over the colony. This meant that the Baptist and Congregational registers, in the absence of a church policy of interest and conservation, were not available. If they are still in existence, they are in the hands of the registrar general, who refuses to make them available to serious scholars. In the case of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, some kept parish registers, although individual ministers also carried around their own books. The appreciation of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of these records has led to their collection and conservation. Even so, 'individual' registers had often been commandeered by the registrar general's department and were not made available. As a result, the number of marriages for each of the denominations for which registers were available: Church of England, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, Lay Methodist, United Free Methodist and Presbyterian, was highly variable.

Table A1.1 shows that the number of marriages was heavily weighted to the last two decades of the century and the various

Table A1.1

Marriages included in marriage register survey: denomination
and decade

Decade	Total	C/E	R.C.	Denomination				
				Pbtyn.	Wes.	P.M.	UFM	L.M.
1860-70	60	60						
1871-80	178	69	18	50	35		6	
1881-90	507	175	43	106	80	38	59	6
1891-1900	676	283		49	105	116	30	93
	1421	587	61	205	220	154	95	99

Source: Marriage registers for the Newcastle district. For full list see bibliography.

denominations were not represented precisely in accordance with their strength in the population. The absence of vital statistics for the towns of the N.C.D. before 1875 makes it impossible to say what proportion of marriages in the first two decades of our period were included in the survey. The number of marriages recorded in the colliery townships in the 1880s and 1890s suggests the marriage register survey covers about a third of them (table A1.2).

Table A1.2

Marriages recorded in the Newcastle colliery townships in the 1880s and the 1890s: civil registers and the surviving church registers

Decade	Marriages	
	Registrar General	Marriage registers
1880-90	1560	507
1891-1900	1990	676

Sources: *N.S.W.S.R.* (vital statistics vol.), 1881-1900.
Marriage register survey, 1881-1900.

Table A1.3 shows Anglicans, United Free Methodists, Presbyterians, Wesleyans and Lay Methodists were overrepresented and Primitives and Roman Catholics underrepresented. The small number of marriages for the Roman Catholic church was not because registers did not exist, but because the ones the church insisted on preserving were not those required by the state. Each parish kept a register in Latin with a different format from those issued by the state. They said nothing of age, occupation or nationality. They did give the residence of both parties and whether it was a mixed marriage or not. The 153 marriages recorded in this fashion, of which 13 were in the 1870s, 41 in the 1880s and 99 in the 1890s, had to be coded differently. Because of the relatively small amount of information they contained, they were not computerized. Their details on the residence of spouses was added by hand to this section of the computer analysis.

Table A1.3Strength of the main denominations in the N.C.D. in the marriage register survey and the 1891 census

Denomination	Distribution (%)	
	Marriage Register	1891 Census
Anglican	41	31
Roman Catholic	4	10
Presbyterian	14	13
Wesleyan	16	8
Primitive Meth.	11	19
United Free Meth.	7	1
Lay Meth.	7	3
Congregational	0	3
Baptist	0	4
Other	0	8

Sources: Marriage register survey
Census of N.S.W., 1891.

If the marriage registers were to be used to draw conclusions regarding the distribution of religious adherence they would be utterly useless. Fortunately there is census material on this matter. Many of the questions asked of the material did not involve religion as a variable. Others looked at factors like class and birthplace within one denomination. Where religion and other variables went together, bias was likely. For instance, when looking at birthplace within England, the underrepresentation of the Primitives probably led to the underestimation of the strength of Geordies in the population. The overrepresentation of the Presbyterian church probably led to exaggeration of the number of Scots in the colliery townships. In most other cases where religion was tested as a variable, such as marriage between towns, age at marriage and social mobility, it seemed to have a negligible influence.

Therefore, despite the bias of the available registers to certain denominations, it is unlikely that they distorted the answers to most questions asked. Where questions of religious or ethnic distribution

were asked of the whole of the data, the likely effect of the overrepresentation of some and underrepresentation of other denominations included in the survey must be borne in mind.

APPENDIX II

The electoral roll survey

1. Feasibility

Although late nineteenth century N.S.W. does not have the census enumerators' books available in places like England and Canada, which lend themselves to studies of physical mobility, there is an alternative in its electoral rolls. From 1856 all adult males in N.S.W. were eligible to vote, provided they owned or leased land, or had lived in an electorate for six months. To 1893 electors were listed in terms of qualification and residence. The latter indicated where the elector lived. Qualification referred to his entitlement to vote by virtue of being a freeholder, leaseholder, householder or resident in the electoral district. Therefore, these rolls show land ownership and security of tenure, as well as residence. In 1893 a new electoral act abolished property qualification and the six months residence provision for those who did not own property. Occupations were included on the roll.

Before 1894 the residence qualification caused considerable difficulty for seamen and shearers. However, in the colliery townships, where work was not itinerant or seasonal, it did not restrict abnormally the number of persons who were entitled to register. In chapter nine we presented evidence to suggest that most adult male residents in the N.C.D. registered to vote. This and the absence of seasonal work in the area suggests any study of mobility using electoral rolls in the N.C.D. should provide an accurate indication of population movements. Nevertheless, there are certain problems with electoral rolls which could render any such study inaccurate. First, they are notorious for being out of date. The dead and those who have left the district often continue to appear long after their departure. Within the same electorate, many omit to notify any change of address or occupation. Second, there is the problem of two people with the same name. If there are numerous electors called John Smith or David Jones it is

virtually impossible to work out which one changed residence, or was removed from the roll for other reasons.

Checks on the electoral rolls using the list of miners killed in accidents, as recorded by the N.S.W. department of Mines, the terms of office of headmasters, as recorded in local school histories, and the names of those dying from natural causes or leaving the district, which appeared in newspapers, showed that before 1890 they were extraordinarily accurate. 94 per cent of those killed in mining accidents and all those dying of natural causes or known to have left the district were taken off the rolls the year after death or departure (table A2.1). Considerable attention was paid to keeping other details recorded on the rolls up to date. Detailed examination of changes in the roll for persons who stayed in the electorate for two consecutive years showed that if a man with a leasehold bought land, his qualification was changed to freehold, even though it made no difference to his eligibility to vote. When a man changed the town where he lived, even though it was in the same electorate, residence was altered. If a man left the electorate, but kept property there, his residence was changed.

Table A2.1

Removal of those known to have died or left one of the Newcastle
colliery townships within one year of the event

Cause for removal	To 1890		1891-1900	
	No.	Removed (%)	No.	Removed (%)
Mining fatality	47	94	16	56
Death by natural causes	5	100	10	90
Left town	12	100	16	31
All causes	64	95	42	55

Sources: *M.A.*, 1875. *N.M.H.*, 1881, 1891, 1900. *W&PSun*, 1886, 1891.
Dept. Mines, *op. cit.*, 1873, 1874, 1880-1900. 'Schools
Files', 1876-1900.

There was a sharp deterioration in the accuracy of the rolls in the 1890s. Only 58 per cent of those killed in mining accidents and 90 per cent of those dying of natural causes were stuck off the roll after one year. The biggest gap was in those leaving the district. Whereas all were off the rolls the year after removal before the 1890s, less than a third were off a year after they had left in the 1890s (table A2.1). Many stayed on for up to five years.

The failure to keep the rolls accurate in the 1890s meant that, prior to drawing up commonwealth electorates in 1900, there had to be a major revision of the rolls. When the police first looked through the roll, they found that up to 30 per cent of names belonged to persons ineligible to vote in the electorates for which their names appeared. The average for the electorates covering the N.C.D. was 16 per cent. These figures were very much a function of the population size of an electorate. Figures were lowest for the city where police knew individuals less well and highest in the least populous country areas, where the police knew everyone. Realization that these figures did not represent the true state of affairs led to a house-to-house survey by police. This revealed that 40 per cent, not 30 per cent, were ineligible. The average for the electorates covering the N.C.D. was nearly 35 per cent, over twice the number the police thought ineligible at a first glance¹.

Therefore, the electoral rolls of the 1890s in general had to be rejected as a reliable basis for the study of mobility. There were individual rolls, however, that were accurate. The new electoral act of 1893 abolished the residence qualification and plural voting entitlement for freeholders. Electoral districts were changed and the new rolls gave occupation and residence, instead of qualification and residence. Since no failures to strike

1. *V&FLA*, 1900, vol. 1, pp. 817-818, vol. 2, p. 235.

people off the rolls carried over from 1893 to 1894, we may assume that the rolls were revised fully then. They were fully revised again in 1900 before drawing up the commonwealth electorates. So, even though the intervening years are unreliable, the 1894 and 1900-01 rolls can be used safely for the last decade of the period.

Establishment of which rolls are accurate may make them a more reliable source for a study of physical mobility. It may not, however, make the study more feasible. Despite the care taken to keep rolls up to date, this is to no avail among people of the same surname and given name. Seeming changes in qualification and residence could indicate the departure of one Charles Jones and the arrival of another. The survival of Peter Williams in the same town for 15 years could hide the constant arrival and departure of different individuals of the same name.

It was possible to be fairly sure qualifications and residence rather than individuals were changing because of the way the rolls were made up. There was no alphabetical order among people of the same surname because the names of new electors were simply added on at the bottom, leaving the older electors in the same order, except for those who had died or left, who were taken out. If old electors changed their residence or property qualification, their position on the roll did not change. Thus it was certain that any changes next to electors on the list the year before referred to them rather than new electors.

The whole exercise of checking names showed there were certain ways of avoiding confusion of people with the same name in a study of mobility. Take for instance the case of Robert Wilson, who died at the Minmi pit in 1883. That year a Robert Wilson had a leasehold at Minmi. He was not on the 1884 roll, but there was a Robert Wilson on the commonage. One could be certain they were different people and that the Robert Wilson at Minmi in 1883 was the one killed by comparing the 1883 and 1884 lists. They showed Robert Wilson of the commonage was also on the 1883 roll. So, there were two different people. The way electoral rolls were made up was also

important in solving such problems. In 1883, a John Harris died at the A.A.Co's pit at Hamilton. That year a John Harris lived at Merewether, where many A.A.Co. miners lived. In 1884 his name was not in its customary position, but on the end of the list was a John Harris living at Jesmond, between Lambton and Wallsend. If John Harris of Burwood was not the deceased, he would have kept his old position on the roll if he had moved to Jesmond. Thus the two John Harris were different people. The implications of these two examples for a mobility study are that it is possible to distinguish two people of the same name of whom one dies, leaves the electorate, or changes his residence within the electorate, and one who is new to the area. After the new electoral act of 1893 the inclusion of occupation made it much easier to be sure one was tracing the same individual.

2. Outline of procedure

It was decided to draw three samples of electors in 1875, 1881 and 1894, and trace their movements, that is: if they stayed in the same town, moved to another colliery township, moved to another part of Newcastle, or left the Newcastle area. That the rolls included details of land ownership and occupation meant that these variables could be correlated with mobility. The unreliability of rolls after 1890 meant the 1875 and 1881 samples had to stop in that year. The 1894 sample could only be compared with the 1900-1 roll. Later rather than earlier years of the period were chosen on the assumption that it would take some time for the population of the new area to settle down. 1875 was chosen as the earliest year from which to draw a sample because by that time other sources suggested a stable social structure and way of life was developing. 1881 was chosen for the second sample because it was about a decade away from 1890 and so the sample could be traced over a reasonably long time span. There were other reasons for choosing these years. As the peak year for wages, 1875 typifies the good years of the 1870s. 1881 heralded a decade of deteriorating industrial relations, shifting pit location and lower wages. For the 1890s, 1894 and 1900-1 were the only rolls which were worth examining. Another

sample could possibly have been drawn for 1870-71, but there were severe financial limitations on the project.

Samples at the 95.5 confidence coefficient were drawn from the electorates covering the colliery townships in this study. Absentee electors and residents of towns in the electorate, but not in the study, were excluded. Because electors in the colliery townships were spread over several electorates, a preliminary count of them had to be made. Proportions of the sample were allocated to the different electorates according to their strength in the total number of colliery township electors. Within electorates letters of the alphabet were allocated a quota for the sample in accordance with their strength on the roll. Thus more sampled electors had names starting with B, C, D, and M than Q, U, Y and Z. This was done to avoid any bias that might have crept in because of the relationship between certain letters of the alphabet and names of a certain ethnic origin. For instance, if a small number of persons with surnames starting with M or O were drawn the Scots or Irish element in the sample might have been understated. If D or E or J was overrepresented, the proportion of Welsh would also be overrepresented. This is not to argue that there were ethnic differences in mobility. However, a possible relationship between occupation and mobility was suspected. If ethnicity and occupation were strongly related, this might influence the results. The sample was drawn using a table of random numbers and the electoral roll numbers. The details of each elector were only recorded for three year intervals, even though every year following the sample had to be checked because of the importance of the way electors were listed for their accurate identification. Only one elector, in the 1875 sample, could not be traced with certainty. This was because one of the rolls in the late 1870s was missing.

3. Correction for mortality

In interpreting the results of the survey allowance had to be made for the numbers who could have been expected to die. It is customary in studies such as this to estimate survivors by using the age distribution of the adult population and applying life

expectancy tables to it. In late nineteenth century N.S.W. the latter did not exist. The nearest to an age and sex specific death rate for the population in question was the adult male death rate for N.S.W. at this time. For the 1875 and 1881 samples the death rates for each three year interval used were averaged and applied to the sample. For the 1894-1900 sample the rates for the six years in question were averaged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Sources

1. Church papers

Church of England, 'Marriage Registers'. NUA. Parishes of
Wallsend, 1868-1900.

Hamilton, 1882-1900.

Lambton, 1885-1895.

Merewether, 1889-1900.

Hexham, 1860-1871.

Newcastle (Christchurch), 1860-1900.

Newcastle (St. John's), 1870-1900.

N.S.W. Baptist Association, 'Minutes', 1868-1900 (4 vols.).

Baptist Historical Society. Baptist Theological College,
Eastwood, N.S.W.

Methodist Church. Located in Uniting Church Records Society
library, Clarence St. Sydney, unless stated otherwise.

Marriage registers for the following circuits

a) Wesleyan

Wallsend, 1872-1900.

Lambton, 1895-1897.

Newcastle, 1878-1900.

b) Primitive Methodist

Merewether, 1886-1897 (N.S.W.A.A.), 1894-1897.

Wallsend, 1889-1892, 1898-1900. N.S.W.A.A.

Newcastle, 1893-1894. N.S.W.A.A.

c) Lay Methodist

Adamstown, 1890-1896.

New Lambton, 1893-1898.

d) United Free Methodist

Merewether, 1878-1900.

Wallsend, 1887-1889.

Minutes, accounts, etc.

Hamilton Wesleyan church, 'Trustees minute book', 1880-1901 (2 vols.).

Wallsend Wesleyan church, 'Trustees minute book', 1892-1900.

Wallsend parsonage.

Wallsend and Waratah Wesleyan circuit, 'Minutes of quarterly meetings', 1899-1901. Wallsend parsonage.

Lambton Wesleyan church, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 1894-1900.

'Register of trustees of Plattsburg Primitive Methodist and Wallsend Wesleyan Methodist churches'. Wallsend parsonage.

Burwood P.M. circuit, 'Minute book', 1886-1900.

Burwood P.M. church, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 1889-1900.

Newcastle P.M. circuit, 'Minutes of quarterly meetings', 1858-1879. M.L.

Adamstown P.M. church, 'Trustees minute book', 1889-1900 (2 vols.).

_____, 'Financial book', 1888-1901.

_____, 'Sunday school teachers minutes', 1891-1896.

_____, 'Sunday school teachers register', 1881-1891 (2 vols.).

Lambton P.M. church, 'Sunday school teachers register', 1886-1900.

_____, 'Seat rent book', 1872-3, 1889, 1890.

Junction Lay Meth. church, 'Minute book', 1894-1900.

Burwood UFM church, 'Minute book', 1879-1900.

_____, 'Financial book', 1878-1902.

Minmi UFM church, 'Treasurer's book', 1882-1892. Wallsend parsonage.

_____, 'Account book', 1890-1900. Wallsend parsonage.

Presbyterian Church. Located in Ferguson Memorial Library, Presbyterian church offices, Margaret St. Sydney, unless stated otherwise.

Marriage registers for the following charges:

Wallsend, 1863-1885.

Hamilton, 1891-1894.

Newcastle, 1871-1894.

Presbytery of the Hunter, 'Minute book', 1865-1900 (2 vols.).

Hamilton Presbyterian church, 'Minutes of the committee of management', 1886-1900 (3 vols.). Scots Kirk, Hamilton.

_____, 'Minutes of Kirk session', 1883-1896. Scots Kirk, Hamilton.

_____, 'Sunday school teachers minute book', 1839-97. Scots Kirk, Hamilton.

Roman Catholic Church, 'Marriage registers'.

a) Civil registers (in English)

Lambton, 1875-1890. Lambton presbytery, Dixon St., Lambton.

b) Church registers (in Latin)

Newcastle, 1875-1900. Newcastle presbytery, 33 Church St., Newcastle.

Lambton, 1875-1900. Lambton presbytery.

Hamilton, 1889-1900. Hamilton presbytery, 827 Hunter St., Newcastle West.

2. Business Records

Newcastle Coalmining Co. At ANUA.

'Colliery managers' out-letters', 1876-1893 (2 vols.).

'Pay sheets', 1881-1900.

Newcastle and Northumberland Permanent Land, Building and Investment Society, 'Applications for advances of money', 1889-1900. NUA.

Scottish Australian Mining Co. Superintendent's/Manager's letter books', 1859-1900 (6 vols.). Fisher Library rare book collection.

Wickham and Bullock Island Coal Co., 'Pay sheets', 1889-1899. N.S.W.A.A. 2/2390-2397.

Australian Agricultural Co. At ANUA.

a) 'Coal Papers'.

Letters from J.B. Winship, Feb. 1861-Mar. 1876 (1/59).

Colliery memoranda, 1860-1900 (1/61).

Colliery labour papers, 1855-1897 (1/62).

b) Pay and store records.

'Pay sheets', 1870-1900 (12 vols.).

'Pay abstracts' (1/101).

'Colliery abstract sheets' (1/102).

Newcastle Building and Investment Co. (also known as County Building and Investment Society), 'Loan applications', 1886-1900. NPLA A639-A677.

3. Municipalities

'Merewether assessment book', 1897. NPLA.

Rate books for municipalities of Hamilton, 1871-1900, Adamstown, 1887-1900. In possession of the Newcastle City Council.

4. Government

Located in N.S.W.A.A. unless stated otherwise.

a) Colonial Secretary

Report on the Lambton coal disturbances 'Special bundles' (4/817.1).

Municipality of Merewether, proposed incorporation 1885, 'Special bundles' (4/858.1).

b) Education

Board of National Education, 'Miscellaneous letters received', 1848-1866 (1/381-443).

Council of Education, 'Miscellaneous letters received', 1867-1875 (1/743-1061).

Department of education, 'Schools files', 1877-1901 (P. 1710-2124). Boxes are arranged by year and within year according to school.

_____, 'Correspondence of the department of technical education', 1890-1899 (P. 1190, 1194, 1197).

_____, 'Correspondence with Schools of Arts and Mechanics Institutes', 1880-1900 (P. 3680-3689).

c) Registrar of Friendly Societies

'Entry books'. 1839-1914. 7/6364-89.

5. Other

Thomas Croudace, 'Letterbooks', 1864-1891. 4 vols. NPLA.

'Minutes of the Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association of the Hunter River District', 1874-1880. ANUA E165/28.

'Notebook kept by John Cogan, (n.d.). In the possession (1977) of Mrs. Bea Hodge, 14 Cram St. Merewether.

R. Ford, 'Reminiscences of Mr. Richard Ford, New Lambton, 1971' Newcastle, 1971. MS in NPL local history room pamphlet box.

'Notebook kept by Charles Noble' (n.d.). In the possession (1977) of Mrs. Gwen Hunter, 37 Watson St. New Lambton.

'Interview with Miss Elsie Patrick', 41 Glebe Rd. Junction, 6 Feb. 1977.

Official Papers

1. Churches

- Anglican diocese of Newcastle, *Synod reports*, 1870-1900. M.L.
 Congregational Union of N.S.W., *Yearbook*, 1870-1900. UCRS.
 Methodist church of N.S.W., *Minutes of Conference*, 1860-1900. M.L.
 Australasian Wesleyan Methodist church, *Minutes of General Conference*, 1894. M.L.
Laws of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist church. Melbourne, 1885. M.L.
Report of the Federal Council for Methodist Union. Sydney, 1896. M.L.
Australian Primitive Methodist yearbook. Adelaide, 1890. M.L.
 Presbyterian church of N.S.W., *Yearbook*, 1865-1900. FML.

2. Parliament

- 'Progress report of the select committee on employment of children', *V&PLA*, 1875-6 v. 6.
 'Progress report of the select committee on assisted immigration', *V&PLA*, 1879-80 v. 5.
 'Petitions against the electoral bill separating Hamilton and Minmi from the electorate of Northumberland', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1879-80 pt. 2.
 'Report of the royal commission into friendly societies', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1883 pt. 2.
 'Report of the accident at Ferndale colliery', *V&PLA*, 1885-6.
 'Report of the royal commission on the coal mines regulation bill', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1896 pt. 2.
 'Report of the royal commission on public charities', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1898(2) pt. 1.
 'Royal Commission on subsidized benevolent institutions', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1899(2) pt. 1 (report), pt. 2 (minutes of evidence).
 Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Report on the proposal for sewerage works for Newcastle and suburbs', *Jnl. L.C.*, 1901 pt. 3.
 Parliamentary standing committee on public works, 'Inquiry into proposed tramway from Wallsend to West Wallsend', *P.P.*, 1904(3) v.2.

Royal Commission into the decline of the birth rate and infant mortality in N.S.W. 2 vols. Sydney, 1904. M.L.

'Royal Commission into Saturday half holiday', *P.P.*, 1909(5).
N.S.W. parliamentary debates, 1889-1900.

3. Government departments

Education.

Report of the Council of Education on the condition of public schools in N.S.W., 1867-1869. M.L.

Report of the Council of Education on the condition of certified denominational schools in N.S.W., 1869-1879. M.L.

Report of the minister for public instruction, 1881-1900. M.L.

'Report of the immigration agent', 1876-1887, *V&PLA*, 1878-9-1887.

Department of mines, *Annual reports*, 1874, 1875, 1881-1900. M.L.

Government Statistician.

Census of N.S.W., 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901.

T.A. Coghlan, *Wealth and progress of N.S.W.*, 1887-1900.

N.S.W. statistical register, 1860-1900.

N.S.W. statistical register (vital statistics), 1874-1900.

Held by Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics Library,
George St. Sydney.

Department of lands, maps of counties and parishes. N.S.W.A.A.

N.S.W. government gazette, 1871-1900. M.L.

'Report of registrar of friendly societies', *Jnl.L.C.*, 1898(2)
pt. 1.

N.S.W. electoral roll, 1860-1901. N.S.W.P.L.

Hunter river combined sanitary district, *Reports of the medical officer of health*, 1898-1900. N.S.W. Health Commission library.

4. Friendly Societies

Independent Order of Oddfellows of N.S.W., grand lodge, *Journal of proceedings*, 1884, 1887, 1889. M.L.

Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, *Report and proceedings of the grand annual moveable conference*, 1880, 1882-1900. M.L.

Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of N.S.W., *Minutes and Proceedings*, 1874-1887. In society's offices, Elizabeth St. Sydney.

Wallsend Yearly Fund, *Rules for the guidance of members*, 1879. M.L.

5. Other

Rules of the Amalgamated Miners' Association, no. 2 colonial district of N.S.W., 1887. NPL.

Newspapers and Periodicals

- Australian radical*, 1887-1890 (before 1888 *The radical*). M.L.
- Australian Witness*, 1873-1879. FML.
- Christian advocate and Wesleyan record*, 1869-1900. UCRS.
- Independent*, 1875-1902. UCRS.
- The miner's advocate and Northumberland recorder*, 1874-6. N.S.W.P.L.
- Newcastle chronicle*, 1861, 1862, 1870, 1871. N.S.W.P.L.
- Newcastle morning herald and miner's advocate*, 1876-1900. N.S.W.P.L.
- Northern light*, 1893. UCRS.
- N.S.W. Baptist*, 1887-1900. Baptist theological college, Herring Rd. Eastwood, N.S.W.
- People and the collectivist*, 1897-1900 (1897 - Ap. 1898 known as *Socialist journal of the northern people*). M.L.
- The Presbyterian*, 1897-1888. FML.
- Presbyterian record*, 1890. Scots Kirk, Hamilton.
- Primitive Methodist*, 1899. UCRS.
- Rechabite and temperance magazine*, 1897-1900. Rechabite House, 85 Campbell St. Surrey Hills, N.S.W.
- Wallsend and Plattsburg Sun*, 1886, 1891-95. NPL.
- Weekly Advocate*, 1888. UCRS.

Contemporary Works

- J. Inglis, *Our Australian cousins*. London, 1880. M.L.
- Edwards and Allen (surveyors), *Map of coal properties in the Newcastle district*, 1890. M.L.
- T.S. Parrot, *Map of country around Newcastle*, 1892-3. M.L.

Modern Works1. Books

- Adamstown Methodist church, *Jubilee souvenir, 1874-1929*. Newcastle, 1924. UCRS.
- R. Altick, *The English common reader, a social history of the mass reading public*. Chicago, 1957.
- M. Anderson, *Family structure in nineteenth century Lancashire*. Cambridge, 1971.
- F.W. Bateson (ed), *The Cambridge bibliography of English literature*, v. 3, 1800-1900. Cambridge, 1940.
- A. Baker, *A guide to the best fiction in English literature*. London, 1913.
- D.F. Branagan, *Geology and coalmining in the Hunter Valley, 1791-1961*. Newcastle, 1972.
- T. Brennan, E.W. Cooney, H. Pollins, *Social change in south west Wales*. London, 1954.
- A. Briggs, *Mass entertainment, the origins of a modern industry*. Adelaide, 1960.
- G.D.H. Cole, *A century of cooperation*. Manchester, 1944.
- M.T. Daly, *The growth of Newcastle and its suburbs*. Newcastle, 1966.
- N. Dennis, C. Slaughter, F. Henriques, *Coal is our life, an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*. London, 1969.
- J. Dixon, *A history of Merewether*. Newcastle, 1935.
- D.M. Downes, B.P. Davies, M.E. David, P. Stone, *Gambling, work and leisure: a study across three areas*. London, 1976.
- R. Durant, *Watling, a survey of social life on a new housing estate*. London, 1959.
- R. Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*. Pelican, 1966.
- R. Fynes, *The miners of Northumberland and Durham, a history of their social and political progress*. 2nd ed. London, 1923.
- J.M. Freeland, *The Australian pub*. Melbourne, 1966.
- R. Gollan, *The coalminers of N.S.W., a history of the Union, 1860-1960*. Melbourne, 1963.

J.H.P.H. Gosden, *Self help, voluntary associations in the nineteenth century*. London, 1953.

—————, *The friendly societies in England, 1815-1875*. Manchester, 1961.

J. Gusfield, *Community, a critical response*. Oxford, 1975.

B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians, the temperance question in England, 1815-1872*. England, 1970.

R. Hoggart, *The uses of literacy*. Pelican, 1957.

K.S. Inglis, *The churches and the working classes in Victorian England*. London, 1963.

T.D. Jacques and G.R. Pavia (eds), *Sport in Australia, selected readings in physical activity*. Sydney, 1976.

Lambton Baptist church, *Centenary souvenir*. Newcastle, 1968. NPL.

R. Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s*. Brisbane, 1973.

P. Loveday and A.W. Martin, *Parliament, factions and parties, the first thirty years of responsible government in N.S.W., 1856-1889*. Melbourne, 1966.

P.F. McDonald, *Marriage in Australia*. Canberra, 1974.

R.W. Malcolmson, *Popular recreations in English society 1750-1850*. Cambridge, 1973.

P.H. Mann, *An approach to urban sociology*. London, 1965.

B. Mansfield, *Australian democrat, the career of E.W. O'Sullivan, 1846-1910*. Sydney, 1965.

A.W. Martin, and P. Wardle, *Members of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W., 1856-1900*. Canberra, 1959.

R. Moore, *Pitmen and politics, the effect of Methodism in a Durham mining community*. Cambridge, 1974.

J.H. Morris, and L.J. Williams, *The south Wales coal industry, 1841-1875*. Cardiff, 1958.

S. Morrison, *The English newspaper*. Cambridge, 1932.

B. Nairn, *Civilizing capitalism, the labour movement in N.S.W., 1870-1900*. Canberra, 1973.

R. Page-Arnot, *A history of the Scottish miners from the earliest times*. London, 1955.

J. Rickard, *Class and politics, N.S.W., Victoria and the early Commonwealth, 1890-1910*. Melbourne, 1977.

A. Seymour, *The one day of the year*. London, 1962.

M. Stacey, *Tradition and change, a study of Banbury*. London, 1960.

- D. Storey, *In celebration, a play in two acts*. London, 1959.
- W.J. Townsend, *A new history of Methodism*. London, 1907.
- A. Walker, *Coaltown, a social study of Cessnock*. Melbourne, 1945.
- Wallsend Baptist chapel, *Centenary souvenir*, Newcastle, 1963.
- Baptist theological college, Herring Rd., Eastwood. N.S.W.
- S. Webb, *The story of the Durham miners*. London, 1921.
- E. Welbourne, *The miners' unions of Northumberland and Durham*. Cambridge, 1921.
- E.R. Wickham, *Church and people in an industrial city*. London, 1957.
- P. Willmott and M. Young, *Family and kinship in East London*. London, 1957.
- , *Family and class in a London suburb*. London, 1960.
- A.T. Yarwood (ed), *Attitudes to non European migration*. Melbourne, 1968.
- F. Zweig, *Men in the pits*. London, 1948.

2. Articles

- E.J. Braggett, 'The development of state aided education in Newcastle, 1858-1880', *JRAHS*, v. 54 pt. 3 1968, pp. 299-320.
- E.G. Clancy, 'The struggle for Methodist union in N.S.W.', *AMHS, J&P*, Sept. 1975, pp. 1360-1378.
- M.T. Daly, 'The Development of the urban pattern of Newcastle', *AEHR*, v. 10 Sept. 1970, pp. 190-203.
- C. Greenberg, 'Work and leisure under industrialism', in E. Larrabee and R. Meyerson (eds), *Mass leisure*. Illinois, 1958, pp. 38-42.
- P.M. Hauser, 'Observations on the urban-folk and urban-rural dichotomies as forces in western ethnocentrism' in P.M. Hauser and L.F. Schore (eds), *The study of urbanization*. N.Y., 1965, pp. 504-515.
- G.A. Hillery jr., 'Definitions of community: areas of agreement', *Rural sociology*, v. 20 1955, pp. 111-123.
- , 'Villages, cities and total institutions', *American sociological review*, v. 28 1963, pp. 779-91.

- J. Hughes, 'The Lay Methodist church', *AMHS, J&P*, Oct. 1957, pp. 983-986.
- M. Katz, M. Doucet, M. Stern, 'Population persistence in a Canadian city', *Social science history*, v. 2 no. 2 1978, pp. 208-229.
- P. Loveday, 'New South Wales' in D.J. Murphy (ed), *Labour in politics, the state labor parties in Australia, 1880-1920*, Qld. 1975, pp. 13-126.
- W. Mandle, 'The games people played: cricket and football in England and Victoria in the late nineteenth century', *H.S.* v. 15 no. 60 1973, pp. 511-535.
- D. Martindale, 'The formation and destruction of community', in G.K. Zoltschan and W. Hirsch (eds), *Explorations in social change*. London, 1964, pp. 61-89.
- W.W. Phillips, 'Religious profession and practice in N.S.W. 1850-1901: the statistical evidence', *H.S.*, v. 15 Oct. 1972, pp. 378-400.
- S. Pollard, 'Nineteenth century cooperation: from community building to shopkeeping', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in labour history*. N.Y., 1967, pp. 74-112.
- F.B. Smith, 'Thomas Walker' in *Australian Dictionary of biography*, v. 6. Melbourne, 1976.
- J.W. Turner, 'An incident at Minmi', *Labour history*, no. 6 May 1964, pp. 3-9.
- , 'The development of the urban pattern of Newcastle: a critique', *AEHR*, v. 10 Sept. 1971, pp. 179-190.
- M.G.A. Wilson, 'The changing pattern of pit location on the N.S.W. coalfields', *A.A.A.G.*, v. 58 1968, pp. 78-90.
- M.J. Wise, 'Some notes on the growth of population in the Cannock Chase coalfield', *Geography*, v. 36 1951, pp. 235-248.
- G.H. Wood, 'Changes in average prices in N.S.W., 2828-1898', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, v. 64 no. 4 1901, pp. 661-76.

3. Unpublished Manuscripts and Theses

- R. Broome, 'Protestantism in N.S.W. society, 1900-14', Ph.D., University of Sydney, 1974.

- B. Dickey, 'Charity in N.S.W., 1850-1914'. Ph.D., ANU, 1968.
- K. Elford, 'Church, state, education and society: an analysis of eastern Australia society c. 1856-1872'. Ph.D., University of Sydney, 1972-3.
- L.M. Fish, 'The folk-lore of coalmining communities in northern England'. Ph.D., University of Indiana, 1974.
- F.A. Larcombe, 'The history and development of local government in N.S.W., 1857-1919'. M.Ec., University of Sydney, 1945.
- John Mackinolty, 'Married women's property acts', paper delivered to Women and Law Conference, Sydney, Sept., 1978.
- A. McLagan, 'History of the Newcastle district trade unions'. v.2. NPL.
- I.T. Matheson, 'In search of respectability, secular and religious influence on society in N.S.W., 1863-1900'. Ph.D., ANU, 1970-71.
- J. Roe, 'Old age policy with special reference to Australia', paper delivered to the Economic History Association Congress (section C.15), Edinburgh, 1978.
- J.W. Turner, 'Coalmining and manufacturing in Newcastle, 1797-1900'. Ph.D., University of Newcastle, 1977.
- C. Turney, 'The history of education in N.S.W., 1788-1900'. Ph.D. (3 vols), University of Sydney, 1962.
- M. Whiting, 'The education of adults in the Mechanics institutes of the colony of N.S.W., 1883-1901'. M.Ed., University of Sydney, 1973.