GROWING UP IN MELBOURNE

Transitions to Adulthood in the Late Nineteenth Century

By

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Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated

this thesis is my own work.



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For my parents, who deserve much more

Abstract

The late nineteenth century was a period of tumultuous social change throughout the English-speaking world. Nowhere was this more apparent then in Melbourne, the principal city in the British colony of Victoria. Melbourne experienced the best and the worst of the era. It enjoyed rapid economic growth and an unsurpassed level of general prosperity. However the depression in the following decade exposed and deepened cracks in the economic system which had been present for a long time.

This thesis uses a wide variety of aggregate and individual-level data to chart the life courses of young Melburnians as they made they way to adulthood. It examines their schooling. It measures their entry into the work force, and investigates the types of jobs that were available and the consequences of boys' and girls' employment decisions. It considers what factors were important in determining the ages at which men and women married.

In the early 1870s laws were passed to make elementary schooling compulsory and universal, yet children's schooling practices were impervious to such interventions. Enrolment and attendance stayed at their former levels and in many ways parents and children circumvented or disregarded the laws to suit their own needs.

Families were less successful in influencing the labour market. Mechanization and specialization went hand-in-hand with a deskilling of jobs. Youths of both sexes were forced into dead-end employment which taught them little or no skills and sentenced them to a life of low wages and frequent unemployment.

The median age at marriage changed very little during the period, after controlling for changes in the age structure of the unmarried population. Most women faced no attractive alternatives to marriage. Consequently there was a relatively narrow dispersion in the ages of brides and only slight differences amongst women from different social classes. Marriage for young men was a more accurate reflection of the their perceptions of their present and prospective economic circumstances. At the furthest extreme, migrants who were working in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs were disillusioned and married very late.

The unifying theme to the thesis is how the transitions to adulthood reflected the strains of late nineteenth-century family life and in particular the economic relationship

between parents and children. Chapter 5 investigates marital fertility decline which is another example of how families coped. Melbourne began the fertility transition in the 1880s. Two unique features were that young married women were at the forefront of that demographic change and a large contribution to lower fertility rates came from longer intervals between births. The ideological importance of separate public and private spheres and on maintaining 'respectability' are argued to be at the root of the fertility decline and on the progression from childhood to marriage in late nineteenth-century Melbourne.

Note on Citations

The abbreviations used are self-explanatory.

References to material in the reports and evidence of Royal Commissions and Boards of Inquiry include a shortened form of the name, a year and a page number. All of the material were published in the *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*. The year in the citation refers to the session of Parliament that the testimony or final reports were presented and corresponds to the volumes in which they appear. The page numbers are for that single item, not the entire volume.

Citations to material in annual reports of government Departments also appear in the *Victorian Parliamentary Papers* but the year given is the year of the report, not the year of publication. They were typically published the following year.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the last decades of the nineteenth century Australians invariably turned to metaphors of childhood and youth when they needed a national symbol or a rallying cry. Competing visions such as willowy goddesses and kangaroos never gained the same currency. Initially 'Young Australia' evoked the first large generation born in the colonies. The old colonists used the expression when they fretted about a future led by that pampered group. Young colonials of all political persuasions evoked it to set themselves apart from their tradition-bound parents. In time though 'Young Australia' was identified with the nation or a colony. Cartoons portrayed Australia as a little boy standing up to John Bull. The caricature reflected the popular self image of Australians (or Victorians or New South Welshmen) as still unformed and impetuous but with a promising future.

While exploring the symbolic meaning of 'Young Australia', social historian Ken Inglis (1981) paused to consider whether that potent image of childhood reflected an unusually high regard for young people in Australian families and in the wider society. Certainly there is abundant evidence, as Inglis observed, from overseas visitors and immigrants who professed good memories, colonial children were a 'horror':[1] indulged to the point of being spoiled, impudent and precocious. Well-bred governesses baulked at teaching them (Clarke 1985, pp. 56, 59, 84). Such comments should have had a familiar ring. A half-century earlier British travellers had passed the same judgement on American children and their lax parents (Rapson, 1973). Undoubtedly egalitarian and democratic fervour can infect observers in a new land as much as it can affect colonists' actual childrearing practices. Platitudes are difficult to disentangle from accurate observations of unique behaviour. The onlookers in America were convinced that the Revolutionary spirit was responsible for the chaotic domestic life. Australia's relations with the mother land were much warmer; colonists still consciously recreated an English society in the

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[1]That frequently quoted appellative is from Twopeny (1973[1883], 82). McLachlan (1950, 75-84) gives the best review of which I am aware of other similar nineteenth-century opinions. He found 'almost an *embarras de richesse* in evidence emphasising the "relaxed discipline observed in many households" and "the corresponding tendency in the children to treat parents irreverently"' (p. 7).

southern hemisphere. Nonetheless the colonial spirit and specifically the common boast that in Australia every man considered himself equal to every other man found its way into the discussions of child-parent relations. R. E. N. Twopeny, for example, claimed that the problem with the Australian boy was that

> he has breathed the free air of Australian independence too early to have much regard for the fifth commandment. ... His impudence verges on impertinence, and his total want of respect for everybody and everything passes all European understanding. His father and mother he considers good sort of folk, whom he will not go out of his way to displease (1973[1883], 82, 88).

Inglis (1981, 20-3) was right to suggest that a history of Australian childhood would have to address the relations between parents and children and whether they reflected a national ethos. But he also directed research to go beyond the opinions of visitors and disgruntled parents and describe the children and their lives.

Following Philippe Ariès's example historians of childhood have been preoccupied by the attitudes towards the young. The discourse has centred on how parents felt about their children: did they love them, indulge them; were they sentimental about them; did they want them to fulfil independent destinies or to achieve parental aspirations? These are compelling questions. But apart from the hoary dilemma of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, young people in the past have been done a disservice by the emphasis on what people thought they were doing to them. Surely one of the tasks for an historian of childhood should be to describe what children did (Hair 1982).

1.1 The Questions

This thesis investigates what growing up in Melbourne was like during the last four decades of the nineteenth century. It does this by focusing on three roles which the vast majority of boys and girls performed as they passed out of childhood and into their adult years. Most young Melburnians went to school, joined the workforce and eventually married. What proportions were, in fact, involved in each of these activities, at what ages and with what range of options in how and when to participate are the central questions tackled here. This requires that the institutions in which these roles are performed must therefore be examined as well (Vinovskis 1977, 275). A history of children's schooling must necessarily include the educational policies that shape them. Early work experiences require knowledge about the organization of labour and specifically the economy's requirements for juvenile labour. When men and women marry is determined, among other factors, by the responsibilities they have to their family of origin and the rewards that they have received from being an unmarried member of that family, balanced by the anticipated burdens and benefits of being a spouse.

Throughout the West the late nineteenth century was a period of tremendous social change. Many of the institutions which are part of twentieth century life were infancy then. A time traveller would recognize the beginnings of a meritocratic public service, centralized state education, state regulation of wages, the welfare state, effective medical care administerd in hospitals and, of course, fertility control. On the other hand much would seem foreign. Compared to today children were treated much more harshly, women were economically, legally and physically far more vulnerable and no worker had job security. How did the family negotiate a path through this confusion? How did the roles of children adapt?

Demographers have a particularly strong motive to understand the progress of young people from one role to another during the late nineteenth century. Its relationship to the fertility transition has been best articulated in Caldwell's reformulation of the demographic transition in which he explicitly integrated attitudes and behaviour towards offsrping. In his wealth flows argument (1976) he proposed what demographers now assume that they always believed (Caldwell 1981, 5). He defined two fertility regimes: one in which high fertility, limited only by a non-economic céiling, is economically rational for the principal decision maker(s); and one in which low fertility, limited only by a non-economic floor, is economically rational for the principal decision maker(s). For a society or a subgroup to change from the high to the low fertility regime the family unit must be economically and emotionally nucleated. However, such cleavage from the rest of the kin group is not sufficient for fertility decline because parents could still find large numbers of children beneficial.

In other words, according to Caldwell couples have no reason to limit their fertility if they feel their first responsibilities were to their own parents, grandparents, anuts and uncles. This is both because good and bad fortune are shared by the wider kin group and because the couple can anticipate the same loyality from their offspring. Therefore simply removing a primary obligation will not induce fertility. Farming families, as a classic example, have every reason to believe that a baby comes with two hands and only one mouth. Couples must be convinced that large families are too great an economic or emotional burden before they are interested in controlling the number of children they have.

At its simplest and least useful the wealth flows perspective, like the demographic transition 'theory' it replaced, is a mere description of social change. Caldwell (1981, 7-8) has agreed with his critics that on one level he has only proposed a tautology.

> It is indisputable that a settled, largely subsistence economy based predominantly on familial production will be one with high fertility ... and that it is inevitable that a capitalist society with a fully developed labour market producing nearly all goods and services would be one where fertility is low (p. 8).

Clearly a picture of social change covering such a broad canvas will not advance our understanding of what causes a transition to low levels of controlled fertility. Only by concentrating on that period of change can we do that. We must ask when did married couples begin to restrict their fertility? What factors present in the broadest social-cultural-economic context in which these men and women lived motivated them to begin then. Why was it that other couples, not only centuries, but also mere decades earlier did not control their fertility?

Caldwell has asked those questions in his own research. His theoretical work (1978, 1981) and his studies of contemporary south India (1982) and late nineteenth century Australia (Caldwell and Ruzicka 1978) concentrated on the phase during social change, not the periods before and after. At those times all elements of the social structure do not change at the same speed. In fact an imbalance, with aspects of both the new and the old present means that significant change is under way. Charting the process of that change means identifying what aspects of the new are quickly adapted and what of the old lingers. Researchers concerned about the emergence of a particular phenomenon, such as public health measures, nursing homes for the aged, or the fertility decline, the strands of social behaviour which had already changed are the most important to identify and study.

In practice though it is difficult to distinguish causal factors when everything is in flux. Consequently theory becomes important as a way of focusing attention on what *should* have been the causal agents. The theoretical debates among demographers studying the fertility transition have echoed the wider sociological argument between the Marxists and the Weberians. Thadani (1978) and Levine (1985) have stressed the pre-eminence of economic factors. Caldwell has insisted that the locus of change was social and predominantly within the realm of values. Each researcher has isolated elements belong to the social and economic spheres and argued that his preferred one was the catalyst for marital fertility decline.

In terms of wealth flows, those in the economic camp claim married couples turned to prevention only when they could not put their children to work. When families must support themselves by selling the labour of individual members in the market, and young people are only offered wages below the cost of maintaining them or are not wanted by employers at all, then couples will limit their family size for their own preservation. Members in the social camp argue that it was a change in attitudes that made children a burden. Couples did not think about what children could do for them but what they could do for their children. A change in attitudes produced a situation where parents felt it was inappropriate, even immoral, to expect anything from one's offspring. Fertility limitation followed because few couples could afford to put such attitudes into practice with a large family. Sharing a fixed amount of resources amongst a smaller family would benefit the parents and at the same time allow them to give more to the children they had.

The most rewarding research on fertility decline investigates the plausibility of a specific cause not only by showing that it is related to fertility but also that it emerged at the same time or some reasonable time before the onset of the transition. Caldwell (1980) proposed that mass education, and specifically the nineteenth-century educational reform movement, was the most important factor initiating wide-spread family limitation in the West. He linked this institutional change to fertility via a change in the values which determined the economic and emotional resources devoted to children. While there are some serious flaws in his argument, his methodology is important. As he pointed out, too much research purporting to be about the fertility transition is actually about post-transitional differentials. His critics (Thadani 1978; Levine 1985) have agreed with him on that issue and use his methodology in their own efforts to isolate alterations in the West's economic system during the first stages of marital fertility decline. Similarly, one can find in models of families and fertility recently proposed an emphasis that their proof would be an appropriate chronology of events. Ben-Porath (1980, 12-23) would expect fertility to be very responsive to a lowering of the transaction costs in dealing with strangers. Lesthaeghe (1980, 534-43) would anticipate a fertility change almost immediately after a cultural support for a particular fertility regime had faltered or toppled.

The life course to adulthood elucidates many aspects of the flows of wealth between parents and children in late nineteenth-century Melbourne. In a variety of ways children's schooling, youth's work experiences and young adults' marriages define what parents could expect from them and what they could expect from their parents. My primary task is to describe the nature of those roles and the timing of the transitions between them during the last third of the century. By searching for changes in how young people grew up and comparing when those changes occurred to when marital fertility decline began I can suggest whether the first could have conceivably affected the second. That is, the nature of schooling, work and marriage hypothesized to be conducive to the onset of fertility decline should not have emerged either a considerably long time before marital fertility started to fall or sometime after that event.

After understanding how people behaved and when, it is possible to go a step further and ask why. Consider again the spoiled colonial boys and girls and assume for the moment that that was a fair description. Why should that have been the case? Was it because their parents believed children should be indulged and deserved equal rights? Or was a baser economic motive responsible? A doctor told a story of meeting a pipe smoking 14 year old boy on Melbourne's streets. He told warned the fellow that he would tell his father but the boy only snarled. 'I don't care a d--- if you do, I can earn more wages than he can (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 84).' Which came first, egalitarism or high

wages? Learning how children grew up can point us towards a resolution of the debate about whether cultural or economic factors were predominant. Were large families economically beneficial or a disaster? Was the fertility decline preceded by a change in the prospects of children suporting their parents, or did parents stop looking for support from their children?

1.2 The Methods

1.2.1 Methodological approaches

The family life cycle was the most immediate conceptual and methodological antecedent of life course analysis. Typically it used 'stages' of family development to group individuals and families and then study a particular phenomenon. Nuclear families could be divided, for example, into five groups: childless adult couples, those with the oldest child below age six, those with the oldest child under 18, those with the youngest child still at home, and couples with an 'empty nest'. Family income, wife's employment, and frequency of visits with kin or friends could all be profitably studied by comparing the average levels between families in the different stages. Such a framework appealed to researchers who wanted to highlight how social phenomena varied according to the size and composition of the nuclear family (Vinovskis 1977, 271-2). However its drawbacks were equally apparent. Through the delineation of family stages (often far more subtle than the example given here) families and persons who did not fall into those categories were at best ignored and at worst treated as deviants.

Historians found it difficult to apply family life cycles designed for contemporary Western families to earlier populations. Most appropriate data described household members, not families. When the two did not match, as in the case of boarders, lodgers and servants, the relationship between, say, 'family' size and income was obscure, if not erroneous. Similarly, if the roles of various family members differed across social groups, failure to account for those differences made generalizations about conditions within each family life cycle stage meaningless. For example, from an early age children in lower income families were expected to work to help support the family but children at that age from higher income families would have been attending expensive private schools. In the first group teenage children living at home would mean relative prosperity, whereas in the latter case they would imply considerable financial burdens.

Life course analysis has been more powerful because it focuses on the individual rather than the family unit and it emphasizes the timing and nature of transitions from one status to another. Modell and colleagues (1976) investigated the life course to adulthood exemplifed by the transitions of leaving school, entering the work force, leaving

the parental home, marrying and becoming a household head (or spouse of head). They isolated five aspects of the timing of these transitions which are a good introduction to what a life course approach can reveal. They proposed that life experiences can be encompassed by measuring the percentage ever making a transition, the average age at a transition or duration since a previous event, and the dispersion of ages or durations at which a transition occurs. Some researchers claim that the ability to measure the distribution in the timing of the transitions is the greatest strength of the life course approach. Transitions can be linked together as well. Modell and colleages designed two methods to do this. One they called age-congruence. It is concerned with the degree that the distribution of ages at a transition overlaps with another. As an example, were there a sizeable number of persons still attending school at the same ages when many others had entered the workforce? On an individual level, was entering the workforce a good predictor of having left school? Did household headship require that one had been married for a while and did men who married later become a head more quickly? (e.g. Ankarloo 1978). Finally, one can study the degree to which a particular transition regularly proceeds another one.

The examples given above are meant only as illustrations of approaches under the rubric of the life course. Despite their considerable range they give a relatively narrow definition of the life course since they concentrate solely on the age patterns of transitions. In a recent volume of research edited by Glen Elder, Jr. which applied a life course perspective, he presented a considerably broader definition (Elder 1985, 31-46). The 'long view' of a life course is an individual's career, be it a work career, marriage career or education career. A possible work career for a woman would be to enter the work force after school, leave it at the birth of her first child and return to the work force when her last child left school. The transitions from one state to another is a more restricted version of viewing those careers. Age and even duration may not be crucial for all transitions. A second marriage, for example, depends on the dissolution of the first, and not on age although the probability of remarriage may vary by age. Similarly, entry into the workforce is dependent on age, but unemployment is not.

All of the articles in Elder's (1985) volume used the same longitudinal data set. Its great depth and breadth combined with the scope of the life course perspective meant that a phenomenal range of topics were addressed. Some examples were the living arrangements of children of different cohorts, the interaction of employment and health effects of life events on psychological well-being, and the consequences of divorce. Historians are also interested in these issues but, unfortunately, the evidence available even for the comparatively data-rich late nineteenth century would make any investigations along these lines speculative at best.

In most cases historians are on more secure foundations when analysis is limited to age-dependent transitions and to the career stage entered just after the transition. For example, it is not difficult to find data to investigate the factors leading to marriage at a particular age and even link that to a subsequent but very immediate consequence such as household headship or the interval to the birth of the first child. However it is much rarer for historians to be able to analyse the effects of age at marriage on a lifetime employment career. The measures used by Modell and colleagues (1976) to describe the prevalence, timing and interaction between transitions and the pace of the life course are much closer to what most historians are able to do, although their methods may differ from those used by Modell. The limitations of available historical data, both generally and for this thesis will be discussed later. First the strengths of this narrower version of life course analysis which are particularly useful for social history will be reviewed.

Despite its emphasis on individuals' life courses, the approach has been avidly incorporated by researchers primarily interested in how families operate. Individuals can be easily located within a family structure and the effects of that structure on their behaviour can be studied. One of many examples is Kaestle and Vinovskis' (1978) work on the age of starting and leaving school in late nineteenth-century Massachusetts. They studied the effects of the family's ethnicity, father's occupation and age, mother's employment and an index of the ratio of workers to consumers in the household on these important transitions.

The life course perspective also provides an elegant way to investigate the impact of specific historical events and the more general phenomenon of social change (Ryder 1965; Boocock 1978, S383-8; Hareven 1978; Elder 1985, 24-7). Demographers are familiar with the distinctions between changes which occur as a natural part of the aging process and changes indicating genuine social change. The latter is characterized by one cohort at a specific age behaving differently than a previous cohort had at the same age. Social change can be observed as a gradual process as in the typical pattern of fertility decline when each birth cohort of women consistently have lower age-specific marital fertility rates than the previous cohort. Change can also occur as a result of an isolated historical event: a time of crisis like a war or famine or a period of great prosperity. Some changes, like postponement of marriage, last for only the duration of the event. Others are more lasting. Elder (1974) used the life course as a framework to study the differing effects of the 1930s depression on a birth cohort in their early teens in 1930. He contrasted the children from families whose principal wage earner lost more than half his income with those relatively less deprived. The long term effects of short term deprivation, controlling for social class, included early marrriage and greater commitment to the family for women, and some preference for security as opposed to risk-taking for men.

A more self-evident aspect of the life course approach which nonetheless makes it so appealing to some historians is that it is fundamentally empirical. Much family history and in particular studies of the processes of becoming an adult have had to rely on the preserved evidence of the relevant ideologies. While this is a valid endeavour, it has frequently been undertaken by persons who would have preferred to study actual behaviour. As two of the first modern social historians of adolescence wrote:

> The difficulty lies in the nature of the evidence available to historians, which comprises for the most part a variety of written materials. It is much easier, therefore, to construct a history of ideas *about* the family than of the family as such (Demos and Demos 1969, 632).

Even for historians whose primary concerns are values, attitudes or ideologies, the interplay between them and behaviour should be one of the highest priorties of research. This is particularly the case when the period under study is hypothesized to have undergone significant social change.

1.2.2 Australian research

In an introductory article to a collection of papers given at an Australian conference on family history Allen Johnston (1982) suggested that research on the life course was one of the most promising directions for the discipline. At that time John Cole's (1981) work on a small farming community in Queensland was the only Australian study which had expressly used the life course as an organizing framework. Unfortunately Cole's work had several limitations. His community was very small and composed of two distinct social groups, one originating from Germany and the other from Britain, making it necessary to treat the community as two populations. He relied almost exclusively on offical records: school registration books, and marriage, birth and death registers, all kept within the community. Not only were schooling, marriages, births and deaths occurring elsewhere lost, but very few records gave individuals' ages. These factors greatly reduced his effective sample size.

Shirley Fisher (1976) was similarly compromised by having to rely only on the marriage certificates retained by Sydney's Protestant churches. Rather than using them to study purely demographic behaviour, she used the information on the occupations of grooms, brides, and the fathers of the brides and grooms to measure various aspects of social mobility, although she was concerned less with patterns by age than by generation. Chris McConville (1979) was also interested in occupational mobility when he used, probably misleadingly, grooms' ages and occupations to sketch the occupational life cycle of Catholics and their chances for upward mobility. During the 1980s state governments relaxed earlier restrictions on historical access to vital registration records. Several researchers have taken up the challenge and reconstituted the fertility of women in

specific marriage cohorts in various Australian localities (Grellier [Anderson] 1981; Neale *et al.* 1981; Anderson 1985; Cole 1985; Grimshaw and Fahey 1985; Grimshaw, Fahey, Janson and Griffiths 1985). However, their analyses did not extend beyond measuring birth intervals and the length of the childbearing span.

McDonald and Quiggin (1985) used indirect estimation techniques on published census data to derive the probability of losing parents, siblings and spouses. Their simulations of household composition were not as informative because they could not distinguish between unmarried people living with relatives and those boarding with other families.

The two most successful Australian applications of a life course perspective eschewed demographic parameters. Ian Davey (1985), partly led by his work on school attendance, interviewed men and women who had grown up in an urban district during the first decades of the twentieth century. From them he learned about the disorderly processes leading from late childhood to young adulthood. His interviewees left school as soon as possible and took on a wide variety of jobs, rarely staying at any one for very long. Among these working-class respondents, those who acquired skills did so after several years of shifting from one job to another. Janet McCalman (1984) also used interviews in her social history of an inner city area of Melbourne from 1900 to 1965. The life course provided her with an organizational structure for her narrative. The suburb's history was presented according to the experiences of an inexactly defined Edwardian birth cohort. Aspects affecting children, such as infant, child and maternal health, home and family life, school and child labour, were the central concerns of the first chapter encompassing the years 1900 to 1914. The theme continued up through the period 1956-1965 when the problems of old age were discussed. One of life course analysis's strengths is that in linking events together sequentially it tells a story about people's lives. These two works succeed partly because their authors have been able to forge a tale that is no less fascinating for being true.

1.2.3 Difficulties and solutions

Historians' efforts to explore any questions are often hampered by available evidence. Appropriate data are particularly rare for the broad but formalized problems generated by the life course perspective. Before discussing the sources used in this thesis, it is useful to consider the common snares and obstacles. This will form the basis for explaining why I employ certain methodological approaches and avoid others.

Two hallmarks of life course analysis are the length and depth of the information on how individuals construct their lives. The need for length demands longitudinal data. Hareven (1982) was in a fortunate position in her study of a factory town. Employment

files and insurance records spanned many decades. They were detailed enough to enable her to construct kin networks involving even the most intermittent employees over the entire period. For the early twentieth century oral history or more systematic surveying is an excellent way of constructing life histories. Collective biographies, narratives describing the lives of many individuals, are an appealing source (Tilly 1978, 11). However, in practice they are usually collected from *Who's Who* type publications with their unavoidably middle and even upper-class bias and self-promoting entries.[2] Most researchers of past populations do not have any of these attractive options.

Instead, quantitative historians use one or more of three possible means of building a longitudinal element into their work. Ideally one wants to examine the effects of time, both through aging and the historical events which occurred before and in the interim, on the behaviour of individuals. The most straightforward means of obtaining that information is to gather records and other documents on a person describing him or her at different times. Several large scale North American projects have linked the census entries of individuals in one year with the information in the entry for the following census year (see Katz 1975; Hershberg 1981; Katz *et al.* 1982). Family reconstitution was pioneered by Louis Henry in the 1940s and applied to English data by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure in the 1960s and 1970s. They linked vital events recorded in parish registers to measure the demographic parameters of the population and to 'reconstitute' entire families (for an introduction see Wrigley 1966). Essentially any two listings of the same population can be linked. Rate book entries of the occupier of each dwelling can be traced to learn about residential and occupational mobility. Marriage in a census year can be linked with census entries to learn about the living arrangements of people about to be married and newly married.

It is tempting to assert that for most populations with a tradition of record keeping, the amount of longitudinal data that can be formed through linkages is limited only by the researcher's imagination. Unfortunately that is not the case. A host of difficulties can defeat the most intrepid investigator. First, the event may be too rare to trace effectively. It would be very enlightening to know the relationship between ages at leaving school and entering full time employment. However, practicably, even with school records and some wage books from nearby factories, very few former students could be expected to show up in factory records. Quite apart from that logistical problem, it would still leave open the question of the relationship between schooling and work for

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[2]See Jensen (1973) for an example of a successful study with this type of data. For two sources which could have been used for Melbourne see Davison (1979, 10) and the volumes of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* published by University of Melbourne Press.

girls who became domestic servants, or boys who worked as messengers. Even linking data sources with wider coverage can be frustrating. Researchers who have used census linkages have been frustrated by the decade separating observations. What happened in between may have been vital, but completely unknown. Studying occupational mobility based on occupations reported on marriage and death certificates is just as tantalizingly inadequate.

After one has considered the weaknesses and resolved that creating a unique longitudinal data set would still give meaningful information, the problems may have just began. For the under-financed researcher working alone, data linkages are enormously time-consuming. Even if money were available most research allowances would be soon exhausted after paying for manual searches of handwritten lists organized in entirely different ways and with very little duplicate information for matching. Alternatively these barely legible documents could be transposed in their entirety into a machine-readable form for computerized matching. This expense, in terms of time or money, stifles many projects before they start. Some persist but sacrifice sample size or take much longer to complete the project than they would have desired.

Finally, record linkages are frequently woefully inadequate. It is not uncommon for only a small fraction of the initial population to be traced from one record set to another. Inconsistent spellings, common names, inaccurate age reporting, and vague statements as to birthplace make it hard to identify correct matches. Most records and population listings are usually from confined geographical areas. Cases of people sliping out of observation through out-migration are inevitable, and usually unmeasurable. In the worst cases out-migrants were significantly different from the people who remained. Ignoring them distorts the study.

Consequently individual-level longitudinal data sets are relatively rare in historical studies. When possible the researcher is well-advised to use cross-sectional data in ways which lend them to longitudinal interpretations. However, this approach also has failings. The methods are standard demographic tools of manipulating aggregate level data. The first method ages 'birth cohorts' from one census to the next to show changes to the cohort as a whole over the period. Intercensal survival rates are a classic example of this approach. A cohort interpretation in such cases is only justified if the population is a closed one. If there were migration flows into or out of the area or both, the behaviour of, say, 15-19 year olds in 1861 has little relevance for the behaviour of 25-29 year olds in 1871. It is essential to know about the nature of the migration streams during the study period to be able to interpret the results.

The second method is the synthetic cohort. It only requires a single cross-sectional data set, usually a census. Longitudinal effects can be simulated by assuming that

throughout their lives people will behave or have behaved at a particular age as people who were that age in the census year behaved. As a heuristic device it can be very powerful but it performs quite poorly as a predictive tool in periods of social change. Like cohort analysis, it can lead to meaningless conclusions when there have been large scale migration flows. Most flows are age specific and occur during a short period of time. Frequently they are large and concentrated enough to dominate some age groups while being relatively rare in others. Differences which appeared to be due to aging could be the result of the different composition of age groups. Similarly, historical events such as wars or depressions which affected particular birth cohorts could lead to erroneous interpretations of synthetic cohorts. Again, the only solution is to know the history of the people being studied.

The second hallmark of life course analysis which has to be kept in mind while designing the research is that the individual must be placed within a context. Typically the central interest is with the interplay between an individual's development and that of his or her family. This probably explains why most of the impetus for life course analysis has come from North America were there is ready access to census manuscripts which conveniently give information on both households and individuals. However, as usual with historical data, even that can be inadequate. A study of life transitions in Buffalo, New York, from an 1850 census could not distinguish between different types of young single adult males living apart from their families (Glasco 1977). Some would have been migrants who came alone, but others would have moved out of their parents' home in the city and into lodgings. The prevalence of the latter group has important implications on the relationship between parents and the older wage-earning children.

When census manuscripts are not available it may be impossible to learn much about a person's family and household. Again, data linkage is often the only solution to give the analysis depth. Family reconstitutions can build up a dynamic picture of the structure of the nuclear family and even of the kin group. A pioneering family history study used reconstituted families to investigate how birth order and inheritance affected age at marriage (Greven 1970). However, usually less ambitious linkage projects are undertaken to augment other information about the underlying causes of life course careers or transitions. In general an historian 'works by accretion, adding a bit here and a piece there, until a reasonable likeness of the subject of his pursuit begins to emerge' (Robin Winks, quoted by Boocock 1978, S367).

Analytical depth also requires sensitivity to the historical context in which the life courses are enacted. Frequently life course analysis produces research which loiters outside of space and time, without grounding in a social, economic or cultural context (Erickson 1980). This can operate on several levels. One needs to understand nineteenth-

century urban Anglo-Saxons, their institutions, beliefs etc., but also in doing researcher one needs to know how the building industry was faring in Melbourne in April 1891. The need for that type of specificity can be overlooked when the only data set used is a single cross sectional slice of the population or the years studied were chosen because they were census years. It is tempting to make 1891 evidence stand for a much broader swatch of time, but economic and social conditions current in those particular years can significantly influence behaviour. Relying only on census years or other sets of single years spanning a much longer period could give an inaccurate portrayal of trends over time.[3] While one cannot alter the date of past censuses a sensitive interpretation must take the uniqueness of the years into account.

Similarly, because researchers want to use individual level data they are frequently forced to study small geographical areas intensively. There is a risk of learning a great deal about very little. It is rarely enough to be told that one village was very much like other villages. If only to aid future reseach details should be reported about the conditions in the study area during and before the study period. Future work in other regions can be based on informed judgements as to how comparable they are. The proliferation of studies on North American mid to late nineteenth-century cities suffers the same problem. For example, to date there has been too little explicit comparison of findings based on the different economic structures and ethnic compostion of the populations. Many of the differences found in household composition were probably the result of the size of the residential housing stock and the presence of single adult migrants, not differences in the desirability of living with parents or kin.

1.2.4 Methods for an Australian study

This thesis was designed around those methodological considerations. If a study of life courses requires a longitudinal data set which follows individuals from one transition to the next with abundant information on their family circumstances at each point, then this study fails miserably. But clearly the historical literature demonstrates that there is no single accepted methodology.

The immutable constraint on Australian historical research is the lack of census manuscripts.[4] This is why there has been almost no work along the lines of North American quantitative history. However, the social historians who have done quantitative work comment on the regrettable lack of census manuscripts and then proceed to describe

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[3]For an example with Australian data see McDonald (1974, 131-3).

[4]Actually, there may be a few scattered ones remaining. Margaret Grellier [Anderson] (1981) was able to use schedules from an 1859 Western Australian census for a rural district. Others may be found in the future. However, it is improbable that any will be found for any city or town population during the second half of the nineteenth century.

the relative richness of the data sources they employ (e.g. Davey 1977, 10). I shall follow suit by briefly introducing the types of evidence used for each transition. All research involves a delicate balance between the evidence which is collected because it will answer specific questions and the results which emerge because those questions can be asked of the data. Suffice it to say that every effort was made to find the most suitable data and to put them to their best use.

A general comment is required first. Although census manuscripts do not exist, the published decennial census volumes for Victoria from 1861 to 1901 are an excellent source. Detailed tables of the sexes, ages, birthplaces, religions, occupations, marital statuses and literacy of the population are presented in every year. In each case a rough approximation and usually a very precise measure of the attributes of the Melbourne population is given or can be derived. Breakdowns by age and sex are available for marital status, literacy and, less satisfactorily, occupation. The most serious omission in the census reports is of any detail on the age of persons by their birthplace. That makes it impossible to provide any definitive picture of the age structure of the immigrant and native born populations. Like most other nineteenth-century censuses the Victorian ones do not ask about fertility. The New South Wales census in 1901, however, asked and reported the number of children ever born within the current marriage for married female respondents. Questions about each household member's relationship to the head of the household were asked in Victoria, but tables were never published.

As much as possible this study avoids cohort and synthetic cohort analysis, despite the high quality of the census reports. Melbourne is a classic example of when those techniques are inappropriate. Waves of internal and international immigration created an uneven age distribution. Between decennial censuses a five-year birth cohort could double. With the native-born concentrated in the younger ages, synthetic cohorts would reflect the differences between the British and Victorian-born as much as changes during the life cycle.

The census is a blunt instrument for studying the schooling career of children. It gives the proportion receiving different types of education in broad age groups. This is a poor means of determining the ages children entered and left school. Also, to borrow a quip from Kastles and Vinovskis (1978), it was no better at catching truants than the truant officers. The census says nothing about how frequently enrolled students actually attended school and how much time they had free for work or play. Only very detailed records could give this type of information on schooling and fortunately they were available in the form of school registers. These are that rare beast, a longitudinal data set. For every child enrolled in a particular state school they record a wealth of personal information and, in the same book, details his or her subsequent career in the school. For

various reasons few students began or ended their careers at the same school. To learn more about why they left, some of the students in the sample were linked to their parental home through the municipal rate books and their residential tenure traced. These linkages increased the value of the school registration books tremendously.

No single source adequately addressed children's entry into full time employment, their acquistion of skills and their achievement of adult wages. As a result Chapter 3 is based on a wide assortment of data. The censuses provided an overview of the activities of the population under 20 years of age. The annual reports of factory inspectors gave the most readily accessible data on the wages of young workers. For contrast there were also the listings of government employees containing birth dates, starting dates and salaries. Advertisements in the daily press for juvenile labour were systematically examined for an impressionistic account of the type of work available and the ages of the workers. Finally, the detailed engagement and wage records of a biscuit factory were studied intensively to learn about the juveniles who had worked there. While this was merely an illustrative case study, it was useful for confirming findings based on other, more generalizable evidence.

Information on brides and grooms came directly from official marriage certificates. The Victorian vital registration forms were the most detailed in Australia. They were also the most conscientiously completed so there was rarely missing information. While these certificates tell us about those who married, there are no comparable data on those who remained single. The census is used as much as possible to construct the 'risk' of marriage and to infer differences in marriage patterns among various groups. Prenuptial pregnancy was detected by locating the birth certificates for the first child born after marriage. This linked data set also served for studying changes in the length of the first birth interval during the early stages of the fertility decline. Most of the chapter on the fertility decline, though, is based on samples of all births registered in Melbourne during census years in combination with more traditional fertility measures.

1.3 The Setting

Melbourne began modestly. In 1835 two men took up land holdings in Port Phillip Bay and four years later a government surveyor came from Sydney to design the town. The pastoral and agricultural community which grew up there and in the western district was estimated to have a European population of 10,000 by 1840. That was enough for its leaders to be faced with a host of unique administrative difficulties and for the populace to share a sense of identity. Melbourne already had many taverns, a paper, organized horse races, a cricket club and an exclusive men's club, debating societies, a town band, churches and a cathedral (Grant and Serle 1957, 9-12). Rumblings for freedom from New

South Wales's 'tyranny' had already begun. At the end of 1850 their wish was granted. An act of the English parliament separated the Port Phillip District and its 76,000 residents from the northern colony. Yet, within nine months the new colony of Victoria's chances of being a sleepy, insignificant outpost of the empire were dashed. Gold was discovered in its interior.

During the gold rush decade Melbourne's population grew by 15.7 per cent each year (McCarty 1970, 119). In 1851 it was a good sized town of 29,000, but by 1861 it was a city of 125,000. This thesis begins after that period of frenzied growth. Although subsequent migrants and the children of the gold seekers continued to swell the population it was on a more manageable scale, as indicated in Table 1-1. Figure 1-2 shows the two waves of immigration into the colony, the first in the 1850s and a second, smaller one in the 1880s.

Table 1-1: Melbourne's population from 1861 to 1901.

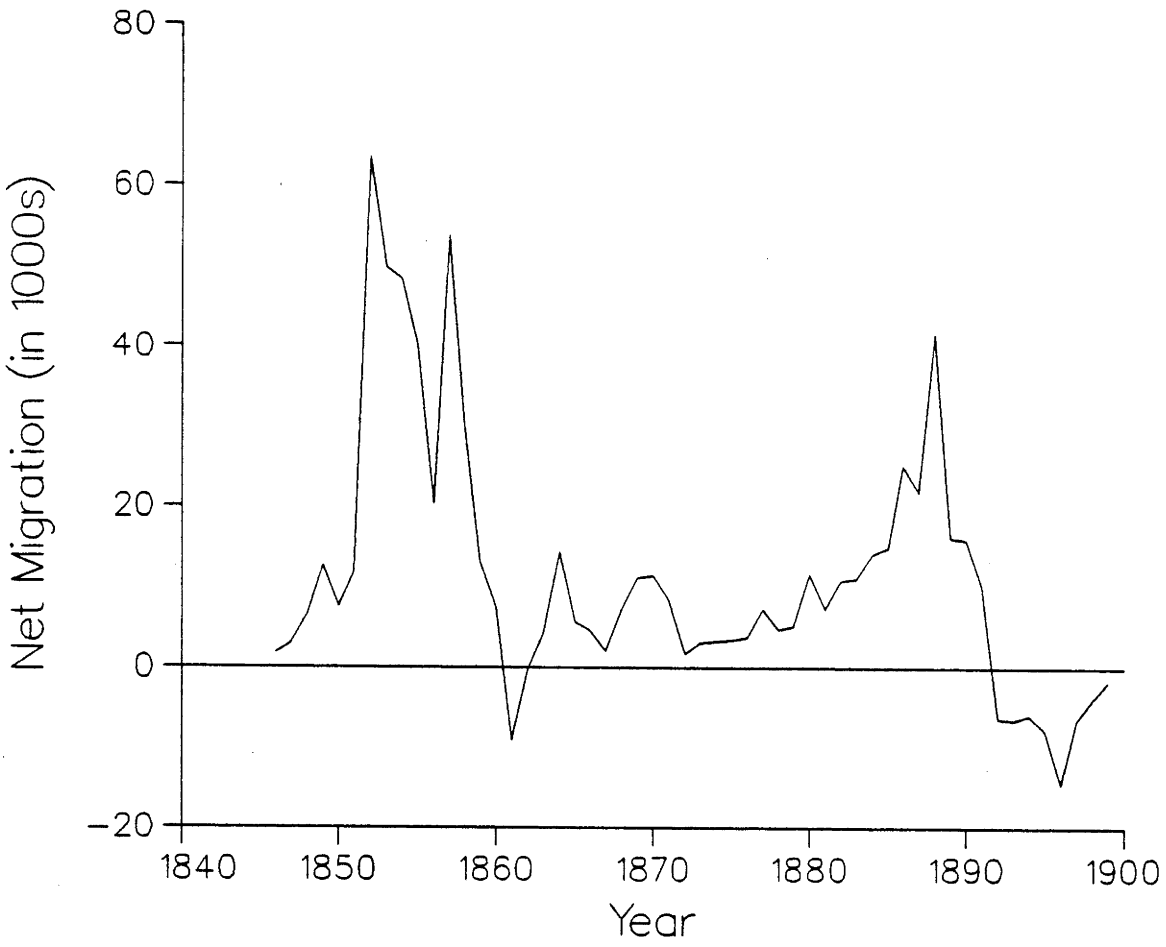
Year	Population of Melbourne	Annual growth rate	% of Victoria's population
1861	119,903		22.2
		4.7	
1871	191,236		26.1
		3.4	
1881	268,832		31.2
		5.6	
1891	1,140,405		41.3
		0.2	
1901	1,201,341		40.1

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria* 1861-1901.

It is easy to over-stress the newness of Melbourne. By the end of the study period it was no older than an elderly gentleman. But cities do not age on the same scale as people. Melbourne's culture and politics arrived ready-made from contemporary Britain and well-established New South Wales. It quickly achieved the critical mass of people and capital to construct buildings, public and private, and a thriving urban sense of self. In 1903 Ada Cambridge recalled her first walks about Melbourne.

> As I remember our metropolis then, and see it now, I am not conscious of any striking general change, although, of course, the changes in detail are innumerable. It was a greater city for its age thirty years ago than it is to-day, great as it is to-day. I lately read in some English magazine the statement that

Figure 1-1: Net immigration into Victoria, 1846-1899.



Source: *Victorian Yearbooks*
Note: Immigration and emigration estimates are admittedly crude. They are based only on an incompletely record of arrivals and departures by sea.

> tree-stumps -- likewise, if I mistake not, kangaroos -- were features of Collins Street 'twenty-five years ago'. I can answer for it that in 1870 it was excellently paved and macadamised, thronged with its waggonette-cabs, omnibuses, and private carriages -- a perfectly good and proper street, except for its open drainage gutters. The nearest kangaroo hopped in the Zoological Gardens at Royal Park (p. 18-9).

Her tour included many monuments that were already grimy with age. The Town Hall, University, Public Library, Hospital and Botanical Gardens were grand old institutions by then.

Table 1-1 also tells another part of Melbourne's history. As the century progressed more and more people came to the city. Some, of course, were arriving from overseas and saw in the familiar shops and bustle a prospect for a life reassuringly like the one they left. But new Melburnians also came by land, by foot, waggon, coach and train. They left

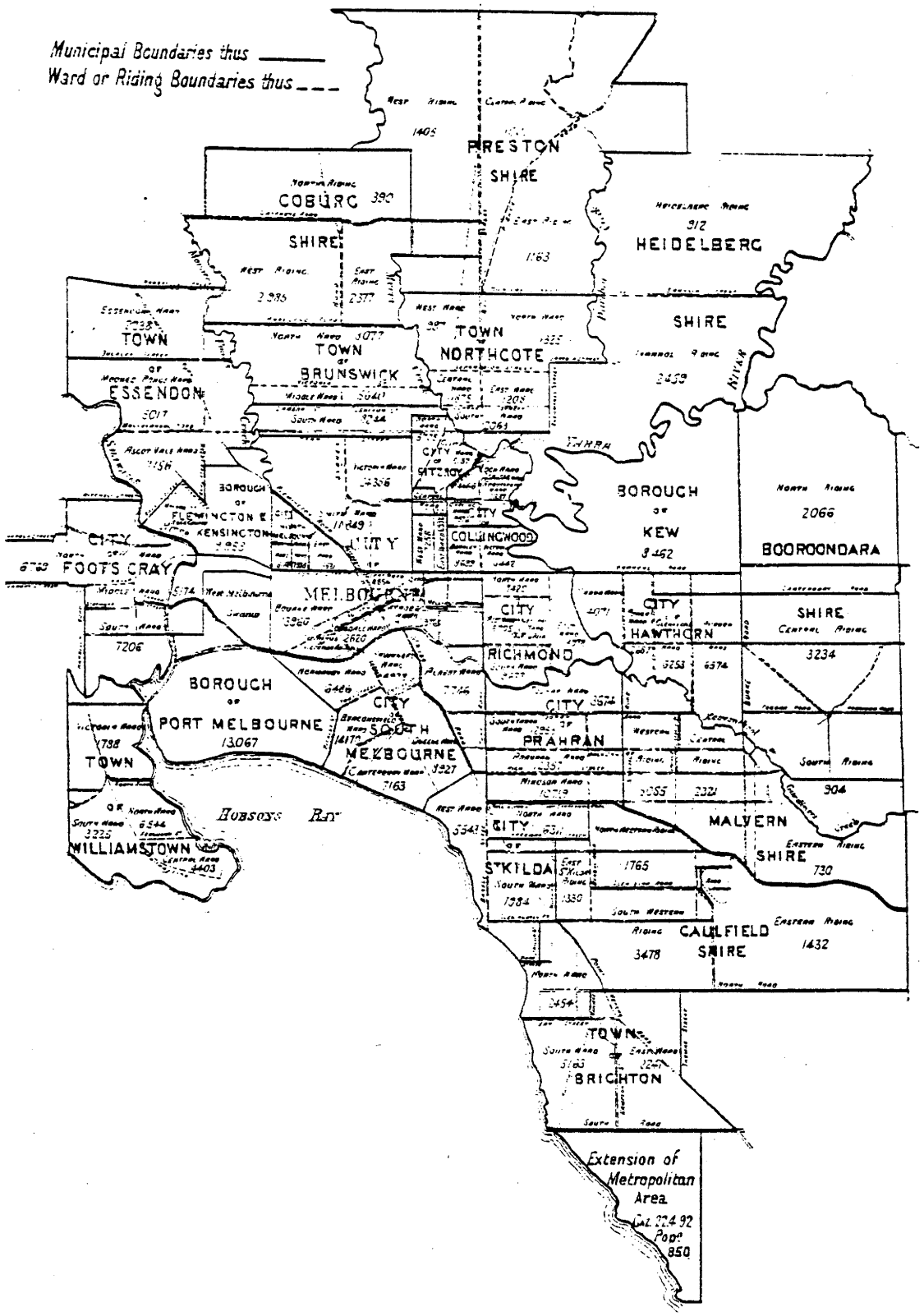
the farms and mining settlements in the Victorian countryside and other colonies to try their luck in the city. The colony and the city both grew, but Melbourne grew faster. Australians were already demonstrating one of their most enduring characteristics: they are an urban population.

These men and women who were city dwellers by choice nonetheless had a very clear notion of how they wanted to live. Australia was not only the English-speaking world's most urbanized population in the late nineteenth century (Butlin 1964, 181), it was the first nation of suburbanites. This was apparent even in 1851. The centre of the city could no longer accommodate the population. Gentlemen lived with their families in the already fashionable suburbs of Prahran, St Kilda and Brighton as well as the elevated areas of Fitzroy and Richmond. North Melbourne, Collingwood, and the low lying sections of Fiztroy and Richmond were where the working class lived in terraces and some detached housing. The great demand for housing during the 1850s and 1860s pushed the boundaries of the urban area out farther and filled in gaps that had appeared.

In a process which began in the 1860s and continued well into the next century, the Yarra became Melbourne's social divide (a map of Melbourne is shown in Figure 1-2). Even today the effects of the self-perpetuating miasmic theory of illness, which attributed disease to 'bad air', are apparent. One approaches the Yarra through the inner suburbs along two-laned, cramped commercial streets with a mixture of factories, warehouses, inexpensive restaurants and shops. Behind them are a maze of smaller one-way streets and alleys with tiny terrace houses and postage-stamp yards. Crossing over the bridge the visual contrast is startling. The dominant colour changes from grey to green. The tree-lined streets climb and curve gracefully and even modest homes are detached and on generous blocks.

Some enclaves within the river's loop remained reserved for the well-to-do, but most of the middle class lived in the southern and eastern portions of the city. Private railway lines made commuting to the centre feasible, though expensive. Suburbs such as Hawthorn, Kew and Prahran grew slowly at first, but dramatically during the 1880s. The working class also pushed out from the centre. Some found a place in the south and east; there were workingmen's cottages in the most exclusive suburbs. But more chose to move to the north and the west. Close-in suburbs such as Essendon, Footscray and Brunswick were settled first. Later Northcote, Coburg, Preston and others were developed. Cheap land, the railway extensions, zealous developers who over supplied the market and factories that moved with their employees to the new working-class suburbs all made the suburban dream possible for many families. But the dream came first. Even when offered flats in the centre of the city, with moderate rent and more amenities and space than the average labourer's cottage, Melbourne's working class preferred to rent or make payments towards purchasing a house (Davison 1978, 140-1).

Figure 1-2: Map of Melbourne in 1891 showing suburbs.



Source: *Census of Victoria* 1891.

The term suburb can be confusing. Melburnians were so anxious to recreate the idealized British city that they imported the concept of a suburb, with its connotations of bucolic serentity and wholesomeness combined with proximity to the city, long before they had anything resembling it. The term was enthusiastically employed from the very first days to describe such an unlikely residential area as the cluster of tents in North Melbourne. Added to this extravagant use of the word was its legal definition. Melbourne solved its problems of local government by ignoring them. In the 1850s and 1860s a municipal government could be established from a petition with 150 householders. Later legislation added gradations in the types of recognized local governments. First there were municipalities or boroughs and then cities, towns, boroughs or shires. In any event an entity called a suburb was an identifiable self-governing body. This is why it makes sense to call Collingwood, a very poor area in the heart of the city, a suburb. To make matters more confusing the unit called the City of Melbourne included the central business district and also residential areas such as East Melbourne and Carlton.

Since Melbourne was not a single government unit and it accommodated new residents by expanding rather than consolidating, the definition of what constituted Melbourne is neither straightforward nor constant. When one is needed, even for a simple operation like estimating its total population as in Table 1-1, the best solution is to use information on the smaller units which composed the urban population at each date. With each decade more suburbs are added.[5] The problem arises when census tables or other published statistics do their own arithmetic and present a summary measure for the 'metropolitan area', 'Melbourne and suburbs' or the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. The latter was an umbrella organization formed in 1891 to co-ordinate and initiate public works. It is the broadest possible definition of Melbourne and conforms very closely with the ten-mile radius from the centre which colonial statisticians felt was the appropriate definition of an urban area. Fortunately, as McCarty (1970, 129-31) has observed, the defintion used is not very important because the outer ring of suburbs which were not really in the metropolitan ambit until the twentieth century, were so sparsely settled that including their population does not distort the urban quality of the bulk of the population.

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[5]As closely as possible I followed the definitions of Melbourne proposed by McCarty (1970, 129-31). Since his only interest was in total population counts he arbitrarily included fractions of outlying suburbs' populations in some years to reflect that some of the area was still rural. Since one can hardly extend that practice to estimating, for example, the number of married women 20-24 years old, I included only some of the questionable outlying suburbs. Appendix D gives the details of the suburbs choosen in each year in the context of the fertility study in which it is the most crucial.

1.3.1 Economic history

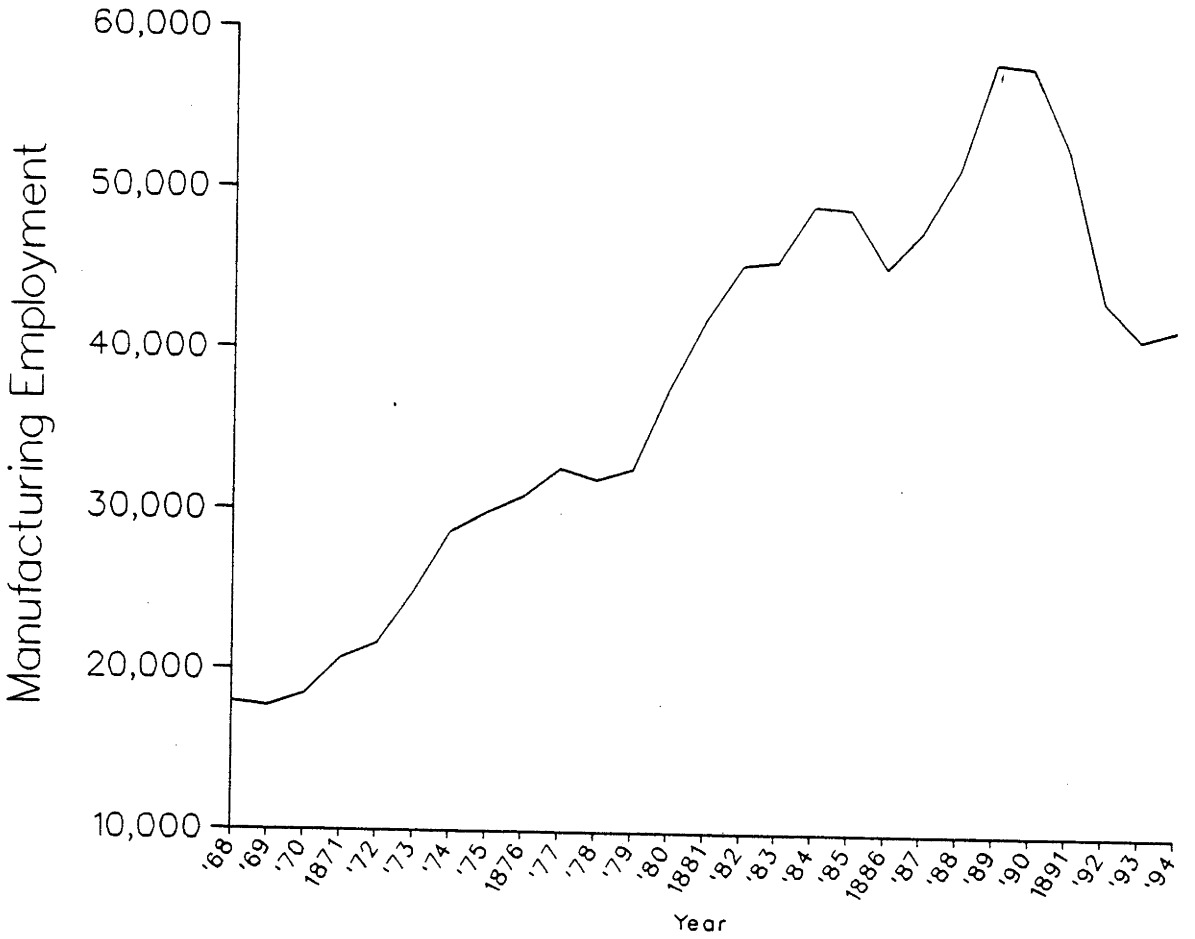
The traditional interpretation of Melbourne's economy from the 1850s to the 1890s is one of unparalleled prosperity. In fact periodic depressions and recessions caused unemployment, wage reductions and other hardships for many people. A predictable slump followed the gold boom. The most accessible gold was quickly tapped and by the end of the 1850s the goldfields were shedding labour. Temporarily there was little for this large population to live in, much less to do (Butlin 1964, 39-41). Investment rallied in the middle of the next decade, from 1864 to 1869, and one of the results was an increase in manufacturing activity. But although such developments were welcomed it is not clear if they were as yet strong enough to meet the needs of a dislocated population. A governess arriving in 1864 wrote in despair:

> Melbourne is too full, hundreds are in greatest distress ... house rent is very high and many other things ... since I landed I have wished myself in England again (Clarke 1985, 134)

Two years later a weekly suburban paper complained about the 'stagnation of business that is existing' (*R'd Aus.* 17 Feb 1866). Indicators of economic advancement sagged from 1869 to about 1872. Manufacturing employment is the best indicator of general prosperity available from a mass of even more limited statistics. As Figure 1.3 shows it increased until 1875, following a burst of investment. During the late 1870s, 1877 to 1879, both stagnated. Investment was steady but not high up to 1886, but it was enough to give jobs to increasingly more people. Money flooded into the capital city at a dizzy rate at the end of the decade. Employment took a while to respond, but then expanded until 1890. In 1889 some industries were already reporting hard times (*Factory Report* 1889, pp. 9-11). Various explanations were proposed and it was expected to be another one of the many temporary slumps. It was not. Large numbers of people were sent away from their jobs in late 1891. The depression deepened, hitting the bottom in 1893. Wage rates fell dramatically. Butlin estimated that from a money wage index of 1000 in 1890 it slipped and stayed at about 840 for at least ten years later (1962, 158). His index was based on official statistics which gave a range of wages rather than an average wage. Worse they do not take into account under-employment, days and even weeks when business shut down altogether. Everyone, including those with a job, suffered. Although the numbers employed in factories started to rebound in 1896, wages would not return to pre-drepression levels until after World War I.

Much of this thesis uses Victoria's decennial censuses. As indicators of change over 40 years they can obscure as much as they reveal. So much depends on the circumstances at the time when the census was taken. Therefore, the economic conditions in each census and intercensal year deserve a brief review. (Intercensal years are used in the

Figure 1-3: Manufacturing employment in Victoria, 1868-1894.



Source: Butlin (1964, 203).

marriage study.) Recession, or only very modest growth, characterized 1861, 1866 and 1871. On the other hand, 1876 was prosperous although the approaching slump may have been foreshadowed. The 1880s boom had already started in 1881 and was in full swing by 1886. However, that particular year had a mild recession so it is unclear if people would have been feeling confident of continuing prosperity or reacting to the restricted opportunities at that moment. The 1891 census best represents Marvellous Melbourne at its greatest glory, but how much better if it had been taken in 1888 or early 1889! As it was taken in April it missed the unmistakable beginning to the depression. For years, though, official publications had been advising that there was no unmet demand for labour in the city. There had only been marginal improvements by 1896.

1.3.2 Melburnians

Melbourne was Australia's premier city in the late nineteenth century.[6] People and capital from overseas made it their port-of-call and the city grew richer from commerce than it had from gold. No commentator could resist mentioning the wealth and how it had transformed what should have been a staid, English provincial city. The myth makers had many rags-to-riches stories; they were not about the lucky gold miner as often as about the hard-working master craftsman who steadily expanded his enterprise or the shrewd shopkeeper who knew when to open new stores. It is still an open question if there actually was unusually good opportunity for upward social mobility in Melbourne. However, everyone seems to agree that what opportunity was there forged an upper class based on money, not inherited status. English travellers enjoyed bringing back stories of the *nouveau riche* colonists' more outrageous crudities. Men and women who were less fortunate nevertheless shared the exuberance of the 1870s and 1880s. Confidence led to brashness. The pace of life was faster, the tone more vulgar than in Sydney or Adelaide, which were only 50 years older. Melbourne girls had the reputation of being flashy dressers and having a pert, frank charm. As with reactions to the city itself, some found them refreshing, others thought them forward.

Despite Melbourne's vitality, or perhaps because of it, there was also a stodgy element. The city's wealthy and even just comfortable residents had come from a sector of Britain which put respectability above all other virtues. With their upper-working class and lower-middle-class backgrounds many of Melbourne's leaders championed non-conformist causes. Sabbatarians kept the Public Library closed on Sundays, did away with Sunday newspapers and restricted Sunday trains. Temperance was a strong political and social force although it did not win many legal battles. The early attainment of secular education probably owed much to the evangicals' powers. They were perfectly happy to train their children on Sunday - since there were so few distractions. Still, this staunch respectably moral atmosphere had positive elements as well. Movements for the eight-hours day and early-closing, a protectionist policy against imported goods, abolition of government-assisted migration and salaries to parliamentarians all used the rhetoric of the non-conformist 'wowsers' and were supported by many of the same people.

Civic pride and belief in unlimited progress was common in the late Victorian era, but Melbunrians had some justification. With almost a half-million residents in 1891, its

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[6]My description in the following paragraphs of Melbourne's society follows the conventional historical interpretation. The best social history of Melbourne is Davison's *Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (1977). Other general histories which I found useful were Grant and Serle (1957), Briggs (1963), and Serle (1971). There are many general accounts written by nineteenth century visitors and writers. The best ones for an overall impression of city life are Twopeny (1973[1883]) and Adams (1893).

ratable value was the third highest in the British Empire: only London and, barely, Glasgow exceeded it. Tangible proof of Melbourne's accomplishments was boorishly pointed out to every visitor. But 'Marvellous Melbourne's' great heights made its fall all the more tragic. The depression in the 1890s not only caused terrific physical distress, it inflicted a psychic wound which never healed. Melburnians were no longer proud of their accomplishments, which had once appeared so solid but proved so transitory. The Australian myth makers turned away from the cities and to the bush.

CHAPTER 2
SCHOOLING

Imagine the constellation of factors that distinguish a high fertility regime from a low fertility regime. Then imagine that one factor could be singled out which, when introduced into a society otherwise content with uncontrolled marital fertility, would trigger a decline. Caldwell (1980) has argued that that crucial factor is universal schooling. His argument is persuasive. For most of each day children attending school cannot be summoned by their parents to perform chores or be sent into the workforce to earn a wage. The sharp distinction that school implies between the preparation for economic activity and being a wage earner makes it unlikely that school children will be asked to perform such tasks out of school hours. Schooling reinforces dependency if it does not create it. Parents are not only deprived of potential income, but school children cost money in fees and school supplies and in presentable clothing and footwear. More subtly education changes aspirations. It teaches skills that are only saleable in the capitalist economy in which the individual and not a collective unit sells his or her labour. Consequently it rewards individual achievement. Banks (1981, chapters 6 and 9), in much the same spirit as Caldwell, has argued that the system of external examinations in the English government and private school systems was the deciding factor in that country's fertility decline. Such examinations, which were also central to Australian State school systems, promoted the ethos that the family could give the child as much support as possible but that success was determined by the child's abilities as judged by an impersonal arbitrator. In other words, parents must make financial and emotional investments in their children and yet have no guarantee of receiving either economic or prestige benefits in return.

Despite its persuasive reasoning, Caldwell's thesis is difficult to operationalize. His analysis of the Australian fertility with Ruzicka highlighted the role of universal primary schooling (1978, 89). They characterized late nineteenth century education as undergoing gradual expansion. 'Governments became increasingly involved in financing education and an ever-growing proportion of children entered school.' The same was true in European countries (Caldwell 1980, 233). Nevertheless his writings imply that in the midst of this 'silent revolution' which took many decades, a specific time period can be

identified for the advent of universal schooling and that marital fertility fell almost immediately after that date (1980, 233-4, 236; 1981, 20). In these cases he abandons his preference for empirical measures of education, such as the proportion of children attending school, for the dates of legislative reform. The series of English acts in the 1870s which made government elementary schooling compulsory for working class children corresponds with the beginning of marital fertility decline in the late 1870s. The timing appears so convincing that this operational sleight of hand seems pardonable and even justified. However, Levine (1985, 195-201) has pointed out that compulsory education did not affect fertility levels in either Sweden or Prussia which had compulsory schooling long before England. Even in England the coincidental dates do not bear closer examination. The very poorest sectors of the urban working class still had upward wealth flows by the time compulsory education was instituted. It would not be until after the First World War that this group would begin to have smaller families *and* to have a reversal in the direction of intergenerational wealth flows.

How then should universal education be defined? One's impression of the extent of schooling in late nineteenth-century Victoria depends on which indicator is used. The expensive voyage to the Victorian gold fields put migration out of the reach of most illiterates. Government assistance schemes either required literacy or made it impossible for an illiterate person to negotiate the screening process. Consequently, the people who settled in Victoria were overwhelmingly literate. The 1861 census reported that 95 per cent of the men and 93 per cent of the women between 20 and 45 years old could at least read, and between 85 and 90 per cent could write as well. It would be inconceivable that they would allow their children to grow up illiterate. On the other hand, their children and their grandchildren were only partly committed to going to school. Throughout the last decades of the century only 50 to 60 per cent of enrolled students actually entered a classroom on any given day.

Caldwell has preferred to define universal education with structured schooling and particularly compulsory schooling.[1] The significance of education was not in mere literacy and the access that that gives people to information. What happened within the school walls was more important: the discipline teachers enforced; the competition, social as well as academic, with people outside of the kin group and the neighbourhood; and the physical absence from the home. Caldwell and Ruzicka (1978, 88) have claimed that

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[1]In some societies the early stages of mass education could have a kind of economic compulsion in the sense that only people with formal schooling could hope to get desirable jobs (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell 1985). However, in the West employers' requirements for credentials followed increased schooling. Educated workers were not needed or sought for most manual jobs, including those in skilled trades (Caldwell and Ruzicka 1978, 89). If there was compulsion in Australia it had to be either legal or social.

education, along with the desire to educate children was 'the one change that radically altered life in the second half of the nineteenth century'. Clearly, the school experiences of children before and during the fertility transition have to be examined in order to evaluate that assertion.

2.1 The Background: History and Historiography

State education in nineteenth-century Victoria was punctuated by three major legislative actions. The colony inherited from New South Wales two rival Boards which controlled government supported schools: the relatively secular National Board and the Denominational Board which oversaw schools run by religious denominations. In 1862 under the Common Schools Act the two Boards were united to form the Board of Education. Church sponsored and secular schools could receive support, but the child had to be given four hours of secular instruction, although such instruction could have a denominational bias. Fees were charged and attendance was entirely voluntary. In 1872, after several false starts, the Education Act was passed which required that state schooling be secular and some form of schooling compulsory for children within school ages. The free State schools were expected to provide primary instruction to all of the colony's children. Indeed, every child would, to use educator and one time Minister for Public Instruction Charles H. Pearson's vision, attend a State School regularly for five or six years achieving, at the age of twelve, the standard level of proficiency (*Pearson* 1877-8, pp. 8-9). However, in practice the system of education established by the Act was still a long way from the ideal of efficient instruction at the end of the century.

In the 1870s Victoria had the most comprehensive state educational system in the Australian colonies, and eventually all instituted similar reforms. Because it was the pathbreaker it has received the most attention by historians. Consequently the outlines of the politics behind the reform measures are well-known. They have been subjected to a Whiggish interpretation of continuing improvement (Gregory 1960; Austin 1961; Blake 1973) and to reinterpretations of the motivations and relative power of conflicting interest groups (Grundy 1972; Bessant 1983). These diametrically opposed approaches nonetheless share a conviction that the 1872 legislation changed the nature of state schooling. I am not so convinced. This chapter is based on my scepticism about whether laws alone can readily change schooling practices. In Melbourne the Act had almost no effect on the percentage of children aged 4-14 receiving an education. In 1871 72 per cent were returned as scholars; in 1881 the percentage had increased to 78. This hardly suggests an educational revolution. The 1872 reform on the whole did not result in the sweeping changes that the nineteenth-century education authorities expected and, to some extent, believed had happened. However, the Act does not deserve either the

accolades or criticisms historians have bestowed upon it. The legislative reforms created winners and losers, but for the bulk of the population schooling practices were largely unchanged. For some of this credit is due to the good sense, or political sensitivity, of the education authorities.

Two recent review articles (Hirst 1984; Dow 1985) have suggested that Australian educational history can more profitably be viewed as 'the story of the interplay, or dialogue, between the wishes of government authorities and those of parents over the form and style of education children were to receive' (Wilson 1984). Also work emanating from a South Australian group which has been avowedly revisionist has begun to take on this interpretation. Their analysis of schooling at a large State school in Hindmarsh, a working-class district south of Adelaide, led to a new view of the role of schooling in a child's life. They have argued that children were not cramped day after day behind a desk, dependent and institutionalized. Juveniles well into the twentieth century had various roles. In urban as well rural areas they combined school attendance with assisting in domestic duties and working in casual jobs (Davey 1985). My analysis owes a great deal to that formulation of childhood. The Adelaide group's shared political leanings initially led them to interpret compulsory legislation as having 'substantially changed the relationship of the working class to schooling' (Cook [Miller], Davey and Vick 1979, 41). The early studies emphasized the difficulties of working-class parents who needed their children's labour, but had to face visits from truant officers and fines for non-attendance and to use ruses such as enrolling in private schools or faking medical certificates (Wimshurst 1981). This argument had particular poignancy because in South Australia state education was not free until the 1890s (Grundy 1983). But in the latest work the authors observed that while almost all students failed to meet the quarterly requirement at least once, prosecutions were very rare. Local boards recognized the need for flexibility and were sympathetic especially if absences were due to parental illness or the child was 'profitably or usefully employed' (Davey and Wimshurst, forthcoming).

This chapter investigates the reality of schooling in late nineteenth-century Melbourne. Following the well-trodden path, the 1872 Education Act is central to the discussion. However, its influence is tested rather than assumed. The first issues are ones of policy. The Act has been credited with providing free and secular education. These were considered radical reforms. The latter measure is still politically controversial. But were these really changes in policy; did the reforms extend schooling to the poor or change the content of the curriculum? The second issue is one of coverage. All children were expected to go to State schools, but there were alternatives. The extent to which these competed with the State schools indicates how well various sectors of the community were served by the government system. Also, we only know about the

schooling of children attending State schools. It is important to know if this excludes significant minorities. Finally schooling itself is examined. When did children begin their studies and when did they leave; while enrolled how often did they attend? The iron hand of compulsion supposedly imposed conformity on what had been chaotic childhoods. How strong, then, is the evidence that the Education Act altered schooling patterns?

2.2 Data and Methods

My principal evidence for studying elementary schooling in Melbourne is two sets of school registration books which recorded information on enrolling students. I drew samples of students from enrolment cohorts of selected years between 1866 and 1888. Head teachers assigned students a number when they enrolled and their name, age, parents' or guardians' occupation and date of registration were noted then. Alongside that a record was made of the number of days attended each semester and the class level reached before every external examination until the child left the school. State schools used the common schools' registration book form up to the late 1870s. The new form recorded information on children's school careers in quarters rather than semesters and also noted parent's or guardian's address and the school the child had attended before enrolling at the current one. Australian historians have only recently begun to tap this rich data source and to date Victorian registration books have only been used in conjunction with local and school histories.

Few Melbourne schools still have a complete set of their nineteenth-century registration books. Out of those even fewer had begun prior to the Eduction Act and retained their identity through the decades of widescale amalgamation of urban schools. In addition two schools serving distinct populations were required since a central issue is the effectiveness of the government school system in reaching all segments of society and how each social group used the State schools. Fortunately, I found two suitable schools[2] but, regrettably, both schools were missing registration books for the 1890s, so this study ends prematurely.

Both schools had been Protestant church sponsored common schools. In the beginning of 1873 they chose to become secular State schools; a change which involved no alteration in buildings or teaching staff. One school was State School 307 in North Melbourne, a suburb which had changed its name from Hotham in 1887. Located just

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[2]The records were still held at schools. Neville Drummond, then head of the Education Department's History Section, told me about the books for North Melbourne SS307 which had found their way to the King Street State School in West Melbunre. It is now a two-room school and the staff cheerfully put up with my occupation of their kitchen for a couple of weeks. I contacted about 20 schools before I decided to use the Hawthorn records and was received with courtesy everywhere. The Hawthorn school secretary Jeanette Roper was particularly helpful.

northwest of the central business district North Melbourne was solidly working class. Of Melbourne's inner suburbs it had the highest proportion (more than 70 per cent) of its employed male residents in manual occupations throughout the second half of the nineteenth century (Fricker 1978). I chose the suburb in preference to other inner city areas which have received more attention from historians. In contrast to such suburbs as Collingwood, Fitzroy and to a lesser extent Carlton, Richmond and South Melbourne, North Melbourne had a more stable community. Although it had its share of the very poor, compared to others it attracted fewer transients despite its proximity to the city centre (Davison 1985, 11). Such people are important to study, but they are not the focus of this work.

State School 293 was in Hawthorn alongside the Yarra river. Brickmaking yards started in west Hawthorn in the 1850s and flourished through the century guaranteeing a working-class presence in the area. However, by 1861 the suburb had a rail link with the city and it attracted the middle class in growing numbers to its predominately low density land boom homes (McWilliam 1978). Being close to the border the school also drew students from east Richmond, a predominately poor neighbourhood with a concentration of tanneries that spilled their waste down the river. Since the neighbourhoods were so different, much of the analysis will separate the Hawthorn school students by whether they lived in Hawthorn or Richmond.[3]

2.3 'Secular and Free' Common Schools

Regardless of the debates and public discussion which raged in the early 1870s about the possible consequences of secular and free education, the Board of Education was staunchly in favour of both and they had already been integrated into the common school system. The educational authorities only sought legislative reform to consolidate and legitimate current practices.

In the Board of Education's report for 1869 a passage appeared which stated that children of all religious denominations freely went to schools run by other denominations. The figures presented to support this, though, clearly indicated that Protestant children did not attend Catholic schools. In the following year's report it was shown that a majority of schools controlled by a religious denomination did not give religious instruction; again, the notable exception was Catholic schools. Finally, the number of Roman Catholic common schools was increasing while Protestant schools were giving way

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[3]North Melbourne and Hawthorn reappear as case study suburbs in Chapter 4. Although I do not claim that these suburbs are representative of the entire city, they do reflect most of its important attributes. A statistical comparison of these suburbs and Melbourne from 1861 to 1901 is presented in Appendix B.

to secular schools (*Bd. of Educ. Report* 1871, p. xi). Instead of meeting a varied demand for religious instruction, the Board of Education was increasingly providing two types of instruction: Catholic and secular. The Education Act merely authorized the government to provide only one.

Free schooling also existed before 1873, at least for many students. Children whose parents or guardians were unable to pay the weekly school fees were called 'destitute' and after application to the teacher or local committee could attend school free. In compensation the school received the minimum fee from the Board of Education. In 1866 and 1867 the annual reports charged that there were flagrant abuses of the system by parents and teachers. This presaged a halving of the payment given to schools on 1 July 1868. Despite that the number of destitute scholars remained large, although it declined (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1: 'Destitute' scholars paid for by the Board of Education, Victoria, 1864-71.

Year	Average attendance	Number of destitute scholars	Percentage of destitute scholars
1864	41,539	6,412	15.4
1865	46,137	10,015	21.7
1866	49,404	12,875	26.1
1867	53,580	18,759	35.0
1868	58,812	19,466	33.1
1869	60,031	14,608	24.3
1870	61,404	14,012	22.8
1871	67,233	14,884	22.1

Source: *Reports of the Board of Education*, 1864-1872.
Note: Average attendance was the only measurement of the total number of students available for all years. The method used to calculate the number of destitute children was never explained; it referred either to all students qualifying for any government paid fees or an average of the number of weekly fees claimed under the scheme.

While up to one-third of the common school students were attending free, many others were paying high fees. All common schools were required to charge a minimum weekly fee of 6d for a child in infant school and 9d for a child attending the regular program. However, schoolmasters were free to set higher fee schedules if they wished. To put the minimum charges into context, in England at roughly the same time a weekly fee

of 9d was the demarcation between schools catering to the children of the working class and schools for the children of the middle and lower middle classes. English government elementary schools usually charged less than 6d and often only 2d or 3d for infant schools (Gardner 1984, 22, 83).

Parents, at least those in the Melbourne area, who did not plead destitution, frequently paid more than the minimum fee. For example, the Model School in the centre of the city charged 1s6d per week (Pawsey and Elliott 1984, 68). The editor of Richmond's local paper, the *Australian*, voiced parents' frustrations. The complaint is worth quoting in full because this popular objection to the Common School system has not received attention in historical literature. The editorial began with a description of the Board's most recent annual report which was

> apparently for the purpose of persuading us against our every day convictions and experiences, that our system of education is most economical and most admirable and that the Board of Education are a very shrewd and wonderfully qualified selection of officials.

According to the editor the Board of Education estimated that each child in a common school cost his or her parent threepence halfpenny a week.

> But unfortunately this is mere chimera; there is no school in the country where, unless a child goes with the brand of pauperism upon him, free, he can receive a decent education for less than five times that amount. For the information of the Board, who surely cannot know anything about the matter, we may say, without fear of contradiction, that an infant capable of learning nothing but school rhymes is charged from sixpence to ninepence per week, and as soon as that stage is passed has another sixpence a week to pay, and so on until when the child is really getting education the school fees reach the exorbitant sum of two shillings or half-a-crown per week. We make this assertion without fear of contradiction, for we take the average. We do not make this statement on hearsay....
>
> In this Borough are existing first-class schools which do not receive one penny from the State coffers, and charge little more than one half of the fees charged in some large common schools.... Rather let us trust to private enterprise than so expensive a system, which, instead of lessening a burden of the poorer and middle classes, is a gross and shameful infliction on the class supposed to be benefited (*R'd Aus.* 10 June 1871).

To be fair to the Board of Education it must be pointed out that their calculations were based on average attendance, but this probably was not how parents paid for their children's education or thought of its costs. The *Australian*'s editorial engendered a hurt response from the president of the board of one of the local common schools insisting that the 'average' was not an accurate representation of each school. The editor agreed but did not back down from his original vehemence (*R'd Aus.* 1 July 1871). If his claims were true, and there is no reason to doubt them, most Melbourne parents who were unwilling

or unable to have their children declared destitute would have been concerned with high school fees and in support of free government schooling. As a large proportion of children already did not pay fees, extending the privilege to all children was a relatively moderate step.

2.4 Nongovernment Schooling

The *Australian*'s editorial alluded to the common schools' competitors. By the end of the era Melbourne's suburbs were replete with common schools. The urban area had 87 common schools serving an average attendance of 17,500 (*Bd of Ed. Report* 1871, pp. 76-80). Yet, despite this abundant diversity, 37 per cent of students were attending other schools in 1871. The Education Act decimated that competition. The 1881 census showed 25 percent of students attending private schools, but most of these would have been Catholic schools. Before the Act most Catholic children attended Catholic common schools. After 1872 they left the government school system, but their departure was more than compensated by former private students. A school inspector admitted that

> rendering education free caused at the outset a very great increase of attendance at our schools; but it cannot be concealed that this increase was, in a great measure, due to the emptying of private schools ... (*Education Report* 1874, p. 141).

It is hard to generalize about private elementary schools before the Education Act. Naturally a few elite institutions catered for the upper and upper-middle classes. However, educationally rigorous elementary schools of a slightly lower class were largely common schools, frequently conducted under the auspices of the Church of England. The bulk of private primary schools fell into two categories. One served the upper working and middle classes. They set themselves apart from the common schools by promising social exclusiveness, some flexibility in curriculum and, usually, smaller size. Since schoolmasters often had a proprietorial interest in their common schools, the differences between running a common school and a private school of this class would have frequently rested on political acumen in negotiating with the Board of Education (e.g. Sullivan 1984; Rushbrook 1984). There were also working-class private schools typically run by women in their own homes. They were organized very much along the lines of working-class elementary schools in England in that they were used by the poor and stressed reading over writing skills (cf. Firth 1977; Gardner 1984). We have no means of distinguishing the prevalence of each type of private school. Table 2-2 shows that even though children in the poorer inner suburbs were less likely to be attending a private school, a substantial number did.

Those in charge of common schools had little respect for private schools. Their

Table 2-2: Types of schools attended by students (percentages) Melbourne and suburbs, 1871.

	Common School	Private School	At home
Inner Suburbs	58.4	29.1	12.5
Outer Suburbs	40.4	41.6	18.0

Source: *Census of Victoria*, 1871.
Notes: 'Mode of education not stated' distributed proportionately. Inner suburbs: Collingwood, Emerald Hill (South Melbourne), Fitzroy, Hotham (North Melbourne), Melburne, Richmond, Sandridge (Port Melbourne), Williamstown. Outer suburbs: Brighton, Footscray, Hawthorn, Kew, Prahran, St Kilda.

teachers were not certified and were therefore assumed to be incompetent, the cramped environments of private homes lacked necessary educational materials and students were not judged by external examinations (*Bd of Ed. Report* 1870, p. 58). Of course, common schools could have the same faults and in neither system did it necessarily follow that children's education was suffering. A sensitive school inspector visited a North Melbourne common school *Bd of Ed. Report* 1865, p. 51). Eighty children were taught there 'in a small cottage of two rooms and a passage. The place was crammed with children either sitting or standing, the infants being in the passage.' Only five students could squeeze around the sole desk. And yet, he observed, this was an excellent school, conducted by a gifted teacher. He wondered if in such cases schools should not be hindered by excessive regulation. Many private schools undoubtedly were equally successful against what modern eyes would see as tremendous disadvantages.

Prior to the Education Act there are no adequate sources for studying private schools. Because the educationalists ultimately won their battle for bureaucratic control and professional standards it is not surprising that very little is known about the alternatives which once existed. I used the 1869 *Sands and McDougall Melbourne Street Directory* to identify schools in the North Melbourne-West Melbourne and Hawthorn-Richmond areas. Although it was an attractive source because it gave the exact location of the schools, it proved woefully inadequate. For example, the directory indicated 15 private schools in Richmond, 12 run by women and only one clearly affiliated with a church. But, even if it is assumed that each private school employed two teachers and each of the five common schools four teachers (a liberal estimate) this does not come close

to accounting for the 139 persons in Richmond who returned themselves as 'schoolmaster, schoolmistress or teacher'. The Hawthorn search was even less successful; three private schools were listed despite the fact that the 1871 census showed 45 teachers, and 42 per cent of Hawthorn's students attending a private school. Nonetheless, if this small, unrepresentaive sample of schools are plotted on a map they reveal that considerable options were available. The private schools clearly saw themselves in competition with the common schools. Those listed in the *Directory* tended to cluster along major roads and close to common schools.

After the Education Act private schools were still criticized for being at best of uncertain quality. Pearson quipped, 'I have visited one private school, where the mistress apologized for the children's inability to write, and deficiency in all other respects, by observing that they were very good in texts and hymns' (*Pearson* 1877-8, p. 5). But now charges had to be phrased carefully. By the mid 1870s there were a number of high quality private schools serving the sons and daughters of the middle classes, indeed 'middle class schools' became a term for secondary schools. These schools also took younger children. In addition the Roman Catholic schools were legitimate competitors. Pearson conceded they were 'conducted by teachers of known competence, and can hold their own after a fashion against the State schools' (p. 6).

Once it was apparent that free schooling had all but abolished the working-class private school the Education Department expressed little interest in them. The Royal Commission on Education in 1882-83 largely ignored the issue, concentrating on Catholic schools. It was assumed that those that still existed were being used as a refuge from the Act's compulsory clause. The Education Department could think of no other reason for patronizing the schools. In 1876 an amendment to the Education Act required private schools to submit returns. In 1878 the Education Department asked local Boards of Advice, teachers and truant officers to identify private schools and returns were eventually requested from 675 private schools. The department intended to use this information to confirm claims of State school students who had not attended the minimum days per quarter that they were going to a private school (*Education Report* 1878-79, p. 8). But legislation only allowed the Department to collect annual returns. Many private schools refused to submit voluntarily more detailed quarterly reports. As they stood the returns proved useless as legal ammunition (*Education Report* 1880-81, p. vi), but the practice of collecting them continued throughout the nineteenth century. They are the most comprehensive source on nineteenth-century private schools.

Departmental reports published the head teacher's name, the school's address and the total number of boys and girls attending during the year. These estimates of total attendance are used in conjunction with the published figures of total attendance in State

schools to estimate which types of schools children attended in the selected suburbs after the Education Act.[4] Table 2-3 shows such a small proportion of students attending non-government schools that one is tempted to dismiss the returns collected by the Education Department as incomplete. However, the sum of the proportion of students attending both forms of nongovernment schools in all cases approached or exceeded the one-quarter derived from the census for the Melbourne metropolitan area. Clearly, even though throughout the 1870s and 1880s non Catholic private schools continued to exist the only numerically significant alternative was the large metropolitan Catholic schools. The larger proportion of private students in Richmond-Hawthorn was due almost entirely to the enrolments in private schools in Hawthorn. This is indicative of the fact that the only private schools which could compete against free government schooling were those which served the middle and upper classes. Victoria did away with working-class private schools without the almost draconian techniques of inspection and certification used by English authorities to annihilate theirs (Gardner 1984, 188-210).

A common feature of nineteenth century schooling in Melbourne was the frequent shifting from school to school in the same neighbourhood. This practice will be discussed in greater detail later, but for now it can be used to determine if children attending the different schooling systems after the Education Act freely moved from one to another. While the table is dominated by the large percentage of children from nearby State schools, other conclusions can be drawn from the chart. If the State schools under study were able to attract students regardless of the type of schooling they had had before, the proportions in Table 2-4 should match those in Table 2-3. Of course neither of the tables is precise enough to justify any calculations between the two, but large discrepancies should be apparent.

At the North Melbourne school many students came from nearby Catholic schools, but not as many as would have been expected from Table 2-3. Considering that SS307 was only five blocks in each direction from two large Catholic schools, one with a total annual attendance of about 1,200 (the same size as SS307) and the other about half that size, priests appear to have been effective in attracting and retaining children. The percentage of children who were once in other types of private schools was, on the other

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[4]Estimating the number of students actually attending a school in a year is remarkably difficult. Pearson was not exaggerating when he wrote that 'the departmental report every year shows more children of school age on the rolls than are alive in the country' (*Pearson* 1877-8, p. 7). In each report the Department deflated the total number on the rolls by a factor (usually around 15 percent) to represent the amount of duplicate enrolments. This factor was bogus. It had been derived from questionnaires distributed annually in December which was the lowest attendance month of the year. When it is applied to total numbers of students in small areas unreasonable estimates result. Undeflated totals for private and State schools were used for Table 2-3.

Table 2-3: Types of schools attended by students in two areas of Melbourne, 1879 and 1888.

	State Schools	Catholic Schools	Other Private Schools
1879			
Richmond-Hawthorn	69	16	15
North Melbourne-West Melbourne	69	25	6
1888			
Richmond-Hawthorn	71	17	12
North Melbourne-West Melbourne	74	22	4

Source: *Report of the Minister for Public Instruction*, 1878-9 and 1888-89.
Note: The percentages are intended as rough indications of the prevalence of each form of school. The relative size of the State school student population is overstated in both suburb groups because a large State School on the North Melbourne border with Flemington and another on the East Melbourne border of Richmond were included. These schools, with total enrolments of over 1000 students, served children from adjacent suburbs in unknown proportions.

hand, larger than would have been expected from Table 2-3. This suggests a flow either constantly away from the private schools and into the State schools or continual fluctuation between them.

The Hindmarsh project found small private schools catering to young children who would eventually transfer to the State school (Cook *et al.* 1979, 42-3). To a limited extent this was true in the North Melbourne school. A larger percentage of children who transferred from a private school to SS307 were under six years of age (32 per cent) than the percentage coming from either Catholic schools (7 per cent) or other State schools (19 per cent). But clearly private schools were not functioning solely for very young children.

Far fewer Catholic school students than expected transferred to the Hawthorn State school. Of course Hawthorn's Catholic school, though only around the corner from SS293, was small and Richmond's major Catholic school was some distance from SS293. However, these are only partial explanations because former Richmond State school students came from even farther away. The real reason lay in the success of Richmond's

Table 2-4: Distribution of enrolling students who came from another local school by type of school, 1879, 1884, and 1888.

Students enrolling at:	Type of school previously attended: State School	Catholic School	Other Private School	N
SS307 North Melbourne	74	14	12	286
SS293 Hawthorn	79	5	16	189

Source: Melbourne School Registration Sample.
Note: Based on students transferring from a nearby school. Students who had 'private school' noted without information on where the school was, were assumed to have come from a local private school.

Catholic clergy in retaining their students. The Royal Commission on Education asked the superintendent of St Ignatius, the largest Catholic school in Richmond, how he was able to maintain an average attendance of over 80 per cent, far above that of any Melbourne State school. He explained

> We have several means of keeping up the average, we have a system of rewards, ... and I think, as a rule, the attendance at voluntary schools will always be better, on account of the less changing of schools (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 183).

Another priest, previously attached to Richmond, claimed that out of the 1,400 Catholic children in the suburb only 100 were in State schools (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 128). Unfortunately no one testified from either of the large Catholic schools serving North Melbourne, but a table presented to the commissioners showed they had a lower average attendance than St Ignatius.

Hawthorn's State school appears to have received the expected number of private students from the area. However, 45 per cent of these students lived in Richmond, even though the majority of private schools were located in Hawthorn. Clearly the elite private schools in Hawthorn were more successful in retaining their students than the Richmond schools. This is hardly a surprising finding as some of Hawthorn's schools were catering to the children of Victoria's most affluent citizens. During the prosperous late 1870s and the 1880s wealthy students at private schools were not likely to be transferred to a State school.

2.5 Who Were State School Students?

John Hadfield, a head teacher in a Melbourne state school boasted

> I have all classes of children in my school; the children of doctors, the children of professional men and the children of every-day laborers, throughout the school, and they sit side by side, without the slightest difference being shown in any way whatever (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 241).

Other witnesses to the 1883-4 Royal Commission on Education made similar claims (*RC on Education* 1882-3, pp. 106, 190, 199).[5] General histories of Australian education have presented the late nineteenth-century State school system as serving all classes, but these views have been based on slender evidence (e.g. Hirst 1984, 100-1). Even royal commissioners could not get information. When they asked about the social composition of State school students the Education Department's Secretary admitted it was possible to collect the occupations of students' parents or guardians from registration books. But he discouraged the endeavour, saying it would amount to 'heavy work upon the teachers' (*RC on Education* 1882-3, p. 10, 14-15). Recent detailed Australian educational histories have sidestepped the issue. Middle-class education has been studied in the context of secondary schools[6] and the Hindmarsh project was necessarily limited to working-class children because of the school's location. In Melbourne there was at least the potential for class selectivity. As we have seen, in addition to the Catholics, a substantial minority of students attended private schools well after 1873. Only two-thirds of the city's children returned as students in 1881 were in State schools and they represented only 52 per cent of all school-aged children.

Both ends of the social scale may have been pressed out of State schooling. From the inception of the Education Act there were charges that the very poor were excluded (*Age* 25 January 1873, p. 4). Head teachers admitted that some children variously called 'ragged children', 'gutter children', and children of 'vicious habits' who threatened the discipline or respectability of other students were not encouraged to attend (*RC on Education* 1884, pp. 55, 75, 121-2). Others claimed that middle and upper-class parents avoided the free State schools because they carried a taint of pauperism. At least that was the explanation given by the commissioners and the Education Department. They were so convinced of the high moral tone and standard of instruction in the schools that they could not give any other reasons for the higher classes to prefer private schooling

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[5]The *Age*'s first editorial on the implementation of the 1872 Education Act remarked with satisfaction that middle-class children were flooding into State schools, their parents recognizing the value of the tax financed system *Age* 15 January 1873, p. 2).

[6]The best work on middle-class secondary schooling has been done on girls' schools. For some examples see Theobald (1984), Zainu'ddin (1982) and Mackinnon (1982).

(*RC on Education* 1882-3, p. 10 and 1884, pp. 108-9). Still, several witnesses simply said that it was 'chiefly the lower classes' who sent their children to State schools (*RC on Education* 1884, pp. 22, 355).

The royal commissioners believed that the combination of compulsion and free education brought greater numbers of poor students into government schools and drove out the children of the affluent parents. However, this was too simple a generalization. Richmond's high priced common schools were not unique, but other schools welcomed destitute students. Edward Strahan's school in the centre of Melbourne had accepted many poor students under the destitute scholars scheme. He told the commissioners that since the Education Act went into effect he actually had a 'better class of children' (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 238).

Table 2-5 compares the social composition of the student bodies under the Common Schools Act and in the first years under the Education Act. Students are divided according to their fathers' occupations. All those listing only a mother as parent were grouped together. It was rare for the registration forms to specify a woman's occupation, most were simply called widows. While there were wealthy widows and others who made a modest living running a shop, most were very poor women, struggling on the small wages they and their children could earn. The categories of male occupations are self-explanatory. 'White-collar' workers are dominated by clerks, salesmen and commercial travellers. 'Businessmen' are all proprietors or presumed proprietors of merchandising or manufacturing concerns of any scale. Virtually all manual trades are classified as 'skilled'; the semi-skilled category is made up of hawkers and sellers of services such as gardeners, cab drivers and carters. Many railway employees are also in this group.[7]

In North Melbourne the commissioners' suspicions about the effect of free schooling were borne out. From the first year after the 1872 Act a greater proportion of the enrolling students were the children of semi-skilled workers, labourers and widows. The proportion of other students declined correspondingly, particularly those from skilled and business families. The explanation is that SS307 served a disproportionate number of the middle and lower middle-class children in North Melbourne during the common school era. Of the eight common schools in its vicinity this Presbyterian sponsored school was the least likely to admit destitute scholars. Less than five per cent of its total enrolment in 1868 and 1870 were supported by the government compared to an average for the other seven of 21 per cent (*Bd of Education Report* 1868, p. 112 and 1870, p. 76). On the other hand, the Education Act did not bring any consistent change in the social composition of enrolling students at Hawthorn State School 293.

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[7]Appendix A has a more thorough discussion about this classification scheme and a list of the specific occupations included under each category.

Table 2-5: Students enrolling before and after the 1872 Education Act by parental occupation.

	SS307 North Melbourne		SS293 Hawthorn	
Occupation	Pre 1873	1873-79	Pre 1873	1873-79
Professional	2	2	3	6
Businessmen	7	6	11	8
White Collar	13	9	7	7
Skilled Manual	53	44	41	49
Semi-skilled	11	14	27	16
Labourer	10	15	7	5
Female head	4	11	6	8
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	417	414	216	300

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.

A crucial question is whether the students at State schools were representative of their own communities. The only systematic description of the residents of areas smaller than a suburb are municipal rate books. I drew districts surrounding each school, considering both the competing nearby schools and reasonable walking distance.[8] Then I collected the occupation and sex of every household occupier within the districts from the 1882 North Melbourne, Richmond and Hawthorn rate books.[9] To guard against shifts in the occupational structure of the communities over time the occupations from the rate books have only been compared with those of the parents of students enrolling in 1879 and 1884. Table 2-6 shows the distributions.

Little was left of the North Melbourne school's tradition of serving the better off after the Education Act. Although the school attracted more children of skilled manual workers and fewer of semi-skilled and labouring fathers, the differences were slight. The overall impression is one of remarkable balance between the school and its community.

[8]For Richmond-Hawthorn the district was defined by Power Street on the west, the Yarra river in the south, Burnley Street to the east and the municipal boundaries to the north. In North Melbourne the neighbourhood was bounded by Curzon Street on the west, Victoria Street to the south and Harris Street on the north.

[9]I would like to thank the Archives Section of the City of Melbourne, Ian Powell, reference libraian at Hawthorn's public library, and Richmond's town clerk, David Williams, for allowing me to examine the original rate books.

Table 2-6: Comparison between the occupations of the community (1882) and the parents or guardians of enrolling students (1879 and 1884).

	Householders (H) and parents (P) of:							
	North Melbourne		Richmond		Hawthorn		Richmond-Hawthorn	
Occupation	H	P	H	P	H	P	H	P
Professional	2	0	5	4	22	7	12	6
Businessmen	10	7	5	17	13	12	8	14
White Collar	3	5	4	2	7	13	6	8
Skilled Manual	40	45	45	45	30	43	39	44
Semi-skilled	18	17	17	12	11	13	15	13
Labourer	17	13	15	13	3	1	10	6
Female head	10	13	9	8	14	10	11	9
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	1176	347	367	127	285	137	652	279

Sources: North Melbourne, Richmond and Hawthorn Rate Book Sample, 1882/3 and Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.

The Hawthorn school was less in harmony with its environs. From Richmond it drew a disproportionate number of merchants' and shopkeepers' children. In Hawthorn professional men did not support the State school while the neighbourhood's tradesmen compensated for that lack of confidence.

The conclusion from Table 2-6 is that State schools did not cater exclusively for the least advantaged. Indeed, if any group was under represented in metropolitan schools it was those very groups, along with the professional elite. The State schools studied here were utilized disproportionately by the children of white-collar workers, shopkeepers and artisans. As an *Age* editorial commented:

> It is satisfactory to know that pupils are pouring into the schools, but we cannot be blind to the fact that they are not the pupils on whose account, mainly, the change in our legislation was effected. Had Mr Stephen's bill never been introduced in Parliament these children would not have gone uneducated (*Age* 25 January 1873, p. 4).

Words of caution are necessary. People may have tended to give a less impressive occupation to the rate collector and a more resounding title to their children's teachers. Only careful linking of individuals between rate books and school registration books

would resolve this uncertainty. Rate books are silent about male occupiers' marital status and number of children. Chapter 4 will show that labouring men born outside the colony married at late ages, and many probably never married. This could distort the expected proportions of poor children at State schools since labourers living in the neighbourhoods would be less likely to be married and to have children. Finally, the boundaries may have been inappropriate. A large majority of the students lived within those boundaries, but they were not required to attend those schools. Particularly for children in North Melbourne and east Richmond, who could choose among other State and Catholic schools, the character of the school or where friends went rather than immediate proximity may have determined their choice.

2.6 How Often Did Children Go to School?

A teacher looking out over most government schoolrooms in nineteenth-century Melbourne would have seen far fewer students than were on the rolls. Children attending less, often considerably less, than every school day were a source of constant irritation to the education authorities, from the Minister of Public Instruction down to the school teacher trying to earn a decent wage through the payment-by-results system. To combat irregular attendance education authorities during the common schools era argued for compulsory schooling (*Bd of Ed. Report* 1870, p. 45 and 1872, p. xi,25). After 1872 they supported, first, effective enforcement of the compulsory clause and, then, an increase in the minimum number of days required (*RC on Education* 1884, p. lxxxiv; *Education Report* 1873-4, p. v and 1878-9, pp. 17-18). Legislation was enacted slowly. In 1876 compulsory attendance was defined as 30 days (or 60 half days as the roll was called twice a day) out of each 60 day quarter. In 1890 the minimum was increased to 40 days, followed by 75 per cent of all days in 1901 and four days out of every five day week in 1905.

Attendance practices changed at an even slower pace. The ratio of the average number of students attending in a day to the total number enrolled faltered and crept from 50 in 1872 to 54 in 1890 to 61 in 1901. Annual reports gloated over each incremental rise, but low average attendance was seen as a failure of either the school system or parental control. Pearson began his report on the state of public instruction by writing 'I do not myself regard an average attendance of 46 per cent or less with any feeling but dismay, when I consider what our expenditure has been' (*Pearson* 1877-8, p. 3). He did not need to be so defensive. Irregular attendance was a feature of schooling throughout the West. While schooling itself was valued, daily attendance was not. Parents had to balance their children's need for an education against the family's needs.

2.6.1 Average Tenure at a School and the 'Love of Change'

Before examining average attendance it is necessary to discuss a related, but separate issue. Not only did children fail to attend the school at which they were enrolled frequently enough to satisfy the education experts, they also tended to transfer from school to school freely and often. High residential mobility was a feature of urban life in the nineteenth century, but the authorities tended to blame 'love of change' rather than family moves (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 133, 138, 143; *Education Report* 1876-7, p. iv).

Registration data clearly indicate that shifting schools was common. Of the common school students in the sample, 29 per cent attended for only a half-year. Among students enrolling in 1873 and 1874, the first two years under the Education Act, the percentage leaving within six months rose to 39. It had declined to 26 per cent by the end of the decade. Only 42 per cent of students enrolling before 1873 and in the late 1870s were still attending one and a half years later. Only in the chaotic years after the Act was the percentage very low (26 per cent).

If premature departures were the result of caprice rather than family moves, there were certainly opportunities for indulging it. Although State schools were being consolidated, children still had many schools to choose from. Nor was distance an obstacle if a child wanted to go to a particular school. Truant officers and head teachers commented on cases in which a single school in a district overflowed while others remained empty (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 30). Edwin Parnell, head teacher of La Trobe Street State School 1278 told the royal commission that 'I draw more than one third of the children from La Trobe street to the Yarra - the others come from North Melbourne and Hotham and other places'. He lost students when a school opened across the border from North Melbourne half a mile from his school (p. 138).

In order to learn if children were staying a short time at State schools because they were moving house frequently I did a more intensive study of all of the sampled students who had enrolled at the North Melbourne school in 1879 and at the Hawthorn school in 1879 and 1884. Armed with their parent's or guardian's name, address and occupation from the school records, I located the parental home in the rate books.[10] By searching successive years I could determine if the family had been living in the house up to two years before the child enrolled at the school and up to two years after the child stopped attending. The linkage was very successful; 78 per cent of the North Melbourne students and 70 per cent of the Hawthorn school's students were located. Although they cannot be included, it is worth noting that 69 per cent of the students who could not be identified in

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[10]Gwen McWilliam kindly allowed me to look at the indexes she has compiled of early Hawthorn residents. They were a great help in narrowing my search.

the rate books had attended fewer than four quarters. Probably many of them lived in the area too briefly to be enumerated in the annual rate books.

Changing schools without changing residence was a real practice of urban children and not an unfounded phobia of education authorities. More than half (56 per cent) of the students linked to rate book entries had lived at the same residence for at least one year before transferring to the school.[11] This was most common in North Melbourne (62 per cent) and among students at the Hawthorn school residing in Richmond (61 per cent), but not unknown among children living in Hawthorn (43 per cent). Given such a pattern it is hardly surprising that there was a strong relationship between occupation and the probability of students having lived at the same address a year before registering. Only 15 per cent of the children of professionals delayed enrolment compared to 33 per cent of other white-collar workers' children. The percentages of children changing schools were much higher for other occupational groups: 65 per cent for shopowners' and other businessmen's children, 54 per cent of skilled manual workers' children, an incredible 91 per cent for semi-skilled workers' children, 61 per cent for labourers' children and 43 per cent for the children of widows and other female guardians.[12]

Richmond Central State School 1567 was the closest school in Richmond to the Hawthorn school and the one from which the majority of Richmond students shifted. Its head teacher Julius Stach explained to the Royal Commission:

> at present. I may mention, there is no check upon the children's inclinations as to the number of schools the individual child may wish to attend in a week. In my own experience I could easily bring forward the names of children who have attended at least three schools in the same week, and in the same district (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 113).

Constant shifting between schools at worst suggests a fundamental bitterness towards the State school system. At best it implies a lack of attachment to any particular school. Children made the formal, unimaginative teaching, crowded classrooms and strict discipline a little more palatable, a bit less repressive and tedious by a change of scenery. However, short tenure was partly promoted by the Education Department's explicit policies. Large classes and uniform curriculum geared towards annual examinations encouraged each urban classroom to be identical to any other.

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[11] Children enrolling for the first time at any school are not included.

[12] In the order in which the occupations are mentioned the number of cases are 13, 15, 26, 106, 33, 28 and 21. Despite these small numbers the differences are so large that they are significantly different at less than the 0.001 probability level.

2.6.2 Average attendance at school

The Education Department measured its success by students' attendance, valiantly battling with lengthy explanations in the annual reports against indications that it was not increasing. Beginning in 1878-79 the reports included a table which divided students on the rolls into those who had complied with the compulsory clause of sixty meetings a quarter and those who had not. The latter were subdivided into categories of every conceivable exemption; the remainder were labelled as 'apparent defaulters.' For the average of the four quarters in 1884, as an example, only 74 per cent of the children who attended at all attended the required number of days. The Department quickly showed this was not unreasonable. Subtracting those outside the school ages (7 per cent), living beyond the prescribed distance (3 per cent), or already educated beyond the standard (2 per cent) as well as those sick (4 per cent) or who entered or left the school during the quarter (6 per cent) left only 4 per cent unaccounted for *(Education Report* 1884-5, p. ix). Needless to say such calculations should be treated with considerable scepticism, but they remind us that not all failures to meet the minimum requirements were wilful violations of the law.

School registration books recorded the number of half-days a child attended each semester or, after the mid 1870s, each quarter. Though unfortunately they do not record why a child attended fewer than the required meetings, they can still be used to study attendance patterns. The analysis is restricted to students enrolling in 1879, 1884 and 1888 because there was no pretence of enforcing the compulsory clause until truant officers were hired in 1877 (Blake 1973, 212).[13] To meet the various requirements for studying attendance the units of analysis are quarters attended rather than individual students. All quarters which were the first or the last one the student attended are disregarded. Then only the students who attended at least four additional quarters are used, and only those four quarters are studied. This strategy eliminated artifically low attendance due to students enrolling or departing in the midst of a quarter. Of course, students may have transferred in order to evade the minimum requirement. By using four quarters instead of one the variability of attendance for individuals can be captured without biasing the sample towards students who stayed an unusually long time at the school. Unlike the Education Department's report, I include quarters if the student did not attend for a single day but had attended the quarter before and would attend the following quarter. It was surprisingly frequent for a child to miss an entire quarter. Although he or she may have received education elsewhere during that period, from the

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[13]The first cases before the Richmond police magistrates were prosecuted by the newly appointed truant officer J. Ryder and not the local Board of Advice (*R'd Aus.* 2 June 1877, p. 3).

school's point of view it is realistic to include them since they were still considered enrolled students. I suspect that in many cases the children were visiting relatives, trying out a new school or ill. However, I did not find any meaningful differences in the proportion of quarters with no attendance by age, sex or parental occupation.

In 65 per cent of the quarters attendance exceeded the minimum requirement. Table 2-7 shows that completely failing to meet the requirement was as common as coming within ten meetings of the minimum. This confirms findings of the Hindmarsh project (Wimshurst 1981, 404-5) and testimony to the Royal Commission on Education (1884, p. 66, 112, 217) that parents were aware of the minimum requirement and strove to achieve but not exceed it every quarter. The 1888 enrolment cohort was most likely to exceed the requirement in both schools. This was a voluntary increase since it measures attendance before the minimum was raised by the 1890 Act. Finally, the Hawthorn school had a consistently lower attendance record. This suggests that noncompliance was not limited to the poor.

Table 2-7: Attendance per quarter for students attending more than four quarters by school and year of enrolment.

Meetings attended each quarter	North Melbourne				Hawthorn			
	'79	'84	'88	Total	'79	'84	'88	Total
None	6	11	8	8	11	10	7	10
1-49	14	12	9	12	19	19	9	16
50-69	16	8	9	11	15	15	12	14
70-129	64	69	74	69	55	55	72	60
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100	100%
N	328	348	256	932	212	352	260	824

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.
Note: Cases refer to number of quarters. Every student is represented by four quarters. See text for the selection criteria.

Table 2-8 shows that occupation groups as different as white-collar workers, skilled manual workers and labourers sent their children to school for more meetings than required by law approximately two out of every three quarters. Semi-skilled workers and widows averaged a slightly lower percentage while professionals almost always sent their

children regularly. The most unusual group were businessmen. These fathers kept their children and particularly their daughters from attending regularly far more often than any other group. In most retail establishments wives were active business partners and daughters may have been needed for housework that would otherwise be neglected. Children of Richmond businessmen had the lowest percentage of quarters which exceeded the requirement (28 per cent) but the percentage for Hawthorn residents was also low (44 per cent). Children of North Melbourne businessmen had a more typical proportion of quarters with regular attendance. All three groups, however, were more likely than other children to attend zero or very few days. The Richmond children may have been attending the Hawthorn school (perhaps in conjunction with another school) to evade legal requirements. Yet, since North Melbourne and Hawthorn businessmen also followed this practice it seems more likely that as a group they were relatively immune to legal repercussions either because of their standing in the community or because their children's labour had such direct monetary benefits that a 5s fine, if levied, was not an economic threat.

Table 2-8: Percentage of quarters exceeding the minimum requirement by sex and parental occupation.

Occupation	Girls	Boys	Total
Professional	83	73	77
Businessmen	42	57	48
White Collar	69	71	70
Skilled Manual	64	69	67
Semi-skilled	63	60	61
Labourer	70	66	67
Female-head	63	54	59
Total	63	66	65

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.
Note: Based on students who enrolled in 1879, 1884 and 1888.

The compulsory clause did not apply to children under six years of age, but that did not prevent large numbers of young children from enrolling. As their attendance was optional parents used the school to suit their own needs, sending the child only when convenient. Children younger than six years old were almost twice as likely to attend only one to 49 meetings in a quarter and less likely to exceed the minimum requirement.

Children within the ages covered by the compulsory clause attended at least 70 meetings in 70 per cent of the quarters.

Table 2-9: Percentage of quarters exceeding the minimum requirement by student's age and parental occupation.

Occupation	2-5 years	6-10 years	11 + years
Professional	69	72	100
Businessmen	40	53	56
White Collar	60	75	75
Skilled Manual	62	71	66
Semi-skilled	42	78	71
Labouring	70	58	100
Female-head	50	69	38
Total	58	70	71

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.
Note: Based on students who enrolled in 1879, 1884 and 1888.

Three distinct patterns of attendance by age can be discerned in Table 2-9. The children of professionals, white-collar workers and businessmen were more likely to attend regularly as they grew older. The middle class patronizing State schools put great emphasis on the value of education received by older children for it was in the last years that they would learn the skills that would mark them as members of the 'educated class' and qualify them for further education or a job or apprenticeship in a white-collar occupation. This implies motivations which are more geared towards males, but in fact these groups tended to send sons and daughters to schools equally often. However, twice as many older daughters were in the State schools than older sons. Regular attendance was more common among the children in the middle age group with fathers in skilled manual or semi-skilled jobs or with widows or other female guardians. For these children attendance varied by gender in the oldest age group. As in the middle class, older girls predominated in State schools, but they attended less regularly than their brothers. Working-class boys of that age would have found it difficult to combine full-time wage labour with even occasional attendance at day school. Boys who did attend would have been exceptionally motivated to receive an education. The combination of school and domestic responsibilities which many working-class girls juggled made schooling more feasible, but regular attendance difficult. Children of labourers appear to fit a different

pattern; their attendance declined in the middle years and then rose. These families may have been more eager to take advantage of the schools as a way to simultaneously care for and teach young children. All of the few older children of labourers in the sample were male, which suggests that gender specific pattern was closer to that of other working-class children.

The preceding analysis based on quarters gives the mistaken impression that about two-thirds of all students attended regularly. While this was true for any given quarter, over time individuals' attendance could vary considerably. During the four quarters studied here only 13 per cent of the children failed to exceed the minimum requirement every time, but 64 per cent attended less at least once. Of course this differed by occupation of parent or guardian. Still, only 44 per cent of professionals' children attended 70 or more meetings in each quarter. At the other end of the scale only 24 per cent of widows' children maintained such regularity. Overall 31 per cent of girls consistently had regular attendance compared with 40 per cent of boys.

The education reforms of the 1870s could have influenced the regularity of attendance in two diametrically opposed ways. The minimum number of days established in 1876 was to have set a floor to the variability of attendance. As we have seen even that modest requirement was more of a goal than a rule. However, compared to the practices in the common schools where all attendance was voluntary there may have been considerably more regularity in the late 1870s and the 1880s. The commissioners believed parents enforced regular attendance when they paid fees even though some head teachers told them that a rainy Monday would mean an empty school for a week because parents were reluctant to pay when their child was not going to attend every day (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 21, 242). The commissioners, as usual, argued without data. In fact, attendance patterns had changed, but not in a way they anticipated.

Common school attendance was recorded in semesters. To be comparable with the later figures students were selected from the sample who had enrolled before 1873 and attended at least four semesters before that year. The analysis is restricted to their second and third semesters. Table 2-10 shows that overall 69 per cent of the semesters were attended for at least 140 meetings compared to 65 per cent under the Education Act. Middle-class parents seem to have used the same economic reasoning as the commissioners. Professionals were the only occupation group to send their children to school very regularly before and after 1872. However, white-collar workers and the businessmen who showed such economic cunning afterwards, sent their children more regularly when they were paying. Changes in government policy had little effect on working class families. While the day by day decisions to send a child to school may have altered after the abolition of fees and the introduction of truant officers, attendance was

much the same because the children were needed at home or in the labour force just as often.

Table 2-10: Percentage of quarters exceeding the minimum requirement before and after the Education Act.

	Students enrolling in:	
Occupation	1866-1871	1879-1888
Professional	82	77
Commercial	73	48
White Collar	87	70
Skilled Manual	65	67
Semi-skilled	68	61
Labourer	72	67
Female-head	57	56
Total	69	65

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.

One aspect of the 1872 education reforms was extremely important. Table 2-8 showed the proportion of quarters exceeding the minimum requirement by the parent's or guardian's occupation and the child's sex. Only business owners sent their daughters to school substantially less often than their sons. Two other groups had favoured their daughters' education. It was considerably different in common schools. Even then daughters of professionals attended more often than their brothers. Children of white-collar workers went to school equally regularly regardless of their sex. But from other groups girls were much less likely to attend regularly. The percentage of boys attending 140 meetings a semester was greater than the percentage of girls by 23 points for business owners, 13 for skilled manual workers, 10 for semi-skilled workers, 8 for labourers and 13 for families headed by women. Naturally sex differences remained after 1873 but they were smaller and in general only involved the youngest and the oldest children. The revolution of the Education Act took a form that its framers never anticipated, but that must have had considerable impact on the daily lives of individual girls and possibly on

their overall self esteem.[14] Irregular attendance during the common school era meant irregular attendance for girls. This difference did not exist ten years later. True the housewife was undoubtedly forced to toil even harder in her home with less assistance from her daughters. But liberation, albeit quiet and subtle, is not too strong a word to use for the benefits to working-class girls. Suddenly they were accorded the same rights as their brothers to attend school.

2.7 Ages of transition

Enclosing the school career, or more precisely the period of occasional attendance at a variety of schools, were the day the child first walked into the school and the day he or she walked out, never to return again. These are periods of transition in any child's life, but in late nineteenth-century Melborne they were not abrupt. Attendance was irregular at the beginning and the end of the school career and children assumed other roles such as wage labour before abandoning school altogether. Firm evidence is available on the age of beginning school, at least for children enrolling in or after 1879. Unfortunately, an average leaving age is more elusive.

2.7.1 Beginnings

The official attitude towards young children in schools was ambivalent. Opposition to early schooling prevalent in America since the 1840s existed in Victoria as well (Kaestle and Vinovskis 1978, 55-60). 'Infants fitted rather for their mothers' arms than school' (*Education Report* 1874-5, p. 141) were thought to make the whole school degenerate into a nursery (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 24). Others argued passionately that small children risked bad health and 'acute brain disease' from overcrowded classrooms and premature intellectual exertion (*Education Report* 1880-1, p. 199; Goergs 1886, 93-6).

In 1867 the Board of Education decided it would make no payments for children under three years old unless the common school was equipped with a separate infant school.

> It is clear that their presence injures the organization of schools, and that where there is no special instruction they receive little benefit; they are frequently sent solely to be out of the way of their mothers, and seldom pay fees (*Bd of Ed. Report* 1867-8, p. 37).

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[14]This unsung benefit of 'universal' schooling is not unique to Melbourne. In many Third World countries it has been boys who are more often sent and who stay longer in the first stages of popular primary schooling (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell 1985, 31-2, 39). In Hamilton, Ontario considerable sex differences in the proportion of the school aged population disappeared within ten years owing to the establishment of a centralized government school system (Davey 1977, 5).

Most Melbourne common schools had infant schools. After 1873 the Education Department extended this policy, refusing to pay for children under three years of age (*RC on Education* 1882-3, p. 5). The local Boards of Advice and the teachers retained the right to accept younger children, or impose a higher age limit as long as it did not interfere with the statutory age limit of six years.

Prodded by discussions of early schooling in the press, which viewed it as an inappropriate expenditure of public monies and an unethical way for teachers to inflate their salaries, the Minister of Education asked inspectors for recommendations (*RC on Education* 1882-3, p. 51). They proposed a minimum age of four and a half years, but suggested that younger children should be allowed to attend at the teacher's discretion although the government should not pay for them. The inspectors were afraid older siblings would be kept from school if younger ones were not permitted to accompany them (*Education Report* 1881-2, p. 193). Those who testified before the Royal Commission supported their earlier recommendations of four and a half as a minimum age and three admitted that they would prefer it to be placed at five years of age. However, it is hardly surprising that inspectors, who only examined children who had passed out of the infant classes, would have been sceptical of the educational value of early schooling.

Melbourne State school headmasters overwhelmingly supported a minimum age of four years and several believed that at least some younger children could also benefit from the curriculum. The most vociferous advocate of a form of kindergarten schooling promoted three as an ideal age to start school. When asked about the dangers of early schooling he said 'It is pitiable to see even the sixth class badly instructed' (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 179). Only one head master told the commissioners that he refused to admit children under four years old (p. 101). Most were tolerant towards very young children for two reasons. First, many had three-year-olds and even two-year-olds in their schools. To deny that those childen were benefiting from attending was, of course, to request a reduction in salary (p. 410), but also to admit that the school was badly managed. The other reason was in the nature of infant school teaching. Instruction in government infant rooms was very poor, both in stimulating children's intellect (*Education Report* 1885-6, p. 153) and in teaching them to read (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 409). Yet, as Pearson said, 'All the teachers I have seen of late have spoken so very strongly to me about the importance of catching them young, that I think it ought to be done' (p. 346). Infant schools taught children obedience and discipline, which made teaching older children easier (p. 410 and 1882-3, p. 61).

Given the multitude of opinions the Education Department did not establish a firm starting age for school children. Head teachers used their own discretion and probably rarely turned away children over three years old, particularly when a sibling accompanied

them. Actual practice reflected parents' convenience and notions of the right time to begin school.

The mean age of entering school for children who had never attended a school before and who registered in 1879, 1884 or 1888 at the North Melbourne and Hawthorn schools was 4.3 years, not much higher than the head teachers' preferred minimum. Forty-five per cent of girls and 42 per cent of boys starting school were under four years old. Table 2-7 shows that there was a minor relationship between occupation group and very early enrolment. All classes found advantages in sending children to school at a young age, particularly as it was free and regular attendance was optional. However the teachers who testified to the Royal Commission would not have been surprised that the working class were more inclined to enter school early. Edwin Parnell of La Trobe Street State School told the commissioners:

> I agree with the teachers who gave evidence here before, if you could get elementary instruction given at home as you do sometimes in families in England, between six and seven would be time enough [to start school], but for the working classes I think between four and five would be, because they have not the advantages that people in other circumstances have of getting instruction at home at night or during the day. The parents are occupied (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 137).

Table 2-11: Age at starting school by parental occupation, 1878, 1884 and 1888.

Occupation	2 & 3 years	4 & 5 years	6 + years	Total	N
Professional	29	43	29	100%	7
White Collar	32	63	6	100%	16
Businessmen	36	50	14	100%	22
Skilled Manual	39	51	10	100%	102
Semi-skilled	55	34	11	100%	47
Labouring	40	55	5	100%	20
Female-head	41	47	12	100%	17
Total	42	48	17	100%	231

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.

Comparable figures on the proportion of children under the statutory age of six attending school cannot be constructed over the whole period because the age categories used in censuses and Department reports varied. Also, total numbers of students in single years of age given in annual reports were notoriously poor. There is, however, no reason

to expect that they became more or less accurate during the period, so they can still be used to study trends.

Free state education increased the numbers of young children in government schools. Only 16 per cent of 3 and 4-year-olds were on the rolls in 1871 compared to 31 per cent in 1881. However, this may not have been an increase in the proportions of young children who were scholars. Private schools, particularly those catering for the working class, often only taught the young. These schools have been dismissed as child-minding centres, but they were very adept at teaching the young to read (Gardner 1984 and *RC on Education* 1884, p. 409). After 1881 the proportion of young children enrolling in State schools declined. Of the three to five year olds in 1881, 21 per cent were in State schools; in 1891 the proportion was 16 per cent and by 1901 only 8 percent. But many more were receiving some education. Census returns on occupations revealed that 43 per cent of three, four and five-year-olds were students in 1881 and 37 per cent in 1891. A study of the ages of entering school in nineteenth-century Massachusetts showed that parents held out against bureaucratic and ideological efforts to keep young children out of school (Kaestle and Vinovskis 1978, 60-6). However, within 20 years of the initial campaigns in the 1840s early schooling was minimal. Victoria is a good example of how long parents would continue to find an advantage in sending their youngest children to school if they faced no resistance from authorities.

2.7.2 Endings

The inspectors' recommendations on the ideal starting age intimated that one reason for keeping the minimum age of entry low was the hope that if children began school early they would be able to finish early. As children grew older they were more useful to their parents. The greater the overlap between the prescribed school career and the ages at which a child could earn a wage, the less chance there was of keeping a child in school. Pearson went so far as to calculate the value to the colony's parents of keeping children in school from ages twelve to thirteen (*Pearson* 1877-8, p.8-9). He used this as an economic argument for more regular attendance of younger children, but parents perceived too great a short run value in irregular attendance to conform to Pearson's wishes. Because the inspectors and head masters believed that starting school early did not lower the age at which children eventually reached the standard level, reducing the compulsory age from six to five, or even four, was never seriously contemplated (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 12).

The school leaving age was intentionally ambiguous. Officially it was fifteen, but few urban students stayed at school as long as that. It took much less time to sufficiently master the basic skills needed to pass the standard examination. Estimates of when a

child would be ready were remarkably uniform. Some head teachers told the Royal Commission that students should be able to pass at age 12, but most set 13 as the upper limit for a child 'with average abilities and attention' (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 102). 'If they cannot obtain their certificates at fourteen they are not likely to obtain it at all (p. 161).'

There was less consensus about what happened after the standard level had been achieved. The Education Department regretted that the standard had been interpreted as the end of schooling and urged a transparent ruse of a change in the wording of the certificate to discourage parents from withdrawing their children once they passed (*RC on Education* 1882-3, p. 11). Practices probably varied from school to school. At some schools children doing the work of the fourth level were routinely presented for the examination. At other schools parents had to request that their children take the examination before they reached the fifth level. The North Melbourne and Hawthorn schools' registration books rarely recorded the date of passing the examination, so either such examinations were infrequent, which is unlikely, or it was not customary to record them. The Hawthorn head teacher told the commissioners that he had 'only five or six' students attending who had passed the examination (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 205). Passing the standard and leaving school must have been seen as equivalent there. On the other hand, another teacher said that at his school very few students left immediately after passing, and that after twelve months half would still be at school (*RC on Education* 1884, p. 202). Estimates of the average leaving age were consistently given as 13 or 14. A typical statement was: 'Most of our pupils seem to leave school betwen the ages of thirteen and fourteen, but I have not collected a sufficient number of instances to guide an exact conclusion' (*Education Report* 1881-2, p. 193). Given the sometimes extreme irregularity of attendance, different ages of starting school and the variety of parental backgrounds, such consistency is remarkable. Thirteen had clearly become the normative end to compulsory schooling, the *de facto* end to the school career, long before that age was made the statutory age limit in 1890.

Unfortunately, because most students spent such a short time at the schools studied, it is difficult to estimate from school registration books the age children left all forms of schooling. However, life table analysis can be used to construct an average age of leaving school from information on the students who were linked to rate book entries. Life tables calculate the probability of a terminal event (like dying or finishing school) occurring within a given time interval. The probability of leaving school at age 12 can be calculated as the number of students who left while they were 12 divided by the number of students who were still in school at their twelfth birthday. A problem arises when there are some students who left the school but continued their education elsewhere, but life

tables take this into account. If a 10-year-old girl stopped attending and her family left the neighbourhood she contributes to the proportions who continued school beyond eight years of age and to age nine; when she is withdrawn at age ten she is removed from the denominator and thus does not affect the subsequent probability of continuing in school to age 11.

The results using the linked data set are sensitive to assumptions made about who left all forms of school and who transferred to another school. I constructed two series. Under conservative assumptions only children who left when 11 years old or older and whose parents stayed in the neighbourhood were defined as leaving school. That produced a median age of leaving school of 14.1 years. The liberal assumption was that all children leaving school at any age whose parents stayed in the same house had finished all forms of schooling and that any child who was at least 11 years old when he or she stopped attending, even if the parents had moved, had also finished with schooling. That produced a median age of leaving of 12.8 years. In other words, the data, while unable to give a precise estimate of the average age children left school, show a stubborn adherence to the range frequently mentioned by the education authorities. Most children left school when they were 13.

2.8 Conclusion

The school careers of children in Melbourne do not support Caldwell's thesis that universal education changed the direction of wealth flows within the family. The major legislative action during the period, the 1872 Education Act, had little effect despite the significance it has been accorded by contemporaries and historians. Secular, compulsory and free State schooling did not bring under the civilizing umbrella of education children who were not already there. The Act did make schooling more uniform. It replaced what had been a variety of private, quasi-private, religious and government schools with two major systems. After 1872 Catholic schools were the only sizable alternative to State education, and even they consciously modelled themselves on their official competitors in all aspects except the content of the moral refrain to course work. If we consider how children used the State schools it seems unlikely that this imposed regularity made many significant changes to their lives. Compared to the experiences in the earlier common schools, children's attendance was about the same. Girls may have noticed some difference, but their improvement was more relative to their brothers than absolute. I do not have evidence on when children left school before the Education Act, however the annual reports and testimony at the Royal Commission did not suggest that there had been any changes.

Of course the emphasis on the 1872 legislation could be misplaced. Earlier reforms

may have made fundamental inroads into family life. However no other governmental actions in Victoria could have instituted such changes. Other Acts did not have the element of compulsion and they were not intended to serve all of the children in the colony.

The nature of schooling in the last third of the nineteenth century was shaped not by educational theories, struggles between churches or in the police courts. It took the form which best suited families. The changes in schooling that did occur during the period were made without legal pressure. Students who enrolled at the suburban schools in 1888 had the most regular attendance. They reflected a colonial trend of a gradual improvement in average attendance which precipitated an increase in the minimum attendance requirement. Behaviour dictated law.

When parents' or childrens' desires conflicted with the wishes of the educational authorities the victors were clear. The authorities wanted schooling to be as efficient as possible. Children should not enter school until they were old enough to behave themselves and benefit from lessons. They were expected to attend daily, pass annual examinations and be through with the minimum curriculum by about age 12. Instead parents sent their young children to school, probably both to get them out of the house and because it was believed they were old enough to start studying. Once they were in school, families made the institution fit their own requirements. When it was inconvenient to send them, when they were needed at home or at work or when the children just did not feel like going, school was ignored. The uniform educational system with an emphasis on learning by rote lessons of little or no practical use has been interpreted by many historians as a blatant form of social control. It was designed to make a docile wage-earning class. In a similar vein Caldwell has argued that mass education inculcated qualities of individual achievement in a world where one had few rights by virtue of influence or personality. However, both through irregular attendance and in the constant shifting from school to school children, probably with their parents' blessings, subverted these intentions. Undoubtedly many children developed a sense of failure from their school careers (Miller 1984). But most would have viewed school as a means to an end: a chance to play during the walks to and from school, to learn the basic skills of reading, writing and numbers, and to pass the time away from their parents' watchful eyes. Children from working-class families were most likely to have behaviour at odds with the prescribed school career. But State school students from families in each occupation group had some tendency to use the schools for their own and different purposes (1985, 195).

Levine has argued that in England

> The introduction of mass education *followed* the working-class family's recomposition; it did not precede it, as J. C. Caldwell would argue. The changing direction of wealth flows within the family transformed the morality governing family relationships, and not vice versa.

The same was true in Melbourne. I have not addressed in this chapter why parents sent their children to school. However, by their children's behaviour we know that they did and without pressure from outside authorities. Families' economic needs, the availability of jobs and apprenticeships, and the subjective beliefs about when a child was a child all influenced school attendance and the timing of transitions into and out of school. The 1872 Education Act did not define or alter these factors. On the contrary, educational regulations were forced to conform to them.

CHAPTER 3
WORK

The only schooling most Melbourne children had was the State school program. When they finished their next step was to look for work, if they did not already have a job. This chapter looks at youthful workers. I investigate how common it was for children to work, when they started and what types of jobs they had. I also examine their options and explain why some girls were servants and others worked in clothing factories, why some boys became engineers and others swept floors, and what the consequences of their choices were.

If parents can make their children work for them from a relatively young age, then it is economically rational to want as large a family as possible. Thadani (1978) and Levine (1985) have argued that the fertility transition occurred when the economy no longer required child labour. Throughout the West the mechanization of agriculture was reducing the demand for all labour and a rationalization of manufacturing meant there were fewer master craftsmen available to take on live-in apprentices. These structural changes doomed the common practice of sending children away to work as farm labourers and servants or apprentices (see Gillis 1974; Kett 1977). Cottage industries were being subsumed into the factory system and parents who had previously kept their children at home because they were useful had to find other employment for themselves *and* their children (Levine 1985). Suddenly, idle children and youth were a problem. Some even argue that schooling became popular because it was a way of occupying children who, for the first time, had nothing else to do (Musgrove 1964; Smelser and Halpern 1978).

Before my story of Melbourne begins England had already been transformed by those changes. Since the colonies had imported the new economic order, we could presumably say that Melbourne parents never viewed their children as economic assets. The fact that Melbourne very early on had voluntary mass schooling would seem to support Thadani's and Levine's argument that it was economics which was responsible for reversed wealth flows and the fertility decline. However, some historians have pointed out that there was another structural change that took place during the late nineteenth century which brought children back to the work force and and into the ranks of their families' pool of productive members. Katz and his colleagues (1982, chapter 7) found

that the industrialization of a declining commercial city during the 1860s and 1870s increased boys' employment opportunities. While there was no return to the widespread employment of school age children, previously idle youths found work. The wages proved so attractive to the boys and their parents that the school leaving age dropped.

Melbourne's economy was very similar to the one in Hamilton, Ontario that Katz studied. Commerce, the service sector, public works, construction and manufacturing were all thriving during the 1870s and 1880s. Did that prosperity bring young people into the labour market or did it mean that parents were sufficiently well off to keep them out of the work force? Did parents benefit from their children's labour? Were decisions about jobs made with the young person's future in mind or for the short term advantage of the family? By answering these questions it should be possible to characterize late nineteenth-century youth as dependent on their parents or as supporting their parents.

3.1 Pre-occupations of Children and Youth

3.1.1 Methods

Despite the lack of extant census manuscripts and the poor age detail in the published tables, Victoria's censuses still provide the most comprehensive picture of how late nineteenth-century children and youth formally spent their time. Each census from 1861 to 1901 gave enough information on the 'Occupations of the People' to isolate and describe the population under age twenty. Naturally this is a broad age category and, unfortunately, a more subtle analysis which accounts for differences between infants, children and adolescents can only be done for the last two census years. Nonetheless, the worst effects of using such a large age group can be reduced through a form of indirect standardization.

For the analysis children were divided into groups based on the occupation returns. 'Students' included all of those reported to be students regardless of the type of education they were receiving, which ranged from university to being educated at home. 'Dependants' were defined as persons returned as son, daughter, relative, visitor, boarder or lodger and who either had no occupation specified or were reported as performing 'domestic duties'. In earlier censuses all dependants were put under a single classification and they cannot be separated, but most nonrelatives under twenty in this category were most likely living with a parent in another person's household. A third group consisted of inmates of charitable and penal institutions. This group at no time accounted for as much as two per cent of the under-twenty population and was usually less than one per cent, but including them with dependants or employed would clearly be inappropriate. The residual population was defined as members of the labour force. It should be remembered

that not all of these children were earning wages or working outside of their home for people who were not relatives. Before discussing the proportions of children in each category and how they changed as the century progressed, some of the weaknesses of the data must be examined.

3.1.1.1 Changing definitions of the working population

The work of very young children and particularly girls was vital to a smooth-running household. This kind of domestic duties was never reported in the Victorian censuses as productive labour. However, the administrators acknowledged that so-called dependants performed an essential role in the family economy when the householder conducted a business at home. Family farms were the most obvious case, but hotel keepers, boarding-house keepers, shopkeepers, shoemakers and butchers were also envisaged as carrying on home-based enterprises requiring the wife and older children's participation. In 1861, 1871 and 1891 only family members who were specifically returned as 'assisting' were reported under the householder's occupation. In 1881 and again in 1901 Victoria followed an earlier English practice of altering the returns. All wives and relatives fifteen years and older living with a farmer, shopkeeper, etc. were assumed to be 'assisting'. They were assigned the householder's occupation unless they reported another one, such as 'student'.

Recently there has been interest in the colonial census authorities' shifts in coding policies because they had a substantial effect on the recorded level of women's participation in the labour force and particularly on the contribution women made to the agricultural work force. Deacon (1985) has argued that the assumption that wives participated in economic activities conducted from the home was a more accurate representation of their activities than the one revealed from the untampered returns of the 1871 and 1891 censuses. Jones (1984), on the other hand, deflated the 1881 and 1901 estimates of women's contribution to the rural work force to be in keeping with the censuses which did not alter occupations. The authors took it as axiomatic that the majority of farmers' wives respectively did and did not regularly perform economically productive tasks.

This analysis is concerned less with wives, though there were some wives under twenty years old, than with unmarried children and youths. Even though recoding was confined to persons aged 15-19, its effects were significant. In 1881 and 1901 a larger proportion of the economically active nonmetropolitan boys and girls was reported to be employed in agriculture (Table 3-1). The differences between those years and the years in which there was not wholesale recoding were much greater for girls. This was due to several factors and discussing them reveals much more about young people's work roles

than could be learned from directly tackling the issue of whether sons and daughters were economically productive on family farms.

In the face of the striking similarity in the level of agricultural employment in 1881 and 1901 for nonmetropolitan girls the disparity between 1871 and 1891 is curious. Why should enumeration by the householder produce different results in separate years when there was no significant change in the size of the farming population? The most likely explanation lies with the instructions to householders on the census forms. In 1891 the instructions included a sample schedule which listed a hypothetical farming family with an unmarried daughter described as 'assisting in dairy'. The 1881 sample schedule was not included in the census's General Report so it is not certain when this practice started, but the published 1871 form did not include such a daughter. An unmarried son was 'assisting on farm' in both the 1871 and 1891 sample census forms. Including an economically active daughter in 1891 may have prompted householders to scrutinize their own daughters' contribution to the family farm more thoroughly than 1871 householders had done. On the other hand, the constant proportion of males under age twenty employed in agriculture had less to do with the example of the sample schedule and more to do with the social conventions underlying that example. Later in this chapter, age-specific employment rates will show householders automatically gave males over approximately fifteen years of age were automatically given an occupational title. The same practice did not extend to their sisters.

Table 3-1: Number and percentage of the employed under 20 year olds who worked in agriculture, nonmetropolitan Victoria, 1871-1901.

	Males		Females	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1871	7,861	45	1,301	12
1881	16,692	49	7,695	32
1891	16,358	45	4,094	24
1901	19,544	47	6,882	33

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria*, 1871-1901.

3.1.1.2 Limitations of census tables

From 1871 summary tables for the colony reported the occupations of males and females over and under age twenty separately. Unfortunately 1861 tables did not distinguish by age. The proportions in each category had to be estimated by assuming that the percentage of all students, dependants and publicly supported persons who were less than 20 years old in 1871 was the same in 1861. Since virtually all students and dependants were under twenty and the total number of publicly supported persons was small, this method has little opportunity for error.

Occupations of Melbourne residents were not given in as great detail and needed more estimation. In 1861 and 1871 the occupations of persons are available down to the smallest administrative unit, making it possible to compile summary measures for the urban area, but the data are not given by age. In 1881 the occupations of males in metropolitan Melbourne, under and over age twenty, were published, but no data were presented for the city's females. Consequently information on Melbourne females in 1881 had to come from the tables for the County of Bourke which, again, was not divided by age.[1] This means the occupation data for males in 1861 and 1871 and Melbourne females in 1861 to 1881 were adjusted in the way described above using the proportions derived from the 1871 age-sex-specific occupation table for all city, town and borough residents of Victoria.

The following analysis compares Melbourne's children and youth with their peers in the rest of the colony. Married females under twenty have been excluded, but, since early marriages were rare during this period, this does not distort the under twenty population. Even in 1861 when the proportion of 15-19 year old females who were married was at its highest, it was only 13 per cent; from 1881 to 1901 it was under three per cent. Men almost never married in their teens so all males were included.

3.1.1.3 Controlling for shifts in the underlying age structure

Unfortunately the simple percentage drawn from the censuses of how the under twenty year old population was occupied is potentially misleading when used alone. Successive waves of migration to the gold- and commerce-rich colony created baby booms and echo booms which played havoc with the age distribution of the young. So did the fertility decline which can first be detected in the 1880s and which accelerated during the 1890s. The result is a population of young people with a very different age composition in each census year. For example, in Melbourne children aged 0-4 years represented 40 per cent of the under twenty year old population in 1861 but only 25 per cent in 1901. This

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[1] In 1881 92 per cent of Bourke County's female residents lived in metropolitan Melbourne.

would make the proportions of Melbourne's children and youth returned as students greater in 1901 than in 1861 merely because of the smaller proportion of the population under school age at the turn of the century. To guard against these distortions, impressions culled from the census must be balanced against knowledge of the age structure.

The best method for controlling for shifts in the underlying age structure is to multiply the age-specific ratios in each census year by a standard age distribution. However, only the 1901 census gave the occupations of Melburnians in sufficiently refined age groups. Therefore, the only way to control for age is to use the age-sex-specific ratios available for 1901 and apply them to each age group in the other census years. This gives, for example, the 'expected' number of students in a particular year if the children were as likely to be students then as they were in 1901. Since the expected proportions for each census year use different population weights care must be taken when evaluating the results. They are only intelligible in conjunction with the actual percentages derived from each census. A change in the expected proportion from one census year to the next gives the change due to age structure shifts. If that change is of the same direction and magnitude as the change in the actual proportions, the latter change can be attributed to age structure alone. If, however, the expected proportion of dependants declines by five percentage points, but there was no change in the actual proportion, then there was an increase in the probability of someone of the same age being returned as a dependant.[2]

The results of the analysis must be used with caution. The method attributes all differences in the actual and expected proportions to shifts in age structure when, in fact, they may be due to changes in the underlying but unknown age-specific ratios. If, relative to 1901, young children in 1871 were more likely to be in the labour force and older children less likely, that subtle but important difference would not be uncovered using the indirect method of standardization (Shryock and Siegel 1975, 421-2). Another difficulty is that the age groups used in 1901, which form the basis of the age-specific ratios, are fairly crude: ages 0-4, 5-14 and 15-19. The middle age group, 5-14 years of age, is very broad and encompasses the pivotal ages of 12 to 14 when boys and girls customarily left school. Small changes in the population distribution within that age group could create the impression of, for example, an increase in employment when, in fact, none occurred. Despite these problems the census remains the only comprehensive source on what young people were doing in late nineteenth-century Victoria. Any study using that data which does not take into account the considerable changes in the population's age composition is certain to be more at fault that one which controls, even if inadequately, for age.

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[2]For an example of this method using different data see McDonald (1974, 104-7).

3.1.2 Results

The actual and expected proportions given in Table 3-2 show that it is not possible to make a single generalization about how children and youth were occupied without specifying the decade and whether one is discussing boys or girls from the city or the country. When the whole period is looked at comparing 1861 with 1901, young males in Melbourne showed almost no change in the probabilities of attending school, working or living as dependants. On the other hand, boys living outside the metropolitan area were much more likely to be attending school by the end of the century and they experienced equally reduced chances of being dependent or working. City girls were brought out of the home; proportions attending school and participating in the work force increased. Much the same occurred with nonmetropolitan females except that school enrolment grew faster.

The Common School legislation was introduced after 1861 and was in effect for another year after the 1871 census. That first step in the process of making a single centralized, secular public elementary school system corresponded with an increase in the proportions of nonmetropolitan boys and girls returned as students. Boys had a decrease in the proportion employed and both dependency and employment declined for girls. But, at the end of the decade, Melbourne children were less likely to be students; girls experiencing a greater decline in proportions than boys. The decrease for boys was made up by a slight increase in the proportion who were dependants. The proportion of girls who were dependants, on the other hand, also declined. Relative to 1861 girls were more likely to be working, rather than going to school or staying at home.

The changes from 1871 to 1881 show the aggregate effects of the free, compulsory and secular schooling system introduced in 1872. The decennial increase in nonmetropolitan students was substantial. Constructing and staffing schools in recently settled and sparsely settled areas was a slow, fitful and expensive project (*Education Report* 1877-8, pp. ix-x), but it was through extending government schooling beyond the towns that the Education Act made its only contribution to furthering universal education. In Melbourne the censuses bear out the previous chapter's findings. Particularly in the case of boys the educational reforms did not affect the already high levels of enrolment. Remarkably this level had already been reached before the 1860s. For girls, though, some aspect of the Act was responsible for bringing more into school. Unfortunately we do not know if the important factor was a greater awareness of the importance of girls' education brought about by the publicity surrounding the Act, the legal threat of compulsion or the abolition of school fees.

Throughout the colony the proportion of young male dependants did not change and there was only a slight decrease in the probability of being in the labour force.

Table 3-2: Actual and expected percentages of the population under twenty by sex, 'occupation', and census year, Melbourne and nonmetropolitan Victoria, 1861-1901.

	Melbourne				Nonmetropolitan Victoria			
	Males		Unmarried females		Males		Unmarried females	
	Act	Exp	Act	Exp	Act	Exp	Act	Exp
Students								
1861	38	39	36	40	26	35	27	37
1871	44	46	38	47	39	45	40	46
1881	42	43	42	44	43	44	44	45
1891	44	42	44	42	46	42	46	43
1901	47	--	47	--	44	--	46	--
Dependants								
1861	44	44	55	47	51	47	64	55
1871	37	36	45	40	41	38	51	45
1881	34	32	47	38	34	32	40	42
1891	33	35	41	41	31	33	43	44
1901	29	--	36	--	31	--	41	--
Employed								
1861	17	16	9	12	22	18	9	8
1871	18	18	15	13	19	17	9	9
1881	24	25	10	17	22	25	17	13
1891	22	23	14	15	23	25	11	13
1901	23	--	16	--	25	--	13	--

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.
Note: See text for definitions.

Young females during this period had divergent experiences, depending on where they lived. Melbourne girls became more likely to be dependants. Since they were also more likely to be going to school this meant a decline in the proportion employed. The decrease was greater than the previous decade's increase in labour force participation. Nonmetropolitan girls were more likely to be employed in 1881 than in 1871. Since the proportion of students had also increased, there was a considerable decline in the proportion returned as dependants. However, the nonmetropolitan changes were in large part due to the 1881 policy of classifying all related dependants living on farms as farm workers unless another occupation had been specified.

Relative to 1881 Melbourne boys and girls were less likely to be dependants in 1891. The proportion of girls in school continued its increase, though to a lesser extent than in the previous decade and they increased their participation in the labour force, though not quite recovering from the decline in the 1870s. This contradicts Sinclair's (1982, 279-82) conclusion that during the 1880s families took their unmarried daughters out of the work force. He estimated that the labour force participation ratio for unmarried females aged 15-59 was 69 per cent in 1881 and only 58 per cent in 1891. Table 3-2 quite explicitly shows that there was no such decline for young females. The conclusions can be reconciled only if it were the case that teenage daughters were a form of reserve employment to which the family reluctantly resorted in times of great difficulty. If the fraction of such families stayed constant or increased during the 1880s then so would the proportion of employed under twenty year olds. The rest of the families would be free to keep their younger daughters at home and send their older daughters to work depending on economic circumstances and personal preference. Throughout this chapter there will be other evidence to support the ambivalence towards sending daughters and particularly young daughters into the labour force.

Boys and girls from the city and nonmetropolitan areas all had small decreases in the probability of being a student from 1891 to 1901 and concomitant increases in being employed. Males in both regions were slightly more likely to be returned as dependants. This decade is the most difficult to place in an historical context. Some sectors of the economy were already feeling the down-turn in 1889, but the 1891 census was taken before the worst effects were widespread. Conditions had improved substantially by the time the population was enumerated again in 1901.

In a study of mid nineteenth-century Hamilton, Ontario. M. B. Katz and colleagues (1982, 242-84) observed that as the city evolved from a commercial to a manufacturing based economy, more employment opportunities for young males emerged. During the critical years 1851 to 1871 the percentage of boys aged 13-16 employed rose from 15 to 32 (p. 255). But industrialization had little effect on Hamilton girls' experiences. Domestic service remained almost the sole occupation and the percentage of working girls in the same age group barely moved, rising only from 3 to 6. Clearly Melbourne's nascent manufacturing sector had a different effect on its young people. Boys were occupied in much the same way from 1861 to 1901. It was the pattern of girls' lives which was altered. Increasingly they went to school and took jobs rather than remaining to help at home.

3.1.3 Age-specific participation ratios

A more precise indication of children's and youths' involvement in school, the work force and domestic duties, and of the timing of transitions in and out of those roles can be drawn from age-specific ratios. Tables 3-3 and 3-4 give information for Victoria in 1891 and 1901 and contrast Melbourne and the rest of the colony in the latter year. Again, only unmarried women are included. Because of the difficulties in estimating the agricultural labour force, that form of employment has been listed separately. It is unfortunate that detailed information on Melbourne and Victoria was not available in other years. As the analysis above showed, there were few changes in the activities of young people from 1891 to 1901.

It comes as no surprise that schooling was concentrated in the 5-14 year age group. This was even more the case in 1901 than in 1891 because of a decline in the proportion of children under age five returned as students. Although we do not have comparable ratios for Melbourne in 1891, it is certain that the decrease occurred in both the city and the country. The ratio of students among the youngest children was low in both regions in 1901 and the previous chapter showed that early enrolment was common in urban State schools up to the end of the 1880s.

Boys and girls under age fifteen were equally likely to be returned as students. Girls were more likely to be students in the 15-19 year age group, but by the early twenties their advantage had disappeared. Virtually no-one was a student after age 20, but those who were were almost exclusively metropolitan males.

Dependency on parents or guardians varied considerably by sex. The proportion of boys who were dependant was very low during the prime school years ages 5-14. Outside of the school age the proportion is even lower. A dependent son in his twenties was unknown. On the other hand, once girls finished school many stayed to help at home and were classified as dependants. The proportion of female dependants aged 15-19 did not change much from 1891 to 1901. However, at least in 1901, girls of that age living outside Melbourne were much more likely to be at home than those in the city.

Unmarried females aged 20-24 were somewhat more likely to be dependants than females five years younger. Two factors caused this. The first was an artifact of the census classification. Visitors, boarders and lodgers with no other occupation stated were included as dependants. In earlier censuses it was not possible to separate them from dependent relatives, but in 1891 and 1901 they can be isolated. The percentage of 20-24 year old females returned as visitors or lodgers is higher than the percentage for 15-19 year olds. For the under twenty year old population it was argued that virtually all persons so described would have been living with a parent or guardian in another, unrelated person's house, but women in their early twenties who were lodgers were more

Table 3-3: Age-specific participation ratios of young males, 1891 and 1901.

	Victoria 1891				Victoria 1901			
	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4
Students	9	84	7	0	3	82	6	1
Dependants	91	9	4	0	97	10	4	1
Agriculture	--	2	24	20	--	3	27	26
Other employment	--	5	64	78	--	6	63	72
	Melbourne 1901				**Rest of colony 1901**			
	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4
Students	3	83	8	2	3	81	5	0
Dependants	96	9	5	1	97	10	4	1
Agriculture	--	0	2	3	--	4	41	40
Other employment	--	8	85	93	--	4	50	59

Sources: *Census of Victoria*, 1861-1901.
Note: An empty cell is signified by '--'; 0 per cent means less than 0.5 percent.

Table 3-4: Age-specific participation ratios of young females, 1891 and 1901.

	Victoria 1891				Victoria 1901			
	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4
Students	9	84	9	0	4	83	8	1
Dependants	89	12	38	42	96	13	36	35
Agriculture	--	1	6	3		1	10	8
Other employment	--	3	47	52		3	45	56
	Melbourne 1901				**Rest of colony 1901**			
	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4	0-4	5-14	15-9	20-4
Students	4	84	10	1	3	82	7	0
Dependants	95	12	30	32	97	14	40	37
Agriculture	--	0	1	0	--	1	17	14
Other employment	--	4	58	65	--	3	35	48

Source: Censuses of Victoria, 1891 and 1901.
Note: An empty cell is signified by '--'; 0 per cent means less than 0.5 percent.

likely to be living independently. The boarding-house keeper would be subject to the

same social conventions which led to an under-enumeration of female employment as any other householder. A more important factor was the middle- and upper-class girls who were still attending school in their late teens. When they left school they rarely joined the work force. Whatever the reason for the slight discrepancy the proportion of dependants in the 15-24 year age groups is remarkably similar to that prevailing in the United States at the same time. In 1900 35 per cent of single urban American women of that age were neither students nor employed (Goldin 1980, 83).

More striking than the slight change in the probability of being a dependant as the girls matured was the fact that 20-24 year old females were much more likely to be employed than the 15-19 year olds. Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven (1978, 202-3) found the same pattern by age among girls and young women in late nineteenth-century Massachusetts. Boys in Melbourne, Massachusetts, Hamilton and elsewhere entered the work force immediately upon or even before leaving school. Their sisters, though, often stayed at home either because their parents consciously decided to give them domestic training first (*RC on Employees* 1884, pp. 50,59) or simply because 'someone must stop at home' (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, p. 150) and the youngest ones were the least likely to resist.

A very small number of young children in Victoria worked. While this is impressive, it is hardly surprising. Australia had been spared the Satanic mills and coal mines that devoured England's children. The excellent General Report for the 1891 census gave more detail on employed children. In that year only 107 boys and 80 girls under 10 were returned as employed. Fifteen per cent of 10-14 year old boys were working and only six per cent of girls that age. England in the same year had 26 per cent of its boys 10-14 years old at work and 16 per cent of its girls (Nardinelli 1980, 754).

Victoria's low figures could have been an artifact of its census question. Only the 1861, 1871 and 1891 schedules are extant. None of these, though, gives an example of a person under 15 years old who was not a student. On the other hand, the accompanying instructions in fine print specified that if the child was engaged in another pursuit it should be stated. In 1861 and 1871 the format of the census schedule made it impossible to return a child both as a worker and as a student. There may have been a feeling that this caused an underestimation of the number of employed children despite the instructions because both the format and the instructions changed in 1891. Householders were told

> CHILDREN being educated to be designated 'Scholar' if not engaged as well in any industrial pursuit, but, if following any such pursuit during portion of their time, as for instance, delivering or selling newspapers, minding cows, &c., before or after school hours, to be set down as of that pursuit, the entry in one of the special columns under the head of 'Education' sufficiently showing they are also receiving instruction.

Assuming householders could understand the instructions, children's employment should not have been under reported. However, keeping in mind that State school students had very irregular attendance which suggests that many had at least some employment as well, there appears to have been a great reluctance to report a school aged child as anything other than a student. This was certainly not unreasonable behaviour. In 1881 census authorities passed on the names and addresses of families with children not returned as students (Tait 1985, 86).

3.2 Children's Work

What jobs, then, did teenage boys and girls do? Their different work patterns imply they did not share the same job opportunities and, not surprisingly, a direct comparison of the sectors employing young males and females shows that. But more interesting and more subtle is the relevance of juvenile labour for a subsequent career. Children, boys or girls, could be relegated to jobs which were only done by children. As they aged they would have had to leave their jobs and find a new place in an adult labour market. On the other hand, juvenile labour could be merely a precursor to a future job in the same area. The idealized image of the apprenticeship system was one where every juvenile worked to learn a task which he or she would eventually master. We turn again, cautiously, to the census for an answer.

The occupational classifications used in Victoria's censuses seem to have been perversely designed to frustrate historical research. Not only did the scheme change after almost every census, but not one of the schemes is particularly suitable. It would be useful to be able to measure status, income, relationship to the means of production, or even a simple manual-nonmanual distinction from an occupational classification but unfortunately they can be done at best very crudely. Specifically, while much the same titles were used for various occupational classes (e.g. professional, commercial, primary industry) in censuses from 1871 to 1901, a close look shows considerable changes in the allocation of specific occupations to particular classes. For many of these inconsistencies the censuses can be made comparable by tediously identifying, for example, the nurses in the domestic category in 1871 and 1881 and adding them to the professionals as they were in 1891 and 1901. However, the most serious source of incomparability involves the treatment of workers in a range of commodities from bicycles to zinc. In 1871 and 1881 the owners of manufacturing concerns, the workers in their factories and shops, the importers of foreign-made goods, and the wholesalers and retailers of the commodities were put into a single category. Of course to some extent this accurately reflected how many small workshops conducted business. In 1891 and 1901 the single category was somewhat erratically divided, separating dealers and manufacturers and putting those

who did both tasks in either category. Although the change appears straightforward it makes it almost impossible to measure trends over time in the commercial and manufacturing labour forces. A more subtle, but just as important change was instituted in 1901. A wide assortment of workers, including clerks, storemen and carters, who reported the type of industry they worked in was placed within that industry. That meant, for example, the clerk at an iron foundry would be classified with the iron founders and moulders, the owner and the firm's sub-contracting carter. 'Lack of necessary funds' prevented the 1901 census authorities from compiling a list of individual occupations which would have grouped all carters together, all clerks together, etc. whether they worked for a biscuit factory or a mercantile warehouse. In spite of all of the difficulties Table 3-5 shows the distribution of the work force into broad industrial classes. Every effort was taken to make them consistent with one another, but any apparent changes over time must be viewed skeptically. Only the 1871 and 1881 classifications are strictly comparable.

The most pronounced change in the labour force participation of females occurred during the 1870s. Although we have already seen that the likelihood of young females working declined in that decade, far more girls under 20 years old and, to a lesser extent, older women joined the manufacturing sector. Domestic service remained throughout the period the most common form of employment, but, instead of providing more than two-thirds of all jobs as it did in 1871, it occupied only one-half of employed girls from 1881 to 1901. After the 1870s there was little other change in the occupational distribution of the female labour force. Involvement in the commercial sector may have grown in the 1890s, reflecting the expansion of retail establishments and the concomitant demand for sales assistants as well as the beginnings of a demand for female clerical workers. Also during the 1890s the proportion of women, but not girls, employed in the professional sector grew. In previous years this sector had been dominated by teachers, however, during the 1890s medical care was increasingly conducted in public and private hospitals. The absolute increase in the number of nurses swelled the professional sector.[3]

Together manufacturing and domestic service employed 92 per cent of all female nonfarm workers under age 20. In 1901 86 per cent of girls were still in one or the other sector. Older women had a slightly greater diversity of employment options. However, service or working in a factory or workroom were the options for 79 per cent of the nonagriculturally employed women in 1871 and for 70 per cent in 1901.

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[3]The nonfarm work force of women 20 years and older grew by 37 per cent from 1891 to 1901. Working women returned as professionals grew by 65 per cent but the number involved in medical care grew by 118 per cent. Nurses represented 24 per cent of the professional women in 1891 and 32 per cent in 1901.

Table 3-5: Distribution of the nonfarm work force by occupational class and age, Victoria 1871-1901.

	1871		1881		1891		1901	
	<20	≥20	<20	≥20	<20	≥20	<20	≥20
Males								
Professional	4	6	4	7	4	7	4	8
Domestic	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5
Commercial	19	14	19	16	24	20	27	22
Transportation & Communication	8	6	8	8	10	10	10	11
Industrial	49	37	52	42	50	48	46	40
Manufacturing	41	25	44	30	41	31	38	27
Construction	9	12	8	12	9	16	8	12
Mining	16	32	13	22	7	10	9	15
Females								
Professional	6	13	6	14	6	13	6	15
Domestic	68	57	52	47	47	47	48	45
Commercial	2	8	2	10	6	10	8	14
Transportation & Communication	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Industrial	24	22	40	29	40	28	38	25
Manufacturing	24	22	40	29	40	28	38	24
Construction	0	0	--	0	0	0	0	0
Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sources: Derived from the *Censuses of Victoria* 1871-1901.

There were no major shifts in the industrial structure of the male labour force, or at least none that could not be equally well explained by definition changes. Boys working in nonfarm occupations were not confined to a single occupational class. The manufacturing and commercial sectors were their largest source of employment, but accounted for only 60 to 65 per cent of jobs. While they had more diverse employment opportunities than girls, they were still more circumscribed than men. Manufacturing had a special requirement for boys. Unions continually claimed employers were hiring boys to replace higher paid men, but boys were also complements to adult male labour as assistants. Similarly, in the commercial sector boys found jobs as messengers and all

purpose helpers in small shops. Both the young factory hand and the grocer's boy were going to have to find other employment when they grew up. The same proportion could not be absorbed into the adult work force. Construction, on the other hand, did not have much use for boys. In 1891, the peak of construction activity registered in censuses years, the proportion of boys employed in that sector did not increase at the same rate as the proportion of men in the building trades.

Broad occupational classes do not convey what workers actually did. Unfortunately the smallest divisions published in the censuses leave much to the imagination as well. All they do is identify the industry or the type of work that was done. There were not many differences between charwomen, for example, but laundresses include young women working in large steam laundries and old women who took in shirts. A boy working in a foundry could be in his last year as a mechanical engineering apprentice or a lad who fetched tools and swept the floor of a blacksmith's shop. Nonetheless, the age composition of occupations tell us about the nature of young people's work and their prospects. I used the 1901 census to illustrate this, not because it was a typical year, but because it had the best age detail on employed Melbourne workers. Of course the 1901 census is not free from definitional weaknesses. Keep in mind that all persons involved in an industry have been classified together. The working population aged 5 to 64 years was grouped into five age categories in the census. Taking males and females separately, every occupation (called sub-orders in the census) which included one per cent or more of the labour force in at least one age group was included in Tables 3-6 or 3-7.

The narrow range of employment options for women is even more obvious when examining individual jobs. The one per cent criterion generated a list of 29 occupations for females which accounted for 87 per cent of all female workers. The 41 occupations identified for males on that basis accounted for only 54 per cent of male workers. Out of the entire female labour force under 65 years old, 46 per cent were either servants in a private house or 'tailoresses, dressmakers or sewing machinists'. If other servants and clothing workers are included the percentage goes up to 62. Women could be found in other trades; but not only were there few women working elsewhere, but the choice even for those few were restricted. The labour force was also characterized by extreme segmentation. Out of the most common occupations held by men and women, only 13 were on both lists. Half of these, hotel keepers, property owners, milksellers, grocers, shopkeepers and dealers were performed by women older than the average working woman. These small enterprises were probably conducted jointly by husband and wife, or by widows who either inherited the business or capital to purchase the business.

Nonclothing manufacturing had a disproportionately young female work force. They were the factory fodder. Wages, conditions or hiring practices kept older women

Table 3-6: Age structure within major occupations, Melbourne females, 1901.

	Percentages						Totals
Occupation	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	5-64	5-64
Nurse, midwife	0	1	11	55	33	100	1705
Teacher	0	23	25	42	10	100	2112
Tutor, governess	0	10	30	52	8	100	576
Music teacher	0	9	21	56	14	100	1030
Hotel, restaurant, boarding house keeper	1	6	8	49	35	100	3453
Hotel, etc. servant	1	16	33	46	4	100	2972
Private house servant	4	22	26	39	8	100	16261
Paid companion	1	14	32	47	7	100	540
Charwoman	0	1	4	54	40	100	466
Laundress	1	9	13	50	27	100	1766
Money broker, financier, capitalist	0	1	5	39	56	100	198
Property owner	0	0	2	29	69	100	743
Draper	1	27	30	36	6	100	1334
Milkseller	5	10	10	37	38	100	223
Confectioner	1	15	22	43	19	100	467
Grocer, greengrocer	3	12	13	46	27	100	879
Shopkeeper, undefined	2	18	17	43	19	100	515
Dealer, trader, seller, undefined	1	10	14	47	29	100	342
Clerk, cashier, typewriter, undefined	1	21	36	39	2	100	613
Commercial traveller, saleswoman, undefined	2	25	33	36	4	100	676
Bookbinding	5	46	25	23	1	100	579
Clothing manufacturer	5	36	24	30	5	100	2136
Tailoress, dressmaker, sewing machinist	3	28	24	38	6	100	13087
Hat, bonnet maker	5	41	24	26	5	100	402
Milliner, stay and glove maker	2	40	31	24	2	100	1197
Sock maker, knitter	11	47	23	16	3	100	202
Bootmaker	9	45	26	19	1	100	1066
Tobacco, cigars, cigarettes	11	51	26	11	1	100	383
Factory worker, undefined	10	48	24	17	1	100	307
% in total labour force	3	22	23	40	12	100	64371
% of listed jobs to total labour force	87	88	88	87	88	--	87

Source: *Census of Victoria*, 1901.
Note: Occupations are ones which represented at least one per cent of the work force in at least one age group.

Table 3-7: Age structure within major occupations, Melbourne males, 1901.

Occupation	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	5-64	5-64
Civil servants and government officers	0	5	4	64	27	100	1134
Hotel, restaurant and boarding house keeper	1	2	4	54	40	100	1184
Hotel, etc. servant	2	8	16	55	19	100	1728
Private house servant	5	20	18	40	18	100	1548
Bank manager, clerk	0	16	18	53	11	100	1164
Property owner	0	0	2	22	76	100	452
Newsagent, vendor	29	24	7	27	14	100	424
Draper	4	21	18	43	14	100	3499
Milkseller	4	18	20	45	13	100	1294
Butcher	2	13	18	50	16	100	1947
Grocer, greengrocer	6	19	16	43	16	100	4003
Ironmonger	3	23	19	43	13	100	1071
Merchant, importer, undefined	2	20	18	45	15	100	914
Shopkeeper, undefined	12	28	9	35	16	100	568
Dealer, trader, seller	2	8	11	53	25	100	1437
Clerk, cashier, typewriter, undefined	6	26	18	38	12	100	3307
Commercial traveller, salesman, undefined	3	6	14	56	22	100	1159
Railway employee	0	9	7	66	17	100	4620
Tram, coach, cab driver or conductor	2	3	15	61	19	100	2179
Carrier, carter	1	14	18	51	17	100	3188
Wharf labourer	0	4	11	61	24	100	2079
Messenger, errand boy	59	35	2	3	2	100	622
Printer	9	27	15	36	13	100	1591
Engine maker, fitter	1	18	13	50	18	100	1467
Furniture, cabinet maker	2	11	10	58	18	100	1189
Tailor	3	16	15	47	18	100	1666
Boot, shoe maker	9	45	26	19	1	100	1066
Baker, biscuit maker	6	19	17	56	12	100	2148
Tanner, fellmonger, woolwasher	2	16	21	42	18	100	1133
Tinsmith	8	30	20	33	9	100	871
Iron founder, moulder	2	19	15	49	14	100	2062
Blacksmith	2	20	15	46	17	100	1758
Bricklayer	0	5	6	64	25	100	1120
Carpenter	1	8	7	59	25	100	3614
House painter	2	12	11	57	18	100	2500
Plumber	2	21	13	51	12	100	1757
Road labourer	0	5	12	55	28	100	1241
Factory worker, undefined	14	39	14	28	5	100	520
Engineer, stoker, fireman, undefined	1	11	15	47	27	100	1183
Labourer, undefined	1	14	18	48	18	100	4767
Gardener	1	9	12	46	33	100	1339
% in total labour force	3	14	14	51	19	100	135430
% of listed jobs to total labour force	60	59	56	52	51	--	54

Source: *Census of Victoria*, 1901.

away. This was not the case with the clothing trade, although Table 3-6 does not distinguish between dressmaking, tailoring and slop work; factories and outwork. Similarly, relative to the factory hands, domestic servants were older. The widows of poor men turned to charing and laundry work. While a woman could reasonably expect to stay in domestic service or the clothing trade for all of her life, other factory work would eventually be closed to her. Conversely, a young woman had little chance to work in or run a small commercial venture.

The more varied and complex male labour force is more difficult to generalize about. Table 3-5 showed a heavy concentration of youthful workers in the commercial sector. Indeed, they could be found running errands, doing clerical work, and selling newspapers. They were much less visible amongst grocers, butchers, drapers and so forth. In the prominent manufacturing industries some clearly depended on boy labour, tinsmithing, printing, bootmaking and biscuit making being the best examples. Other metal trades, furniture making and the construction trades used a more representative mixture of young and adult workers, or avoided youthful workers entirely.

3.3 Entering the Work Force

3.3.1 School aged children

Extreme poverty, often brought about by a family losing the father's wages, forced many children well below the legal school leaving age into the paid work force. That there should have been even one child in such a situation was sad, but the fact that anyone living in a working-class neighbourhood would have known a number of such cases is one of the best examples of the precarious hold so many had on economic security. Nonetheless, in terms of the entire urban population full-time employment of children under 13 was unusual. The scanty evidence relating to the entry of young people into regular wage labour will be discussed in the next section. Here the much more common experience of combining work and study will be considered. The law only required children to attend roughly one-half of the days school was in session. In addition the legal school day was only from ten o'clock to noon and from two to four o'clock. Theoretically this left ample time for the most law-abiding child to hold some kind of job.

No comprehensive sources capture children who combined school and wage labour. Davey and Wimshurst (forthcoming) attempted to measure it by implication through the seasonal pattern of school attendance. Summer quarters had the highest proportion of absenteeism for students at the Hindmarsh school in 1884 and 1899. Unfortunately the quarters, in three month blocks beginning in January, do not neatly correspond with the antipodean seasons. Sticking to quarters, they found that while the first quarter clearly

had the lowest attendance in the earlier year for every parental occupation category of boys and girls, the pattern was less consistent and much attenuated in 1899. Attendance had gradually improved and going to school was no longer so dependent on whether there were other things to do.

Adelaide had a far less extensive manufacturing sector in the nineteenth century than Melbourne and its economy was more dependent on the agricultural and pastoral activities of the rural portion of the state. Some industries in Melbourne, such as food-processing factories and those involved in handling the woolclip, showed considerable fluctuations during the seasons in the total number of hands employed. But other industries had different annual rhythms. Metal works were particularly busy in nonharvest months and the clothing trade peaked as seasons and fashions changed. In other words, Melbourne's economy was too complex to be accurately portrayed by a simple foul winter, fair summer dichotomy (Lee and Fahey 1986).

Even granting that seasonal economic cycles had considerable influence, their expected effect on childhood employment is ambiguous. Families would have needed their children's income most when the principal wage earner was unemployed, however, juveniles might have also had a difficult time finding work then. If, though, the jobs held by children were relatively resistant to seasonal change families would have been more likely to take their children out of school and put them into the work force during the winter when the rest of the economy was slack. Jobs as errand boys, messengers, newspaper sellers and nursegirls would have fallen into that category as long as the winter slump was mild and considered temporary.

In practice it is difficult to infer Melbourne children's employment from school attendance because the annual reports do not state the official number of school days in a quarter. The requirement merely stated that 30 days (40 days after 1890) per quarter had to be attended. Holidays played havoc with the attendance patterns. Quarters that had many official holidays meant that children had to go to school for a greater proportion of the remaining school days. The children at the North Melbourne and Hawthorn state schools were less likely to exceed the minimum attendance requirement in the summer quarters from October to December and January to March. This could mean they were absent because of the seasonal increase in employment opportunities, but the Christmas holidays must have been at least partly responsible for the low attendance.

The same trouble occurs with the colonial figures. One would expect that rural families would sacrifice their children's schooling during the height of the harvest and at other busy times in the year. However, after comparing an urban and a rural school district in South Australia, Davey and Wimshurst (forthcoming) concluded that attendance patterns and the causes behind them were quite similar. The percentage of all

Table 3-8: Attendance by quarters in selected Melbourne State schools, students enrolling in 1876-1888 (percentages).

No. of days attended	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
Girls				
1-49	15	16	12	12
50-69	18	14	9	17
70 +	68	71	79	70
Boys				
1-49	12	10	9	11
50-69	17	13	7	14
70 +	71	77	84	75

Source: Melbourne Schools Registration Sample.
Note: First and last quarters and quarters with no attendance excluded.

students completing the minimum requirement prior to 1890 shown in Table 3-9 are of the same magnitude as the somewhat different calculations presented for Melbourne students. In each year Victorian students had the most regular attendance in the winter months, particularly during the third quarter. With Easter usually falling in the second quarter, the third quarter would have had the fewest holidays. The Education Department considered attendance to be worse during the last quarter and attributed this to both the heavy demand on childrens' labour and the holidays (*Education Report* 1878-9, p. vii). They did not highlight the low attendance in the first quarter (once the summer's heat was used as justification [1879, p. 7]) because in each year better attendance in the second and third quarters made it appear that there had been steady improvement which faltered only at the end. Attendance in the 1890s emphasizes the relative regularity during the winter. Within a few years children appear to have adjusted to the higher minimum requirement in the second and third quarters. In the summertime both work and holidays made it more difficult to find the time to attend regularly. An extreme case demonstrates this. In 1894 the Easter holidays fell in March leaving only 44 official school days (1894-5, p. x). That 20 per cent were still able to meet the required 40 days is remarkable.

Most working school children would have had part time work which fitted into the

Table 3-9: Percentage of State school students completing minimum attendance requirements per quarter in selected years, Victoria 1878-1894.

	1878	1882	1886	1891	1894
Jan-Mar	65	70	72	40	20
Apr-Jun	67	72	73	65	75
Jul-Sep	78	80	77	71	77
Oct-Dec	70	72	72	51	69

Source: *Report of the Minister for Public Instruction*, 1878-79 to 1894-5.

normal school day and perhaps occasionally demanded extra time. Taking care of livestock is probably the most common job delegated to children the world over. The inner suburbs of the late nineteenth-century Australian cities were no exception. One man recalled taking the neighbour's cow to the local paddock every morning before going to the Hindmarsh Public School and bringing it back again in the evening (Davey 1985, 164). The 1891 census reported 478 head of cattle and 143 goats in Richmond. There were almost 30,000 chickens and 3500 ducks. All of this animal life coexisted in a suburb with an average density of 27 persons per acre. In the 1860s and the 1870s the local paper's reports on the police magistrate courts had constant references to wandering goats, neighbourhood feuds involving the ownership of ducks and the ubiquitous boys happening onto all manner of things while taking a cow to the Richmond Paddock in the early hours of the morning. Advertisements in the *Age* sometimes specified that a boy could sell papers after school hours or a girl was needed to assist with housework but could go to school. More children would have worked infrequently, whenever opportunities arose to do odd jobs for people in the neighbourhood.

Some of the hardest worked school children would have been those with self-employed parents. Boardinghouse keepers, storekeepers and outworkers would have considered their children's services before and after school as their due (McCalman 1984, 70). Indeed by 1902 the Anti-Sweating League's secretary did not mention the employment of young children in factories and workshops. Instead he railed against parents:

> There are people I know of in Melbourne who are working their own children in their shops, and I have been appealed to ... to do something for these children. They work them from seven o'clock in the morning till 11 o'clock at night. I have been told by medical men that they are murdering their children ... (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 203).

Several final points need to be made about the labour of school children. The first is that it was not entirely a phenomenon born of economic necessity. Even if the children were keeping their small wages as pocket money they were expected to work in some way. McCalman (1984 63, 69-70) found that most of the men and women she interviewed who had grown up in Richmond during the first two decades of the twentieth century had had some jobs while they were young. Their families were not necessarily very poor or unduly harsh; it was as much a matter of principle that children should work. Although this is from a later period the ethos would have been at least as strong a couple of decades earlier.

The second point is that working for wages was an extension of the work each child was expected to perform at home. This burden fell particularly hard on girls. A common pattern was for boys to take on odd jobs for nonrelatives and for the girls to assist their mothers (McCalman 1984, 53-5, 68-9). The somewhat less regular school attendance of girls even after the Education Act narrowed the gap suggests that they were at greater risk of being kept from school.

Lastly, even though children in the late nineteenth century certainly had a harder life than children have now, their history should not deny them their play. Those who did not attend school every day should not be too starkly pictured as toiling at home, in the streets or in a shop. In theory schooling would have seemed important to children and parents; reading, writing and arithmetic were essential skills. But in practice school was dull, irrelevant and oppressive. The school authorities' charges of truancies and idleness were not entirely unjustified. Sympathetic parents, particularly mothers who may have liked the company and help at home, did not object very strongly. Children evaded school, as they shifted from school to school, with enthusiasm. During the Edwardian era even the third generation to face compulsory education 'were spectacular truants, often aided and abetted by parents' (McCalman 1984, 74 as well as 71-85 *passim*).

3.3.2 Children out of school

The public was not greatly concerned about the ages children started to work, probably because there was so little full time employment of school aged children. Child-savers focused on highly visible youthful, mainly male, workers such as newspaper vendors and hawkers of sweets outside of theatres. They were assumed to be one step

away from crime and depravity, but they were always acknowledged to be a tiny minority. In fact, most young people selling in the streets or running errands which made them appear to be idle were probably beyond the school age. As Wimshurst (1981) has argued for Adelaide, many others were more or less successfully combining work and the compulsory school requirement. Truant officers were explicitly instructed to accost probable truants on the steets of Melbourne's central business district and inner suburbs but year after year they reported that these children were not contravening the law (e.g. *Education Report* 1885-6, p. xxiii).

When it came to entering factories many over-worked truant officers baulked; some even believed they did not have the authority (*RC on Employees* 1884, pp. 92-3, 94-5, 97). Indeed, it took the publicity generated by the Royal Commission's hearings to goad the Education Department into hiring an officer exclusively to investigate factories (pp. 95-7). The regular officers' reluctance was understandable. Children's true ages were difficult to prove (1884, pp. 92, 93, 96) and the officers were sympathetic to families in such great need that they sent their young children to work (pp. 90, 97). Nevertheless a contemporaneous royal commission was outraged.

> In our visits to the various factories in and around Melbourne, we were surprised and grieved to find in some of them, where the work was of such character as young children could perform, many children employed of an age at which they should be at school. With employment so plentiful as it is in this country, and wages at such a rate as usually rule here, we are satisfied that very few of the children so employed have any necessity to commence work at so early an age. These grasping or self-indulgent parents, therefore, who, regardless of their children's health, education or feelings, thus condemn them to early toil, in order to minister to their own idleness, indulgence, or improvidence, should be prevented from any longer transgressing the common dictates of humanity in this manner.
>
> We recommend a more vigilant and stringent enforcement of the compulsory clause of the Education Act, in the interests of the children and the State; and we further recommend, fresh legislation, if necessary, in the direction of an amended Factories' Act, in order to protect these little ones, if need be, from their parents or guardians (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, p. lxxx).

A struggling widow or deserted wife with children to support would have not recognized herself in that description, which is fortunate because if she had made the connection she would have been outraged. The well-intentioned royal commissioners showed very little sympathy with the poor. They had influence though. The Factory and Shops Act of 1885 prohibited any child under 15 years of age from working in a registered factory unless he or she had a certificate of passing the standard. In addition all under 16 years old were required to have a medical certificate testifying to their physical ability to work. Immediately the Chief Inspector strongly recommended modifying the restrictions (*Factory Report* 1886, p. 4). The problems with the legislation as it stood were many-

sided. Had there been widespread disapproval of under 15 year olds working full time, the legislation would have been justifiable. However, the census data alone suggest that it was usual to begin work at 13 or 14. Clearly the age 15 benchmark was intended to be consistent with the Education Act. But, even the school authorities, as argued in the previous chapter, had retreated to a *de facto* leaving age of 13. Again, the difficulties were bureaucratic ones. Had school certificates been easy to obtain most urban children would have been free to work from 13; but, for whatever reason, few had certificates. It is more likely that this is because schools were reluctant to give them than that great numbers of children failed the examination. Despite continual objections by factory inspectors, the requirement for school certificates remained troublesome until 1890 when an amendment lowering the upper age limit for compulsory schooling to 13 went into effect (*Factory Report* 1889, p. 5).

Medical certificates were an even more noxious obstacle to employment. The legislatively decreed price of 5s was to be paid by the child or parent to a private doctor. This could amount to two weeks earnings for many young, recently employed workers. Every time a child left a job, a new certificate was required for the next one. Despite the popularity of using lodge doctors who worked under contracts with friendly societies, they could not grant certificates. The Chief Inspector's reports explicitly state that discretion was used in many cases (*Factory Report* 1887, pp. 4, 11; 1893, p. 5; 1894, p. 11). In 1896 a new Factory and Shops Act considerably reduced this burden by lowering the price of the certificates to 2s 6d and, more importantly, exempting most industries including clothing and food *Factory Report* 1896, p. 9).

In practice, though, children, their parents and their employers did not rely on the inspectors' compassion very often. The Chief Inspector explained

> It is no unusual thing for a boy or girl to get work in a factory, stating that he or she has the educational or medical certificate (as the case may be) and will bring it the next day. This excuse is generally accepted until the inspector's visit, which may not be for a few weeks. The production of the certificate is then insisted on, and an early date fixed for another visit. Before, however, the visit is paid, the child has left, not having the certificates, and knowing they cannot now be done without. The same thing is done at another factory, and continued until the statutory age has been reached, when these certificates can be done without. The Act makes employers responsible for this and liable to punishment for employing children without the necessary certificates (*Factory Report* 1887, p. 4).

At T.B. Guest's biscuit factory in the city[4] this practice seems to have been the normal procedure. Out of 101 children under 15 years old employed at Guest's from 1888 to 1890, 47 of them had no mention of school certificates in the engagement book, even though there was a column for it. Only five children had actually brought a certificate and in two cases it was honestly recorded that the children had none. Various excuses were made for the others. Twenty-six children promised to bring theirs later and notations were made for the others to the effect that they had achieved a particular class or were going to night school. Clearly, the school certificate requirement was treated as a dead law. Medical certificates were accorded marginally greater respect. Of 247 under 16 year olds engaged from 1888 to 1895, only 16 per cent had no mention of medical certificates noted. More than a quarter (28 per cent) actually brought a certificate, and 55 per cent were employed with the promise that they would 'bring' or 'get' one, but never produced it.

Even with the legal restrictions on juvenile labour, or perhaps in flagrant disregard of them, children started factory employment early. The Chief Inspector of Factories reported that 'the average age of the boys and girls starting work in factories in this colony last year was 13.86 years and 14.24 years respectively' (*Factory Report* 1891, p. 6). He was in a delicate position when discussing the ages children should begin work but largely preferred earlier to later ages. The Factory and Shops Act which he administered was responsible for ensuring registered factories met specific sanitation and safety standards and that children and women were not worked long hours. Although the 1893 Board of Inquiry in to the Act found that only one district inspector was doing an adequate job, the legislation at least had aimed high. It was also probably true that the colony's best working environments were in registered factories. But they constituted a small universe, including only manufacturing enterprises employing six or more unrelated hands or using power-driven machinery. The Chief Inspector thought children, and particularly boys, belonged in factories. The only alternatives were for the children to work in places which were not policed or, in the myopic view of men who regulated factories, to slip inevitably into unemployed idleness and larrikinism (1886, p. 4; 1887, p. 4; 1889, p. 5; 1893, p. 5). After the legal maximum school age was reduced to 13, the Chief Inspector urged that the factory minimum be dropped to age 12. Figures were

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[4]The University of Melbourne Archives holds T.B. Guest's personal and financial papers. In this chapter I use data collected from the firm's engagement book covering 1888 to 1898 and the wagebooks up to 1902. All of the analysis has been done with a random sample of the juvenile employees. I am grateful to Jenny Lee of the Archives for showing me this source and giving me excellent advice on what questions to ask and how to get the answers out. Peter Howard acted as a willing and imaginative if sometimes wayward research assistant during what must have been the most tedious week of his life. I could not have collected the data without his help.

presented to show that a majority of students would pass the educational standard before their thirteenth birthday (1886, p.4; 1891, p. 6). The *Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers* used much the same arguments when they urged that the minimum age be lowered (McLachlan 1950, 104-5).

As the Chief Inspector well knew, registered factories only employed a small proportion of the children and youths in the work force. Manufacturing absorbed only one-half of Melbourne's employed teenage girls and 36 per cent of the boys in 1901. But at least by then most of the juvenile labour force in manufacturing worked in registered factories.[5]

Accurately determining when people began fulltime employment would require a census tabulation giving the proportion working in each single year age group. The 1891 census provided that for all Victorians up to the age of 15. Less than half (45 per cent) of 14 year old boys and only 19 per cent of the 14 year old girls were returned as having a specific occupation. These are twice as great as the percentage of 13 year olds in the work force (20 and 8 per cent respectively), but still lower than one might expect. By comparison the Chief Inspector's figures suggested that the boys and girls who entered factories were unusually young. However, the rural areas and country towns of Victoria can be assumed to have had fewer employment opportunities for children, particularly since the census did not count farm children under 15 as economically productive.

Any evidence other than census data on the average ages of starting work is bound to reflect the hiring biases of the particular employer or industry and usually obscures whether the child had prior work experience elsewhere. The 530 males under age 20 employed by the Victorian public service (excepting the railways department) in 1891 were, on average, 14.9 years old when they started working for the government.[6] Only nine per cent started when they were 13 years old, 34 per cent when they were 14 and 39 per cent when they were aged 15. Most (72 per cent) of these young workers were messengers. The second most common job in the public service for young males was as letter sorters and carriers. They had much the same average starting age. Clerks started significantly later. They were required to pass a civil service examination which was a modified version of the university's matriculation examination. Boys who had not gone through at least the sixth level at State schools had little hope of passing. Consequently,

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[5]Exact figures are impossible to derive; however, roughly 9,100 boys and 8,000 girls were working in registered factories in 1901. Naturally not all these establishments were in Melbourne, but the vast majority were. The census reported 8,180 boys and 8,132 girls in Melbourne employed in the manufacturing sector.

[6]These figures and others based on the age composition and wages of the public service are from the 1891 Blue Book printed as part of Victoria's *Statistical Register*. Employees obviously based outside of Melbourne were excluded, leaving 4,099 cases.

the mean age of joining the service for young clerks was 16.7 years; 46 per cent were 17 years old. Young railway workers were hired at about the same age as messengers and postal workers.[7] From July 1890 to June 1891 the Victorian Railway Department hired 50 'boy labourers' and 'steam hammer youths'. Their average age was 15.3 years. None of them was under 14 and 54 per cent were 15 years old. Similarly at Guest's biscuit factory the mean age of boys when hired was 15.0 years. Out of the 411 boys in the sample only one was 12 years old and 26 were 13 years old. Almost all of them (89 per cent) were between the ages of 14 and 16.

There is much less information on girls started working. The public service employed very few. Those who worked at Guest's factory were older than the boys. On average they were 16.5 years old when hired; 56 per cent were 16 or 17 years old.

We will never be able to measure adequately the the ages when children entered the Melbourne work force. However, the fragments presented above give an impression of the appropriate time to start work. Some factories had a use for younger boys, but the public service took on very few 13 year olds and preferred 15 year olds to 14 year olds. The railways, probably demanding greater physical strength, also preferred them to be 15 years old. The more fragmentary evidence on girls is that they started work a little later.

Other employers, people such as small shopkeepers, tradesmen working for themselves, and householders requiring servants of all types are not tapped by these sources. Certainly judging by the advertisements in the daily press most of the jobs available for young people were merely for 'strong and active' boys and girls to be 'useful'. The want ads cannot tell us the average age of entering these jobs. Desired ages were mentioned far too infrequently; usually 'boy' or 'girl' with the occasional adjective 'young' or 'little' sufficed. However, the few prospective employers who stated their requirements more explicitly can assist us in measuring the acceptable lower age limit for juvenile workers.

I used two sets of advertisements. The first came from Wednesday issues of the *Argus* in May, November and December of 1870 and 1871. During the 1870s the *Age* overtook the *Argus* as the colony's premier publisher of employment advertisements, so the second set came from Saturday issues of that newspaper in May and November 1900. The shift during these 30 years away from offering to employ 12 year olds is unmistakable. This is not to say that all persons looking for, say, a girl to assist in housework and mind the baby had wanted a 12 year old in 1870. The most common age

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[7]Wage figures for railway employees are from the 649 appointments made between July 1890 and June 1891. The *Report of the Victorian Railways Commission for the Year Ending June 1891* listed name, position, birthdate and starting salary. I excluded clerical staff and gatekeepers.

specified was 16. But 12 was the youngest age. By 1900 the lowest age specified was 13. For girls even 13 year olds were requested infrequently and the advertisements implied that they were atypical. Out of the six asking for such young applicants, two offered to train and educate them in exchange for services and another required that they sleep at home. Only one advertiser wanted a 13 year old boy, most were asking for one 'about 15'. A new feature to the want ads was a more frequent offer of part time employment to school children and for children coming straight from school, without previous employment. Since some children were released from compulsory school requirements before they were 13 and many during their thirteenth year, legal restrictions cannot entirely explain the shift away from hiring 12 year olds. More subtly, age 12 and perhaps even age 13 had become a time of childhood and dependence, not an age for working full time. This also explains why parents had resisted pressure from the Education Department to accelerate their children's schooling so they could finish when they were 12 years old. However, it is not clear whether this was because parents knew that 12 year olds were not employable or because they shared the opinion that that was too early for a child to start working.

A pure form of dependent childhood where the child is only rarely economically active ceased to exist for virtually all boys and most girls when they left school. However, unless their families desperately needed their earnings, 13, 14, and 15 year olds enjoyed a period of relative freedom. They had no school requirements, jobs were plentiful, and they did not have to take their work seriously. Most young workers were essentially helpers; they were to be available for any small jobs a shopkeeper, tradesman or householder might want done. It was inherently unstable employment. The child would be dismissed when the work was no longer required or move on if there was something more attractive or lucrative. The Chief Inspector of Factories and others thought young children would benefit from the discipline of learning a trade from an early age, but in fact few industries were willing to try to teach under 15 year olds skills taking more than several days to master. Most young children in factories had relatively few choices. They had to go to tobacco, jute, food-processing, biscuit, or some of the clothing and boot factories. These firms held few prospects for the adult worker (Tables 3-6 and 3-7).[8]

Families who were not in poverty incorporated this freedom born of lack of

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[8]I surveyed all testimony by representatives of manufacturing firms in the Royal Commission of the Tariff (1883) to find their preferred starting ages for boy and girl labour and apprentices. The clothing trade wanted older girls. Out of the ten firms that stated an age only four would have taken a girl as young as 14. The employers interested in young children of both sexes were the tobacco companies, makers of jute, and jam, the bottle works and *some* boot firms. The metal trades usually wanted boys to be 15 years old and a wire worker and an agricultural implement factory manager would not take apprentices under 17.

opportunity into their own expectations. A factory inspector in charge of investigating Chinese cabinet makers explained their practices by contrasting them with those familiar to his audience. 'They are not like Europeans', he said. 'They go to the business and learn the trade right off; there is no such thing as a couple of years spent in doing other work' (*Bd of Inquiry in the Factory Act* 1895-6, p. 152). Similarly, turn-of-the-century artisans in Oxford 'allowed their children a few months to "look around" before starting them on their careers' (Gillis 1974, 120).

A situation of relatively few alternative types of work, but many workplaces to choose from, and almost no expectations of long term advancement does not promote a loyal attitude towards employers. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that young boys were discipline problems. 'They run about like young rats' (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 67) and missed days in the summer 'when there is anything on' (p. 22) journeymen complained. Wise employers took some amount of exuberance if not outright rebellion as part of the price paid for cheap labour, although tight supervision, fines and dismissals were common. A manager of a tobacco company which employed many boys said

> The fact is, they are more intelligent than workable, and you would find that if you had to deal with the young boys. Of course, you have to allow a little licence for children. ... If you leave them to do anything they get larking. They are boys just out leaving school (p. 2).

The boys at Guest's bakehouse were not dissuaded by heavy fines from hurling biscuits at each other. The young employees were frequently dismissed for being 'too rowdy' or 'impudent', but many were rehired, often very soon after the incident.

Many of the industries that hired juveniles had heavy seasonal demands. Great numbers of children would be taken on, perhaps before the Christmas rush, only to be dismissed in January. However, much of the shifting between jobs was voluntary. The Chief Inspector complained 'Boys are far too independent -- they will only take work when they like, where they like, and how they like. ...[T]hey go from factory to factory just as they feel inclined ...' (*Factory Report* 1888, p. 5). Guest had a great difficulty in keeping workers. In a sample of 93 under 16 year old boys hired between 1888 and 1898, 35 per cent did not stay a week. Eleven did not make it through a day in the hot bakehouse. The median tenure was under two months and less than ten per cent were still on the wage books a year later. Females stayed somewhat longer. Of all of those under 20 years old when they were hired, 26 per cent left within the week. Otherwise their tenure was the same as the boys.

Wages reflected this period of limbo between school and, at least the desire and expectation of regular employment. Average wages did not rise with age from 13 to 15.

The Chief Inspector of Factory's Report for 1895 gave the average weekly wage and number of employees in registered factories by age for juveniles. A weighted average wage for 13 year old factory boys was 6s 3d. Fourteen year olds earned the same and 15 year olds only earned 8d more per week. Only 16 year olds commanded a significantly higher wage. Factory girls' wages did not increase with age until they were 17. Before that they earned between 3s 6d and 4s 2d.

3.4 Career Paths

3.4.1 History of the apprenticeship debate

> The system of apprenticeship to a trade appears to be fast falling into disuse, although the number of young persons employed in factories has decreased very little. ... It appears that many of the boys and girls now employed in factories are simply taught one branch of a trade, and receive little or no instruction beyond the branch on which they are first engaged. ... [S]ooner or later there can be little doubt that steps must be taken to insure boys and girls employed in factories having at least the opportunity of learning the principal branches of the trade at which they hope to earn their livelihood.
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> -- *Factory Report* 1893, p. 5

Apprenticeships in their traditional form were legal contracts between master and apprentice in which the master guaranteed to train the apprentice to be proficient in all branches of the trade in exchange for inexpensive services during a specified time period. In Melbourne all aspects of this system appeared moribund by the early 1880s and probably before, just as they were in England at the same time. Legally there were no changes until the end of the century (Brereton 1970, 1-42). An 1864 act made it a criminal offence for either party to violate the conditions of indentures. Legislation in 1891 demoted the contract to a civil one, making it impossible to gaol offenders, but otherwise did not further define the content of indentures. In 1896 boards were established to regulate wages in sweated trades. Part of their power was to limit the ratio of apprentices to adult workers. They also established the wages of apprentices and improvers based on years of experience up to age 21 when formal apprenticeships ceased. All employees over 21 years old had to receive adult wages for their work. When the wages boards were extended in 1900 to a wide range of industries the power of limitation and scale of wages were also included. Employer pressure, however, was so great against limitation that that power was suspended in 1903.

Many forces within the manufacturing industry created and maintained the late nineteenth-century system of no apprenticeships and partial apprenticeships. The most important factor was the increasing specialization within the factory and workshop.

Introduction of machinery was partially responsible for this. T. B. Guest's biscuit factory, for example, had a flowthrough oven in the 1860s allowing assembly line organization very early. Some firms were so specialized it would have been impossible for them to turn out a fully trained journeyman. A factory making doors and sashes might teach a boy to make a very good door, but could hardly train him as a thorough carpenter and joiner (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, pp. 527-34). However, task segmentation was a state of mind as much as a result of mechanization or specialization. A harness maker and saddler, working without significant machinery, described his method of using labour.

> A harness maker makes one particular portion of my article -- another man makes another particular portion of it, consequently, as they work in sets, when the whole thing is put together it is a good article cheaply made, and the men make more wages. ... I take lads not as apprentices but to do a certain thing. He will get to do it in three or four days -- in a week as I can do it, and I keep him at that (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, p. 435).

He thought taking apprentices was 'humbug' and, indeed, it is difficult to imagine what role an apprentice would have had in his workshop. Another saddler, though, bound apprentices for three to five years and paid them a graduated scale of wages (p. 455). 'All-round' hands could still have been trained in segmented, deskilled trades. Visionary employees in the boot trade argued that boys should be bound and required to learn every stage of the modern boot making process. At the end of his time the apprentice would be qualified to take up any job in a boot factory, rather than relying on vacancies in his particular branch (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, pp. 319,325). A carpenter suggested apprentices could be shared in some way throughout the industry -- swapping them between employers so they would get experience (p. 528).

By the 1880s each trade and indeed each employer had devised a unique policy on apprentices. At one extreme were a variety of industries which used a large proportion of juvenile labour, often both boys and girls, but who made little or no pretence of teaching them skills which would earn them a livelihood as an adult.[9] The chairman of the wage board regulating jam factories simply stated 'there are no apprentices in the jam factory' (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 435). Factories making biscuits, soap, candles, rope, tobacco; bottle works; and tea packing firms appreciated children's low wages. Any apprentices were in name only. Young workers were hired and dismissed as business conditions allowed. Initial wages were relatively high in compensation. The youngest

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[9]In 1883 the Royal Commission on Employees in Shops and Factories visited many factories of this type. They had a particular interest in juvenile labour and the evidence they collected is the best source on dead-end factory employment for boys and girls. It was published in *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1884, vol. 2.

workers would start at anywhere from 5s to 10s a week. In some factories they were encouraged to go on piece work as soon as they were able and in others the weekly salary would rise commensurate with 'what they are worth'.

Trades which still provided traditional apprenticeships were at the other extreme. The metal trades were the most conspicuous example. Apprentices, sometimes bound but usually not, served a period of time with no wages and rose slowly during their five year period until they were making between 15s and 25s a week in their last year (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 552, 556, 566, 728, 737, 744, 754). In the 1880s coach building also offered standard apprenticeship schemes (pp. 1041, 1046, 1053). Apprentices were bound for five years at a similar sliding scale of wages. Jewellers (pp. 1263, 1273, 1264-5, 1275), organ makers (p. 1242) and pharmacists (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 156-8) also produced proficient tradesmen through orderly apprenticeships. Why some trades maintained apprenticeships is not easy to answer. Certainly none of these trades had much division of labour, a single skilled hand would be involved in most of the manufacturing stages. Hence, there was little scope for the untrained worker except as an assistant. There were also journeymen qualified to teach and supervise the apprentice. Pharmacy was a middle-class trade, almost a profession; even in the 1870s external examinations were required. The other trades were all extremely prosperous in the 1880s. Men with the appropriate skills were scarce and could demand high wages. Boys were willing to serve apprenticeships in exchange for an economically secure future. Evidence for this is best found in the attitudes in trades without this security. An earlier strike, the depression and Chinese competition had all but destroyed the European furniture manufacturers during the 1880s. The number of European furniture makers dropped to 21 as erstwhile workers turned to other employment (*Bd of Inquiry into the Factory Act* 1895-6, p. 156). Journeymen and manufacturers describing their fate said that no one would commit his or her son to such an industry. Even if a parent was willing they would not in good conscience take him (pp. 164, 184, 185).

Between the two extremes were a variety of trades and apprenticeship practices. One pattern was for the boy or youth to go from job to job slowly gaining skills and experience on his own initiative with no pretence of an apprenticeship. These persons were frequently called improvers and were a constant cause for complaint amongst unionists. Traditionally improvers were apprentices who when out of their time worked at various places to gain wider experience. But in the colony they were partly-trained youths who were a threat to journeymen's wages because they could be employed in their place. Nonetheless, the system was the only form of training available in most of the construction trades where even few of the journeymen were continuously employed by the same builder (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 1153, 1171). A baker explained that there were

no apprentices in his trade, the carter would occasionally be asked to mould the dough, would eventually take a job as an assistant, and so on (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 6).

Another pattern was followed by the bulk of manufacturing industries. Apprentices were those who stayed longer and who, through luck, determination or a benevolent overseer, picked up a solid training in at least one branch. The mandatory annual wage increases under the Wages Board were intended to institutionalize this form of 'apprenticeship' (Brereton 1970, 23-8). The rationale was that employers would be given an incentive to teach and the employee an incentive to learn enough to justify the extra pay. As long as there was a craft tradition, or more to the point as long as the workers who had been trained in England preserved a memory of a time when apprentices were bound and subservient and masters conscientious, the industry took apprentices. However, the form of that apprenticeship made a mockery of the term. Without secure job tenure, and a commitment to be taught more than one task boys and girls were little more than process workers. Even in tailoring apprenticeships had been put aside. Boys were taught to be either cutters or pressers. Tinsmiths, boilermakers, bootmakers, hatters, saddlers, brushmakers and many other trades gave their young employees even fewer skills to help them as adults.

The most shameful misuse of apprenticeships was in the clothing trade. Some clothing factories required that inexperienced girls work as assistants to experienced hands for a couple of months (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 56, 81). Afterwards they would be able to go on piece work if there was a vacancy, or try to find employment elsewhere. Most factories operated a table system where girls worked on one small part of a garment under the eye of a forewoman (pp. 64, 105; *RC on Employees* 1884, pp. 52-3). The colonial clothing industry was fiercely competitive and there were many complaints that girls were dismissed as soon as they became expert enough to earn more than a pittance (*Bd of Inquiry into the Factory Act* 1895-6, pp. 118-9, 150; *Factory Report* 1895, p. 7; 1897, p. 14). Circumstances were even worse in dressmaking and millinery. Employment without pay for up to two years was commonplace, and even then the girls were not trained as general hands.

The confused situation existed partly because no special interest group supported apprenticeships *per se*. Employers of course were interested in the least expensive means of producing goods, and that was rarely consistent with a formal apprenticeship. Unionists transparently wanted lengthy, legally binding apprenticeships to keep down the number of skilled hands and prevent competition from persons willing to work for less than full journeymen's wages. The interests of the children and their parents will be explored in the following sections, but given the status quo apprenticeships were not always the most attractive option.

Government regulating bodies were probably the only parties committed to apprenticeships to ensure the proper training of young people. Their moral position was best expressed by the first men authorized to devise an apprenticeship scheme, the chairmen of the early wage boards. One, a clergyman, said that the wide social question was 'Ought we to induce boys to go into a trade that will not be worth a rap to them in the days to come?' (*RC on the Factory Acts* 1902-3, p. 435). Still, these men had to grapple with the problem that because of the way many industries were organized boy and girl labour was required, not apprentices. The attempted solution was an *ad hoc* arrangement for each industry. In some industries juvenile labour was called that, in others it masqueraded as apprenticeships. One chairman argued that each type of worker had to be distinguished and explicit limits placed on their numbers (p. 611). Instead of that, within a couple of years, almost all juvenile workers were called apprentices and there were no limits put on their numbers.

3.4.2 Boys' choices

What employment options did a fifteen year old boy have? Prudent advisors would recommend that he learn a trade. But as alluring as a reliable, respectable, well-paid occupation would have been to all but the most sneering larrikins, for most boys it was unattainable. A university training was required for aspiring doctors and lawyers. More opportunities for scientists and engineers were opening up and degrees were not uncommon though not required by the end of the century. If business appealed one had to buy or start one's own. Clerks could no longer expect a partnership in reward for loyal service because they were reserved for sons (Davison 1978, 27-33). Boys expecting to receive working capital in the future could learn in another's firm. A more feasible alternative for others was to learn a skilled trade, but while this did not require the considerable outlay of time and money that the professions or business did, there were still substantial costs.

The premium, a prerequisite of a traditional apprenticeship, was rare in Melbourne by the 1880s. Some engineering firms required them, as did most chemists and some jewellers and coach builders. The significant direct and indirect costs of acquiring a trade came after the boy took the job. Apprentices almost always received some wages from the start. Only engineering firms and some rare clothing firms had a period stretching from six months to two years in which a boy gave his services free.[10] But starting wages were low. The typical apprentice in any field would earn between 2s 6d and 5s a week and that rate would remain fixed for the first six months to one year. Unskilled and semi-

[10]The 1896 Factory Act set a minimum weekly wage of 2s 6d for all employees.

skilled factory hands would earn between 7s and 12s from the very start. A cigarmaker claimed that 'call boys' in the factory were making 10s a week and that most of them were between 10 and 12 years old (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 67). Guest started the boys under 16 he hired before the depression on an average wage between 8s and 9s 6d. During the depression the starting wage dropped to 7s a week. To make matters more frustrating the typical apprentice was at least 15 years old and often older when he started.

Less abstractly, consider the alternatives available to the 16 year old hired as a cellar boy at Guest's biscuit factory in April 1890. He lived in Carlton with his mother who worked as a laundress. At his last job he had made 15s a week working for a fruiterer and in recognition of that high salary and the responsibilities of his new job he was to earn 12s at Guest's. But within a month he left, saying that he wanted to learn to be a carpenter. Unfortunately, shortly thereafter he was forced to return. His weekly wages as a carpenter's apprentice had been only 5s. This boy clearly wanted to be a carpenter. Over the next year he left the factory again to be an apprentice only to return. While there was no future as a cellar boy, the present was impossible as an apprentice. Nor was he unique. Out of all of the sampled juveniles who worked for Guest, 27 per cent of them reported their mother as guardian.[11] To put this figure in context only 13 per cent of the North Melbourne State School students listed their mother and only 10 per cent of the occupiers in the surrounding community were women (Table 2-6). Extreme poverty drove children to the particularly unpleasant work in the bakehouse and packing room.

After the initial years of service apprentices' wages were the same as or better than other minors'. Various market forces created and maintained this situation. Trade unionists and some manufacturers who claimed that there were no apprentices in Melbourne usually meant that most boys referred to as apprentices were not legally bound. Employers' reluctance to commit themselves to employing a boy for four, five or more years was one reason the practice was strangled. But also valid was the employers' defence that they had no effective legal recourse if boys decided to leave, that the indentures only bound them to keep a boy who was unsuited to the trade and that boys themselves resisted the formal ties of a legal indenture (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 338, 739, 777, 810). Hence, by the 1880s, regardless of the 'understanding' a master and apprentice had, each was free to sever the agreement at any time. Imagine a trade in which a boy who had worked for two or three years was considerably more skilled than a quick-learning but inexperienced boy off the street. Additionally, he did some of his tasks,

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[11]These women were widows or deserted wives. Guest's engagement books reveal a tremendous concern for what the children's fathers did, often listing their employers instead of their occupations.

albeit not all of them, with the alacrity of a journeyman. As long as the employer was doing enough business it was in his interests to retain the apprentice. On the other hand, such boys were aware of the value of their acquired skills and would take a job elsewhere as an 'improver' for more money (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 744, 756, 779, 886).

Steeply rising wages in the last years of an apprentice's period were therefore essential. In trades where journeymen were paid piece rates and particularly if the older apprentices could earn full wages by doing a segment of the trade, boys were allowed to go on piece work whenever they felt able (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 831, 1030, 1194). Even some engineering firms scaled their wages to keep the apprentice who was almost out of his time (pp. 737, 754). The practice of raising apprentices' wages by 2s 6d a week each year was also an incentive to stay. Despite the high starting wages Guest paid, only the exceptional employee received an increase of that size in a single year and none of them maintained the rate of promotion for a second year. While none of his employees that I sampled had a *decrease* in their wage rate during the depression (though all of the factory workers sometimes worked less than a full week), virtually no-one had an increase.

Disaffection with apprenticeships was not only due to the high short run opportunity costs of prolonged training or to competition for partly trained workers within the same industry. Since the Middle Ages masters have found their apprentices wanting in attentiveness, commitment and enthusiasm towards their trade. What placed the apprenticeship system in danger throughout the industrializing world in the nineteenth century was that listless, wayward apprentices faced expanding employment alternatives. Consider two examples from late nineteenth-century Melbourne. A screw and nut maker gave the standard complaints to the Royal Commission on the Tariff about the flightiness of colonial boys (e.g. 1883, pp. 1117-8), but his words had more than the usual venom.

> Q: Do you engage any apprentices?
> A: Yes.
> Q: How many?
> A: I have one under indenture.
> Q: Is that all since you have been in business?
> A: No; I had previous boys under indenture. But allow me to say that, in putting boys to this trade, the amount of expense entailed on putting a boy specially to the fire to learn this class of work sometimes comes very expensive in metal, and that requires them to be very careful in choosing boys to go to that; otherwise the expense of keeping a boy employed would be so great that he could not afford to keep a boy at the work. You must be very cautious in choosing a boy adapted, and careful in minding his work. ...[I]n many instances it is very rare to get a man that will follow it out, even if he gets to the work, after he gets to the best lines of engineers' work, because the trouble and annoyance of keeping so correct to sizes begets differences between masters and men, and the men separate from him before they learn the trade, and they leave it off and never finish it (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, 800).

Of course this man may have been impossible to work with; certainly his trade required more painstaking attention to detail than most. But for many boys committing themselves to a craft for years, only slowly showing advance and to look towards a future that involved nothing but doing the same thing only faster was less than attractive. The plethora of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs ranging from labouring to packing to factory work, cab-driving or serving as a groom were no more interesting. But at least when one became dull another one could always be found. Chiller Green, a character in Dyson's (1921[1906]) lively collection of short stories, *Fact'ry 'ands*, was the archetypal larrikin, with a garish red tie and tight-waisted black trousers. At 24 he took a job as a 'useful boy' in a paper bag factory, but he was a man with a past.

> 'I kin alwez get back ter the trade.' he said; 'on'y it's Chinamen's work.'
>
> ''N' what's yer trade?' asked Feathers.
>
> 'Barrerin' rabbies. They's money in it when meat's riz, but pushin' a barrer gets a man down, I tell yeh, specially in the winter mon's. I reckon I'll hang up here 'n' make a name fer mesilf' (p. 94).

Eventually though the dead-end job did not seem so attractive.

> Next evening, Chiller said to Feathers, 'I'm slingin' it, blokey. Goin' back ter the trade.'
>
> 'But I thought barrer-pushin' was a game fer gazobs?'
>
> 'Oh, ole Spats can't expect me ter go on muckin' round his fact'ry fer seventeen-'n'-a-tizzy. I'm thinkin' iv gettin' married' (p. 104).

It was not until early adulthood, when a young man wanted to move away from his parents' home or when he wanted to marry, that his lack of skills became an issue. For many that was too late for learning a trade.

Some elements in the government wanted to protect boys from their own childish headiness. As the chairman of the tinsmiths' wages board said about the youths who fed tin into machines

> [I]t was almost cruel to continue them beyond a certain age. ... They could not be paid a man's wages for the work they were doing, and it was wrong to keep them there till eighteen or 21, and then be turned adrift ... (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 612).

The proliferation of dead end jobs for boys, subtly seducing them into a life of low wages, captured greater public attention in England (*Factory Report* 1889, p. 5) and the United States (Kett 1977, 145-52) than it did in Victoria. But the problem was just as real in that colony's capital city. A letter inserted in Guest's engagement book poignantly illustrates a common fate.

Thurs 12 Nov 1885

Dear Sir,

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am not coming back to work any more as the place is not agree with me and I do not see any chance of getting on as I have been in the Bakehouse for a Long Time And I Was kept down to much. If you will kindly oblige by giving me a reference and leave with Judd as I will come on Friday, for my money and oblige

Stephen C.

I was 6 1/2
years with you

Poverty pushed some boys into that situation, short-sightedness was responsible in other cases. However, it must be remembered that it was not an entirely irrational decision. In prosperous times, when jobs were plentiful and industries expanding effortlessly, becoming expert in one small branch of a trade was not an unwise strategy. A sensitive factory inspector explained.

> The parents have the control of a child, and they look to its future, and also to the quantity of money it can earn; the earliest possible period he can earn money is what they look to. A boy or girl learning to make trousers, after the first six months earns money for his employers, but not for himself. If he is intended to be only a trousers hand (and he can make a very good living as a trousers hand) [a] two years [apprenticeship] is ample (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 25).

Parents, after all wanted their sons to have a trade, it is just that their plans frequently backfired because of the prevalent industrial organization. Others consciously discounted the value of a trade in a time of cyclical unemployment and with relatively high wages for the unskilled. During the depression a furniture manufacturer recalled

> A few years ago there was a tendency to rush youths into trade; everybody wanted to give their boys a trade. Now when they find that the trade is not worth having they will all drop away from it, and perhaps in the course of a few years we will find ourselves short of tradesmen again (*Bd of Inquiry into the Factory Act* 1895-6, p. 187).

3.4.3 Girls' choices

The low pay and poor chances for advancement in all of the prominent jobs available to women have been discussed by others (Kingston 1975; Fisher 1978; Fitzsimmons 1980; Garner 1980; Alford and McLean 1986). Teaching was the only career option akin to a male's apprenticeship in a skilled trade. Pupil teachers frequently had to

work for nothing before they were formally appointed (*Education Report* 1876-7, p. 33-4) and then they faced six years of low pay and heavy responsibilities (Truscott 1981, 28). However, the reward was a relatively well-paid, secure, respectable occupation. Sales and clerical work were other possibilities which could secure some of the same advantages as teaching, but until the twentieth century they employed very few women. Most girls looking for work in Melbourne had only three choices. They could enter domestic service, join the clothing trade or work in another type of factory. This section will not consider the very important problem of why substantial inequities in employment opportunities existed. Its aim is to describe why girls and their parents would choose each kind of work given existing pay and conditions.

3.4.3.1 Manufacturing

The clothing trade, and its sister industries dressmaking and millinery, must be distinguished from other manufacturing. Their differences can be seen from a glance at Figure 3-1. In the miscellaneous factories employing juvenile female labour wages increased with age for even the youngest workers. Girls performing the traditional feminine duty of sewing were rewarded with remarkably low wages. An average 17 year old in a clothing factory or dressmaker's workshop earned less than a 13 year old who rolled cigarettes or packed tea.

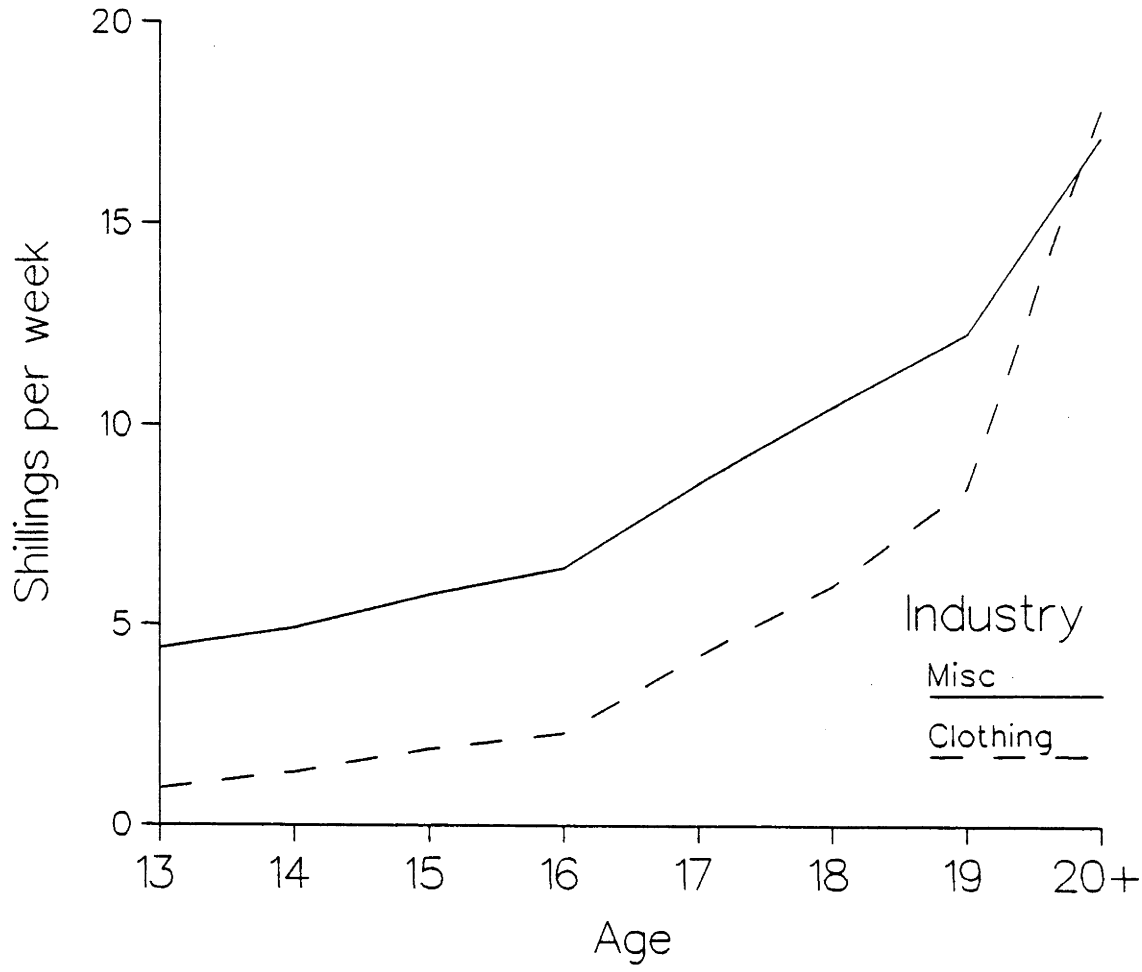
The attraction of nonclothing factory work is abundantly clear. Since girls made less money than boys and were more useful at home, families with both boys and girls would have most likely chosen to send their young sons to work and keep the girls at home. Even from a very young age boys earned more than girls in Victoria's factories (Figure 3-2). But for families in great need of supplementary wages, those with few or no boys and those with enough girls that one or two could help with household duties and the rest work, factory work was the best option. Piece work or at least paying 'what she was worth' was the rule in most of these industries and after a short training period girls were given the full value of their work.

Although the clothing industry also operated on actual or *de facto* piece work rates, the average wages of women were not much higher. Wages for girls in their teens were significantly lower. Why then did any girl work in that industry? As the Chief Inspector of Factories exclaimed,

> The average wage in the dressmaking and millinery trade is about 10s. 10d. per week, and that includes the pay of highly-paid forewomen. In 1897 the average wage for 4,164 workers was 8s. 8d. Imagine making a girl serve at a trade for a year for nothing when the average wage for over 4,000 persons is 8s. 8d (*Factory Report* 1898, p. 22)!

Certainly it is not irrelevant that clothing was the largest form of manufacturing

Figure 3-1: Average wages of clothing and other female factory workers, registered factories, 1895.



Source: *Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for the Year Ending 1895.*
Note: Average wages are a weighted average of the average wages in each industry.

employment for women. In 1901 69 per cent of Melbourne's female manufacturing labour force was working in the clothing trade. Even amongst the restrictive sample of registered factory employees in 1895, which does not include outworkers or most dressmakers, 34 per cent of female workers were in the clothing trades. But there were other reasons intrinsic to the clothing trade regardless of its size which were equally important.

Dressmaking and millinery were useful skills. For a girl who expected to spend most of her adult life as a housewife and mother, time at these crafts between school and marriage would be well spent. These girls' parents were essentially financing their domestic education. According to the Chief Inspector's reports and witnesses to various government inquires, these intentions were often thwarted. Training was rarely thorough and parents were often dismayed to realize that their daughters had spent years learning to pick up pins (*Factory Report* 1896, p. 7-8). Through the 1890s the daily press were

Figure 3-2: Comparison of the average wages of male and female factory workers, registered factories, 1895.



Source: *Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for the Year Ending 1895.*
Note: Average wages are a weighted average of the average wages in each industry.

running regular advertisements offering to give tuition in dressmaking and millinery. Girls from middle-class and well-to-do tradesmen's families would have undoubtedly found such classes a more efficient way to learn. Before that option was readily available their presence in Melbourne's workshops and small establishments lowered wages and made the tradition of a lengthy period of no pay possible (1895, pp. 21-2).

Even in clothing factories some female employees' primary motivation was to learn how to sew, not to master a trade that would support them through a single adulthood. As part of a South Australian oral history project Florrie O. described her experiences in domestic service in the early twentieth century. When she was 26 years old 'she returned to Adelaide to work in a clothing factory in order to learn how to use a sewing machine as she was about to get married' (Davey 1985, 165). Although Florrie would have earned a wage from the factory it might have even been less than what she earned as a servant; the

costs of lodgings in the city would have eaten into her pay as well. But she chose the job because of the skills it promised to give her.

An aura of respectability clung to any enterprise which had to do with clothing or millinery. Almost regardless of the need for money to help the family, some women preferred to ply a needle or have their daughter trim a bonnet than work in a paper box factory or as a laundress. Small workshops in residential suburbs doing contract work for factories claimed their girls would not be willing to work elsewhere (*RC on Employees* 1884, pp. 126-7). Higher class goods conferred their status on the workers. The best dress and millinery shops were the most exclusive jobs. They often combined manufacturing tasks with sales. However, small workshops also had some of the city's worst working conditions (p. 127), longest hours of labour and greatest number of unpaid apprenticeships in the industry.

As improbable as the odds were, the opportunity for a well-paid, respectable job in dressmaking, tailoring or millinery attracted other girls. In reporting the average wages in this trade the Chief Inspector of Factories warned against being misled by the high wages of some dressmakers and milliners (*Factory Report* 1886, p. 7). The fantasy of joining the world of glamorous high fashion, of donning a French accent and being on intimate terms with high society was what induced some girls to commit themselves to years of tacking and picking up pins.

More prosaically dressmaking and tailoring provided a genteel way of earning a livelihood. The tailoress could do order work from a factory or shop at home. The dressmaker could work at her home, do day work at others' homes, or, if she had capital, at her own shop. One of the many English governesses who migrated under an assisted scheme only to find an impossibly tight job market wrote:

> I wish my Father had sent me to learn a business, Millinery or something of the kind; he always used to tell me never to marry for a home and that at his death I was provided for, but now I find that I am entirely at the mercy of the world (Clarke 1985, 143).

The two women who made use of their sewing skills prospered much better in the colonies than the average governess (pp. 18, 123-5, 132-3).

Unfortunately, the combination of the exploitive use of apprentices and other young clothing workers and the habit of girls shifting from workplace to workplace just like their brothers had disastrous consequences. Some girls with determination could become skilled. One tailoress explained:

> When I was apprenticed I served twelve months in Melbourne to a sewing machinist and then I served with a tailor to learn the sewing; that is the reason I can do both. I went six months for nothing and then I got 5s, but I never regretted it because I learned my trade thoroughly (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 681).

There was also Lilian Campbell, interviewed by McCalman (1984, 124), who early in the twentieth century got jobs in clothing factories through sheer gall even though she was not qualified. Once there she would charm her way into some on-the-job training. The bulk of girls though floated from place to place, rarely earning enough to support themselves had that been necessary (*RC on the Tariff* 1883, pp. 69, 77; *RC on Employees* 1884, pp. 124-5; *RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, pp. 676-9).

3.4.3.2 Domestic service

Goldin (1980, 84-8) has characterized the experience-earning curve for American domestic servants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as high and flat, compared to a rising curve for females in manufacturing. To some extent there was a possibility for advancement as a servant in Melbourne.[12] Girls under 16 or 17 years old would invariably be hired to 'mind the baby and assist with house work' for 2s 6d to 7s a week. Middle-class households with children would have hired a girl only as a nursemaid. Families on lower incomes, though, were hoping to acquire an extra pair of hands to assist with all chores. Using these types of 'situations' as an apprenticeship a girl could soon qualify as a general servant. As such they were usually the only servants the household kept. They were expected to do all of the cleaning, washing, ironing and cooking for the family and tended to be paid at the top end of the scale. But, the distinction between a 'useful girl' and general servant was based on age. It would not take long for a general servant going out to service for the first time in her twenties to earn the highest wages. Finally cooks commanded 15s to 20s a week. They would have gained their experience as generals and as Twopeny (1973[1883], 50), the reluctant master of colonial servants remarked, 'by experiments on their employers' digestions'. Although they were isolated in a hot kitchen they were spared other housework. Logic and fragmentary evidence suggest that cooks were older than other servants. The mean age of 287 servants marrying from 1866 to 1896 was 24.3 compared to 30.8 for the 5 brides who reported working as cook.[13] Hotels and boarding houses hired the same categories of servants at the same wages.

Some women made higher wages in manufacturing, but the bulk of them received a salary lower than a good general servant. In addition, a servant who stayed employed, admittedly not always possible, earned the same wages every week. Slow business could cut into the wages of both piece workers and wage earners. Although the latter's pay was

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[12]Wages based on Twopeny (1973[1883], 49-56) and confirmed with advertisements for servants in the first Saturday issue of the *Age* in May and November 1880, 1890 and 1900 and in the first week in those months in the *Argus* in 1870.

[13]For sample description see Chapter 4, Section 1.2.

always quoted by the week, a less than full week's labour reduced the weekly pay accordingly. In addition a servant got her lodgings, work clothing and food free. Even if the factory girl lived with her parents and kept her wages she would have given some money in return for board (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 59).

The reasons that girls and women did not flock to domestic service despite the relatively high wages are well known. They resented the lack of privacy, desired their evenings, Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays to themselves, and felt that doing someone else's domestic chores was demeaning. Also, quite simply, it was hard work (Kingston 1975, 30-4, 36-8). The advertisements in the daily press frequently specified a 'strong' girl or general. That was no extraneous requirement, particularly if the duties included laundry. Advertisements clearly designed to attract applicants promised a 'light place', 'small family', 'no children', or, more importantly, 'no washing', 'no shirts' or that another servant was kept.

Parents played just as strong a role in steering their daughters away from domestic service. Defensive proponents of factory work for girls often explained that many had aged and invalid parents who needed not only their financial support but also help around the home (*RC on Employees* 1883, p. 58 and *RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 436). But able-bodied parents were also reluctant to send their teenage daughters out to service. Perhaps some selfishly wanted to secure both wages and domestic service for themselves. But companionship was the stronger motivation. A tailoress told a royal commission that many girls were put into factory work because they and their parents were attracted by the opportunity to go on piece work very quickly. Many of them would never make good tradeswomen and would be better off in domestic service. However, when asked why the girls did not, then, turn to service she spoke as a mother and not a forewoman.

> Well, they like to be at home with their parents, and their parents like to have them. I would not myself send my daughter out; I have only the one living, but I would not like to send them out if I had more; and I suppose a great many mothers are like that (*RC on Employees* 1884, p. 59).

In 1890 advertisements for servants, especially ones placed by registry offices, were aimed at girls from the country looking for employment. Melbourne girls with homes were not interested in being servants. The younger the single woman was the less likely she would be to have been a servant because there would be a greater chance of surviving parents or unmarried siblings to live with. The age distributions of females in various occupations living in Melbourne in 1901 shows that manufacturing (except for clothing) had a much younger work force than domestic service (Table 3-6). One clothing factory manager estimated that females tended to stay in factories from about age 14 to 24 and then 'leave either to get married or to take up other duties' (*RC on the Factory Act*

1902-3, p. 370). The pressure for accommodation or more flexible work arrangements forced older single women into service as well as other jobs. A unionist in the clothing trade denied that factory workers could turn to domestic service. 'In my walks about of late,' she said, 'I see more servants than can get employment. I see plenty all experienced servants trying to get places for a home' (*Bd of Inquiry in the Factory Act* 1895-6, p. 105).

In 1870 and 1880 there were a few persons asking for a girl to assist with children or housework but to sleep at home. By 1900 the vast majority of advertisements for girls required it. Demand and supply factors were working in tandem. In the last part of the late nineteenth century the English family had receded further and further into their private homes. The burdens of household chores had not lessened much, but men and women were reluctant to share their small dwellings with a stranger. Advertisements for general servants were also more likely to require sleeping at home, but not as frequently as those for girls. Households which could afford a general servant had both a greater need for servants and better accommodation for them. At the same time that sleeping at home became a common prerequisite, the moral qualifications for 'useful girls' and servants were more elaborate. Added to the ubiquitous 'respectable' were 'trustworthy', 'smart', 'ladylike and gentle', and 'honest'.[14] On the supply side, though, employers must have learned that the only way to entice a colonial girl to mop floors for someone other than her mother was to let her sleep at home. They were directly competing with the factories for girls' labour.

Such competition was probably illusory. In the end there were girls who found manufacturing work acceptable and those who found service acceptable. The two groups had very little overlap. Only two of the 57 girls under age 20 hired at Guest's biscuit factory had been servants in their last job; 47 had been working in another factory or workshop.

3.4.4 Middling expectations

The crucial question is what happened afterwards. What was the economic future for the boys and girls who took different career paths? Unfortunately there is no conclusive evidence. The best data available give the salaries of people of different ages, from which synthetic cohorts can be constructed. This forges a single life out of what were disparate cohort experiences. Most older workers would have been trained in Britain, younger ones had picked up what skills they could in Melbourne, some during prosperous times others during recessions or depressions. Furthermore, age-earning profiles of

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[14] All of these examples come from advertisements for female servants in the *Age*, 3 November 1900.

anything less than a whole closed economy do not record those who opt out of that course. Persons seeing prospects for advancement stymied may switch career paths. This is particularly easy when skills can be gained without the formal apprenticeships which ended at age 21. Those who remained in a rising career path were the most successful, others being forced or choosing to leave. Also an ostensibly low wage could be supplemented by regular overtime or special duty pay.

With all due qualifications, then, Figure 3-3 shows the age-earnings profiles for Victorian public servants in 1895 and appointees to the railway department in that year. As far as possible the employees were divided into occupational categories roughly corresponding to those in private enterprise. Of course the nature of the work was atypical. The government hired few skilled tradesmen directly; most materials were made and public works constructed through tender or with casual labour not included in these data. There was also no piecework. Government work was desirable, however, because it gave steady employment. In exchange for that many workers sacrificed higher weekly wages.

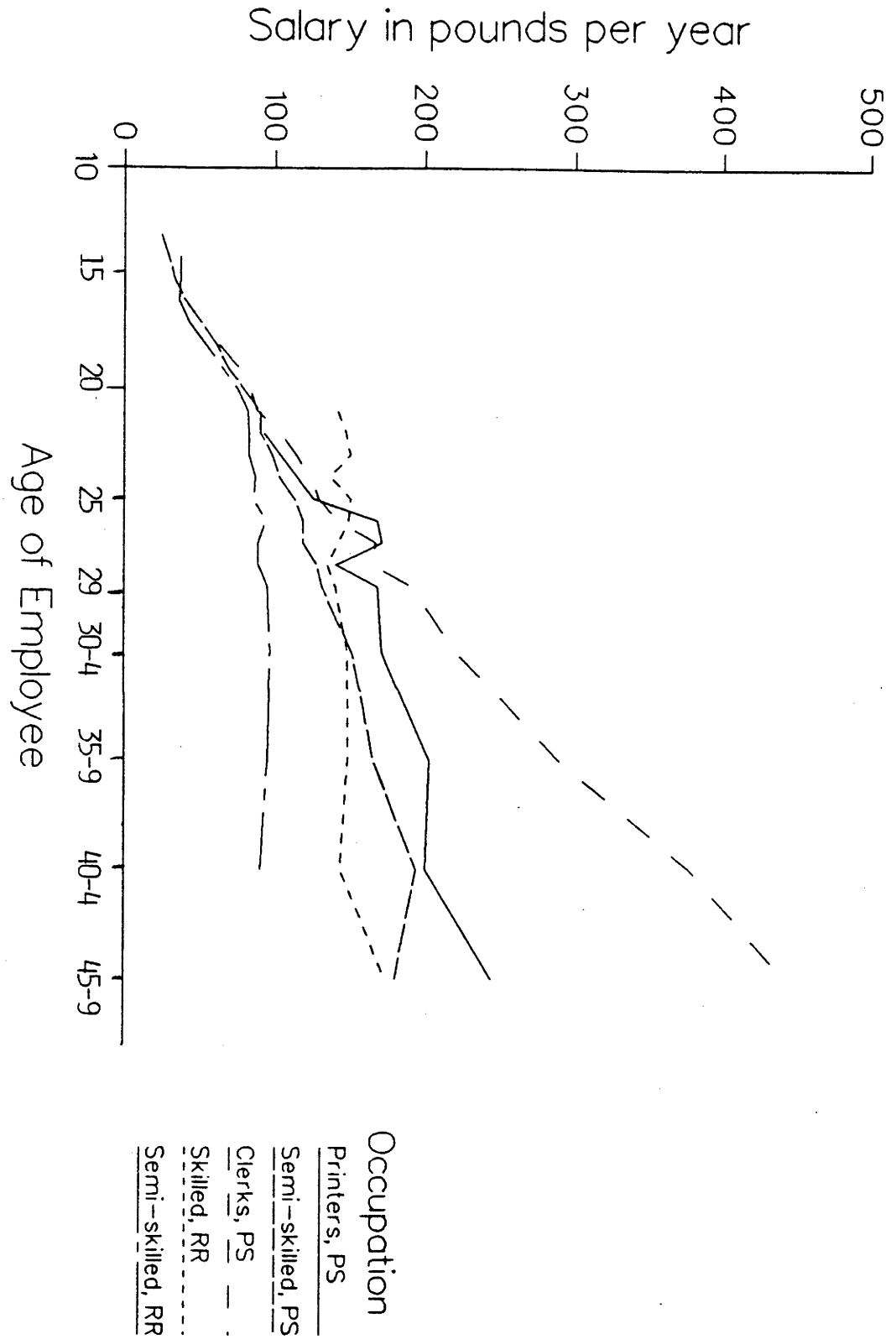
None of the clerks working in 1895 was under 18 years old. Average salaries rose steadily with age, partly because only men receiving promotions would have remained with the government. Supervisory positions were held by 30 per cent of the 40-44 year olds and 38 per cent of the 45-49 year olds. The benchmark wage for skilled male workers was £3 a week or approximately £150 per year. On average a clerk could expect to reach that level when he was 26 years old. By their late twenties they were making at least a pound a week more than any other occupation group.

The semi-skilled government workers were a mixed group: messengers, letter sorters and carriers, customs workers on the wharf and in the warehouses, and warders in lunatic asylums and gaols. These young men were earning the same as young clerks from age 18 to 21. Before that age semi-skilled workers, mostly messengers, enjoyed a steady increase in wages. The drawback with this work was that advantages were short lived. After age 21 the amount of the annual increases in income declined. The men did not reach £3 a week mark until they were in their thirties.

Printers and compositors were the most numerous group of skilled nonclerical workers in the public service and even so there were only 80 employed in 1895. The youngest was age 18, the next youngest aged 25. Visually smoothing the curve, it is clear that only fully competent printers and compositors were hired. The average yearly wage was about £150. Presumably because of increased experience and responsibilities in the government printing offices their annual pay increased from the mid thirties.

The same was true in the railways. Improvers or apprentices in, say, iron moulding were rarely hired. Journeymen's average wages were roughly £3 per week. These men had

Figure 3-3: Age-earning profiles for males in selected occupation in the Public Service and Railway Department, 1891.



just been hired and as they had no claims to seniority their wages show no change with age. Semi-skilled jobs in the railway department included nonmanual occupations such as porter and manual ones such as engine-cleaner and furnaceman as well as labourers. The average pay for the boys under 18 were competitive with the wages for the rest of the government's young employees. After age 21, though, their wages were unaffected by age.

In short, based on the experience of a single group of employees at one time, the average government employee would have approached or reached his maximum pay by his mid to late twenties. For the semi-skilled workers young males of 21 and 22 were receiving full adult wages. As an aside, the further increases on wages in middle age would have affected the men's families. An artisan father finding himself better paid as he grew older would have been in a stronger position than a semi-skilled worker to encourage his son to find and master a trade he liked.

Clerical workers are the other exception. They faced the enviable prospects of continually rising wages during their working life. This experience cannot be generalized to private enterprise. Commercial clerks could not hope to exercise the power that a chief clerk or under-secretary had; that power was reserved for the firm's partners. On the other hand the age-earnings profile for skilled workers was probably similar for wage earners in those jobs in the private sector. The government, of course, would have paid a lower wage in exchange for providing constant employment.

The age-earnings profile for women in the public service does not even need to be illustrated. They performed a variety of roles in 1895 from telegraph clerks and switch operators to warders in prisons and asylums. However the variety did not extend to their pay. The youngest workers were 17 years old and they received an average wage of £56 a year. From that base the pay crept to an average of £70 at age 25. Women in their forties and fifties were making an average annual wage between £90 and £100.

3.5 A Working-Class Adolescence?

This chapter has followed children out of school and through their career paths to adulthood. For various reasons middle-class children have been virtually excluded. The most flippant justification for this is that the middle class could take care of itself. For them growing up was not problematic. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century some secondary schooling was expected for middle-class boys, often followed by a professional apprenticeship or university training. Advanced schooling was just as common for their sisters, although extra professional or academic training was still unusual. The major reason for ignoring the middle class is that it was numerically small. The 1901 *Statistical Register* reported that 4,899 Victorian males and 4,076 females aged 13 and upwards were enrolled in secondary schools or colleges. These were defined as

'private schools where mathematics, classics or languages form part of the ordinary curriculum'. That amounted to 6.4 and 6.5 per cent respectively of all boys and girls 13 to 17 years old.

Some historians of adolescence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have concentrated on the growth of secondary schooling and the emergence of age-graded organizations for youth (Musgrove 1964; Gillis 1974; Kett 1977; Banks 1981). The reasons each choose to do this reflect real factors in the populations they studied. State supported secondary schooling reached large proportions of eligible youths in the United States. In England the cultural pre-eminence of the great public schools and the lesser schools which imitated them was too great for historians to ignore. While Melbourne had (and still has) its great schools the historian is nonetheless not forced by tradition to treat them as the ultimate experience of youth. The government did not provide a comprehensive program of technical or academic training for post-elementary school children until well after the period studied here. In other words, the search for an Australian urban adolescent is free to concentrate on the employed working-class young people, who after all were the largest group of young people in the cities.

Extended schooling has been identified with the emergence of adolescence because it neatly entails all the features which should belong to an adolescent stage of life. School children are financially dependent on parents or guardians, under the control of adults who are either parents or school authorities, they are in preparation for an adult phase of life of which they are not yet part, and while waiting they associate with people of their own age. Kett (1977) on the United States and Gillis (1974) on England contend that the sons of artisans also had a form of adolescence through the institution of apprenticeships. But the multitudes serving as boy labour (and girl labour although both books concentrate on males) were viewed as having too grim a working life of hard toil, too similar to their parents for them to experience a life stage remotely similar to the responsibility-free high school student pausing before becoming an adult.

I am in much more sympathy with writers who have stressed the similarities of the lives of the majority of late nineteenth-century working-class young people to the definition of adolescence given above (Modell, Furstenberg and Strong 1976; Glasco 1977; Hareven 1982, 156-72; Katz *et al.*, 1982, 242-84). Kett has used the term semi-dependence to describe the ambiguous position of those children and Katz preferred to call it semi-autonomy. Their wages were frequently, though not always, crucial to their families, but they also lived at home and often remained under their parents authority until they married.

Unfortunately we do not have any information on where the young people of Melbourne lived. There is the anecdotal evidence that parents went to great lengths to

keep their daughters with them. We know that by the end of the century women desperate for household help tried to attract girls by letting them continue to live at home. Parents probably felt the same way about their sons, and only poverty, overcrowding or incompatability would force them to send them out as house or garden servants or live-in apprentices. Given the low wages most girls could command and the dislike of being a servant, single daughters certainly stayed with their parents for as long as possible. Undoubtedly some young men left to live somewhere else in the city before they married, but without evidence it is impossible to say how many or at what age. Imaginative manipulation of other data sources can overcome the lack of census manuscripts for a surprising number of issues, but there is no substitute for the information on household consumption which was lost forever when the household forms were destroyed. Unmarried men and women living away from their parents would have been lodgers. The census would not have considered them single person households, even if such tables had been published. However, I feel confident in the working assumption that living patterns were similar to those of other Anglo-Saxon urban communities in the second half of the nineteenth century studied by the authors cited above. Certainly the children who grew up in late nineteenth-century Melbourne followed a pattern closer to the ideal type of remaining with parents until marriage than the pre-industrial and early industrial pattern of sending young children out as farm servants and apprentices.

The overwhelming emphasis on boys in the discussion of the development of adolescence has some justification. From the time they left school to the time they married or had to support themselves and possibly an aging parent, females would be in roughly the same social role. We do not know whether it was common for girls to alternate between living at home performing home duties exclusively and working for wages outside of the home. Of course the factory girl probably had greater autonomy than her sisters who were housebound or servants. But their independence should not be overstated. The prescriptions which required that daughters do more domestic chores and in general be more dutiful restricted even the factory hands. The 'semi-dependent' girl or young woman could be found in late nineteenth-century Melbourne, but she was rare.

Boys' lives were more segmented. At the end of the discussion on the timing of entering full time employment I suggested that for most working-class boys (and perhaps girls as well) the ages between 13 and 15 were a time of relative freedom. One was not expected to perform adult-like jobs, prepare for a trade or even be a steady, responsible worker. Those years were not very different from the preceding school days when children attended classes irregularly and changed schools when they felt like it. From 13 to 15 was a period of life more like an extended childhood than an adolescence, but

certainly not like the life of a miniature adult. The men and women Davey (1985) interviewed about their childhoods in urban South Australia in the first decades of the twentieth century told the same story.

> [M]ost teenagers of both sexes continued to work seasonally and casually for a period of three or four years after leaving school. They held a succession of labouring or domestic jobs which they often left not only because they were laid off, but because the work conditions were too harsh, the job was boring, they wanted to learn another skill, they didn't like the boss or because they could get more money elsewhere. In short, while they had to work to contribute to the family economy, teenagers in this period had a considerable degree of independence and autonomy born of a long transition from school to work, a knowledge that their schooling played virtually no part in helping them to find jobs, and an appreciation of the fact that other casual or dead-end jobs were readily available. As one interviewee said, 'a boy could always get a job at the glassworks if he was really desperate' (p. 171).

In the late teens working-class boys' career paths bifurcated. It was at this stage a boy's future was decided. Some boys, usually from the better-off families, went on to an apprenticeship of varying degrees of formality. Others continued in semi-skilled and unskilled work establishing a pattern that would last for the rest of their lives. The wages boards which instituted minimum adult wages in each industry and required that all males above age 21 receive that wage merely affirmed the existing reality. If a boy was not qualified to do the work of a man by that age then he would never be able to do so. Of course there was still work for the 21 year old 'improver', but he had to look for it amongst the range of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs within, but mostly outside of, manufacturing.

Most urban industrializing societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had their local variants of 'toughs' who congregated in street gangs. Australian cities had the larrikin. The term emerged in the press around 1870, but it was so quickly incorporated into the language that it clearly described a phenomenon that had needed a name for many years. Larrikins were boys and young men who were distinguished by their parody of foppish dress and the sometimes elaborate organization of their 'pushes'. They ran up against the police and the magistrates for insulting virtually everyone on the streets whom they felt threatened by or did not like: working-class girls and young women, any middle-class or 'respectable' persons, the Chinese, and, of course, the police. With a flair for symbolism an all-time favourite place to congregate was down the road from a church as Sunday services finished.

McLachlan (1950) has written the most cogent and factual description of larrikins and has given the phenomenon its most penetrating analysis. On most points I agree with him, and the qualifications I suggest here are in the context of general accord. Using his evidence, larrikins could be any age from 13 to mid-twenties; most, though, were

comfortably outside the 13 to 15 year old age range. He claims that almost all of the larrikins were in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs: factory hands, useful boys, sales clerks. McLachlan identified the tedium of this work and its lack of long term opportunity as an important contributing factor to larrikinism. He has probably over-emphasized this point, possibly through taking the apprenticeship debate too literally. The future was indeed grim for young males in dead-end jobs, but the distinction between that work and the traditional apprenticeship was exaggerated because there were so few traditional apprentices. The chaotic state of most industries in the late nineteenth century made it difficult for all but the most determined boy to know whether he would reach the end of his training and be a full-fledged journeyman. In any event semi-skilled jobs did not have a monopoly on tedium. Larrikins appeared to be in semi-skilled jobs because they were the jobs most youths had whether or not they were apprentices.

McLachlan also posited that the frequently decried decline of parental authority was an important factor. He has assumed, as I have here, that these males lived at home. Since most of them would have been making enough to support themselves, albeit spartanly, they must have remained either because they wanted to, because they lacked the confidence to move out or because they were sufficiently cowed by the convention dictating that they stay. It was the freedom of living at home with very few responsibilities which allowed them to roam the streets and form their own social code. Their lifestyle fitted the criteria for adolescence in that they were living neither as a child nor an adult. As the editor of Richmond's *Australian* observed, 'we may say generally that youths scarcely begin to realise their responsibilities until they are at least sixteen or seventeen years of age' (7 February 1880).

Testimony at the Royal Commissions on the Tariff and on Employees in Shops and Factories in the early 1880s implies that the disarray of apprenticeships and the proliferation of dead-end jobs were not new. The presence of larrikin types in the late 1860s suggests that a semi-dependent stage of life had already emerged for most working-class males and some working-class females. The depression in the 1890s probably increased the responsibilities of employed sons and daughters, but otherwise there was no change in the opportunities or lifestyle of young single Melburnians during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

In terms of the directions of wealth flows the situation for children out of school was ambiguous and stayed so until they married. Indeed, resource allocation within the late nineteenth-century urban family between adolescents and young single adults on one hand and parents on the other was more like a wave action. Parents invested in their children. They allowed them freedom to choose their work and their pastimes. To the best of their abilities they directed their children to the jobs with the best prospects both for the short

run and the child's future. Children, youth and young adults returned those economic and emotional investments by handing over some of their wages and by remaining part of the household. The greatest advantage of this system was its flexibility. Families experiencing relatively good fortune could afford to give more to their children with no expectation of material gain in return. Parents in distress had a right to their children's complete assistance. That is why so many of Guest's workers were the children of widows. However, that kind of insurance was not sufficient to make large families an asset. The economic structure was such that the child in the biscuit factory would not grow up to be a man or a woman capable of supporting his or her aging parents in comfort. It did mean though that children had, at least potentially, a significant economic value which persisted throughout the last four decades of the century.

CHAPTER 4
MARRIAGE

4.1 Introduction

For most men and women growing up in late nineteenth-century Melbourne marriage was the culmination of the path to adulthood; but little is known about the nature of the timing of this transition. What little discussion it has inspired has been dominated by two conflicting themes, one of optimism and one of pessimism. On one hand, the Australian-born, the currency lads and lasses, were believed to marry young (Alford 1984, 30). This was primarily a pre-1850 view and consequently belongs more to the literature of New South Wales. Evidence to support it is sparse. The only data come from censuses taken at the turn of the century. The majority of men and women who married prior to 1850 would have been dead. The registration system in the early years was far too incomplete to be of assistance. Given the small numbers of women compared to men it is almost certain that women married at young ages. But, unfortunately, we know too little to be able to hazard a guess as to the timing of marriage for men who married.

Nonetheless, even after 1850 it was not uncommon for people to believe that Australians married younger than the British. In the late 1860s Marcus Clarke (Hergehan 1972, 48) counted youthful marriage as a typical Australian excess. Twopeny (1973[1883], 85-7, 103-4), a just-married observer of town life, thought Australian girls married 'two or three years younger than the English girls' (1973, 87). These opinions were based on the spirit of confidence and optimism which people exuded. Indeed, saying that Australians and particularly Melburnians were brash and confident usually went hand-in-hand with perceiving they married early.

The other theme to discussions in Australian, and particularly Victorian, marriage patterns had a different emphasis. Instead of looking upon early marriage with a mixture of patriotic pride and prudish disapproval, others felt that young Australians were stubbornly avoiding marriage. The 'Marriage Question' was a popular subject for newspaper and magazine columnists and letters to the editor. While some commentators believed that the young women of the colony were somehow wanting in wifely qualities, most felt that young men showed too great a reluctance to undertake the responsibility of

marriage (Quiggin 1985, 85-8, 92-4; Davison 1978, 193). Demographic features were partly responsible for this state of affairs. By the late nineteenth century, and particularly in 1881 and 1891, a kink in the age structure emerged when women in the first large native-born cohorts became eligible for marriage without enough appropriately older men to marry them. This meant that the number of marriages per single[1] woman declined. Male rates of marriage were not very responsive to the relative numbers of women in the late nineteenth century, so, through no fault of their own, the proportions of single women climbed. Among those women who did marry, age at marriage rose slightly. These demographic constraints on marriage for women were well publicized. After the 1881 census exposed the problem the Government Statist annually explained the effects of age and sex structure on marriage rates in the *Victorian Yearbooks*. However, the public debate was more concerned with social theorizing and self-criticism, or at least criticism of the younger generation.

Given the classic conditions for a marriage squeeze[2] and a public, albeit middle-class, discussion on the reluctance of men to marry, demographers McDonald (1974, 126-31) and Quiggin (1985, 85-92) have interpreted late nineteenth-century marriage patterns as ones bred of caution and reserve. However, this opinion fits uneasily with what we know about a colony and a city whose major histories of the period are entitled *The Rush to be Rich* (Serle, 1971) and *Marvellous Melbourne* (Davison 1978). Even though the view that there was prosperity for all in boom period Victoria is now being qualified (Davison *et al.* 1985, Lee and Fahey 1986), it has not been completely abandoned.

The arguments put forward during the late nineteenth century to explain delayed marriage and large proportions not marrying have an odd quality. For example, it is not clear if Catherine Spence was accurately portraying the quality of discussion or if she was a parodying it. However, in her novel *Handfasting* (1984 [1879], 10) an otherwise highly esteemed character known for her wisdom and common sense declared, 'Hugh! I wonder if it is the smoking that makes you young fellows all so satisfied with single blessedness'. The seriousness with which some took up the 'marriage question' was matched by the alternatively facetious and wistful tones of others. Such a discussion no matter how salient in the daily, weekly and monthly press is probably not the best source for

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[1]Throughout this chapter the term 'single' will designate persons who have never married. 'Unmarried' will include those who have never been married but also the widowed and, in rare cases, the divorced.

[2]This term refers to a situation when some fraction of a birth cohort are literally squeezed out of the marriage market because there are not enough potential marriage partners in the appropriate age groups. See Akers (1967) for one of the first demonstrations of the effects of squeeze.

understanding the causes behind marriage patterns. The discussion was almost always set in terms of middle-class men, though women also attracted criticism for self-centred frivolity and domestic incompetence. The terms of reference were obviously derived from the English debate with added colonial embellishments. Victoria had the 'surplus women problem' as did England, but New South Wales did not and yet the commentary in the northern colony was much the same.

Davison (1978, 194-7) has suggested a compromise position more in keeping with the colonial setting. He has argued that even with the demographic obstacles to early and universal marriage there was variation in the timing of marriage. Professionals and men in genteel but poorly paid occupations would have deferred marriage out of economic necessity, while artisans and relatively well paid but less skilled workers would have felt free to marry young. Davison used the proportions married in selected age groups to demonstrate that middle-class suburbs were characterized by a later age at marriage than working-class suburbs. McDonald (1974, 130) has rightly criticized this methodology, but that does not mean that the conclusion is wrong. The New South Wales Actuary of Friendly Societies agreed with Davison. He told the Royal Commision on the Decline in the Birth Rate that

> Speaking generally, you find that the lower down in the social scale a man is, the earlier, on the whole, is his marriage-age; and it increases with the difficulty or the length of time necessary to enable him to qualify for the walk of life he is adopting (*RC on the Birth Rate*, vol. 1, p.6).

What is significant about the discussion on the age at marriage is that there is no mention of the brides' and grooms' parents. This is consistent with the ideal which flourished during the Victorian era of the preeminence of the conjugal family. Once married, one's spouse, not one's parents or siblings, was most important. Parents respected the new couple's independence and did not expect or demand the kind of assistance they received from an unmarried son or daughter. The fact that very close bonds remained after marriage, particularly between mothers and daughters, and that one's relatives were always the first people one went to in emergencies has nothing to do with the newsprint dialogue we have been discussing. To Melburnians marriage meant, at least ideally, an end to the flows of wealth towards the parents.

In the classic dichotomy between traditional and modern societies - or high and low fertility regimes - marriage is entirely controlled by the elders in the former case and left up to the individuals in the latter. In the former it is in the patriarch's interests to arrange marriages between very young people to insure that the new couple have neither the economic resources nor the sense of identity required to demand independence. By comparison marriage is between older, consenting adults in a modern society. However, a

more sensitive analysis shows that the European pattern of delayed marriage and high proportions never marrying represents a third case. Able-bodied single adults at the height of their earning powers are a very great assest to a household. Parents used various stratagems ranging from withholding inheritance to insisting that offspring marry according to birth order to preaching that one should wait for the 'proper time' (e.g. Greven 1970; Lesthaeghe 1980, 532-3). The 'nuptiality valve' in which marriages were postponed or foregone during hard times was a system which benefitted the parents as much as it seemed appropriate to the young people anticipating marriage. Musgrove's (1964) startling argument that the teenage marriage rate is directly related to the rights and economic freedom accorded young people does not seems so outrageous when viewed from the prespective of traditional Western marriage.

The fact that delayed marriage was a middle-class concern in Melbourne is not surprising because those families were not dependent on their sons' and daughters' assistance. They had been able to afford to give them an adolesence of extended schooling and minimal responsibilities and were eager for them to become, at the proper time, independent married adults. But if it were true that the working-class men and women married earlier then does that mean they were escaping the demands their parents placed on them? On the other hand, perhaps the parents of most colonial young people made so few demands that they were free to marry when they wanted, as Levine (1982) has put it, 'for their own reasons'?

In both versions of the Australian marriage debate the arguments are couched in terms of men's motivations to marry early or late. Women are assumed to share the same cultural attitude. That is, those who thought Australian men married young believed that colonial women did so too; those who fretted about low marriage rates sometimes accused women along with men of expecting too much economic security before marriage. However, the economic attitudes underlying each view of marriage involved the decision-making process that men went through before proposing marriage, not the isssues women considered before accepting. By looking at the characteristics of men and women who married in Melbourne we can understand more about the context of marriage and which, if either, characterization is likely to be true. Men and women will be treated separately as there is no reason to assume that they responded to similar economic or social conditions in the same way.

4.1.1 Data and Methods

Late nineteenth-century Australian marriage patterns have received some attention, but they are usually referred to within the context of other social and demographic concerns (e.g. Butlin 1964, 215-38; Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977; Kingston 1977, 6-28; Davison 1978, 193-7). The only major research work exclusively devoted to marriage is P.F. McDonald's (1974) careful study *Marriage in Australia*. In it he exploited the published, aggregate statistics and gave concrete descriptions of colonial-wide trends. Unfortunately, he was limited by his data sources which were the census tables of marital status by sex and five year age groups and the government statisticians' annual reports on registered marriages. These give little information beyond general outlines.

His most relevant finding for Victoria was that from 1861 to 1891 both male and, to a lesser extent, female age at marriage and the proportions single rose in every age group. To those interested in marriage as an individual's transition to adulthood these trends suggest more questions than they answer. It is necessary to know not only that on average people were marrying later, but rather if this was done by all groups or whether only people with certain characteristics were deferring marriage. McDonald could only attempt some answers by considering largely circumstantial evidence about variation by country of birth, religion, place of residence and economic condition.

Most of the recent empirical studies of nineteenth-century marriage patterns have, like McDonald, used aggregate level data. Typically models or hypotheses are tested with census data on proportions married in specific age groups for small areas (Anderson 1976; Knodel and Maynes 1976; Vinovski 1978; Woods and Hinde 1985). This level of analysis restricts researchers to the structural or ecological factors determining marriage patterns. Consequently, variations in the sex ratio in the marriageable ages, employment opportunities for men and women, urbanity and the cultural or ethnic composition receive considerable attention. But it is invalid to extend any conclusions reached in these studies to the indivdual level, suggesting, for example, that a servant in an administrative city was less likely to marry. Just because the proportion of women employed as servants was positively correlated with the average age at marriage it does not follow that servants necessarily had a high age at marriage. On the contrary, it could be that the well-to-do women they served were responsible for the late marrying age. Not surprisingly, three of the studies cited above ended with a plea for research with individual level data.

One other limitation of aggregate level analysis is shared by most studies using information on individuals. In almost all individual level studies of historical marriage patterns the data come from census manuscripts (Modell, Furstenberg and Hershberg 1976; Chudacoff 1980; Woods and Hinde 1985) or population registers (Watkins and McCarthy 1980). The resulting analyses have tended to concentrate on proportions

marrying rather than on the timing of marriage of those who do marry. All of the individual level studies cited constructed synthetic cohorts which essentially gave information that was not qualitatively different from what could have been learned from census tables had they existed. This study takes a different approach with individual level data and studies the timing of marriage.

Coale (1971) argued that across societies with diverse marriage practices the timing of marriage and the proportions married are highly correlated. However, theoretically and in practice the two are distinct. When strong age norms dictate the appropriate time to marry, persons who do marry may be quite young while the proportion never marrying remains high. Woods and Hinde (1985, 124) found substantial variations in the proportions single after the early twenties in selected English registration districts despite similar mean ages at marriage. European settlers to Australian brought with them a view of marriage which made it an important transition to adulthood. Marriage shifted a person's allegiance away from his or her family of origin to the new family. It was also expected but not always possible that everyone would marry. Under these circumstances age at marriage is more suited to understanding the transition to adulthood than proportions married.

In this chapter I examine the timing of first marriage in late nineteenth-century Melbourne with the information recorded on marriage registration forms. Such data make it possible to identify characteristics associated with persons hastening or delaying marriage. The major disadvantage of studying the ages of only those people who marry is that their average ages are as dependent on the ages of those in the community who are single and therefore free to marry as on the propensity to marry at a certain age. Fortunately marriage occurs within a relatively small range of ages in most societies. Changes in the age distributions of brides and grooms usually reflect true changes in age-specific marriage rates. If, for example, teenage marriages are rare, no matter how many 15-19 year olds there are compared to unmarried persons in other age groups very few 15-19 year olds will marry. Modell and colleagues (1978, 122-5) produced separate trends in age at marriage spanning a century for the United States using data based on birth cohorts and on marriages in single years. The approaches gave the same levels and patterns of change over time. Naturally that would not have held if the population at risk had a very unusual age distribution.

4.1.2 The sample

The Victorian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages holds a complete set of registration certificates and annual indexes. Marriages were registered by the celebrant who sent completed forms quarterly to the General-Registrar's office where they were checked, arranged by denomination, and bound. When this research was conducted historians were allowed access to all nineteenth-century documents.[3]

Estimation of the average age at marriage for the urban population was not the primary reason for using individual level data. The more exciting potential of this source lay in identifying factors which predicted when a person would marry. A sample of marriages from some Melbourne suburbs met this purpose better than one drawn from the entire metropolitan area. This is for two reasons. Melbourne changed from the late 1860s to the late 1890s. Some changes such as population growth and the expansion to suburbs increasingly distant from the centre of the city were obvious. More subtle changes involved shifts in the types of people who lived in Melbourne and the kinds of work they did. The analytical difficulties of incorporating that change within the framework of marriage patterns outweighed the value of any additional findings that might have been made. Conceptually it was easier to conceive of changes in marriage patterns within smaller areas which retained their character throughout the period but also represented a significant proportion of what was Melbourne.

The second reason for restricting the population of marriages was to facilitate studying class differences in the transition to adulthood. There had to be a sufficient number of marriages involving middle and upper-class people to make empirical generalizations. Theoretically a Melbourne sample could have been weighted by, say, the occupational status group of the groom. However, at that stage in the research an occupational classification scheme had not been chosen. In fact, during the analysis I used and abandoned two schemes. Selecting small areas which would ensure enough marriages from all classes was the most efficient way to avoid difficulties.

Three suburbs were selected. Two have already been introduced: the inner city working-class suburb of North Melbourne; and Hawthorn, the middle-class south-eastern suburb of white-collar commuters and associated service workers and small retailers. To these was added the suburb of Kew. Directly north of Hawthorn, this suburb had a slightly larger proportion of upper class residents, but in other respects was very similar to Hawthorn, though much smaller. Several south-eastern suburbs would have served the purpose of the study equally well. North Melbourne and Hawthorn were selected to

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[3]Fahey and McConville (1983) give a useful review of the organization of Victoria's vital registration system, including words of warning for unwary researchers.

complement the research on school registers presented in Chapter 2. Kew was added primarily to ensure a sufficient number of marriages in the early part of the period when both suburbs were quite small.

Appendix B compares the populations of the selected suburbs in each census year with that of the metropolitan area. The similarities in age composition, marital status and birthplace are more striking than the differences. The selected suburbs had a noticeably higher proportion of middle and upper-class residents and a smaller proportion of labourers. However, as long as this is taken into account in generalizing to a Melbourne marriage pattern, it is not a great weakness of the sample. From the beginning of the period each of the suburbs was integrated into the city's economy and conditions of work and quality of life did not vary much between localities. Labourers living in North Melbourne and Kew alike worked by day-to-day agreements and lived in crowded, low-rent cottages. The suburbs were not strictly homogeneous socially. The labels of working-class, middle-class and elite suburbs describe a tendency rather than a hard and fast distinction.

The 1104 marriages in the sample were collected from all registered marriages in 1866, 1871, 1876, 1881, 1886, 1891 and 1896 which involved at least one person residing in North Melbourne, Hawthorn or Kew. In 38 per cent of the cases the marriage ceremony was performed in the suburb, but this was not a necessary criterion for inclusion as every marriage registered in the colony in each study year was examined. Such an exhaustive search may actually have been unnecessary as 97 per cent of the marriages in the sample took place within metropolitan Melbourne. Although the analysis in this chapter concentrates on men and women who were marrying for the first time, the complete sample also includes marriages between two people who had both been married before.

The combined population of the suburbs quadrupled from 1861 to 1901. At first North Melbourne was three times the size of Hawthorn, but Hawthorn grew more rapidly and at the turn of the century had about 20 per cent more residents. Obviously this meant a rapid escalation in the number of marriages originating from these suburbs and a shift in the relative importance of each suburb to the total number of marriages. The same sampling ratio for each suburb in each year could have been used, but that would have resulted in either too few marriages for statistical purposes in the early years or an overwhelming collection task for the later years. The solution was a variable sampling ratio ranging from one-third to all of the marriages. The specific sampling scheme is delineated in Table 4-1.

Brides and grooms recorded both their present and their usual place of residence on the marriage certificates. It is not clear what meaning those terms had for the brides, grooms and marriage celebrants. For example, would a domestic servant record her

Table 4-1: Sampling strategy for suburban marriages, 1866-96.

	All marriages	One-half of all marriages	One-third of all marriages
North Melbourne	1866	1871 1876 1881 1886	1891 1896
Hawthorn and Kew	1866 1871 1876 1881	1886	1891 1896

employer's home as her present address and her parents' home as her usual address, or would it be the reverse as she 'usually' lived with her employer but had returned home just before her wedding? Fortunately 87 per cent of the grooms and 89 per cent of the brides who listed one of the suburbs as a place of residence listed it as both their present and their usual address. When the addresses were different it was more common for one of the suburbs to be the present address. This was the case for 70 grooms and 64 brides, but most of them married someone usually and presently residing in one of the suburbs. Probably these people had temporarily moved to the suburb for the wedding. There is also some indication that couples registered the address they intended to live in as their present address. Only 23 of the grooms and 22 of the brides listed one of the suburbs as their usual address and another locality as their present address. For men this tended to mean that North Melbourne, Hawthorn or Kew was their real home and half of them resided there when their first child was born. Women, on the other hand, were usually marrying men who resided in their 'present' locality. Only ten marriages posed a serious classification problem. In these instances both the bride and the groom were from the same country locality and listed North Melbourne as their present address. These were clearly couples who came to the city only to marry but they have been kept in the sample. The present or usual address criterion means that some persons are counted as residents who did not live there as single adults and who were not part of the population at risk of marriage. Yet arbitrarily choosing either present or usual address as the sole rule would eliminate some genuine residents.

4.1.3 Marriage in the suburbs: aggregate trends

Despite the limitations of aggregate level analysis discussed above, trends in the age at marriage in the suburbs is the best introduction to the sample. In this section only residents (defined by either usual or present address) are studied because the object is to contrast the median ages derived from various calculations based on the population at risk of marriage within the selected suburbs.

Median ages at first marriage calculated directly from the ages recorded on the sampled marriage certificates are shown by the solid lines in Figure 4-1.[4] For males these show a pronounced decline from 1866 to 1881 of more than two-and-a-half years. The fall is matched by a subsequent rise to 1896 which was almost as steady. The median age of suburban brides rose through the period, with the greatest increase during the 1870s and from 1891 to 1896. But the climb was gentle; the difference between the highest and lowest median was only one-and-a-half years.

The effects of simultaneously shifting age structure and likelihood of marriage can be isolated through standardization. This is required to determine how greatly the 'events only' approach to studying marriage is distorted by the suburbs' age distributions. The procedure also allows an analysis of the marriage rates themselves.

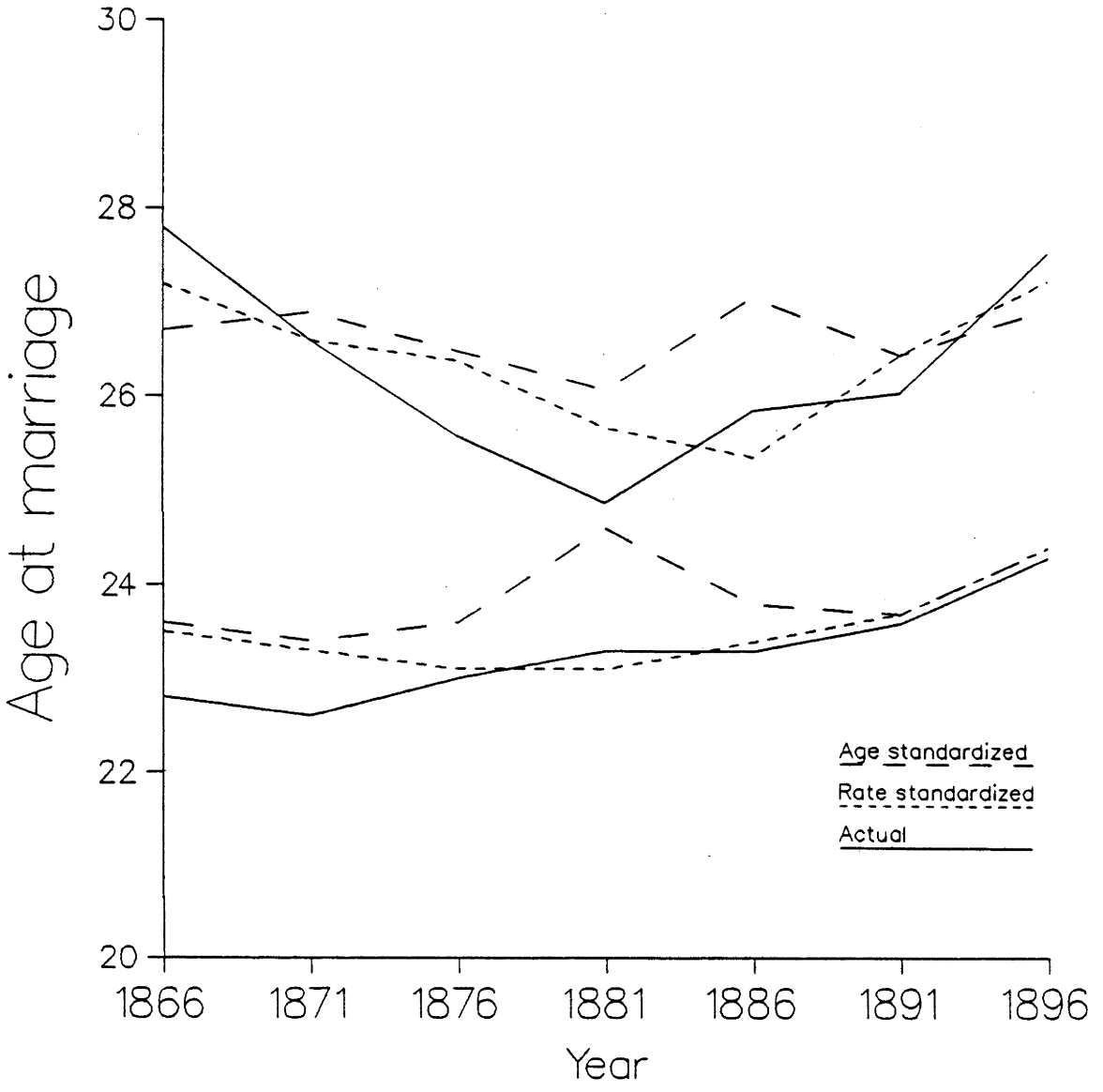
The initial step in standardizing was to estimate the single population in the suburbs for each year marriage data were sampled. Until 1901 the census reported the marital status of the population of each suburb by sex and five-year age groups. In 1901 the information was only given for metropolitan Melbourne as a whole. The total population by age and sex in intercensal years was derived by interpolating a mid-point for each five-year cohort in the 15 to 49 year age range. Rather than using a simple mean to estimate the mid-censal population, weights were derived from the yearly estimates of the population of the urban area to reflect the city's nonlinear growth.

Since marriage is concentrated in relatively few years the proportion single in each age-sex group was estimated as the average of the proportions single in the same age-sex group in each bordering census year. That is, the proportion of 15-19 year old males who were single in 1876 was taken to be the average of the proportion single at that age in 1871 and 1881. In terms of a Lexis diagram, the total population was interpolated diagonally to take account of the size of each cohort. The proportions single, on the other hand, were calculated horizontally. The products of the proportions single and the total population gave estimates of the population in the suburbs at risk of first marriage in the

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[4]All mean and median ages given in this chapter have been calculated using the half-year as the midpoint. For example, 21 year old brides are assumed to be evenly distributed throughout their twenty-second year and aged on average exactly 21.5 years.

Figure 4-1: Actual and standardized median ages of brides and grooms residing in selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.



Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample and the Censuses of Victoria, 1861-1901.
Note: See text for methods used to standardize.

intercensal years. These estimates should be adequate to study overall trends, but certainly make no pretence to sophistication. Cautious readers may wish to concentrate on figures for census years.

Figure 4-1 contrasts the actual median ages with the expected ages if age and, separately, age-specific marriage rates had been constant. The standards were the 1891 age distribution of the suburbs' single population and the 1891 set of suburban marriage rates. Essentially the exercise shows that changes over time were largely due to shifts in the underlying age structure. The rate standardized graph follows quite closely the trends in actual age at marriage. For males controlling for age produced fluctuations, but

overall it considerably reduced the differences during the period. For females, apart from the rather dramatically high median age at marriage in 1881, controlling for age suggests that the median age at marriage stayed firmly within the ages of 23.5 and 24.5.

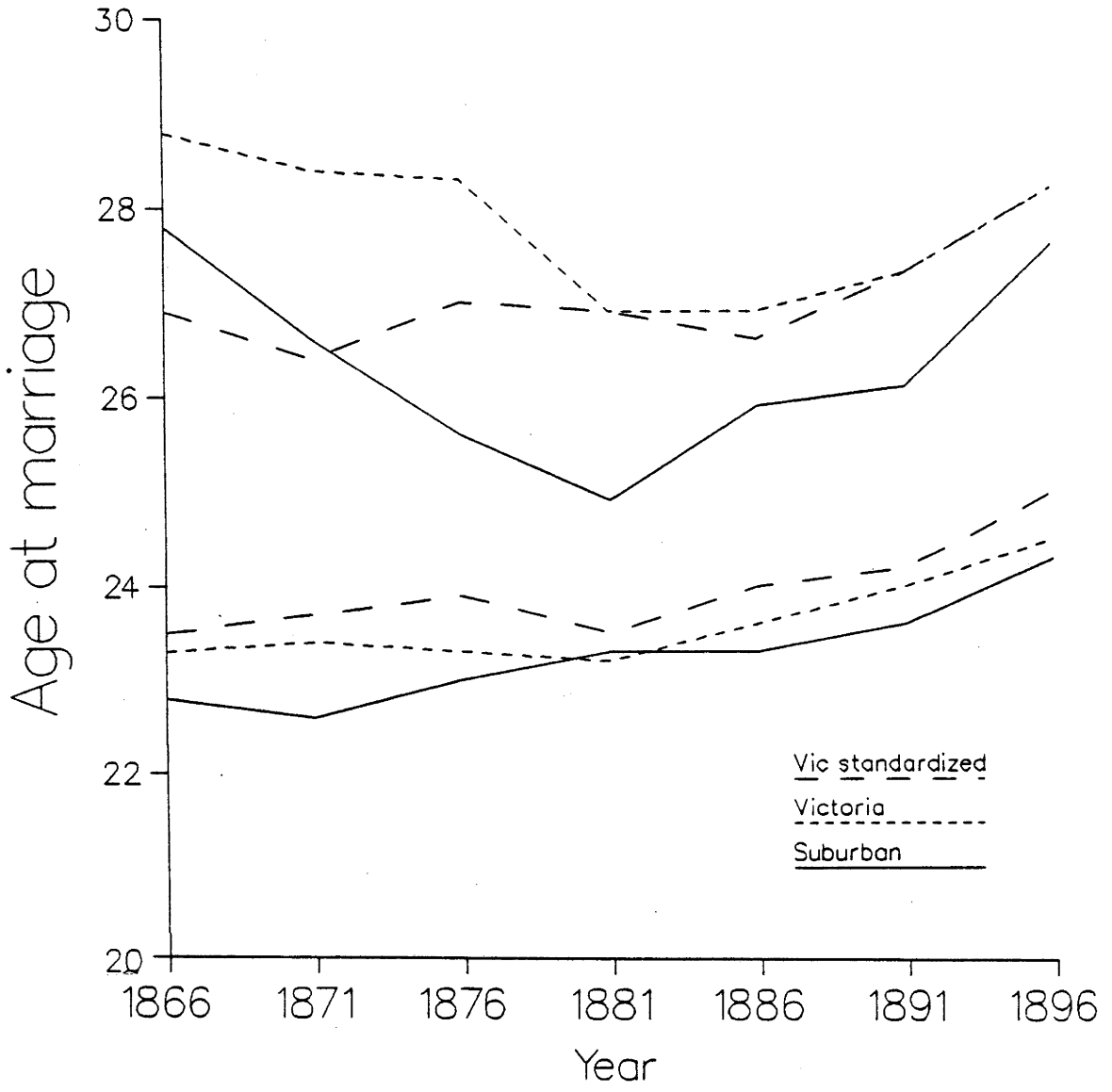
4.1.4 Marriage patterns in town and country

There is no consensus on the role of urban life in marriage patterns. Some historians and demographers have seen urbanization as fostering freedom and others as creating strife. The weight of evidence is on the latter interpretation, particularly if an imbalance in the sex ratio can be counted as strife. The most recent studies have shown that in general nineteenth-century European cities were characterized by relatively late ages at marriage and high proportions remaining single relative to the surrounding countryside (Anderson 1976, 60-1; Knodel and Maynes 1976, 140-4; Woods and Hinde 1985, 127). The level of marriage in the rural areas, though, tends to be roughly as high as that prevailing in the cities. These results qualify earlier speculations of Tilly, Scott and Cohen (1976) and Tilly (1978, 28-38) among others who had anticipated that people living in industrial cities had greater oportunities for rapidly earning enough money to support a family as well as for meeting potential spouses. However, anomalies, cities with patterns of younger, more universal marriage, have appeared frequently enough in the literature to suggest that there is not a single empirical law about the nineteenth century city's impact on marriage patterns (Knodel and Maynes 1976, 144; Woods and Hinde 1985, 134). Any general formulation would have to distinguish between types of cities.

So far evidence has suggested that there were few differences between the urban and rural marriage patterns in late nineteenth-century Australia. McDonald (1974, 108-11) had used proportions single for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Figure 4-2 investigates town and country behaviour by comparing the median ages of all brides and grooms marrying in Victoria with the ages of the brides and grooms from the Melbourne suburbs. To control for differences in the age structure of the unmarried population the Victorian age-specific marriage rates in each year are applied to the unmarried population of the suburbs. Mid-intercensal populations were estimated using techniques described above. The standardization is designed to show whether there was a propensity towards younger or older marriages in the suburbs and in general it confirms that marriage patterns in town and country were quite similar. The only exception was for men in the late 1860s and early 1870s. During that period suburban grooms were approximately the same age as all Victorian grooms, but if both had come from single populations with equal probabilities of marriage, the suburban grooms would have been much younger. The almost permanent state of recession from the end of the gold rush to some time in the mid to late 1870s stymied the economic and population growth of Melbourne. It appears to

have also frustrated marriage opportunities for male residents. For the rest of the period for men and for women from 1866 to 1896, urban and rural residents made essentially the same choices about the timing of marriage.

Figure 4-2: Comparison of ages of brides and grooms in Victoria and selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.



Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Regis- tration Sample and the Censuses of Victoria, 1861-1901.
Note: Based on all marriages in Victoria and of those involving people residing in the selected suburbs.

4.1.5 Central tendencies and dispersions

Measures of central tendency can obscure patterns as easily as they can highlight them. Age at first marriage can be a particular problem because although the majority of those marrying are usually aged within a few years of one another some people marry at considerably older ages. Consequently mean ages at marriage are always greater than

medians, and quite sensitive to a few persons marrying at advanced ages. However, more is at stake in considering distributions than deciding whether the appropriate average is a mean or a median. Many types of distributions are possible and each shape would imply a different process of making the transition to marriage. The distribution of ages could rise instantaneously or gently, form a tight peak or a rounded mound, have a second mode around an older age or steadily dwindle.

Table 4-2: Central tendencies and dispersions of first marrying brides' and grooms' ages, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

	Mean	S.D.	Median	20th percentile	80th percentile	Range	N
Brides							
1866	24.6	5.4	23.1	21.2	27.5	6.3	109
1871	23.8	4.2	23.2	20.8	26.8	6.0	86
1876	24.1	4.5	23.1	20.6	27.5	6.9	123
1881	24.1	4.3	23.1	20.7	26.8	6.1	194
1886	24.0	3.9	23.3	21.1	26.7	5.6	205
1891	24.7	4.4	24.1	21.2	27.4	6.2	174
1896	24.8	3.7	24.4	21.7	27.3	5.6	121
All years	24.3	4.2	23.5	21.1	27.1	6.0	1012
Grooms							
1866	28.3	4.8	28.0	24.2	32.7	8.5	120
1871	28.6	6.1	26.9	23.3	33.7	10.4	83
1876	27.5	5.6	25.9	23.0	30.9	7.9	112
1881	24.5	5.7	25.6	22.9	30.2	7.3	183
1886	27.4	5.2	26.3	23.3	30.6	7.3	203
1891	27.9	6.1	26.5	23.6	29.5	5.9	163
1896	27.9	4.8	27.5	23.4	33.1	9.7	119
All years	27.7	5.6	26.5	23.3	30.9	7.6	965

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Descriptive statistics are based on weighted cases, but the Ns reported are unweighted.

Histograms and summary measures of the ages of brides and grooms marrying for the first time are given in Figures 4-3 and 4-4 and Table 4-2.[5] In almost every year

[5]If, for example, a widow had married a bachelor she would be excluded from the study on brides, but her husband would be included with other first marrying grooms.

Figure 4-3: Ages of first marrying brides by single years of age and year of marriage, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

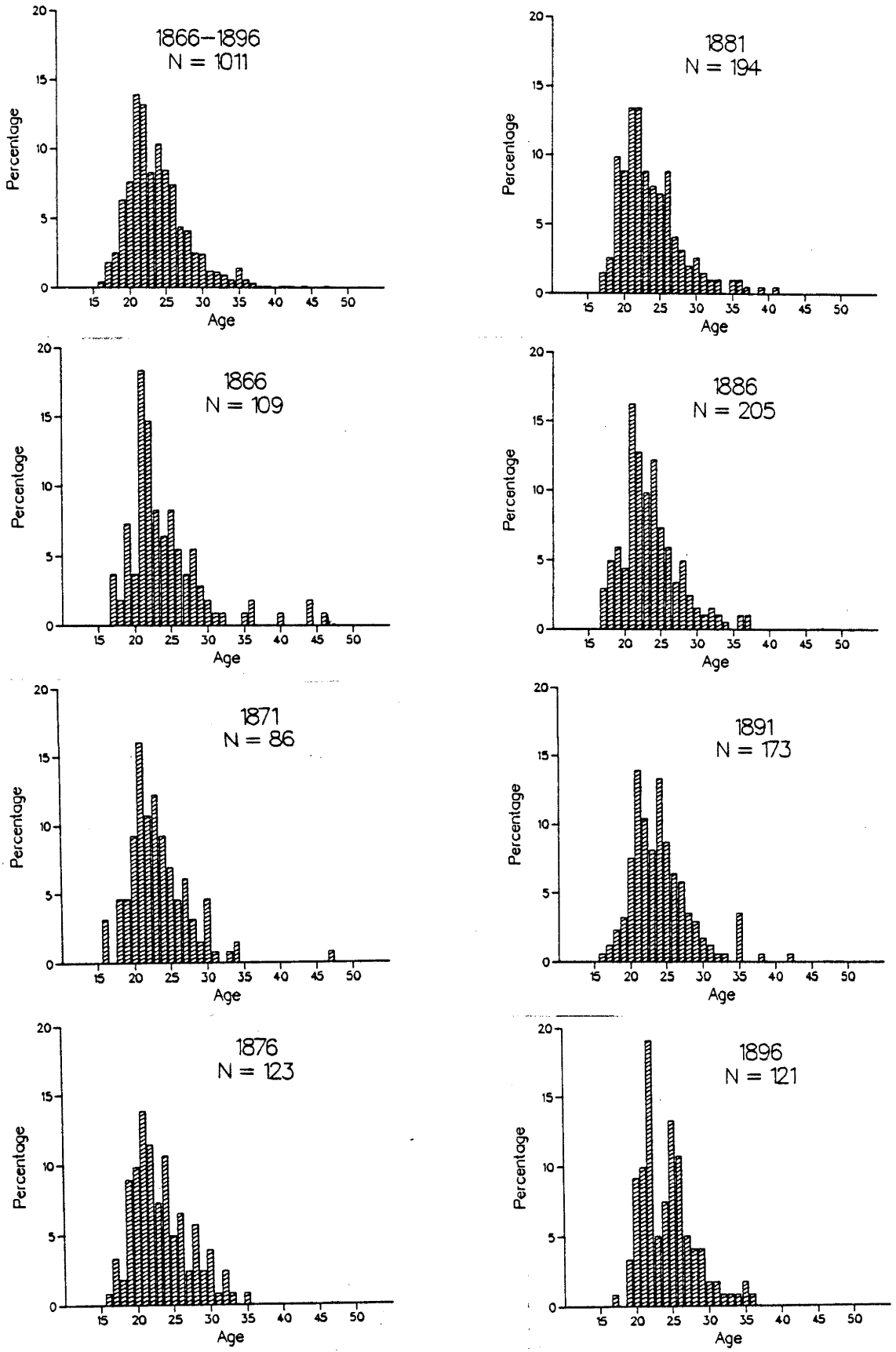
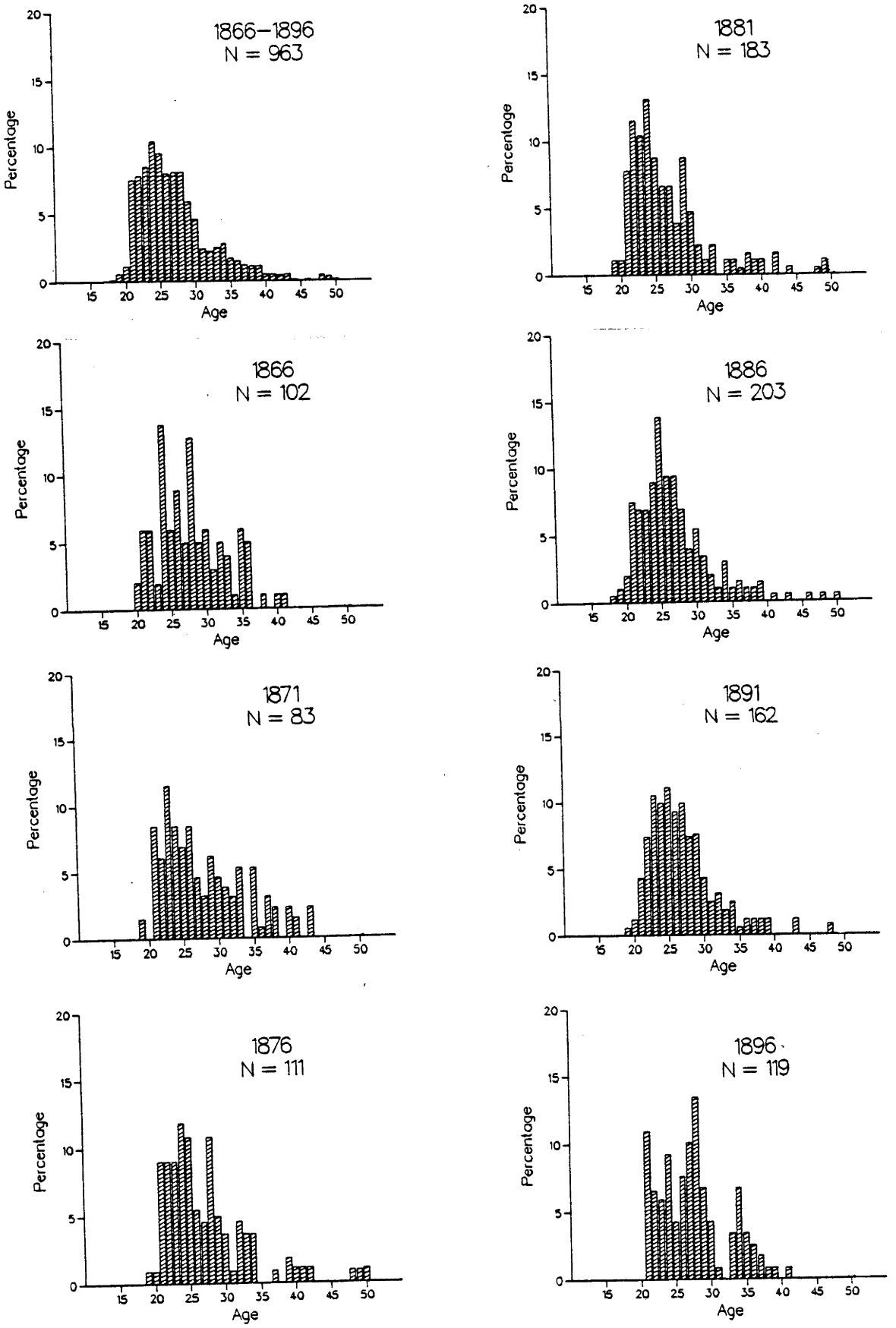


Figure 4-4: Ages of first marrying grooms by single years of age and year of marriage, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.



brides' ages were concentrated within a relatively narrow range. A slightly bimodal distribution was only prominent in 1896. Since in that year marriages at age 25 and 26 were common whereas the second peak in many other years was at 24, it is probable that the unusual distribution was caused by some marriages deferred during the depression. Overall the pattern in the Melbourne suburbs was very different from the classic European marriage pattern illustrated by Watkins and McCarthy (1980, 173) from data from a mid-nineteenth-century Belgian village where women faced roughly similar chances of marriage at every age from 21 to 32.

Bachelors married over a much wider range of ages. Their distributions were flatter and the standard deviations and ranges larger than for brides. When they married also varied more during the period. Above it was shown that the median ages of grooms went through greater change from 1866 to 1896 than brides' ages. Similarly, the starting age for marriage, defined as the age exceeded by 80 per cent of the grooms, was constant after 1866, but the ending age, defined as the eightieth percentile, shifted. This produced substantial variation in the standard deviations and the ranges. As with the brides, though, 1896 was the year when late marriages were the most common.

4.2 When Women Married

> What can a helpless woman do?
> Rock the cradle, and bake, and brew;
> Or if no cradle your fate afford,
> Rock your brother's wife's for your board;
> Or live in one room with an invalid cousin,
> Or sew shop shirts for a dollar a dozen,
> Or please some man by looking sweet,
> Or please him by giving him things to eat,
> Or please him by asking much advice,
> And thinking whatever he does is nice.
>
> --- Anonymous, quoted by MacDonald (1893, 370)

Research is always frustrating when it has to be conducted with data collected for another purpose. We know so little about the brides in the sample Twenty minutes, even ten minutes of conversation with each of them could have taught us so much. We would have learned about their parents and siblings, the responsibilities they had to their families, their education and present condition of life, their hopes for the future.

The Victorian marriage certificates are at least more detailed than most allowing some of the basic factors suggested in the literature as being important in determining the timing of marriage to be included. Nonetheless the available information was used

selectively. An explicit view of the purpose of this study, to investigate the antecedents in a woman's life which lead to marriage, dictated the form the analysis took. Contrary to the view that all unmarried women were perpetually anxious for marriage, the suburban brides are not envisaged as sitting impatiently by the fire or frantically attending dances from about age 18 or 20 hoping for a man to propose marriage. If such had been the case the characteristics of grooms would be the appropriate factors for studying when women married. Instead, a woman's own cultural, social and economic circumstances are seen as leading her towards or away from marriage at a specific time. Because the data only give information on women who have chosen to marry, the analysis identifies the common characteristics of women who chose to marry later and how these women were different from those who married earlier.

4.2.1 Predicting the timing of first marriage

This study concentrates on five factors which could be expected to affect the timing of marriage. They are the occupational status of the bride's father, her birthplace, the work she did, whether she was pregnant at marriage and, to measure secular change apart from these characteristics, the year of marriage. Since each of these factors is meant to predict age there would be little gain in investigating the relationship for each independent variable separately without taking the other factors into account. After some experimenting with coding alternatives and testing for possible interaction effects, a multiple regression equation was chosen which included four sets of dichotomous variables, one interval level variable and one set of interaction variables. The derived equation (shown in Table 4-3) will be used to calculate the predicted mean age at marriage for all of the categories in each variable set. Later sections will discuss the recording and coding of these variables. That will also be the time for a more substantive explanation of why these characteristics were expected to be relevant and what conclusions can be surmised from the data.

The regression model and subsequent discussion is limited to brides marrying for the first time under 35 years of age. Histograms of age at first marriage given in Figure 4-3 show that, not surprisingly, the sample's distribution is not normal. If, however, the extreme tail is ignored the distribution is symmetrical. Means from such distributions are meaningful descriptions of central tendency.

Including women who married for the first time at an advanced age could have one of two effects on a multiple regression. First, it could artificially improve the predictive power of the equation from older brides clustering at one end of the scale. The best fitting regression line would actually distinguish between that group and the rest of the brides when, in fact, the aim should be to describe the relationship between age at

Table 4-3: Multiple regression predicting age of brides, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Variable	B	Std err	Sig of t	Mean
Year	0.466	0.102	0.000	4.27
Professional	0.370	0.947	0.696	0.11
Businessmen	2.290	0.777	0.003	0.17
Semi-skilled	-1.407	0.851	0.099	0.16
Labouring	0.059	0.851	0.945	0.17
Prof x year	0.419	0.201	0.038	0.49
Bus x year	-0.237	0.165	0.151	0.73
Semi x year	0.427	0.179	0.018	0.70
Labour x year	0.042	0.175	0.809	0.65
Australasia	0.577	0.392	0.141	0.08
England & Wales	2.332	0.314	0.000	0.18
Scotland	2.687	0.543	0.000	0.04
Ireland	3.584	0.457	0.000	0.11
Other	0.938	0.687	0.172	0.03
Servant	0.471	0.264	0.074	0.30
Manufacturing	-0.049	0.302	0.870	0.18
Other work	-0.038	0.573	0.947	0.04
Pregnant	-1.784	0.328	0.000	0.12
CONSTANT	20.33	0.513	0.000	
$R^2 = .195$	F = 12.32	Sig. of F = .000		

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: See test for the sample restrictions. Omitted categories are skilled and white collar workers for the occupational status variable, Victorian-born for the birthplace variables and out of the labour force for the employment variables. 'Year' is an interval level variable of the year of marriage: 1866 equals 1 and 1896 equals 7.

marriage and other characteristics for the women who marry within the more customary age range. On the other hand, including older brides can reduce the predictive power when there are not enough of them to affect the best fitting regression equation significantly, but, as outliers to the model, they increase unexplained variance. In this analysis leaving out the older brides had the latter effect.

Claiming that some women in the sample cannot be encompassed by the model is the same as saying that the factors affecting their transition to marriage were different from those of other women. The marriage certificates are not detailed enough to give a sense of a woman's life story. They do tell us, though, that three-quarters of the 32 women marrying after their thirty-fifth birthday had been born overseas. Only 36 per cent of the other brides had been immigrants. Most older brides may have been women who migrated to Australia as adults and therefore were not even part of the colonial marriage market until after the normal age for marriage.

A word of caution is in order. The multiple regression and most of the other empirical work in this chapter use unweighted cases. Such a procedure is justified under the condition that there is no relationship beteen the unexplained variance (the residuals) and the weighting strata (DuMouchel and Duncan 1983). Such a difference would imply that the relationship between age at marriage and the independent variables differed between sampling strata. A one-way analysis of variance on the residuals from the equation shown in Table 4-3 gave the reassuring result that there was no difference between sampling groups.

4.2.2 Birthplace

Even though Table 4-3 excluded unusually old brides, those who had migrated to Victoria were older than those born in the colony. The evidence from the sample of suburban marriages is unambiguous on that point. Coefficients for the dichotomous variables indicating English, Irish or Scottish-born brides are large, positive and significant. Together the birthplace variables explain more of the variance in age at marriage than any other variable set in the equation. After holding other variables constant at their mean values, the predicted mean ages are considerably higher for British-born brides (Table 4-4). Irish brides were three and one-half years older than the Victorian-born.

Another feature of the relationship between birthplace and the timing of first marriage is that the mean ages of the colonial-born brides in the sample increased steadily over the period (Figure 4-5).[6] The age of foreign-born brides also rose, though not as consistently or as dramatically. The same phenomenon of an overall static age at first marriage being the sum of the rising ages of the native-born and the migrant brides is also seen after controlling for other factors. When all of the independent variables in the

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[6]The explanation of why in Figure 4-5 the median ages for all brides are unlike the average of the two nativity groups' medians lies is in the differing proportions belonging to each group. In 1866 only 9 per cent of the brides marrying for the first time had been born in Victoria. By 1876 colonial-born brides represented 42 per cent of the total and from 1881 to 1891 the percentage was close to 70. In 1896 82 per cent of the brides were from Victoria.

Table 4-4: Effect of birthplace on age of first marrying brides, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Bride's birthplace	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Victoria	22.8	23.2	3.2	520
Other Australasia	23.4	23.5	3.8	77
England & Wales	25.1	24.6	3.6	168
Scotland	25.5	24.8	4.3	41
Ireland	26.4	25.6	3.3	105
Other	23.7	24.4	4.5	23

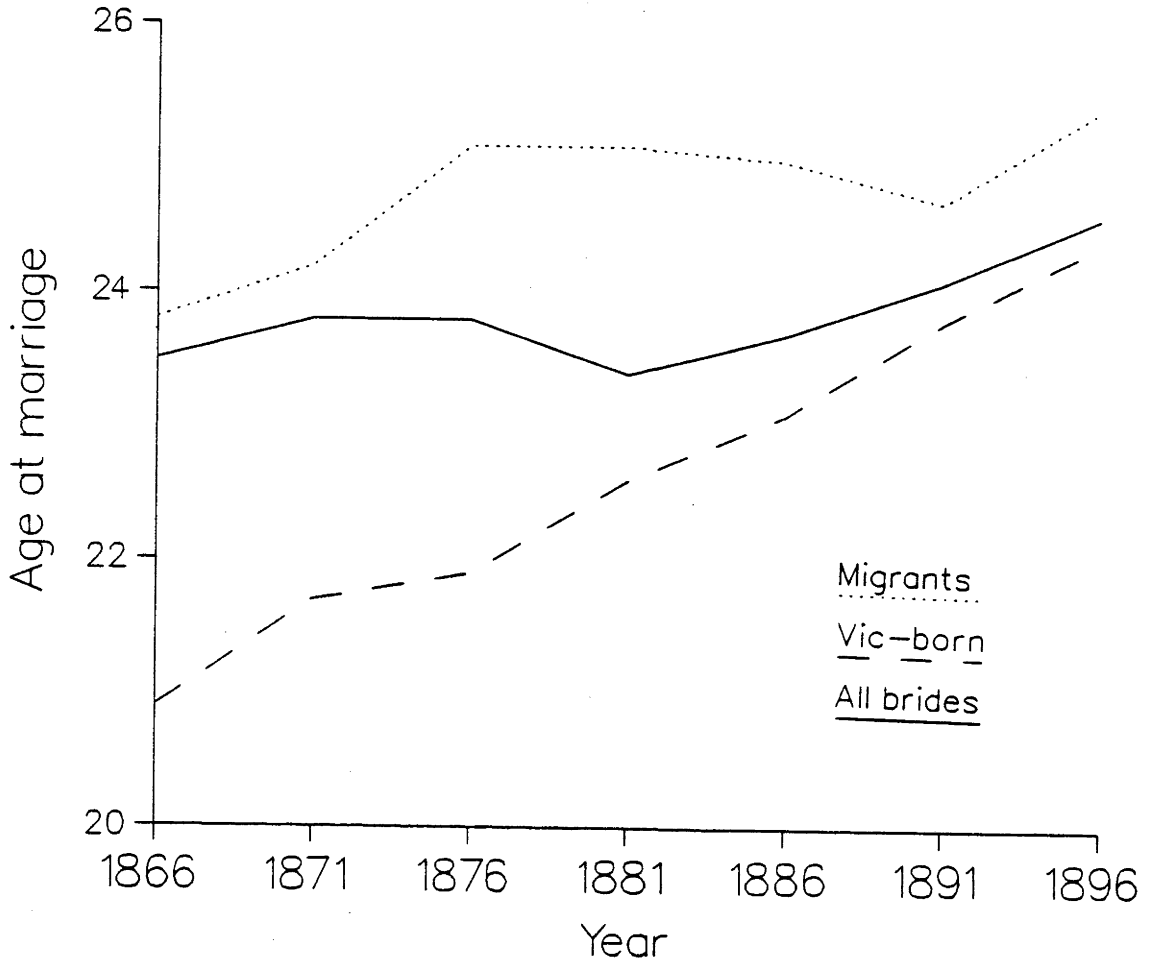
Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-3. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variance shows actual means significantly different, $p < 0.001$.

regression equation were included except for the variables describing birthplace the coefficient for year of marriage was small (0.112) and insignificant. Secular change was only apparent after nativity was added to the equation.

The cause of the different marriage patterns will never be completely answered. Two facts are needed. First, were the higher ages of foreign-born brides due to a deliberate postponement of marriage or merely the result of the fact that as a group the migrants were older? Secondly, was the rising average age at marriage for each nativity group a behavioural change or did it reflect an aging of the underlying population at risk? Unfortunately the basic demographic parameters required for answering the questions do not exist because there can be no direct measurement of the nativity of the population at risk of marriage. Census tabulations of birthplace by age and sex were not published until the twentieth century. Statistics on entries and departures that could be used to derive the migrant population have poor age detail. In fact, for unassisted migrants there is no information at all and Victoria stopped its assisted migration schemes by 1873. Even with good migration data collected from ship records there would still be the problem of migrants disembarking at the port and travelling to another colony by land. The only alternative was to construct an estimate of the native-born population and derive the migrant population from that.

Registered births formed the basis of the projections. Annual totals of Victorian births are available from 1836 when Victoria was still part of New South Wales. In 1853

Figure 4-5: Mean age of first marrying brides, by birthplace, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.



Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.

the new colony introduced its own registration system, but, prior to that, births were considerably under-registered. Nonetheless, the true number of births during the early period was very small, both absolutely and in comparison to the numbers born later. The registration system improved rapidly and was virtually complete by the 1860s (Jones 1971,305).

Five-year birth cohorts beginning with 1836-40 were subjected to life table probabilities of surviving to selected years $({}_{x+5}L_5/{}_xL_5)$.[7] This gave population distributions of the Victorian-born population in five year age groups in census and intercensal years. They are accurate only to the extent that birth registration was

[7]The probabilities of survival are from the single year of age Victorian life tables calculated by the Commonwealth Statistician G.H. Knibbs for 1881-1890 and 1891-1900 and published in the *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1911, vol. 3, pp. 1229-35. Births prior to 1881 were subjected to the probabilities from the first life table until the cohort was aged up to 1891.

complete and that the population was depleted only by mortality and not by migration. Of course migration was, in fact, selective of both age and nativity. However, since the purpose of the projection was to estimate the age distribution within the relatively small range of marriageable ages 15 to 49 years old, the influence of age selectivity in migration was ignored.

The projections produced estimates of the total number of the Victorian-born and the percentage of the total represented by each age group. The number of the Victorian-born enumerated in census years was substituted for the estimated total and the age group percentages applied to it to derive an absolute number of Victorian-born in each of the five year age groups from 15 to 49 years. In 1861 and 1871 because of early under-registration of births more colonial-born females were enumerated in the census than were estimated. From 1881 to 1901 the more thoroughly registered birth cohorts came of age and some of the native-born moved out of the colony reversing the situation. For intercensal years the estimated total was altered by an average of the adjustment factors for the previous and successive census years. Table 4-5 gives the resulting population distribution for colonial and foreign-born women aged 15 to 49 years.

The sheer bulk of the Victorian birth cohorts and their inevitable aging means that even if the assumptions underlying Table 4-5 are imprecise, conclusions about relative ages are irrefutable. Because there were no births before 1836 and from 1866 to 1881 the 15-19 year olds far outnumbered any other native-born age group in the marriageable ages, the native-born as a group were very young up to 1881 and aged rapidly after that. In comparison the migrant population had fewer young women in the marriageable ages and many more older women and hence as a group were older. They were older for two reasons. The most obvious is that the native-born women arrived in Victoria, so to speak, at age zero. Even if they were just babes-in-arms the migrants arrived at an older age. However, the difference in age structures does not necessarily result from women migrating at an advanced age, perhaps after failing in the British marriage market. The most sophisticated estimate of the late nineteenth-century Australian migrant population gave a mean age at arrival of 19.7 years for women (Kelley 1968, 221). Anticipating the analysis of men later in the chapter, male migrants were on average 22.7 years old. Fifty per cent of the migrants of both sexes were aged 15-30 years and most of the remainder were children. Migration to Victoria waxed and waned though. The old age structure of the migrants reflects the ageing of those who came during peak periods without a countervailing force of young migrants to offset them during the years of relatively little migration. Yet, regardless of the cause, these dfference between the native-born and migrant populations strongly suggest that the apparent relationship between age of brides and where they were born is reducible to underlying age structure.

Table 4-5: Estimated age distribution of the female Victorian-born and migrant populations of marriageable age, Victoria, 1866-1896.

	1866	1871	1876	1881	1886	1891	1896
Victorian-born							
15-19	61	67	68	47	35	27	22
20-24	36	20	22	36	31	26	21
25-29	4	12	6	11	23	23	21
30-34		1	4	3	7	17	18
35-39			0	2	2	5	13
40-44				0	1	2	4
45-49					0	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total	6554	18219	53581	95172	140981	184432	219059
Median age	19.1	18.7	18.7	20.4	22.6	24.6	26.8
Migrants							
15-19	14	12	5	6	8	8	12
20-24	15	16	13	8	9	15	11
25-29	19	17	16	15	9	14	13
30-34	20	17	17	17	16	9	13
35-39	15	17	18	18	19	17	10
40-44	10	13	17	19	19	19	19
45-49	7	8	13	18	20	18	21
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total	123169	137073	126009	110303	100822	98081	81015
Median age	30.8	31.7	34.6	36.3	37.0	36.3	35.0

Sources: Derived from annual registered births 1836-1880 published *Victorian Yearbooks* and the *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.
Note: See text for an explanation of the estimation technique.

The derived age structures were used to investigate the possible effects of age on the apparent native-born and migrant marriage practices. The working assumption was that there was no difference. First, I assumed that migrants and native-born women were equally likely to be married and I applied the age-specific proportions unmarried in the total Victorian population to the estimated populations in each nativity group. Secondly, I assumed that each of these groups of unmarried women had the same marriage rates and multiplied the Victorian marriage rates for each of the study years to the estimated

unmarried women of each group. That gave sets of the number of marriages which would be expected if there was no difference in the likelihood of marriage for the migrants and the native-born. Figure 4-6 graphs the median ages of these hypothetical brides. They represent what the trend in age at marriage would have looked like if the marriage rates of the two groups moved in concert and only age composition changed. They are contrasted with the actual median ages of the suburban brides in Figure 4-6.[8]

The pattern over time in the average age at marriage for the suburban brides is remarkably similar to the pattern of the hypothetical median ages for the colony. It would be unreasonable to expect identical medians. The suburbs attracted a population with a different age and marital status composition from the colony as whole. However, the great influence of the size of the successive birth cohorts in determining the relative ages of the native-born and the migrants override small differences in composition. Figure 4-6 implies that it was the fact that migrant women were older that was responsible for them marrying at older ages and not a desire to delay marriage. The rising age at marriage of the colonial-born brides and the more erratic pattern of the brides who had migrated were also due to changes in age structure.

4.2.3 Social status

A bride's social status is measured by her father's occupation; indeed it is difficult to imagine how most women could have obtained an independent status. Of course, there are examples of a rare few. Some bright working-class girls became pupil teachers, which was a familiar avenue of upward mobility. Some of the enterprising women who came to the colonies as sponsored governesses but who found other employment or 'married beneath them' experienced downward mobility (Clarke 1985, 76,123-5,132-3). However, they were exceptions. By and large Melbourne brides came to their wedding accustomed to the economic circumstances, the lifestyle and the values consistent with their fathers' social statuses.

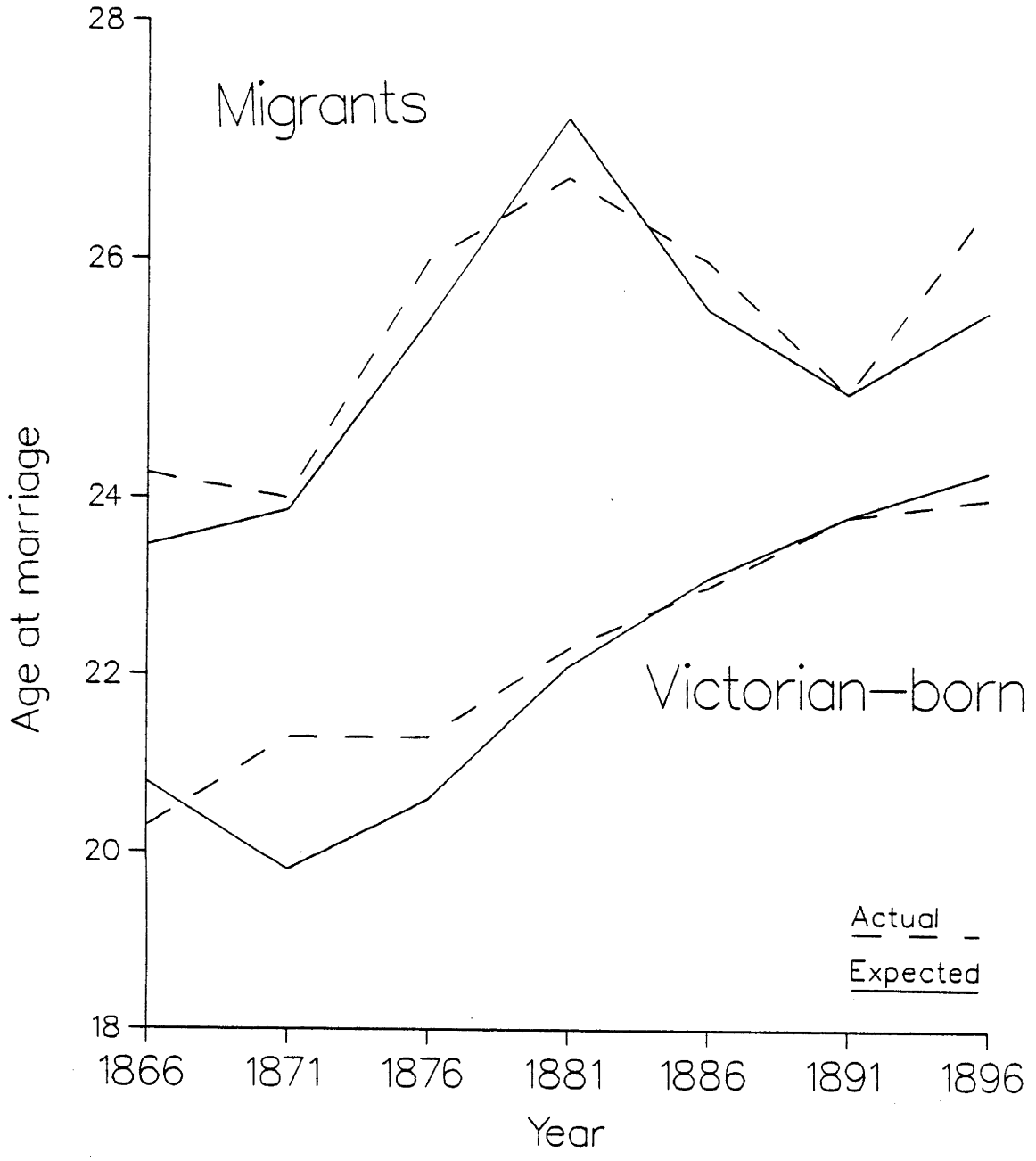
After holding constant other factors, father's occupation made a difference in the timing of first marriage (Table 4-6).[9] Daughters of proprietors married a year older on average than the daughters of working men. Daughters of professionals delayed marriage a year beyond that. These findings are consistent with findings from late nineteenth century England (Anderson 1976, 72) and the United States (Monahan 1951, 261-86), and have the advantage of being based on the status of the woman's family of origin and not the status of the man she married.

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[8]In this exercise all suburban marriages are used rather than just first marriages in order to be comparable with the published statistics for Victoria.

[9]So few of the brides had fathers in white-collar jobs that they were grouped with skilled workers.

Figure 4-6: Median ages of native-born and migrant brides contrasted with expected ages if both groups had the same marriage rates, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.



Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample and the Censuses of Victoria, 1861-1901.
Note: Based on all brides living in the suburbs. See text for method of calculating expected median ages.

4.2.4 Women's work

Researchers looking for factors determining the timing of marriage and proportions married for nineteenth-century women have often focused on their employment opportunities (e.g., Ogle 1890; McDonald 1974, 129-30). Efforts to test the relationship with aggregate data have not been successful, partly because of multicollinearity with

Table 4-6: Effect of fathers' occupational status on age of first marrying brides, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Bride's father's occupation	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Professional	25.4	25.5	3.7	105
Businessmen	24.5	24.2	3.5	158
Skilled Manual	23.2	23.2	3.2	368
Semi-skilled	23.7	23.5	3.5	147
Labourer	23.5	24.2	3.7	156

) Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-3. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variance shows actual means siginifcantly different, $p < 0.001$.

other independent variables and partly because different occupations are likely to have different effects on marriage patterns (Anderson 1976, 65-9; Woods and Hinde 1985). Nonetheless, extensive employment of domestic servants has been associated with high proportions of never-married females. To some extent this is a tautology as the nature of live-in domestic service requires that most servants be unmarried. However, domestic servants were normally concentrated in localities with a surplus of women in the marriageable ages. Many servants eventually moved away from the city, but women who chose to stay probably remained unmarried servants (Knodel and Maynes 1976; Ankarloo 1978, 116-7; and Watkins and McCarthy 1980, 173,178-9). Other forms of employment are less associated with particular marriage patterns. The crucial factor appears to be whether married women also worked. If they did, as in English textile factory towns, marriage appears to be only minimally delayed.

An argument designed for aggregate level analysis may not be valid for explaining the behaviour of individuals. Of course, one could posit that the structure of occupational opportunites in Melbourne determined the prescriptions for the timing of marriage which affected all single females and not just those employed. But, even if an ecological argument is accepted it must be noted that the two major forms of employment would be hypothesized to have contrary effects. It is an open question whether knowing a bride's occupation helps to predict her age.

In Melbourne domestic service was common, but it was by no means the only form of employment. By all accounts it was unpopular work (Kingston 1977, 29-55). Even though an unmarried servant could support herself and save for the future, she was unlikely to find the life attractive enough to postpone marriage voluntarily. Nor is it reasonable to expect that in a city domestic servants would be particularly disadvantaged in a competitive marriage market. The previous chapter proposed that many of the live-in domestic servants were from the Victorian countryside. They may not have even considered themselves part of the urban marriage market, preferring to wait for their sweethearts in the country instead (see Grimshaw and Fahey 1985, 96).

Married female servants were a contradiction in terms. Most general servants lived-in and this practice and the long hours it made possible were too ingrained for domestic service to be an option for married women whose husbands lived in the city. Single mothers and widows, though, sometimes turned to domestic service. The former would leave their children in someone else's care and the latter, if they had children to support, would work as charwomen or laundresses in their own homes. Only the desperately poor married woman would take on that kind of work in addition to her own home duties.

Factory or workshop jobs were largely the province of unmarried women. There is some conflicting evidence on this point. When a Wage Board was established for the clothing trade in 1897 employers insisted that they needed a large ratio of apprentices to skilled hands to compensate for the attrition of their workers due to marriage. Employees' representatives countered that this was not true.

> As to the number that leave the trade to get married that is only a bogey; because there are not such a great number leave our factories to get married; and not only that, a large proportion when they do get married come back; some through their husbands being out of work, some through unfortunate marriages, and some being left widows with large families (*RC on the Factory Act* 1902-3, p. 436; also see p. 384).

Nonetheless it seems clear that young women and their prospective husbands expected them to leave their jobs once they married. Hard times may have forced women back into the factory at a later date but such an event would not be foreseen at the time.

While married women were essentially barred from the factory, taking on work at home was a viable option in the clothing trade.[10] Indeed a married woman 'helping her husband' by taking in outwork was looked upon with approval, at least by royal commissioners and factory inspectors, as long as her husband was not earning a steady

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[10]Fry (1956b, 78) delineates three types of activities which were commonly included under the rubric of 'outwork'. In this discussion outwork is taken to mean work done for a factory or a sub-contractor but done in the woman's home with no assistants other than family members. It does not include self-employed dressmakers.

wage. Employers gave outwork to women who had once laboured inside the factory and who had maintained an association with the firm for years and they sought out former employees to work at home during busy periods (*Bd of Inquiry into Factory Act*, 1895-6, pp. 36,52,57,99,110-2; *RC on the Factory Act*, 1902-3, pp. 359, 420; *Factory Report* 1889, p. 10).

Outwork's role in the clothing trade was dictated by the industry's development and the colony's economic condition (Fry 1956b). In the trade's infancy during the 1870s and early 1880s, a clothing 'factory' was more of a euphemism than a description of the manufacturing process. Without motive power there was little advantage in concentrating all stages of garment making under one roof. Outwork complemented the early colonial factory system and outworkers probably constituted a relatively large proportion of all female clothing hands. In 1873 one-half of all clothing was thought to be made by outworkers, although this would have included persons employed in workshops run by sub-contractors. The situation changed in the 1880s. Demand for colonial-made clothes grew. Large clothing manufacturers introduced power, and smaller firms responded by beating prices down to a competitive low (Davison 1978, 45). The proportion of outworkers would have declined as it became more economically productive to employ hands to work in the factory, but the growth in the volume of output might have kept the absolute number static. Then depression hit the clothing trade. Prices and wages plummeted. The meagre remaining demand was for cheap, mass-produced slop-clothing which was almost entirely made by poorly paid outworkers. The proportion of outworkers to factory hands would have climbed again, but very little work was available for either class of worker.

Most outworkers were unskilled and they had to work long hours to earn a barely subsistence wage. Although unionists and some employees claimed married women took work on for pocket money, the wages for unskilled work were so low that it would be unlikely that anyone but the most desperate would have persisted with the work. Of course with periodic slack times even during the boom period and massive unemployment during the depression, most working-class married women would have been tempted to undertake such work at least once in their married life. Still, a married woman who had worked in a factory might have had better contacts in the trade, but otherwise would not be in any better position to obtain unskilled work. Married women were attracted to the clothing trade because all women of the period had at least a modicum of training in sewing (*Australian Economist* 24 Sept 1894, 437) and unskilled work did not even require a sewing machine. Outwork made it at least theoretically possible to mind the children and do the household chores while working for money. It was the trade that all classes of women with domestic responsibilities would turn to first in hard times.

Only skilled workers could earn good wages from outwork. Prior experience in a factory, workshop or at the knee of another skilled outworker would have been the only means of gaining the required skills. Those women might have anticipated staying in the workforce after marriage, but they were a small minority of clothing hands. The factory hierarchy rested on a broad base of apprentices and improvers who learned one small task and never mastered the trade.

Victoria's marriage certificates had a space for recording the bride's occupation, but this was the only item which the usually meticulous clergymen and registrars frequently left blank. Fully 28 per cent of the brides marrying for the first time had nothing recorded as an occupation. Those brides along with others with such enlightening job descriptions as 'nil', 'no profession', and 'nothing special', were classified as working in the home, outside the paid labour force. Only 51 per cent of the brides marrying for the first time reported an occupation which suggested they were employed. Their jobs were concentrated in the traditional spheres of female employment; of the employed brides 32 per cent worked in the clothing industry and 58 per cent were servants. Other occupations were mentioned much less frequently. Only three per cent of the employed brides were in a non-clothing manufacturing job and almost all of those were in the boot industry. Teachers and a mixed assortment of jobs represented four and six per cent respectively.[11]

Employment among brides was definately undercounted. According to the 1901 census 65 per cent of unmarried women aged 20-24 years were working (Table 3-4). From 1871 to 1901 at least 58 per cent and more frequently around 70 per cent of Melbourne's unmarried women 15-60 years of age were in the labour force (Sinclair 1981, 346). Employed women may have been less likely to marry and therefore systematically under-represented in the sample. However, the following analysis will show that employment did not make much difference in the timing of marriage. Very likely the same would hold true for the proportions ever marrying after controlling for the confounding fact that older unmarried women had to work to support themselves. Clergymen, and perhaps the brides themselves, may not have thought that their work was important enough to warrant mentioning. Since women tended to leave the labour force at marriage or perhaps some time before the wedding in preparation they may have felt that their service or factory work was not relevant.

The problems with the employment data on the marriage certificates should not be exaggerated though. The combined population of North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew had a higher proportion of professionals and a lower proportion of labourers than

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[11]Appendix C gives the specific occupations of brides found in the marriage sample. They are listed by the categories used in this chapter.

metropolitan Melbourne. This has an obvious implication for the proportion of employed brides as the daughters of the middle class were the least likely to work and the daughters of poor labouring fathers most likely to have to work to help support the family. Only 24 per cent of the daughters of professional men and 33 per cent of businessmen's daughters reported an occupation. Just over half of the skilled manual and white-collar workers' daughters were in the labour force. Brides from semi-skilled and labouring families had much higher participation ratios: 62 and 79 per cent respectively.

Table 4-7 shows that, in fact, participation in the workforce made very little difference in the age at first marriage. Brides who reported themselves as servants had a significantly higher age at marriage than those who performed domestic duties at home. This is what the literature on servants and marriage would lead us to expect. However, the difference is very small. Working in any other job had no effect.

Table 4-7: Effect of employment on the age of first marrying brides, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Bride's occupation	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Home duties	23.7	23.8	3.7	454
Manufacturing	23.6	23.2	2.8	167
Servant	24.2	24.2	3.7	279
Other work	23.7	24.1	2.7	34

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-3. See text for sample restrictions. One-way anaylsis of variance shows actual means significatly different, $p = 0.05$.

Given the class differences in the likelihood of an unmarried woman being in the labour force, it would be reasonable to expect that working would have a greater effect on the timing of the marriages of women from classes not accustomed to sending their daughters out to work. Wilcox (1981) pursued a similar argument, though to a different conclusion. She found that domestic service was a great leveller of marriage patterns. Servants in Cambridge, England from 1847 to 1901 had the same median age at marriage regardless of their fathers' occupational statuses. To test these hypotheses several interaction variables between bride's employment and her father's occupation were entered into the equation, but none was significant after controlling for other factors.

Clearly, merely knowing if a woman was working (or, more precisely, if she

happened to be recorded as employed on her marriage certificate) is not enough to understand the age at which she was likely to marry. Her experiences working for wages appear irrelevant to her decisions about marriage. The alternative to working for wages for most unmarried women would have been to take on more responsibilities at home, surely an equally demanding task. In addition the information on employment was crude. Women who were unemployed when they married may have worked as servants or factory hands the year before. The data are also silent on the very aspects of working for wages that may be most relevant to the timing of marriage. We do not know, for example, how much money a woman was earning prior to marriage. We also do not know if she had full control over the wages she received; if she was supporting herself out of her earnings; if her family expropriated the earnings; and, if so, if her earnings were required for necessities or used for luxuries.

In the end, though, it was probably the bleak alternatives facing a single woman which drove many women to marriage. Few other options existed, regardless of a woman's occupation. Life at a parent's home would have been demanding and restrictive, but also impossible in the long run as her father's wages would decline as he aged and cease when he died. Service at least provided a place to live, but it was an insecure home and a life of low status and hard work. Almost all manufacturing work paid wages well below what an unmarried woman would have needed to live comfortably. The age-earnings profile for female government workers discussed in Chapter 3, Section 4.4 indicated that there were no opportunities for significant advancement. A 1907 United States government study on women's working conditions aptly concluded that

> in most cases probably, a woman's expectation of marriage is responsible for her lack of skill, but in some instances, doubtless, her enforced lack of skill is responsible for her longing for marriage as a relief from intolerable drudgery (quoted in Goldin 1980, 88).

4.2.5 Pregnancy

Clergymen in the Victorian era may have been as smug, self-righteous and unyielding as our stereotypes of them. But at least the vast majority of the colony's marriage celebrants refrained from any direct moral observations on the marriage certificates themselves. Consequently we must look elsewhere to find out if, in individual cases, one of the classic motivations for marriage was present. Brides who were pregnant at marriage can only be identified by discovering when their first child was born. This required searching through birth certificates for the first legitimate child after marriage for every couple in the sample.

Attempts to link individuals in two separate sets of records collected for different purposes are never 100 per cent successful. However this effort failed to locate surprisingly

few births. In only 25 per cent of all marriages and 19 per cent of the marriages involving a single woman under 35 years old I could find no trace of a first birth. The excellent system of registering births and marriages in the colony was responsible. Each birth was listed in an annual index alphabetically under his or her surname. Alongside the infant's name was the place where the birth was register, father's given name and mother's maiden and given names. This meant that a birth anywhere in the colony could be located with equal ease. The details included in the index were usually enough to indentify if the child belonged to the couple in the marriage sample. The index also reported the number of the birth certificate and that gave parents' names, ages, birthplaces, father's occupation and their marriage date as well as the date of the child's birth. It was almost always possible to ensure absolute confidence in the match.

The one-fifth of first marriages which could not be linked to a birth were missed for a variety of reasons. Migration out of Victoria and inconsistent spellings were probably the most common. Another factor would have been that some of the marriages remained childless. The following chapter will discuss the rise in voluntary childlessness during the fertility transition, but for this purpose we can use a rough appoximation of eight per cent as the proportion of childless marriages through the period (see Figure 5-7). That would lower the proportion of first births which were truly missing to under 15 per cent. Nevertheless this makes it all the more important to remember that the married couples who were successfully linked to a birth were unusually fertile and therefore more likely to be pregnant before marriage.

4.2.5.1 Level of bridal pregnancy

Various measurement problems make it impossible to determine exactly how many brides were pregnant. One reason is that we know only about the pregnancies which culminated in registered births. Since the couple chose to marry it can be assumed that very few of the women would have also voluntarily aborted or committed infanticide. However, spontaneous miscarriages and failures to register births would have eliminated some evidence of bridal pregnancies from the sample. The interval from marriage to birth is the only means of determining whether a birth was prenuptially conceived. Unfortunately, even at this stage there is ambiguity. No single period of time is recognized as the definitive upper limit for determining when a birth was conceived. If it is placed too low some prenuptially conceived births are unacknowledged; if it is placed too high some legitimate births are classified as having been conceived before marriage. However, using an interval of marriage to birth of eight completed months results in fewer errors than would occur if the definition was seven complete months (Refshauge 1982, 23). This study uses an interval from marriage to birth of eight completed months of four weeks duration (223 days) as the definition of a prenuptially conceived birth.

Out of all first marrying brides under 35 years of age in the marriage sample, 12 per cent were pregnant. Ignoring the brides for whom there is no information on a subsequent birth brings the percentage pregnant up to 15. The sample, however, is somewhat biased towards Hawthorn and Kew because larger sampling ratios were used for those suburbs in some years. Weighting the sample back up to the original totals gave 13 per cent of brides pregnant or 17 per cent pregnant of those with information on the first birth. The question then is how does this level of bridal pregnancy compare to metropolitan Melbourne and other regions of Australia?

Table 4-8 shows that throughout the colonies in the late nineteenth century there was considerable variety in the likelihood of brides being pregnant at marriage. Boonah, a Queensland farming community, had low levels. The offspring of its English elite may have been consciously upholding their standing in the community by refraining from sexual relations before marriage. The Germans in the same community were known for exercising strict parental control which could have kept the rate of bridal pregnancy below the level in other populations. Lodden, Victoria was a gold mining town in 1861 with a concomitant high sex ratio. Wives were an economic asset and courtship was short for men who could find a woman willing to marry them. At the other extreme was Hillgrove, New South Wales, a prosperous industrial mining town with full employment and early, universal marriage. Castlemaine in 1891 was Lodden 30 years later, transformed into a smaller, stable, even static country town. Mining was still important but it did not dominate as it had earlier. None of these populations was urban and therefore not directly comparable with suburban Melbourne. However, Table 4-8 makes it clear that an urban-rural dichotomy will not go very far in explaining the frequency of bridal pregnancy. The brief descriptions here suggest that the relative scarcity of women, economic conditions and cultural background play a role in fostering or hindering the chance of a pre-nuptially conceived birth.

The overall percentage of bridal pregnancies in the suburbs masks an increase over the period. Since it is useful to know about the first marrying brides studied in this chapter and about all marriages to compare with other populations, four trends are shown in Table 4-9. In each case the level of bridal pregnancy was very low in 1866 and 1871, rose slowly to 1876 and much more rapidly to 1881 and then fell back again, though not to the lowest level, by 1886. The rise was resumed in the 1890s; the 1896 marriage cohort had the highest percentage of all. In the last two years the percentage of bridal pregnancies among marriages with information on a birth was very similar to the 1897-8 percentage calculated by the Government Statist for the colony (Yearbook, 1895-8, 654-8). Unfortunately the published description of how that figure was calculated was

Table 4-8: Level of bridal pregnancies in selected Australian localities.

Population	Date	% of pre-nuptial pregnancies	Definition in completed months	Number of observations
Selected suburbs	1866-96+	16	8	831
Hillgrove, NSW	1890-99*	30	7	223
	1900-09*	40	7	160
York, WA	1850-80+	20	8	122
Boonah, Qld.				
English	1870-89+	6	n.a.	Combined
Germans	1870-89+	15	n.a.	= 67
Lodden, Vic.	1861*	12	8	145
Castlemaine, Vic.	1891*	46	8	37

Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample; Neale *et al.* (1981, 98); Grellier (1981, 485); Cole (1982, 58-9); and for the last two entries (Grimshaw and Fahey 1982, 105).
Notes: Years marked with '+' refer to marriage cohorts and the percentage pregnant is from all marriages (not just first marriages) with information on a birth. Years marked with '*' refer to first births born in that year and the percentage pregnant is the percentage of first births prenuptially conceived. Only births with information on the marriage date of the parents are included.

vague but implied an amorphous selection procedure.[12] Any correspondence between the two rates may be coincidental.

The increase in bridal pregnancies found in Melbourne through the later part of the century may have been part of an upsurge throughout Western societies. Smith and Hindus (1975) found a dramatic increase in bridal pregnancies during the last decades of the nineteenth century in three New England towns in the United States. Similarly in France during the second half of the nineteenth century there was an increase in the proportion of illegitimate children legitimized after birth (van de Walle 1980, 271). Data

[12]In 1897 there 7,568 marriages in Victoria and not the 1,846 that the Statist uses in his calculations. The text only mentions searching birth certificates, not marriage certificates. Most likely the Statist scanned the 1898 births to find parents who reported they had been married in 1897. He may have taken the marriage date as stated, or confirmed them through marriage certificates.

Table 4-9: Percentage of brides having a birth within eight completed months of marriage by year of marriage, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1861-1896.

	First marrying brides <35		All brides	
	Excluding missing cases	Including missing cases	Excluding missing cases	Including missing cases
1866	7	6	9	6
1871	8	7	8	6
1876	10	9	10	8
1881	19	15	18	14
1886	13	10	13	9
1891	20	16	20	15
1896	24	19	23	18

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Percentages based on weighted cases. Using unweighted cases does not change the pattern over time. One-way analysis of variance shows each set of percentages significantly different at less than the 0.01 level using either weighted or unweighted cases.

from New South Wales (Coghlan 1903, 9) show that bridal pregnancies rose from 45 per cent of all brides in 1891 to 49 per cent in 1901. The increase continued to an extraordinary 60 per cent in 1911. However, these figures are inflated because they were based on nine completed months from marriage to birth. Comparable data are not available for Victoria.

Refshauge (1982, 44) argued from Coghlan's data that illegitimacy declined in New South Wales as bridal pregnancy increased, leaving the total of non-marital pregnancy relatively stable. He attributed the increase in bridal pregnancy to the offsetting factor of a greater proportion of single pregnant women marrying before the birth. Two other factors would have to be considered before accepting that conclusion. First, the number of marriages plunged at the onset of the 1890s depression (Forster 1974, 121-2) and marriage rates were slow to rally after the recovery (McDonald 1974, 132). It may have been that in those years pregnancy became one of the few reasons which could compel a couple to marry. A second contributing reason for the increase in the suburban Melbourne sample might have been a factor in other studies as well. Voluntary childlessness was a decision undertaken by many more couples as the century progressed.[13] Childless couples

[13]Voluntary childlessness will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, Section 3.

cannot be isolated from the other more numerous category of couples whose first birth could not be traced. However, as the proportion of couples having children declined, the proportion of those having a prenuptially conceived birth out of all of those having children would eventually increase.

4.2.5.2 Relevance for the timing of marriage

Brides who were pregnant were younger than brides who were not. The predicted and actual values of brides' ages in Table 4-10 show this clearly. In the regression equation bridal pregnancy is represented as a dichotomous variable with a value of one if the bride is known to have been pregnant. The ages of these brides are compared with all other brides - those who had their first child after eight completed months of marriage and those for whom there was no record of a subsequent birth. A regression (not shown) on a restricted sample of only those first marrying brides under 35 years old with information on the first birth gave very similar results for the pregnancy variable and other independent variables.

Table 4-10: Effect of prenuptial pregnancy on the age of first marrying brides, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std dev	N
Pregnant	22.3	22.2	2.9	137
Not pregnant	24.0	24.1	3.5	797

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-3. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variances shows actual means significantly different, $p < 0.001$.

Every study of nineteenth century Western societies has found that pregnant brides were younger than other brides (e.g. Watkins and McCarthy 1980, 175; Cole 1982, 60).[14] This consistent finding must be accommodated in any overarching view of late nineteenth-century bridal pregnancy. Women who had a prenuptial conception ought to

[14]But see Concepcion (1980, 121) on the evidence from the World Fertility Surveys conducted in Third World countries during the 1970s. In societies where women marry at very young ages, it is the women who marry at older ages who are more likely to be pregnant.

be compared with both pregnant single women who did not marry and women who married before conception.[15]

The most common interpretation of bridal pregnancy is that sexual intercourse was a normal part of courtship for couples who intended to marry. This explanation is more appealing when the overall level of bridal pregnancies is much higher than it was in the Melbourne suburbs and also when there is less of a difference in the ages of pregnant brides and nonpregnant brides. A cultural acceptance of premarital sexual relations for the young unmarried should extend to the older unmarried as well. In this view single women who become pregnant but do not marry (by circumstances, not by choice) are deviants, but pregnant women who legitimize their children by marrying before confinement are not. A smaller age difference could be explained as due to accelerated marriages because of an unexpected pregnancy. However, the almost two year gap between pregnant and nonpregnant brides is very long even by the Victorian standards of long engagements. If marriage was really hastened to such an extent then one must suspect that these imprudent couples were looking for an excuse to cut their engagements short, which is not the same as saying they were just like other couples.

During the 1970s a subfield of history, the history of sexuality, attracted a lot of interest. Any evidence of sexuality seemed to be taken as proof of a social revolution. Edward Shorter (1973) carried this theme the farthest by interpreting the rise in illegitimacy rates from the late eighteenth century through the mid nineteenth century as a growth of expressive individualism and an awakening of sexuality through the liberating force of the expanding market economy. He has not made many converts to his view (Laslett 1980a, 26-9). However, both he and his detractors seem to have the same interpretations of the context and meaning of late nineteenth-century bridal pregnancy.

Shorter has tended to dismiss all nonmarital conceptions ending in marriage as part of traditional courtship practices. He argued that near the end of the century the urban working class stabilized. Part of their newly formed culture was early and universal marriage. 'Romantic-expressive sexuality' could be and was coupled from the beginning with the anticipation of a subsequent marriage. Tilly, Scott and Cohen (1976) vigorously opposed Shorter's suggestion that illegitimacy meant anything other than exploitation of the single woman, although perhaps ultimately caused by the impossible economic straits of her young lover. They too, however, saw the end of the last century as a growth in the economic prosperity of the urban working class. This increased their individual security

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[15] As it seems probable that most couples who had premarital sexual relations had very infrequent intercourse, the bridal pregnancy rate could mask a much higher level of prenuptial sexual activity (Laslett 1980a, 55).

and their willingness to marry. Finally, Smith and Hindus (1975) viewed the late nineteenth century as a period of conflict rather than complacency, but their conclusions are much the same. Young people, particularly males, were granted greater autonomy due to the plethora of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. This encouraged them to challenge whatever little parental authority remained. Premarital intercourse, even though it was expected to lead to marriage, was one way that the revolution of the young was waged.

With those issues in mind let us examine who the pregnant brides were. First they were more likely to be from working-class backgrounds. However, in every occupational group some daughters had a prenuptially conceived birth and in none of the groups was pregnancy before marriage the typical pattern. Eight per cent of professionals' daughters known to have a child were pregnant at marriage, as were 10 per cent of businessmens' daughters and 14 per cent of the women from households headed by other white-collar workers. Sixteen per cent of skilled workers' daughters who married were pregnant, 17 per cent of semi-skilled workers' daughters and 19 per cent of labourers' daughters. Unfortunately the backgrounds of the mothers of illegitimate children cannot be compared because the women can only be identified through their children's birth certificates and these forms do not record the occupation of the mothers' fathers.

Pregnant brides have already been shown to be younger than nonpregnant brides; however, Figure 4-7 shows that their ages were also more tightly compressed into a narrow range. A bride over 26 years of age was very unlikely to be pregnant. Young brides were more likely to be pregnant though the majority were not. Only 11 per cent of the brides known not to be pregnant were under 20 years old compared to 23 per cent of the pregnant brides. The next two panels show how very different the mothers of illegitimate children were. Relative to pregnant brides they were not much younger, while a significant number were likely to be older.

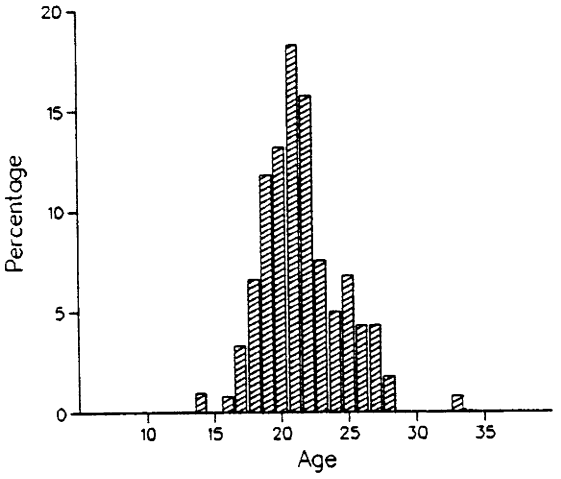
The Government Statistician of New South Wales, T.A. Coghlan, had also observed these differences in the ages of pregnant brides, nonpregnant brides and single mothers. He warned

> this is not due, as might at first sight be supposed, to the superior wariness which comes to women with the increase of years - subsequent figures clearly disprove this - it is to be attributed rather to reluctance on the part of men to marry women of mature years, even when such women are likely to become mothers (1903, 9).

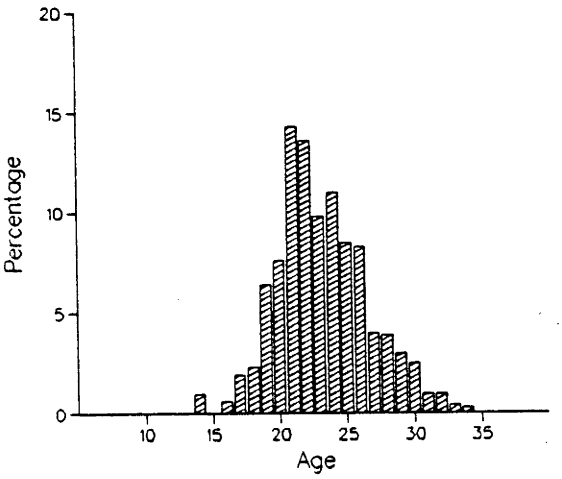
In fact he did not present the age-specific nonmarital fertility rates which would be required to support his claim. Nor did he consider that some of the older single mothers would have been in stable unions. Still, the age distributions suggest that most single mothers had been part of liaisons of a very different character from those of their pregnant but betrothed sisters.

Figure 4-7: Ages of pregnant and nonpregnant brides and single mothers, in single years of age.

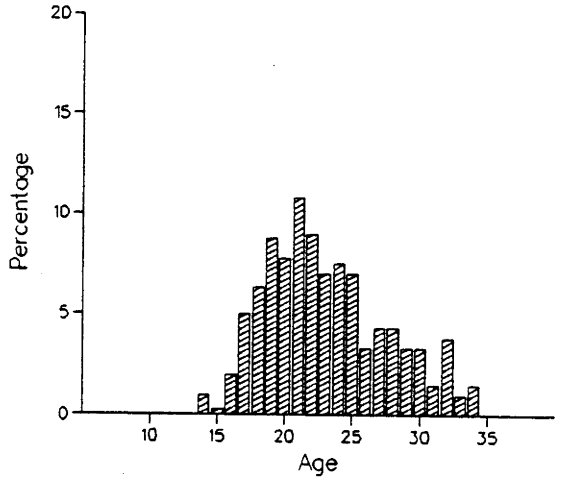
Pregnant brides under 35



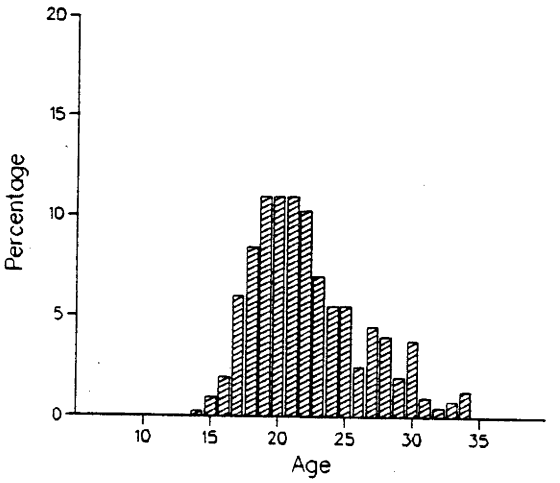
Nonpregnant brides under 35



Unmarried mothers under 35
South Melbourne



Single mothers under 35
Victoria



The women also had different work experiences. To avoid the confounding effect of class, able 4-11 only includes brides with fathers in manual occupations. Pregnant brides

were not only much more likely to be in the workforce, but, unlike the other brides who tended to be servants, they were more typically working in the clothing industry or other manufacturing jobs. For a ten year period (1886-95) the registrar for South Melbourne noted the occupations of the mothers of all registered illegitimate births. Mothers under 35 years old were more likely to have no occupation listed, which could have been due to the fact that the registrar did not have to record the information. Also, since they had just delivered a child they may have been living with and being supported by relatives, friends or the child's father. Of those who did work, though, the majority were servants.

Table 4-11: Occupations of brides and single mothers, selected Melburne suburbs.

	Pregnant brides	Brides not pregnant	Mothers of illegitimate children
Home duties	27	42	47
Manufacturing	37	20	13
Servant	35	35	37
Other	1	3	2
Total Ns	86	431	521

Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample and South Melbourne Illegitimate Birth Sample.
Note: Only brides with a father in a manual occupation included. See text for other sample restrictions.

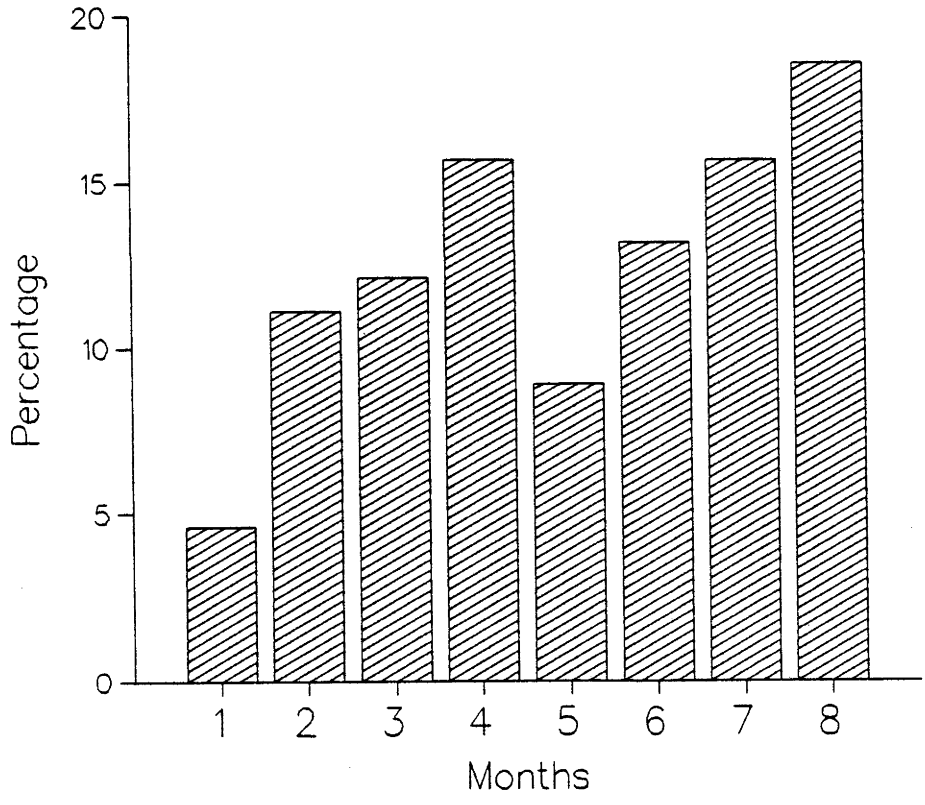
Contemporary middle-class opinion heaped insinuation after insinuation on the moral correctness of young working-class women employed in factories, or indeed anywhere outside a middle class home (eg. Twopeny 1973 [1883], 56- 7). These employers of servants failed to acknowledge or admit that servants, isolated and vulnerable, were the most likely women to be raped or seduced and abandoned. Frequently the women were employed as servants because they did not have a family home in the city. Without friends to give advice and to borrow money from, abortion may have been particularly difficult for them to arrange. Factory workers may have had premarital sexual intercourse, but they were not its victims. A director of a charitable lying-in hospital in Sydney explained the situation to the New South Wales Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth Rate.

> Q: Of what class are the patients?
> A: Principally servant girls and country girls coming from their own homes in the country; and, of course, there are married women from the surround

districts, Newtown, Erskineville, Macdonaldtown, and so forth; but they are principally servant girls and from country homes. ...
Q: Have you any experience of the employment of women in factories and shops with regard to maternity? ...
A: No; I cannot say that a very large number have come to us that have been employed in factories and shops.
Q: Regarding the domestics, do you not have a very large proportion of those poor girls that are in trouble in that way from public houses?
A: No; not a very large percentage. No, I have always be antagonised to some of my fellow temperance workers on that point; we do not have a large number (Decline, vol. 2, pp. 87-8).

Prenuptial pregnancy should not, however, be interpreted as normal or socially sanctioned behaviour in late nineteenth-century Melbourne. The actions of couples who decided to marry after discovering a pregnancy demonstrate that. On the whole they married soon after conception. Very few waited until the baby was almost due (Figure 4-8).

Figure 4-8: Interval from marriage to birth of first child in months (28 days) for brides having a child within eight completed months of marriage.



Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Birth and Marriage Sample.

Couples expecting a child were more likely not to have a church wedding, although it is not clear if this was because of haste, shame or parental disapproval of the match. Twenty-seven per cent of the pregnant brides married at the registry office or at the Victorian Free Church of England (which specialized in inexpensive weddings) compared

with ten per cent of other brides. Ankarloo (1978, 120-1) found in late nineteenth-century Massachusetts towns that couples with a prenuptial pregnancy were much more likely to be living with one set of parents after the marriage than other newlyweds (50 per cent versus 18 percent). He cautiously interpreted this as action bred of necessity because of an unexpected pregnancy.

On the other hand an illegimate birth marked most women for life. A sample of 786 illegitmate births registered in the colony in 1866, 1876, 1887[16] and 1896 was drawn from annual indexes to study the fate of single mothers more closely. Most illegitimate children were listed under their mother's surname. If the father was also noted on the registration form the child was entered in the index twice, once under the father's name and once under the mother's name. However the entry makes it clear that the child was illegitimate only when the mother's name was used. The Government Statist routinely mentioned that a woman could relatively easily disguise her child's illegitimacy to the registrar (e.g. *Yearbook* 1877, 90). In 1876 directions were given to either local registrars or to tabulators in the central office to scrutinize each birth more closely (*Yearbook* 1879, 127) and this revealed from 200 to 300 more illegitimate births annually. In that sense the coverage of the sample is not constant. Only place of birth, not place of parents' residence was noted on birth certificates. This created difficulties because many (for example, 32 per cent in 1891) illegitimate births registered in Melbourne were delivered in the Women's Hospital in Carlton, but were presumably to women from all over the colony. Consequently the sample could not be restricted to Melbourne.

With only mother's name, age and birthplace and the place of birth of the child to go by, I searched the annual marriage indexes to discover if she married within five years of the birth. Since there was so little information to match, particularly for those who gave birth in an institution, undoubtedly many marriages were missed. However the linking exercise could not have been so unsuccessful as to invalidate the major conclusion: single mothers were not likely to marry. A marriage certificate could only be found for 23 per cent of these women who were under 35 years old and, judging by their surnames recorded on the birth certificate, they apparently had not been married before.

Most of the mothers who married did not do so immediately after their illegitimate child's birth. Only nine per cent of the women married within six months; the majority of them (69 percent) married between six months and three years later. This could have been the fault of the recorded information as couples marrying soon after a birth may have told the registrar they had been married earlier.

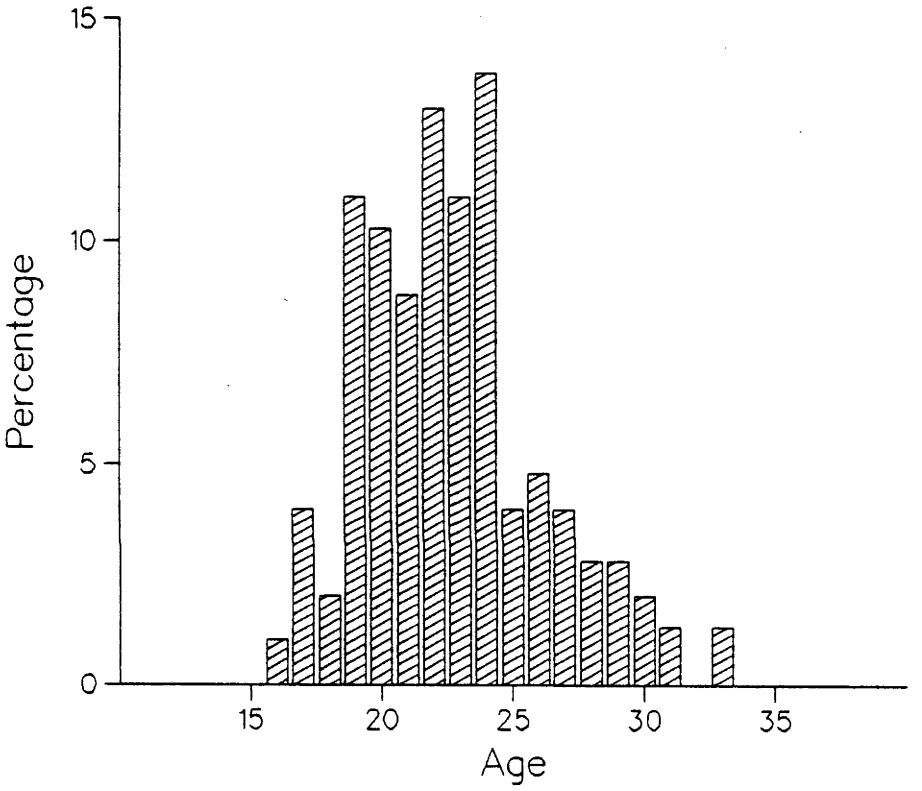
What is impressive is that the mothers who did marry, married at ages very similar

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[16]The index of births for 1886 was not available when this sample was collected.

to other brides (Figure 4-9). The view of illegitimacy propounded by Laslett (1980b) seems to be upheld here. The young woman who made a single 'mistake' had some chance of being 'forgiven' by society. In this case she appears to re-enter the marriage market almost as an equal to other unmarried women. But the single mothers who are too old, too poor, who have had other illegitimate births, who are part of the world of petty crime or in other ways part of the 'bastardy-prone' subgroup are unlikely to escape it.

Figure 4-9: Age at marriage of single mothers under age 35 marrying within five years after their child's birth, in single years.



Source: Victorian Illegitimate Birth Sample.

4.3 When Men Married

> Society here is but an attempted reflex of society in England. We are not much worse than our friends at home, only our follies are much more perceptible. In Victoria most people are just rich enough to be extravagant. Young men marry sooner, achieve independence sooner, and get into debt with greater facility than they do at home. We have had homilies enough about Victorian girls -- will no one give us a homily upon Victorian boys?
>
> --- Marcus Clarke, 1868 in Hergehan (1972, 48)

Historians of early modern and modern Western societies have viewed the age at which the bulk of young men choose to marry as being constrained, indeed dictated, by economic opportunity. Prospective grooms are imagined as carefully considering if they could raise enough food or earn enough in wages or profits to support a family. The normative prescription that young married couples establish their own households forced such a cost-benefit approach. Variations in average age at first marriage between regions, social groups or over time have been interpreted as indicators of different prospects for achieving this objective (e.g. Wrigley and Schofield 1981, 356-401 passim, 421-38 and *Victorian Yearbook* 1882, pp. 199-202).

Banks (1954) proposed a more elaborate economic interpretation in this vein to explain the rise in males' age at marriage in England during the nineteenth century. He argued that middle-class English families in the 1860s and the 1870s faced an acceleration in the sheer quantity of consumer goods considered necessary to keep up the appearance and reality of a respectable, comfortable existence. Simultaneously there was an increase in the numbers of people joining the ranks of the middle strata at the lowest levels of the white-collar hierarchy; this was the group most likely to feel economically frustrated in their efforts to keep up with the Smythes. As the accoutrements of middle-class life multiplied, young men considering marriage would wait until they could establish a household in the approved style and those already married would seriously endeavour to limit their children.[17]

After observing a rise in the proportions single and median age at marriage for Victorian males between the 1881 and 1891 censuses, McDonald (1974, 126-131)

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[17]Banks's thesis can be seen as a specific application of the models designed by the 'new home economists' who emphasize the trade-off between quantity and quality of children, marriage, etc. (See Schultz (1974) and particularly Becker's article in the same volume.) Banks himself has withdrawn from the argument that this attitude was unique to the mid and late Victorian middle class. He has most recently interpreted the European pattern of late marriage and high proportions single as meaning that marriage was always properly to follow a man's s achievement of economic security (1981, 46-7).

suggested a more democratic antipodean version of the 'proper time to marry' thesis. In his view the prosperity of the boom decade encouraged the bulk of the colonial population to believe that they too could achieve the middle-class goal of owning a well-appointed home in the suburbs. Young men presumably postponed marriage until they could afford to purchase their domestic fortress.

An explanation designed for the upper echelons of English society does not well serve the majority of a colonial urban population. Rising prosperity for the middle classes in England coincided with accelerating expectations resulting in later ages at marriage. In Melbourne a favourable economic climate encouraged an optimistic attitude amongst almost all social groups. This will be demonstrated by examining the comparative advantage of migrants and the native-born, and the relationship between age at marriage and grooms' socio-economic status, and their success or failure in achieving a status similar to their fathers'.

4.3.1 Predicting the timing of first marriage

Studying the path to marriage for men is just as constrained as it was for women. Limited by data recorded on official marriage and birth certificates, we know very little about individual grooms. The analysis presented here has been limited to the year of marriage, birthplace and occupation and groom's occupation relative to the reported occupation of his father as well as whether a child was born to the couple within eight months of marriage. Some of these five factors also interacted with each other in influencing the age of grooms. Table 4-12 presents these factors in a regression equation predicting age which includes two sets of interaction variables, one between year of marriage and occupation and the second between occupation and being born outside of the colony. The occupational mobility variables can be thought of as measuring interaction because they are specific to each occupation group.

The object of the regression and discussion that will follow is to isolate the role of each factor in determining the time of first marriage. Consequently the sample is restricted to grooms who had not been married before. In addition, the three per cent marrying grooms aged 40 or more were eliminated. Inasmuch as some brides marrying for the first time married widowers or bachelors over 40 years old and some grooms married widows or single women over 35 years old, the sample of grooms studied here is not wholly a sample of the men who marrried the brides studied above. However, of the brides included in the study, 90 per cent of them married men who will be studied in this section. Of the grooms satisfying the selection criteria here, 94 per cent married brides who were also marrying for the first time and were under the age limit.

The possible effect of including persons of advanced ages in a study of the timing of

Table 4-12: Multiple regression predicting age of grooms, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Variable	B	Std err	Sig of t	Mean
Year	-0.198	0.342	0.563	4.325
Year (squared)	0.102	0.039	0.010	22.031
Professional	2.573	1.711	0.133	0.089
Businessmen	5.220	1.651	0.002	0.106
White Collar	3.671	2.109	0.082	0.096
Semi-skilled	2.750	1.555	0.077	0.146
Labourer	-0.567	1.820	0.755	0.090
Prof x Year	-0.140	0.277	0.613	0.392
Bus x Year	-0.705	0.283	0.013	0.429
White x Year	-0.237	0.313	0.445	0.455
Semi x Year	-0.439	0.248	0.077	0.605
Labour x Year	0.057	0.294	0.846	0.403
Australasia	0.938	0.555	0.091	0.068
England & Wales	3.053	0.473	0.000	0.288
Scotland	3.649	0.730	0.000	0.052
Ireland	3.398	0.612	0.000	0.129
Other	1.955	0.722	0.007	0.045
Migrants				
--Professional	0.522	1.089	0.632	0.054
--Businessmen	-0.755	1.037	0.467	0.051
--White Collar	-1.118	1.098	0.309	0.042
--Semi-skilled	0.165	0.941	0.861	0.088
--Labourer	2.629	1.124	0.020	0.046
Pregnant bride	-1.735	0.409	0.000	0.124
Upwardly mobile				
--Professional	-0.604	0.882	0.494	0.041
--Businessmen	-0.712	0.870	0.414	0.049
--White Collar	-1.340	1.281	0.296	0.037
--Skilled Manual	-0.508	0.505	0.315	0.109
--Semi-skilled	1.041	1.117	0.352	0.025
Downwardly mobile				
--Businessmen	3.149	1.465	0.032	0.010
--White Collar	0.135	1.258	0.914	0.044
--Skilled Manual	1.107	0.466	0.018	0.113
--Semi-skilled	-0.118	0.779	0.880	0.073
--Labouring	0.220	0.938	0.814	0.040
R^2=0.212	F = 7.198	Sig. of F = 0.000		N = 918

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.

Note: All variables except year of marriage are dicho- tomous. See text for description of sample and variables. The cases are unweighted and there is no significant difference at the 0.1 level in the variance of the residuals between weighting strata.

marriage was discussed earlier. Had the older men been included the percentage of overall variance explained would have increased from 21 to 25. Birthplace would have dominated the regression equation, as it does with the subset of younger grooms; however, when older grooms were included differences by occupation were insignificant.

4.3.2 Birthplace

Grooms born outside the colony were older than those who had been born in Victoria. This finding should come as no surprise after the discussion on the role of birthplace in the timing of women's marriages. Men in the sample from England, Ireland and Scotland had similar coefficients, all within about six months of each other. As can be seen in Table 4-12 and Table 4-13 they have a large effect on the predicted age at marriage. Men born in other colonies were on average less than a year older than Victorian-born men. The small number of grooms in the miscellaneous category had an average age between the British and Victorian-born. Data are not available for exploring reasons for the differences in ages between the grooms who migrated from disparate places. However, following the procedures described in the section on women's age at marriage some inferences can be made by contrasting the Victorian-born and all migrant populations.

Table 4-13: Effect of birthplace on age of first marrying grooms, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Groom's birthplace	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Victoria	25.7	25.7	3.65	385
Other Australasia	26.6	26.4	4.14	62
England & Wales	28.9	28.2	4.65	264
Scotland	29.5	28.5	4.96	48
Ireland	29.2	29.1	4.53	118
Other	27.8	27.5	3.67	41

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-12. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variance shows actual means significantly different, $p < 0.001$.

Table 4-14 gives the distribution, in five-year age groups, for the population in the primary marrying ages derived from estimates of the native and foreign-born population living in Victoria. The median ages show how very young the native-born male

population was until the 1890s. Men who had come to Victoria from elsewhere, often many years ealier, were, on the other hand, consistently much older. Their median age fluctuated in response to migration surges and lapses, but remained high. The native-born population's extreme youth and the fact that it was virtually unknown for a man to marry in his teens meant that in the early years there were very few colonial-born grooms. In the suburban marriage sample only two grooms, or two per cent of first marrying grooms under 40 in 1866 had been born in the colony. The Victorian-born represented only six per cent of the grooms in 1871 and 22 per cent in 1876. The percentage was 46 in 1881, 55 in 1886 and 56 in 1891. Only in the last year of the study did the percentage climb to 72. Overall 42 per cent of the grooms were colonial-born.

Figure 4-10 shows what the median age of native-born and foriegn-born men marrying in Victoria would have been if the two groups had the same marriage rates. The medians are compared to the actual medians from the suburban sample. Native-born grooms' median ages from the sample should be ignored in the first two years because they are based on small numbers. Afterwards the derived medians for the colony's native-born grooms and the actual medians from the sample are reasonably similar. In the 1890s there was a greater difference than any shown for women in Figure 4-6. Still, the magnitude of the difference was relatively small. It was among the men who had migrated to the colony and married that the median ages for Victoria and the suburbs differed. From 1876 to 1886 suburban migrant grooms were younger than would have been expected, suggesting that men from outside Victoria were either more eager or more capable of marrying than native-born men or that women preferred men who had come from somewhere else.

4.3.3 Occupations

As elsewhere in this thesis occupation (or father's occupation) is the best indicator available of a person's economic and social circumstances. Table 4-15 shows the predicted and actual mean ages of suburban grooms by their occupations. Both series show a curvilinear pattern. Professionals, businessmen and white-collar workers marrying in the study years were older than skilled manual workers. But the semi-skilled workers and labourers were also older than the middle group. The standard errors of the coefficients for the main effects of occupations are large, making the significance levels rather high. This means the precise value of the coefficients are probably not reliable but, encouragingly, the relative magnitude of each group was stable in all of the regressions tested.

The U-shaped pattern of age at marriage by occupation differs from other late nineteenth-century English-speaking societies. The Registrar General of England (1885)

Table 4-14: Estimated age distribution of the male Victorian-born and migrant populations within the marriageable ages, Victoria, 1866-1896.

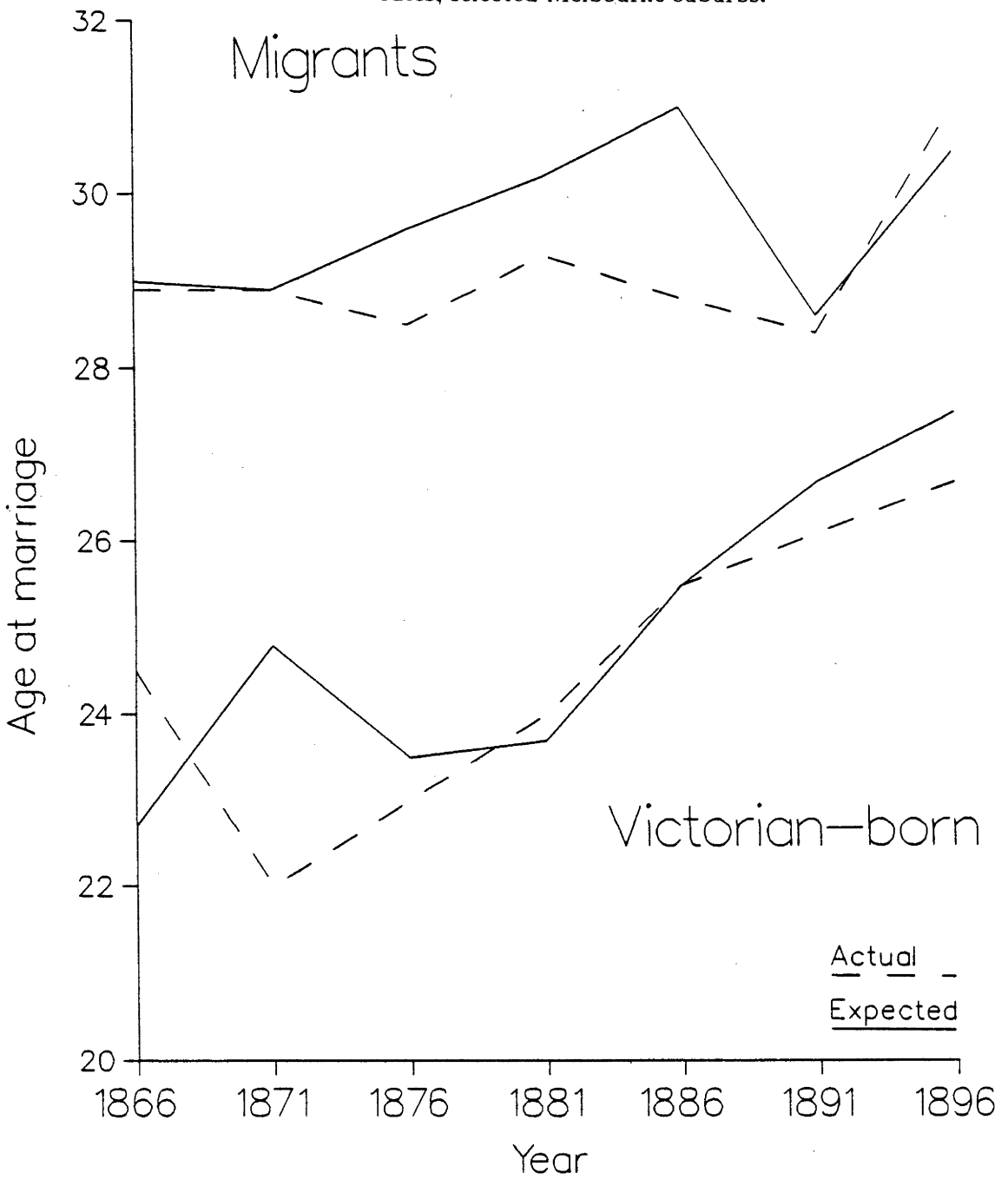
	1866	1871	1876	1881	1886	1891	1896
Victorian-born							
15-19	61	67	68	47	34	27	21
20-24	36	20	22	36	31	25	21
25-29	3	12	6	11	24	23	20
30-34		1	4	3	7	17	18
35-39			0	2	2	5	14
40-44				0	1	2	4
45-49					0	1	1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median age	19.1	18.7	18.7	20.4	22.6	24.6	26.8
Migrants							
15-19	9	8	3	4	9	6	9
20-24	10	11	10	5	10	14	6
25-29	15	15	13	14	9	17	13
30-34	22	17	16	16	16	13	17
35-39	20	20	18	18	17	18	14
40-44	13	18	21	20	18	17	20
45-49	10	12	19	22	20	16	20
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median age	33.5	34.9	37.3	38.0	36.5	35.2	36.4

Source: Derived from annual registered births 1836-1880 published in *Victorian Yearbooks* and the *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.
Note: See text for an explanation of the estimation technique.

analysed a 'large number of marriages' of bachelors in 1884-85 and published the age distribution of grooms by their occupations. At 29.6 years the 'professional and independent class' had the highest median age. 'Labourers', 'artisans' and 'shoemakers and tailors' had similar marriage patterns; their median ages were 24.3, 24.2 and 23.8 respectively. 'Shopkeepers and shopmen' and 'commercial clerks' married on average at 25.5 years. 'The figures,' he summarized, 'show clearly at what early ages working men undertake the expense of marriage, and how very much later the more prudent classes do so.'

In the United States there was also a positive relationship between social class and

Figure 4-10: Median ages of native-born and migrant grooms contrasted with expected ages if both groups had the same marriage rates, selected Melbourne suburbs.



Sources: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample and the Censuses of Victoria, 1861-1901.
Note: Based on all grooms living in the suburbs. See text for method of calculating expected median ages.

age at marriage. Monahan (1951, 261-65) reviewed studies of nineteenth and early twentieth century samples of men in high status occupations. All showed that these men married at older than average ages. In his own work with New Jersey marriage records from 1868 to 1900 (p. 283) men from the 'professional' and 'merchant-managerial' groups married later than other groups. Their mean age at marriage fluctuated between 26.5 and

Table 4-15: Effect of occupation on age of first marrying grooms, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

Groom's occupation	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Professional	28.3	28.8	4.21	82
Businessmen	28.7	28.1	4.03	97
White Collar	28.0	27.9	4.49	88
Skilled Manual	26.4	26.2	4.10	434
Semi-skilled	27.4	27.5	4.59	134
Labouring	27.3	27.3	5.03	83

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-12. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variance shows actual means significant different, $p < 0.001$.

28.5 years. The clerical and skilled manual workers married, on average, later than the semi-skilled and labourers, but the differences were small and by no means consistent. While the mean for the middle groups tended to laid between 25.5 years and 26.0 years, grooms in jobs requiring few skills had mean ages between 24.5 and 25.5 years. From the highest to the lowest social group, the differences in median age at marriage were not as extreme in New Jersey as in England.

Professionals in Melbourne seem to have married at approximately the same age as their counterparts in England and the United States. But for all other occupation groups the suburban grooms appear to have been considerably older. High age at marriage and a U-shaped relationship between age and occupational status might have been distinctively colonial. However, late marriage among the most disadvantaged men in society is not unusual. Knodel (1982, 13-18) found that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century labourers in German villages had higher ages at marriage than farmers and artisans.

Differences between occupation groups in the apparent timing of marriage could, of course, be the result of underlying differences in age structure. While the composition of the single population in each occupation group cannot be measured, by separating the migrants from the native-born in each occupation group more homogeneous groups can be created. The result is shown in Table 4-16. Of grooms born outside the colony, skilled manual workers have the lowest mean age. Among Victorian-born grooms, though, there

was a positive relationship between occupational status and age. Professionals, businessmen and white-collar workers were older than manual workers, although the predicted value for semi-skilled workers was rather high. The reason for the different patterns can be seen from the regression equation. The main effects of birthplace have already been discussed. Yet, within each occupation group the effects of birthplace may have differed. That possibility was tested with a series of interaction variables, but only the variable for labourers was large and significant. While all grooms who migrated to the colony were on average older than all native-born grooms, migrant grooms working as labourers exceeded the age of their native- born co-workers by more. Since it is reasonable to assume that single migrant labourers were not older than the single migrants with other occupations, the explanation for the difference in the timing of first marriage must have resulted from each group's experience in the colony.

Table 4-16: Mean age of first marrying grooms by occupation and nativity, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

	Victorian-born		Migrants	
Groom's occupation	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean
Professional	26.4	27.0	29.6	29.5
Businessmen	27.4	26.5	29.5	29.2
White Collar	26.9	27.0	28.7	28.9
Skilled Manual	24.8	25.2	27.5	27.1
Semi-skilled	25.7	25.4	28.5	28.8
Labourer	24.3	25.0	29.4	29.0

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-12. See text for sample restrictions.

One would expect single men who came to Victoria as adults to face at least a couple of years adjusting to the new environment. It would take that long to establish oneself in the labour market and make enough friends and acquaintances to be able to find a wife. However, if anything, after controlling for age structure, migrant grooms were younger than the Victorian-born in some years. Clearly not all migrants found Melbourne an unsettling place. Nonetheless, for the migrant with few or no skills life may have been much more difficult.

Late nineteenth-century Melbourne was reputed to be a paradise on earth for the workingman. Compared to England 'rewards for unskilled and semi-skilled work were extraordinarily high' (Macarthy 1970, 57). Eden had a few serpents though, and among males the unskilled were the most vulnerable. Rents were high in the urban area and affordable housing was clustered in the crowded inner suburbs or, near the end of the century, in the outer working-class suburbs composed of rows of three-room cottages (Davison 1978, 141-2). Until the late 1880s demand for unskilled labour was high, but the bulk of work was casual. Personal contacts and knowing how to be at the right place at the right time would have been the deciding factor in securing employment. Bouts of unemployment of up to several months particularly during winter were the rule rather than the exception (Lee and Fahey 1986). Men arriving from overseas with few skills would have been the most likely to spend several years in their new country drifting from town to country to town until they were able to find their niche.[18] To make matters more difficult the Melbourne working class opposed migration. By 1873 a successful campaign had abolished government assisted migration programs. The charge was frequently made that this hostility towards migration in general was translated into outright discrimination against individual migrants, particularly when jobs were scarce. The unskilled would have been the least resilient to such an onslaught. Finally, men working as labourers were not necessarily unskilled. Difficulties in finding work as a labourer may have been the last in a series of disappointments and frustrations. In other words, as good as Australia may have been for the migrant labourer, reality was surely different from the rhetoric in emigration propaganda. The difficulties encountered in adjusting to lower-class life in Melbourne may have been the reason that the migrants postponed marriage, perhaps while they weighed the chances of their prospects improving and the wisdom of returning 'Home'.

The suburban marriage data certainly do not suggest that some social groups were prone to reckless early marriages. However, it was the steady tradesman who was the most likely to marry young, along with colonial-born men in other working-class occupations. Their decisions about marriage led them to the altar a couple of years earlier than men from higher social groups. The decline in the average age of grooms occurred during the city's boom period and only reversed itself near the end as economic difficulties become apparent. This is not to suggest that colonials were more likely than their prudent cousins back home to ignore the economic realities of taking responsibility for

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[18]Joseph Jenkins's (1982 [1869-94]) diary is a moving account of the difficulties of obtaining work right through the boom period. He had been a Welsh farmer who migrated without family or capital and spent most of his 25 years in Victoria in varying degrees of poverty.

forming a family. . Melburnians were just as aware of the hard work required to suport a wife and family. R.E.N. Twopeny wrote that in that sophisticated metropolis 'marriage, though still almost entirely an affair of love, has yet learnt to take £.s.d. into consideration' (1973 [1883], 104). However, what is known about life in late nineteenth-century Melbourne does not support the idea that prosperity was a constraint to marriage. As long as one was not an labouring migrant, the good years in Melbourne were indeed marvellous.

Davison (1978, 198-9) compiled household budgets for Australia around 1885 on a range of annual incomes from £150 (a steadily employed artisan earning 10s a day) through to £850. Most of the budgets were for small families with zero to two children. Basing conclusions on these budgets is risky, but they were published in widely circulated newspapers and had been thought by an editor to be generalizable. The percentage of total income spent on food and fuel ranged from 50 for the prototypical artisan to 27 for the highest income level. For workingmen this compared very favourably with budgets presented by Banks (1954, 64) for England in 1873. Over a similar salary range food and fuel took between 63 per cent and 32 per cent of total income.

Protection of local industries through the tariffs imposed in the late 1870s and the general boom resulting from large increases in the number of householders encouraged an active domestic market for inexpensive household articles (Kelley 1968). Davison's (1978, 195) estimates for furnishing a modest four-room house ranged from £27 to £98; the most expensive including a sewing machine and piano. This spanned the estimate found by Banks for the householder earning £150 in 1873. But the wide range given by Davison suggests that householders had considerable leeway in choosing what were essential household items. Twopeny (1973 [1883], 111) was bemused by the middle class colonists' disinterest in the niceties of tasteful (and expensive) household ornaments and luxuries, despite the impressive level of material wealth held by all parts of Melbourne society. In the colony 'the necessity to keep up appearances is not one-sixth as strong as in England.' This attitude was far removed from that which pervaded Trollope's rarefied world of the English upper middle class and gave birth to the 'proper time to marry' thesis.

Much has been written of the specific goal of Melburnians to own their own home. A prevalent ethos undoubtedly associated home ownership not just with financial security but also with the moral qualities of thrift, moderation, commitment to a community, and steadfastness. Still, the view that this acted as an incentive for couples or men to postpone marriage until a home could be purchased seems overstated. Home ownership was, in the late nineteenth century, more attainable in Melbourne than in British and North American cities or in its northern rival, Sydney. Without census figures estimates of the prevalence of home ownership in Melbourne must be drawn from the original

ratebooks for each of the metropolitan municipalities. So far a complete sample has not been attempted, but the partial samples have given remarkably similar results. Dingle and Merrett (1972) suggested that 41 per cent of Melbourne householders owned or were purchasing their homes in 1891. Davison (1978, 180-1) estimated that the percentage was 45.5 in the early 1880s. In my more restricted sample of three neighbourhoods, one each in Hawthorn, Richmond and North Melbourne in the early 1880s, the percentage of owner-occupiers was only 36.[19] However, 62 per cent of the houses in the sample were in North Melbourne which had the typical inner city pattern of a high proportion of tenants. In that suburb only 28 per cent of the homes were owned by their male occupiers. In Richmond the percentage was 47 and in Hawthorn it was 51. The differences in prevalence of home ownership between the suburbs was not due to their different mix of social classes. Among the same occupational groups the likelihood that an occupier would own his home varied.

Keeping in mind the inner city bias of the sample, it is useful to look at ownership by occupation. Table 4-17 shows that while some unskilled workers owned, or at least were purchasing, their homes, this was rare. Even at the other extreme, only among the professionals did a majority own their homes. Businessmen and white-collar workers were more likely to be renting. In North Melbourne, where the bulk of the working-class marriages in the marriage sample originated, only 33 per cent of the skilled workers owned their home. It seems unlikely that the working-class brides and grooms from North Melbourne and other inner suburbs expected to buy a home immediately upon marriage when they knew so few people who owned their homes.

Purchasing a home was much more expensive in the short run than renting (Davison 1978, 179). The householder who wanted to buy had to choose between living in more modest accommodation than he would be able to afford if he were renting, and spending more of his income on housing in order to maintain the same standard of accommodation while enjoying the privileges of ownership. Many people would not have been willing to make such sacrifices. Elaine MacDonald (n.d.), the daughter of journalists, recalled her Melbourne childhood in the late 1880s and early 1890s spent in a series of rented houses. Her father it seems had 'a talent - almost a genius - for discovering picturesque, old-fashioned houses of unparalleled inconvenience and discomfort'. This professional family never bought a home for 'only the wealthy owned their houses'.

A corollary of the 'proper time to marry' argument is that, if a young man strives not just to maintain his social position, but to rise above it, he will be likely to forgo

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[19]The sample was collected to study the community surrounding the state schools studied in Chapter 2. A description of the sample can be found in Section 5 of that chapter.

Table 4-17: Percentage of homes owned by occupier, by occupation, selected Melbourne suburbs, ca. 1882.

	%	N
Professional	64	105
Businessmen	40	137
White Collar	40	73
Skilled Manual	35	678
Semi-skilled	37	307
Labouring	22	261

Source: North Melbourne, Richmond and Hawthorn Ratebook Sample, 1882/83.
Note: Based only on male occupiers.

marriage until he has achieved his goal. The final table on males' average age at marriage shows the importance, or lack of it, of the groom's occupation relative to that of his father. Since the occupational classification is necessarily crude, attempts to compare the status achieved by the father with his son's status at his marriage must also be imprecise. Nonetheless, Melbourne in the late 1880s must have been a place of considerable social fluidity. Fewer than half of the grooms in the sample had the same social rank as their fathers. About one-quarter (26 percent) were classified in a higher socioeconomic group and another 29 per cent were in a lower group. Inevitably the grooms of the lowest rank were the most likely to have experienced downward mobility. Fifty-two per cent of semi-skilled workers and 46 per cent of labourers who marrried had fathers with a higher status occupation. At the top of the scale, 48 percent cent of professionals and businessmen reported that their fathers had a lower status occupation.

Table 4-18 gives the predicted and actual mean ages of grooms according to their occupational mobility. The means overstate mobility's effect because many of the relevant coefficients are insignificant. No confidence at all should be put on the apparent influence of upward mobility. However it is interesting that the tendency is for upward mobility to be associated with a younger age at marriage for every occupation group except the semi-skilled. This contradicts the general argument about the striving, self-sacrificing Victorian middle-class. It suggests that the men who rose to such ranks had been expecting to reach that pinnacle since they were youths, most likely because their families were able to afford the necessary education.

Downward mobility had a strong tendency to postpone Melbourne's businessmen's

Table 4-18: Effect of occupational mobility on mean age of first marrying grooms, selected Melbourne suburbs, suburbs, 1866-1896.

Groom's occupation	Groom's relative to father's occupation					
	Increased		Same		Decreased	
	Pred.	Act.	Pred.	Act.	Pred.	Act.
Professional	27.9	28.6	28.5	29.0	--	--
Businessmen	27.3	27.6	28.0	27.7	31.2	31.6
White Collar	27.0	27.0	28.3	27.7	28.4	28.4
Skilled Manual	25.7	25.2	26.2	26.2	27.3	27.1
Semi-skilled	28.2	29.6	27.2	26.8	27.0	27.2
Labouring	--	--	27.3	28.1	27.5	26.7

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-12. See text for sample restrictions.

marriages and a less extreme but similar effect on skilled workers. But downward mobility did not affect those working in other jobs. These results are not surprising. In Melbourne, during the prosperous years in particular, the demand for labour was sufficiently strong that young labourers could easily gain enough experience to take on increasingly skilled jobs (Fry 1956a, 328-9). Similarly, the long, unremunerative apprenticeships that some skilled trades required often made young men lose patience and take better paying jobs requiring less skill. In such an economic environment there could not have been much meaning attached to movements upward toward skilled labour or downward toward the less skilled ranks. As has already been shown, men who remained in manual jobs could not expect significant inceases in earnings after their early twenties. On the other hand, artisans and men in small commercial enterprises whose fathers had higher positions probably had a very real sense of having slipped in social standing.

4.3.4 Prenuptial pregnancy

Of the first marrying grooms under 40 years old, only 12 per cent were father to a child within eight months of marriage. These grooms, themselves marrying younger women, were almost two years younger than other grooms (Table 4-19). However, early marriage and bridal pregnancy were not synonymous for men any more than they were for women. Six per cent of grooms over 30 years old married pregnant women, whereas 27 per cent of men under age 23 did so.

Table 4-19: Effect of prenuptial pregnancy on age of first marrying grooms, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1896.

	Predicted Mean	Actual Mean	Std Dev	N
Pregnant	25.7	25.0	3.5	110
Not pregnant	27.4	27.4	4.4	773

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Predicted values calculated from the regression equation and mean values shown in Table 4-12. See text for sample restrictions. One-way analysis of variances shows sample means significantly different, $p < 0.001$.

Most work on prenuptial pregnancy has focused on the women. Part of this is due to pure sexism which assigns all matters relating to fertility to women, but it is also the result of the impoverished data sources. While we know about women who had a child within marriage and those who gave birth without marrying, we only know about the men who married their pregnant brides and those rare few who acknowledged they had fathered on illegitimate child. Nonetheless, surely the man was just as important as the woman in deciding if a prenuptial conception would become a legitimate birth. The double standard would suggest that he played the most important part. Who, then, were these men? Shorter (1973), Smith and Hindus (1975) and Tilly, Scott and Cohen (1976) agree that bridal pregnancy in the late nineteenth century was an affair between friends. But the suburban Melbourne sample does not suggest that couples marrying after a prenuptial conception were of more similar ages or social backgrounds than other couples.

First, while men marrying pregnant women were younger than other grooms, they were not necessarily marrying women closer to their own age. The mean difference between the ages of first marrying grooms and their brides was 3.3 years. This varied

somewhat by occupation groups. Groups characterized by older grooms also had greater age differences between spouses. Looking within occupation groups, though, there was no pattern of those marriages which were to produce a child within eight months involving spouses closer in age. Grooms born overseas also tended to marry women more years their junior than colonial-born grooms (a mean of 4.0 years compared to 2.5 years). Yet there was also no consistent difference within nativity groups in the effects of a pregnancy on the age gap between spouses.

Brides' fathers' occupations influenced the probability of a prenuptial pregnancy in intriguingly different ways from grooms' occupations. Table 4-20 is based on marriages involving a first marrying groom and with evidence of a subsequent birth. One-quarter of the grooms who were labourers married a pregnant woman while only one-fifth of the brides from labouring families were pregnant. Bride's fathers who were white-collar workers seem to have kept a tighter control over their daughters than men who were in white-collar jobs kept over themselves. The reverse was the case for businessmen. Relatively few businessmen entered marriage with the liability of a pregnant bride.

Table 4-20: Percentage of couples having a child within eight completed months of marriage, by husband's and bride's father's occupation, selected Melbourne suburbs, 1866-1898.

	Grooms	Brides
Professional	5	8
Businessmen	7	14
White Collar	16	10
Skilled Manual	18	16
Semi-skilled	14	17
Labouring	26	19

Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.
Note: Only marriages with information on a subsequent birth and involving first marrying grooms under 40 years old.

Yet, despite the differing effects of social position on men and women, there was no pattern between prenuptial pregnancy and a greater or lesser social distance between husband and wife by pregnancy status at marriage. We have already seen that couples who married during the course of a pregnancy were different in other aspects. The brides

were more likely to have been working in the relatively free environment of a workshop or factory and the marriage itself was celebrated differently. However, there is no evidence in the Melbourne data that suggest that the couples themselves were any more or less companionate.

4.4 Conclusion

> Nothing is more certain than that, in countries where monogamy prevails, a comparatively small proportion of females - much smaller than is generally supposed - suffices to enable every man desirous of marrying to obtain a wife. ...there is no reason to suppose that, if the total number of females in the colony was equal to or even exceeded that of males, the marriages would be more numerous, or, if it was reduced by half, that the marriages would be fewer than they are now. ...it may be expected that, if the colony continues to enjoy a fair amount of prosperity, the marriages will increase in proportion to the available males (*Victorian Yearbook* 1881-2, pp. 167-8).

Many of the *Yearbook*'s readers would have remembered the time when there were few women in the colony. Family migration and, more importantly, the growing number of native-born people meant that the colony's population balanced itself quite quickly. In fact by the 1880s young Victorian women in their twenties faced a marriage squeeze because there were more of them then of older potential marriage partners. The Government Statist's comments quoted above were written in response to that situation. The passage, though, was more than a description of Victoria's sex ratios in the marriage ages and the relative responses of age-sex-specific marriage rates. Underneath the obvious sexism it articulated a view of the role of marriage in the lives of late nineteenth-century men and women. This chapter has eschewed aggregate level analysis of marriage markets and sex ratios, but it has reached a very similar conclusion about marriage for men and women with an individual level study of suburban brides and grooms. Men married when they were ready and the timing of marriage varied according to economic conditions and their own assessment of their personal situations. While women undoubtedly also married out of self-interest, the resulting behaviour was much more uniform. Women from a wide variety of social groups all faced very similar options. Not surprisingly, they made the same decisions as well.

Table 4-2 has already shown that the ages of brides were compressed within a smaller range than the ages of grooms. Separate calculations based only on first marrying brides under age 35 and first marrying grooms under age 40 give even greater differences. For the whole period the younger brides' ages had a standard deviation of 3.5 years compared with 4.4 years for the younger grooms. The spread of ages between the twentieth and eightieth percentile was 5.6 years for brides and 7.2 for grooms.

Most of the discussion in this chapter was based on two regression equations. These

were not intended to be a comprehensive model of the timing of marriage. Indeed the regressions were only used as a heuristic device to hold other independent variables constant while investigating particular factors. As predictive models they are clearly inadequate. Although the role of birthplace, social background, an impending child, occupational mobility and experience in the workforce should not be underestimated, the small proportion of explained variance (approximately 0.2 in both equations) suggests there was more determining the timing of first marriage than measured by these variables. Additionally, the only independent variables to have very strong effects were those measuring place of birth, and that relationship was due to the age composition of the respective populations and not differences in behaviour.

Of course the necessarily crude measure of men's and women's social and economic circumstances is partly responsible for the low explanatory power. But individual, essentially random, differences between people were the major source of error. That a person ready to marry could find an acceptable and willing spouse involves so many complex conditional probabilities that it is unlikely everyone in apparently the same circumstances would marry at the same age.

However, in the late nineteenth century marriage was not just a matter of individual whims and access to a marriage market. One's family of origin and the prospective family entailed substantial responsibilities, and before marriage one's responsibilities were to one's parents and siblings. Just as in the case with working youths, not all families needed to rely on their single young adult members. Still many must have been grateful that they could and many more were comforted by the fact that help was available if there was a need. This was not, though, a system which equally pleased all parties. T. K. Hareven's interviews with men and women who had lived in a North American factory town at the turn of the century uncovered considerable resentment (1982, 185-8; also see Modell, Furstenberg and Hershberg 1976, 26-31). She summarized that 'although the diversity in timing described as "flexible" may have been flexible regarding age norms, it occurred within a framework that imposed considerable rigidity on individual preferences' (p. 188).

It would therefore be reasonable to expect that since the working class was the most economically insecure it would therefore have had the highest age at marriage. But, in fact, unmarried offspring had their own desires and in many cases were free to marry early. As argued in Chapter 3, a working man, regardless of his skill level, was earning an adult wage by his early twenties. There was little economic reason for him to postpone marriage. Katz and colleagues (1982, 280) made the same observation for mid ninteenth-century Hamilton, Ontario:

> Though forced to accept the discipline of industrial work habits and public education workers nonetheless managed to evade some of the culture of capitalism. No amount of rhetoric could turn a job into a career or mask the fact that the man of 23 earned as much or more than a man two score his senior. If saving and postponing pleasure made sense to the clerk or the professional, it did not to the early industrial laborer. Each man responded appropriately and realistically to his place in a shifting social and economic order.

But the capitalist order which put his father out of a job because of a work injury and make his mother take in laundry *did* affect his marriage plans. The relatively young age at marriage of working-class men suggests that most felt free to marry early. The admittedly inconclusive evidence that migrants married earlier than the native born (except for those in unskilled jobs) may have been because most migrants did not have parents nearby to discourage them.

Yet despite Melbourne's prosperity during most of the period and the evidence that that economic security was translated into somewhat earlier marriages, the high variance around the predicted values of age reflects men's and women's unpredictable lives. Men faced unexpected set backs and disappointments of their own and had to help if their families experienced such difficulties. Women had fewer options and consequently had fewer setbacks. Marriage was more attractive than almost any other kind of work. Although a working daughter could help a very poor family her wages were invariably small. Help with household chores or nursing an invalid parent were probably more significant contributions. She could conceivably give that type of assistance after marriage. A married man, on the other hand, would not be in as strong a position to give his parents part of his wages. It is not surprising then that the variance in ages was smaller for brides. When men married was less tractable. A 'proper time to marry' seems a better description of women's marriage patterns than of the behaviour of most suburban men.

CHAPTER 5
FERTILITY

In the late nineteenth century married Australians began to control their fertility. Regardless of the measure used the general picture of when that change occurred is the same (Jones 1971; Forster 1974; Hicks 1975; Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977). All sources indicate a slight rise up to and sometimes during the 1870s, a slow decline in the 1880s and a steep fall in the 1890s. In the first decade of the twentieth century fertility stabilized before continuing to descend. The picture varies somewhat in individual colonies. In Western Australia where gold had recently been discovered the fall was slight. Queensland on the other hand saw little or no drop in fertility. Melbourne's decline, though, was relatively consistent with the overall Australian pattern.

When the decline began is crucial. When did significant numbers of Melburnians start to treat pregnancy and childbearing as a choice? Equally important, who were the pioneers and did they reflect society as a whole or merely subgroups? The relationship between the processes of growing up - schooling, work and marriage - and the fertility transition can only be explored after answering thos questions. In this chapter I muster all available data to describe fertility in the city during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Then I turn to matters which can not be answered by statistical analysis. While fertility control has profound effects for the entire society it is an intimate, personal act. Whether husbands and wives were equally motivated to control births or if one party was more likely to initiate it has a bearing on why prevention was widely adopted. Of course the desire to avoid births without the means counts for little. Therefore I discuss the available methods and access to information and paraphernalia. Finally the medical profession is used as an example of the contrary stances of late nineteenth-century respectable public opinion.

5.1 Fertility in the Wicked City and Wholesome Country

Studies originating out of Princeton's European Fertility Project consistently showed urban areas to have a unique demographic history. Before secular fertility decline cities have higher levels of marital fertility, their fertility rates started to fall at an earlier date, and in the first stages of the transition their decreases were greater (Sharlin,

forthcoming). While this did not always hold for some smaller urban areas which, depending on offical definitions, often had a rural character, it was always the case for large cities. Nineteenth-century Australian capital cities were, as they are today, primate cities serving the commercial and administrative needs of their rural hinterlands (McCarty 1970). As in Europe, their already lower fertility fell earlier and further.

Censuses and published vital statistics make it possible to compare Coale indices of marital fertility for census years from 1871 to 1921 for Australian cities with those of the rest of their respective colonies or states (Jones 1971, 310-12, 328-9).[1] These indices are invaluable tools for demographic historians because they can be used to distinguish between a fall in total fertility due to changes in proportions married and one due to a decline in marital fertility rates when there is very little information on births. Calculating them requires only the female population in five-year age groups and a total count of legitimate and illegitimate births in a period. In 1871, which was before any hypothesized date for the beginning of the Australian fertility transition, marital fertility measured by I_g was 13 per cent lower in Melbourne than in the whole of Victoria. From 1881 to 1891 the index for Melbourne fell 6 per cent compared to 4 per cent for the colony. During the key decade of the 1890s, the index for the metropolitan area fell 20 per cent while the rest of the colony fell by a similar but lower 18 per cent.

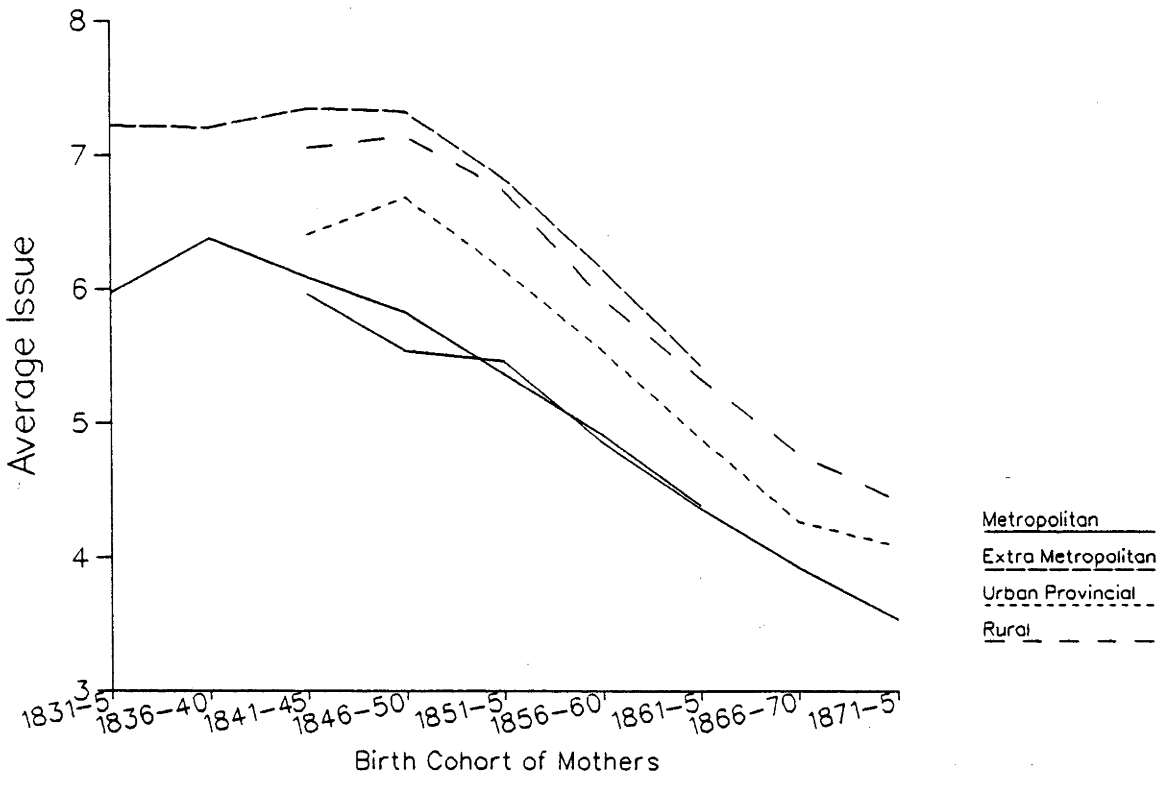
The 1911 and 1921 Australian censuses provide supporting evidence. They present tables on the number of children ever born in the current marriage to wives still living with their husband by the wife's age. These were given by state and within each state wives were divided into those living in and outside of the metropolitan area. Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977, 168-71) have demonstrated that the 1841-45 birth cohort of urban wives was the first to restrict its fertility. Outside the capital cities the pathfinders were in the succeeding five-year cohort. The distinction in Victoria was even more pronounced. Ten years separated the first cohort of family controllers in Melbourne from those in the rest of the colony (Figure 5-1). In both Australia and Victoria the differences between the average number of children of city wives and nonmetropolitan wives initially increased and then merged. Assuming that the first cohorts to have smaller family sizes waited until their thirties to limit births, the censuses point to the late 1870s as the start of the fertility decline in Melbourne and other capital cities and the late 1880s for the rest of the colony. Unfortunately, since women were assigned by residence at the time of the 1911

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[1]Coale indices are age standardized measures of aggregate fertility which decompose total fertility into proportions married, marital fertility and illegitimate fertility. The indices take the form of a ratio between, for example, actual number of legitimate births in a year, and the number that would be expected if the population had the same age-specific marital fertility rates as the very fertile Hutterite women of the 1920s. Jones (1971, 306-7) has a thorough explanation of how they are calculated.

census this could be a poor reflection of period fertility during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For example, there was massive migration of young married Victorians to Western Australia during the 1890s (McArthur 1967, 66). They might have had very different contraceptive practices from the people who remained behind.

Figure 5-1: Mean number of children for wives out of their childbearing years by their place of residence and birth cohort, Victoria.



Source: *Censuses of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1911 and 1921.
Note: Restricted to women currently living with their husband and to the children born in that marriage. Place of residence is at the time of the census. Average issue of birth cohorts 1831-5 to 1861-5 from the 1911 census. The 1921 census was used for birth cohorts 1841-5 to 1871-5.

Even though metropolitan centres were the leaders in the fertility transition, their role should not be exaggerated. Subsequent rural and urban fertility fell in tandem, as Figure 5-1 shows and as can be seen in other measures (Forster 1974, 111-16). The marital fertility of capital cities reflected that of their hinterland. Plotting the I_gs reported by Jones (1971, 328-9) for the metropolitan areas against those for the rest of the colony or state gives a linear pattern and an R^2 of .76.[2] No pair stood out as an exception to the rule that relatively high rural marital fertility was associated with relatively high urban marital fertility, and low urban fertility obtained in the context of

[2]The regression equation for the six time periods between 1871 and 1921 for four states is URBAN I_g = .02 + .84 RURAL I_g.

relatively low fertility in the surrounding region. In other words, Brisbane and Queensland, for example, each had higher fertility than Melbourne and Victoria. Sharlin (forthcoming) noted that this relationship between large cities and their hinterland existed within culturally distinct regions of Europe. He ascribed the regional homogeneity to cultural factors. White Australia, though, was almost entirely settled by British migrants. Any perceived cultural differences would have been slight compared to the diversity which existed on the European continent. Each colony did, however, represent a unified economic structure which was determined by the resources in the countryside and the capital available in the city (Serle 1971; Hirst 1973; McCarty 1978). These economic factors would be more relevant in an antipodean explanation of the homogeneity within colonies.

Of course not all of Victoria outside Melbourne was rural. There were large provincial towns, some thriving and others losing population. The countryside included relatively densely populated areas with fertile soil as well as sparsely settled regions where farmers scratched the dust. But, extending the argument of urban to rural diffusion of fertility control is problematic. The 1921 census tabulations on average issue distinguished between urban provincial and rural residents. Figure 5-1 shows that women in towns clearly had lower completed fertility than other nonmetropolitan residents. The differences are not great though and, unfortunately, the data do not reliably extend to the pre-transition era so we do not know the relative timing of the onset of the decline.

The only successful analysis of Australian spatial variation in marital fertility decline was done for South Australia (Stevenson 1982). In that state the total number of births and the marital status and age of women are available by counties. Stevenson showed that the proportion of the population living in urban areas was the strongest predictor of low I_g values and that agricultural areas, particularly frontier settlements, had high marital fertility (pp. 283-9). The decline which began in Adelaide trickled through the other regions in the same order.

The published birth statistics for Victoria are not given by county, but they are reported separately for the metropolitan area (from which Coale indices for Melbourne and even suburbs within Melbourne can be calculated), other 'cities, towns and boroughs' and the rest of the colony. This corresponds to the divisions used in the census throughout the period, so I could obtain the population of married women by age in those categories. However, when I calculated I_g indices for 1881, 1891 and 1901 there was the anomalous result that the levels of marital fertility in shires (the designation for rural districts) was lower than in towns outside of Melbourne. This is in glaring contradiction to the 1921 census findings on average issue. Although such a difference could be rationalized on the basis of frequent separations of husband and wife, intuitively that

seems unlikely to have had such a large effect. Two factors probably combined to produce this peculiar result. First, married women in the country were older on average than city and town wives in 1891 and 1901. Secondly, many country births were undoubtedly registered in country towns and assigned to the urban provincial category.

Hicks (1975, 576-8) took a different approach and calculated ratios of children aged under five years to married women aged 20 to 44 for five categories of counties of varying population densities. He found that the size of the percentage decline from 1891 to 1901 in Victoria was positively related to density. Bourke County's children-married women ratios fell 34 per cent while counties with less than two persons per square mile had a 14 per cent decrease. However, differences in the age structure of married women can play havoc with ratios. I made the same series of calculations for 1881 to 1891. They gave nonsensical percentage declines of 10 per cent in the least densely settled regions and 15 and 6 per cent increases for Bourke and counties with large towns respectively. Of course this was due to the higher fertility of the first large cohort of colonial-born persons who were in their twenties at this time, and to their greater tendency to live in the city and towns. Without standardizing for differences in age structure even the theoretically appealing pattern of change reported by Hicks for the last decade of the century is of dubious value.

At this stage I can offer only tentative conclusions about the urban and rural paths through the fertility transition. While the Australian fertility decline clearly started in the cities, the spread through the countryside was so rapid that it is hard to claim that people in urban areas were unique. But summary measures of marital fertility do not tell the whole story. It is necessary to do much more intensive work to learn how fertility varied by age, class and other dimensions. The next section presents that work for Melbourne, but it was not possible to do the same study for a rural area as a comparison. This section will have to serve as a reminder that no matter how quintessentially urban Melburnians' behaviour appears to have been, those in the country may have been acting in much the same way.

5.2 Melbourne's Fertility Levels and Decline

The fertility measures I have used and referred to so far are imprecise. They are potentially influenced by shifting or unusual age distributions and they do not allow a close examination of changes in the likelihood of having a child. Nonetheless when the only available information is from published volumes of governmental statistical offices, more subtle analysis is impossible. When, on the hand, researchers have access to official birth certificates much more revealing work can be done. English birth certificates did not record the mother's age, the parity of the birth or the marriage date of the parents,

all of which are crucial for a thorough fertility analysis. Any study using their registers must either be restricted to total counts or involve time consuming, though very informative, family reconstitutions. Nineteenth-century Tasmania and South Australia followed the Home example and asked for little information on their birth certificates, but when the other colonies established their registration systems they broke with tradition. They provided space on the form for the demographically necessary facts and, in addition, the name and age in years (or the notation 'deceased') of all of the father's previous legitimate offspring. Each child was identified as belonging to the father's current or earlier marriage. Therefore, from a single certificate one knows the parity of the child and has some idea of the length of previous birth intervals. The forms also contained the father's age and occupation, and the birthplaces of both parents. This incredibly rich data source can be best exploited in Victoria. From the 1850s local registrars in that colony conscientiously completed every item on the form. In other colonies officials were much more erratic.

Reluctant state authorites have allowed historians access to vital registration records only during the last five to ten years. All of the studies done in the first bursts of enthusiasm have been based on reconstituted families. Quite apart from the fact that this strategy requires that researchers be satisfied with very small numbers of cases, the works have been of limited use in describing and understanding the Australian fertility transition. These studies have been frustrated by the choice of a period prior to the onset of marital fertility decline (Grellier [Anderson] 1981; Anderson 1985) or an area which was too ethnically or economically unusual (Neale *et al* 1981; Cole 1985). In another case the region underwent considerable outmigration during the period (Grimshaw and Fahey 1982).[3] The best analysis to date of the fertility transition is a study of a Victorian farming community (Grimshaw, Fahey, Janson and Griffiths, 1985). Unfortunately, since the authors could not search the twentieth century certificates, the completed fertility of mothers from the last birth cohort is artificially low. T. A. Coghlan, Government Statist to New South Wales from 1885 to 1904 is the only researcher to have used the birth certificates to describe period marital fertility.[4] His age-specific marital fertility rates for New South Wales from 1871 to 1901 are the only ones for that critical juncture in the history of the Australian family.

To redress this imbalance of research effort I took a sample of all births registered

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[3]This was a self-imposed limitation as the birth indexes are organized alphabetically for the entire colony and not by sub-region.

[4]These were presented to the 1904 *New South Wales Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birthrate and on the Mortality of Infants* vol. 1, p. 7. They are reprinted in Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977, 95).

in Melbourne in 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1900.[5] One out of every ten births was selected for the first two years and one out of 15 for the last two years. The total sample had 3,592 cases. The definition of the region encompassed by Melbourne expanded during the period to reflect the city's growth. Appendix D lists the registration districts used in each year.

5.2.1 Age patterns of fertility

Age-specific fertility rates derived from the sample of births are given in Table 5-1.[6] They indicate a fall in fertility from 1871 to 1881, followed by decline of a similar magnitude the following decade and a very large decrease from 1891 to 1901. The 1870s

Table 5-1: Estimated age-specific fertility rates, Melbourne, 1871-1900/01.

Age of mother	1871	1881	1891	1900/01
15-19	.0265	.0348	.0234	.0264
20-24	.1604	.1268	.1527	.1116
25-29	.2402	.2181	.2016	.1336
30-34	.2361	.2117	.2075	.1216
35-39	.1702	.1521	.1393	.1084
40-44	.0721	.0661	.0502	.0316
45-49	.0082	.0047	.0067	.0030
TFR	4.57	4.07	3.91	2.68

Sources: Melbourne Births Sample and *Censuses of Victoria*, 1871-1901.

decline is the most surprising finding as it contradicts most other evidence for Victoria except the census tabulations on average issue. But as Table 5-2 shows, this decline was due to lower proportions married. Married women changed their fertility very slightly, if at all, from 1871 to 1881. While most age groups registered some decline, only changes in

[5]The Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages only allowed access to certificates up to the year 1900 when I collected the sample.

[6]These were calculated by applying the proportion of all births in the sample in each five year age group category of mother to the total number of births in Melbourne in that year and dividing by the number of women in the age groups enumerated in the census. For the last year the proportions were applied to the Melbourne births of 1901.

the youngest age groups were significant.[7] The rates for 15-19 year old married women actually increased. Like other measures for Melbourne, the marital fertility rates point to the 1880s as the decade when a significant proportion of the city's married couples began to restrict their fertility. The last decennial change was even larger for wives in their thirties, but insignificant or even increasing in other age groups. Overall, though, the declines were significant and of considerable magnitude for married women in their mid-twenties and older.

Table 5-2: Estimated age-specific marital fertility rates, Melbourne, 1871-1900/1.

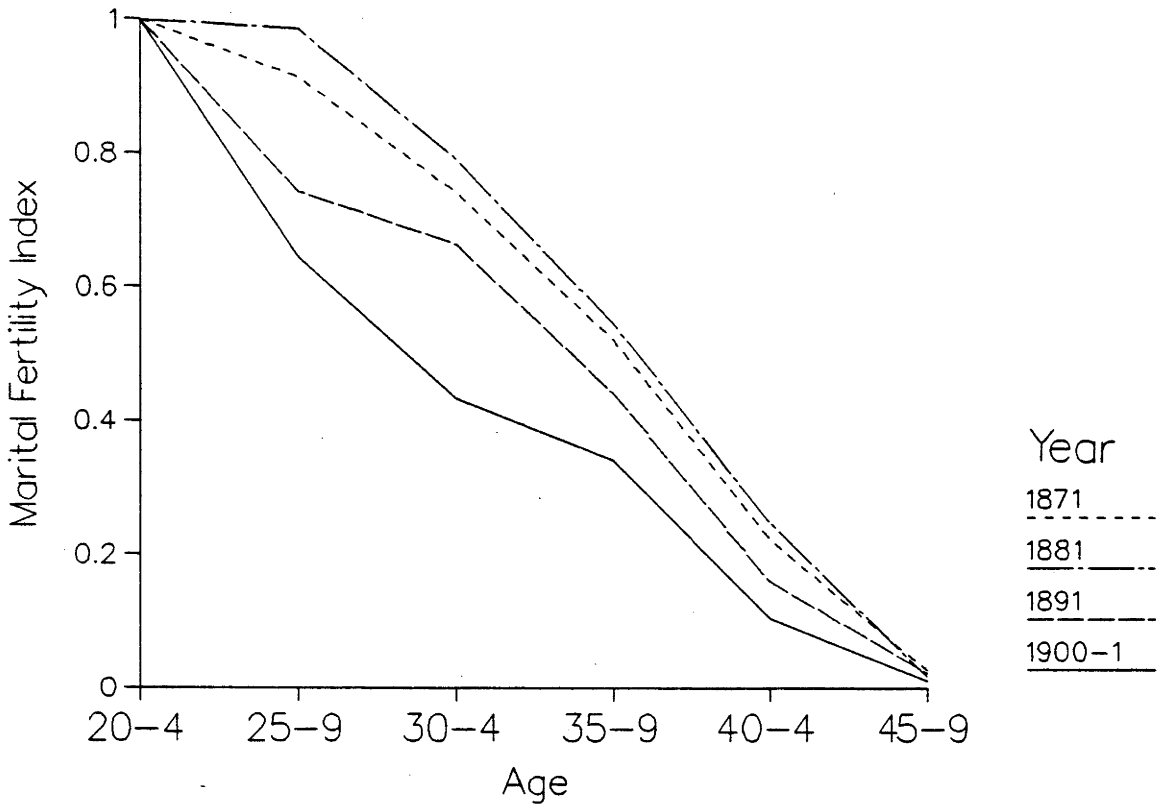
					Differences			
Age of mother	1871	1881	1891	1900/01	1871-1881	1881-1891	1891-1901	1871-1901
15-19	.3850	.6196	.4109	.5483	+.235*	-.209*	+.164*	+.163*
20-24	.4019	.3625	.4247	.4295	-.039*	+.062*	+.032*	+.028
25-29	.3672	.3575	.3154	.2768	-.010	-.042*	-.019	-.090*
30-34	.2981	.2869	.2820	.1862	-.011	-.005	-.078*	-.112*
35-39	.2096	.1976	.1872	.1464	-.012	-.010	-.029*	-.063*
40-44	.0894	.0899	.0679	.0449	+.001	-.022*	-.019*	-.045*
45-49	.0108	.0065	.0095	.0045	-.004	+.003	-.005	-.006*

Sources: Melbourne Births Sample and *Censuses of Victoria*, 1871, 1881,1891 and 1901.
Note: Percentages significantly different at the 0.05 level for a two-tailed t-test noted with '*'. See footnote to text for the method of estimating the standard error of the difference of two rates.

Any set of fertility rates which do not conform to the expected pattern requires particular scrutiny, and the rates given in Table 5-2 and expressed as index values in Figure 5-2 are unusual. When a significant proportion of a population's married couples first begin to control their fertility, they normally practise family limitation. That is, couples act to prevent births when they have the number of children which seems best for

[7]Since the numerator of the rates is derived from a sample and the denominator comes from a population count, there are no straightforward methods for designing a test statistic of the difference in rates. The standard error of the difference in rates between *a* and *b* was estimated as $SE(p_a\text{-}p_b) = \sqrt{p(1\text{-}p)(1/n_a+1/n_b)}$, where p is the total number of estimated births in both *a* and *b* divided by the total number of married women in the age group in both *a* and *b*. The later is deflated by the sampling ratio used for the births. n_a and n_b are the sampled number of births in *a* and *b*. The test statistic, then, is $|p_a\text{-}p_b| \div SE(p_a\text{-}p_b)$.

Figure 5-2: Index values of marital fertility, Melbourne, 1871 - 1900/01.



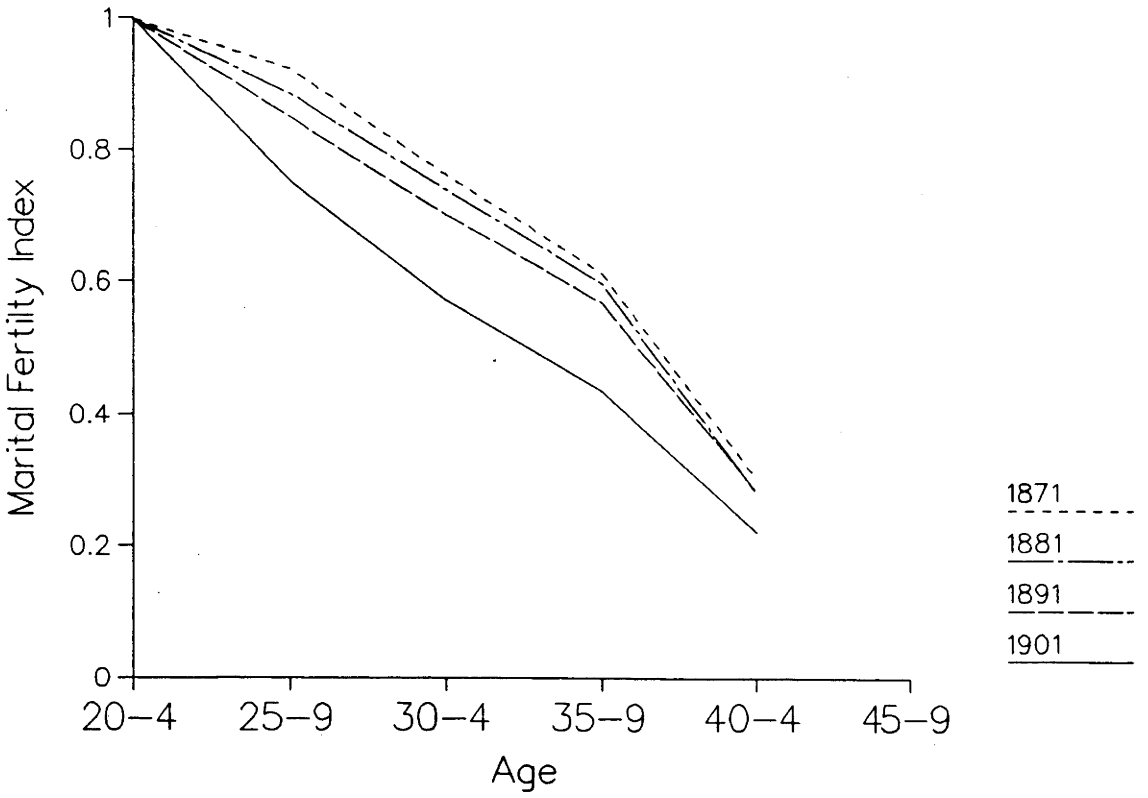
sources: Melbourne Births Sample, *Censuses of Victoria, 1871-1901* and *Statistics of Victoria*, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901.
Note: The age-specific marital fertility rate for 20-24 is set equal to one. Other studies using European historical populations, even under natural fertility, have also found marital fertility rates for 15-19 year olds highly variable. The rates are always based on small numbers and subjected to flutucations in small numbers of marriages and the proportions pregnant before marriage (Henry 1961).

them. While they may have a subsequent birth it will be because of some failure in their contraceptive efforts, not because they actually wanted the child. Demographers call this parity-specific control. Since parity-specific fertility rates are rare, they are usually inferred from age-specific marital fertility rates. Across time older women are expected to experience greater reductions in their fertility. They are the most likely to have reached their desired family size and therefore are more likely to be avoiding more births. Evidence on the age pattern of fertility in nineteenth-century European and contemporary Third World populations that have gone through the transition demonstrate that rates for older wives were the first to fall (Knodel 1977; van de Walle and Knodel 1980).

During the decline from 1881 to 1900/01 the index values of Melbourne's marital fertility rates in Figure 5-2 shifted from a relatively convex to a concave shape. But this was due to the substantial fertility declines of married women under age 35. This process

was already in force in 1891 for women aged 25-29. Index values for New South Wales are given in the next figure. Although the most substantial falls in fertility involved younger

Figure 5-3: Index values of marital fertility, New South Wales, 1871-1901.



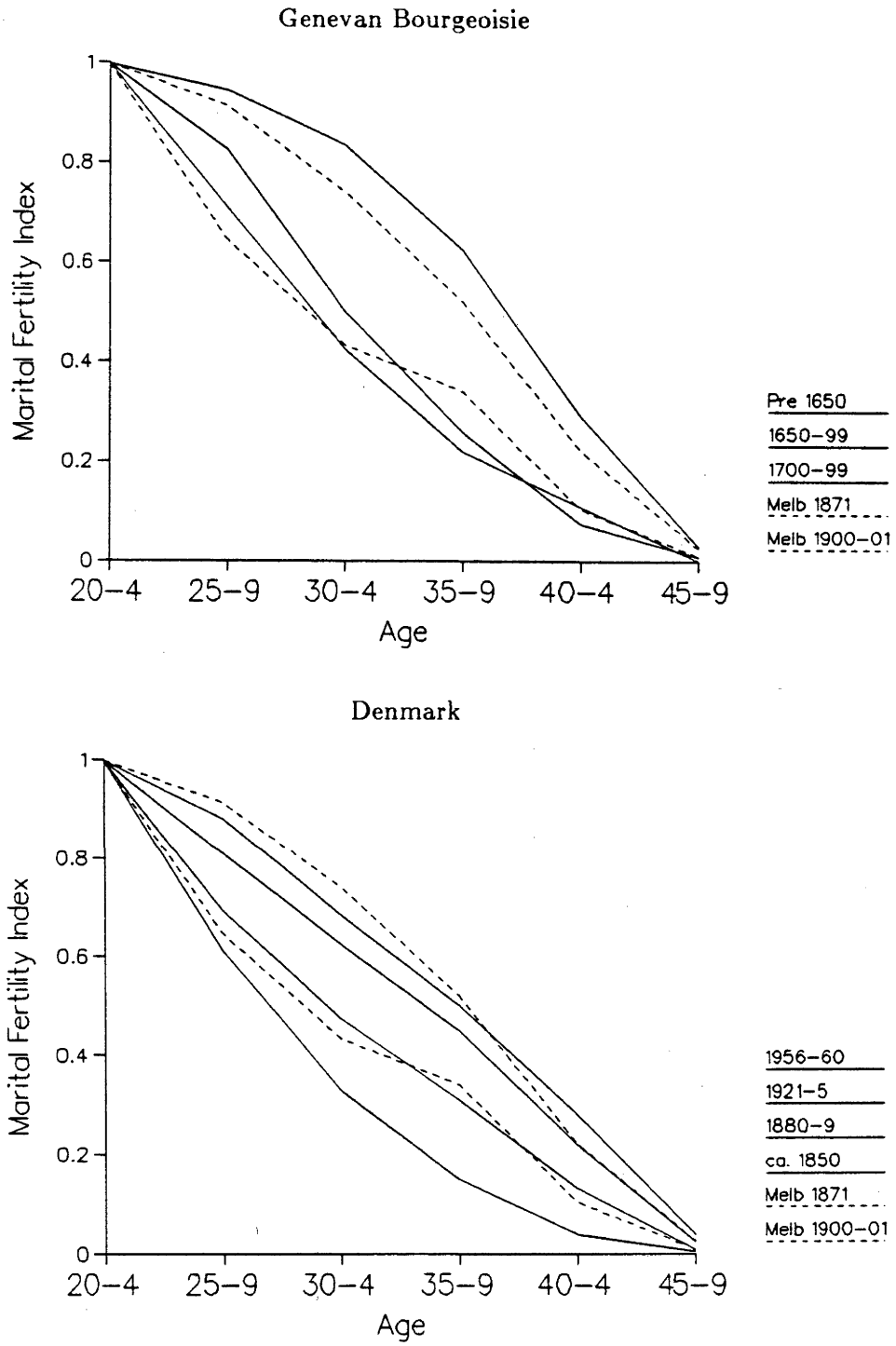
Source: *Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birthrate* 1904, vol. 1, p. 7.
Note: See notes to Figure 5-2.

wives in that colony as well, it was not as pronounced as in Melbourne. The measure m detects the amount of parity-specific fertility control from the age-pattern of fertility rates. Coale and Trussell (1978) suggest that any amount over 0.2 indicates some conscious control. The New South Wales and Melbourne series give increasing m values over time. From 1871 to 1901 for New South Wales they were .134, .171, .166 and .342. The rise was more spectacular in Melbourne: .352, .302, .503, .786. However, for the final year the mean squared error of the regression which estimated m was 0.0102. Coale and Trussell state that such a magnitude indicates a terrible fit which suggests that Melbourne's fertility decline did not follow the typical pattern of family limitation.

To put the age pattern of the city's fertility transition into perspective, its index values are superimposed in Figure 5-4 on the series of two European populations. Melbourne's distinctive pattern of low fertility in the younger ages means the overall shape of the index values at the turn of the century was akin to patterns from very low fertility populations.

The unusual age pattern might have been due to poor quality age reporting. While

Figure 5-4: Comparison of the age pattern of fertility decline in Melbourne with two historical European populations.



Sources: Knodel (1977, 231) and Table 5-2.

certain ages for mothers do appear more frequently than others, digit preference became rarer during the period. In 1871 there were moderate amounts of heaping around ages 20, 25, 30 and 40. By 1901 there was only evidence of heaping on ages 30 and 35. For each year I smoothed the number of births to women in single years of age centring on the

preferred age with a simple linear interpolation. The resulting 'corrected' age specific marital fertility rates showed the same pattern by age over time.

Another reason why Melbourne's marital fertility could only appear to be most conspicuous among young and middle-aged wives is that there may have been many married women living in the city without their husbands. This could have been due to husbands going 'up-country' for work, or to deserted wives and women (single mothers, perhaps) reporting themselves as married congregating in Melbourne. The census does not allow direct measurement of this, but it can be approximated by comparing the ratio of married men to married women in different regions of Melbourne. While this gives some sense of the net proportion of wives living apart from their husbands, it cannot capture circumstances when the husband or wife left the family home and established residence in the same or a nearby suburb.[8] Nevertheless, censuses gave sex ratios of married persons in the metropolitan area from 1871 to 1891 which only varied between .940 and .945. In 1901 the wounds of the depression still showed and the sex ratio had declined to .924. The pattern varied over the city. The new working-class suburbs in the northern and western parts of the city and, remarkably, the city of Melbourne had relatively high marital sex ratios. The inner suburbs, particularly Collingwood, as well as the middle-class suburbs to the south and east of the city, had relatively low sex ratios. One would suspect, but cannot prove from the census, that the apparently similar levels of husband and wife separation were from different causes in the inner suburbs and in the more salubrious sections of town. If the inner suburbs are the only parts of Melbourne to show lower fertility amongst younger wives, marital separation and desertion would be a plausible cause.

In fact, though, a comparison of the marital fertility rates disproves that hypothesis but reveals much more about the key participants in Melbourne's fertility decline. Infuriatingly, the 1901 census does not give the marital status of the population by age, sex and suburb, so the analysis of sectorial fertility in the city must be restricted to 1881 and 1891. Table 5-3 gives the age-specific marital fertility rates for each section, and they are plotted in Figures 5-5 and 5-6. Rates rather than index values are used because the estimates for births to 20-24 year olds are unstable. When that age group is used as the base for the indices a very distorted picture emerges. The northern and western suburbs had the highest fertility. A preponderance of young families moved into this area as it was developed in the 1880s and there is no suggestion that they controlled their fertility.

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[8]Judging by the procedings of the Richmond Police Court reported in the *Australian* this was a fairly common method of coping with irreconcilable marital disputes. Magistrates always required separate residence before they would order a husband to pay his wife maintenance.

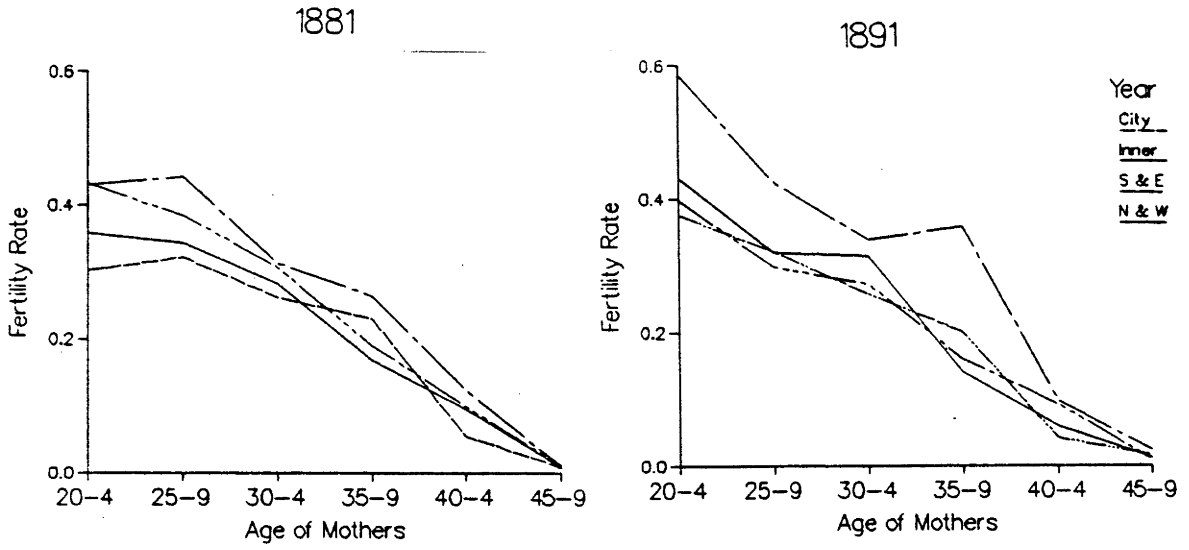
Table 5-3: Age-specific marital fertility rates of areas in Melbourne, 1881-1891.

	City of Melbourne	Inner Suburbs	Southern & Eastern Suburbs	Northern & Western Suburbs
1881				
15-19	.466	.734	.161	1.03
20-24	.302	.359	.432	.430
25-29	.322	.344	.386	.443
30-34	.262	.283	.307	.313
35-39	.231	.168	.190	.265
40-44	.055	.094	.099	.124
45-49	.009	.009	.011	.011
TFR	3.76	4.31	3.32	5.62
N	211	408	154	112
1891				
15-19	.248	.291	.670	.912
20-24	.376	.431	.399	.588
25-29	.321	.320	.298	.425
30-34	.258	.314	.272	.338
35-39	.201	.140	.160	.359
40-44	.041	.060	.092	.097
45-49	.016	.012	.009	.023
TFR	3.49	4.18	3.10	6.54
N	164	455	248	283

Sources: Melbourne Births Sample, *Statistical Register*, 1881, 1891 and *Censuses of Victoria*, 1881-1891.
Note: 'N' refers to the number of births sampled.

Their lives were perhaps the best embodiment of the 'Marvellous Melbourne' era and it is a great pity we do not know how they adjusted their fertility in response to the depression. The remaining three regions cluster together in 1881 and 1891, but in the latter year the shapes of the curves are less convex. Comparisons between the two years for each region must be done cautiously because of the smaller numbers of births sampled. However, early marital fertility decline appears to have been concentrated among older wives in the City of Melbourne and the inner suburbs. In the leafy southern and eastern parts of the city it was the younger women who led the decline. The overall pattern observed for Melbourne can be attributed to these wives.

Figure 5-5: Estimated age-specific marital fertility rates for areas within Melbourne, 1881 and 1891.



Sources: Melbourne Births Sample, *Censuses of Victoria*, 1881 and 1891, and *Statistical Register* 1881, 1891.

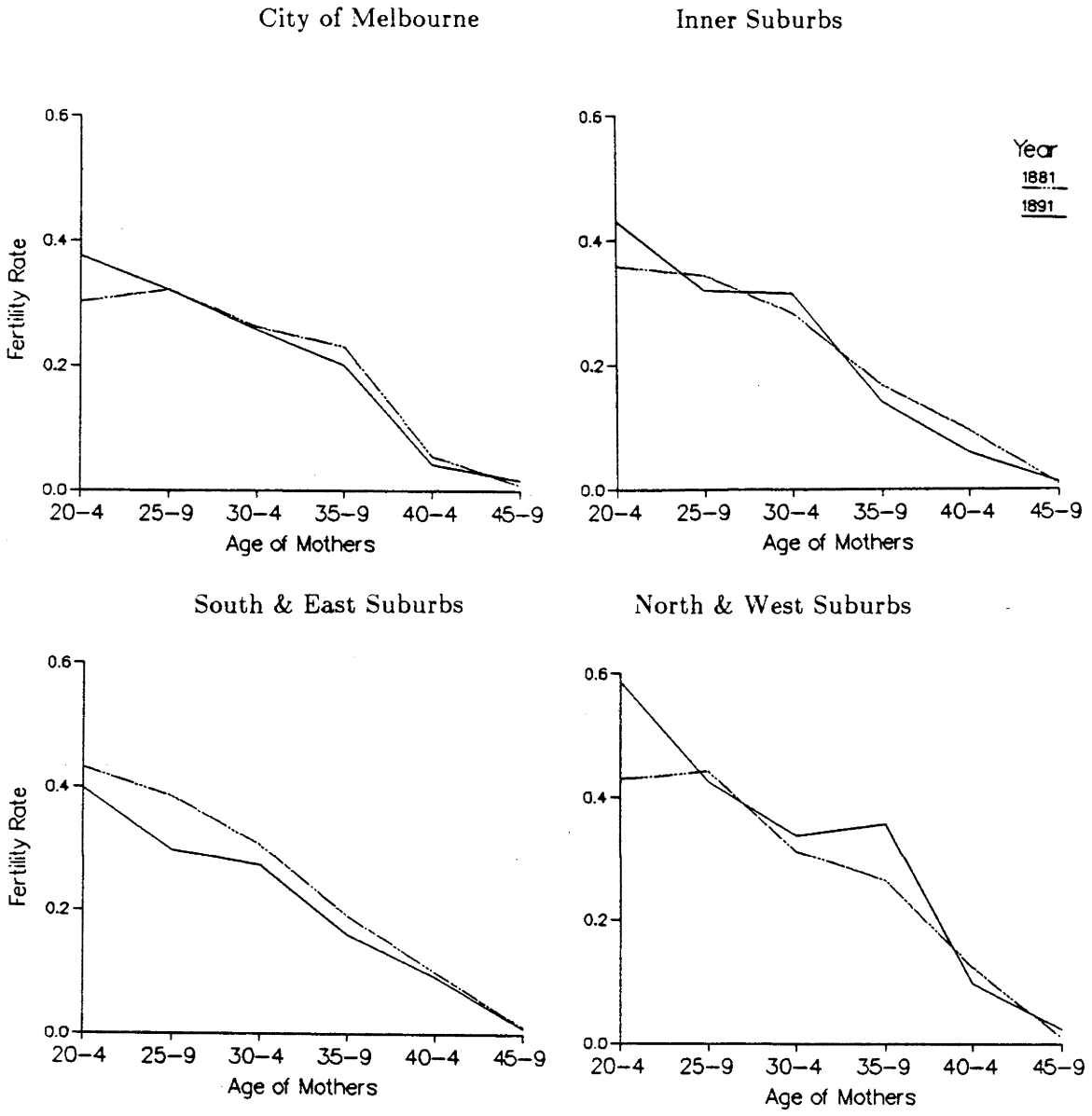
Beyond the aggregate level the sample of Melbourne births is not definitive. Couples who have children are not those one would choose to study during a period of increasing restriction of fertility. The estimated age-specific marital fertility rates are the only way women who gave birth can be set against all those at risk of doing so. Victoria's censuses did not subdivide marital status by characteristics of husband or wife other than age and place of residence, and the distribution of married women by age and parity was not given until 1921.

5.2.2 Evidence for spacing

Were the low levels of fertility among younger Melbourne wives in the first twenty years of the fertility transition caused by couples ceasing childbearing at quite young ages or were they consciously acting to delay the next birth? The spacing versus stopping controversy has been one between unequals. Contestants from the stopping team have been able to marshall overwhelming evidence for parity-specific fertility control in Third World countries experiencing fertility declines under the close scrutiny of international survey teams. Only in developed countries have increases in the length of birth intervals been detected (e.g. Ruzicka 1976). Such circumstances are thought to be impossible unless couples enter marriage already skilled in effective contraception, temporarily childless marriages are not scorned and the question of when to have a child is as important as whether to have a child.

The very existence of spacing behaviour in transitional European populations is

Figure 5-6: Estimated age-specific marital fertility rates for 1881 and 1891 in areas of Melbourne.



Sources: Melbourne Births Sample, *Censuses of Victoria*, 1881 and 1891, and *Statistical Register* 1881, 1891.

disputed. Knodel and Wilson (1981) found that birth intervals *decreased* during the transition in German villages. Only the highest parity birth intervals increased, which he interpreted as failed efforts to curtail childbearing. Tolnay and Guest (1984) convinced themselves, but nobody else, that there was no conscious spacing behaviour among a sample of young white wives with the 1900 United States census. Anderton and Bean (1985) contradict this finding from a set of birth histories of Mormon settlers in Utah. The mean length of birth intervals at each parity increased by as much as ten months from the 1845-9 birth cohort to 1890-4 cohort. They found that spacing went hand-in-hand with family limitation. The small proportion of women who had only four children

in the first cohort had the same long parity-specific intervals as the greater number of women from the last cohort who had only four children.

By definition the Melbourne sample of births is biased towards the most fertile people in the city. They are less likely to be subfecund and less likely to be controlling their fertility for whatever purpose. The sample is also incapable of adequately disentangling the effects of parity and birth intervals. It cannot tell us, for example, if the proportion of couples with three children going on to a fourth birth changed during the period. The average length of a particular birth interval cannot be measured accurately because our sample is biased towards those with short intervals. Yet despite the fact that the sample systematically distorts in the direction of seemingly less fertility control, the sample does reveal substantial evidence for spacing.

Family limitation means more couples will have small families and Figure 5-7 clearly illustrates that more Victorians had fewer children at the end of the century. A woman who married in her early twenties could have easily had two, three or even four births and vowed to have no more -- all before she was in her thirties. Smaller family sizes alone would produce lower fertility rates for young wives.

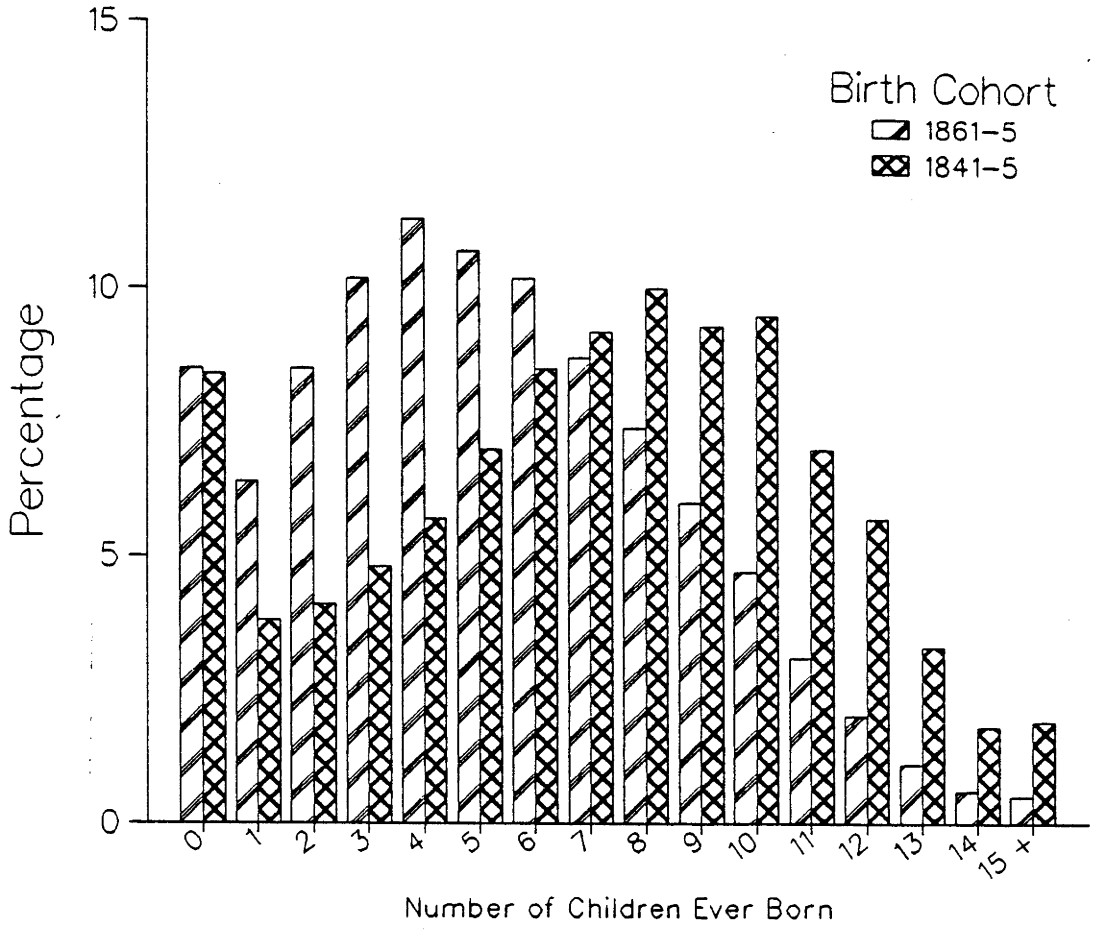
Table 5-4 confirms that the births sampled were more likely to be lower parity births in 1900 and even in 1891 relative to 1871 and 1881 when the mother's marital duration is controlled.[9] Women who had been married a long time and were still having children did not have small families, but even among them women bearing children at the end of the century had a smaller total number of children than women giving birth in 1871. Compared to women giving birth 10, 20 or 30 years earlier, women married 15-19 years and giving birth in 1900 were less likely to be having a sixth or higher parity birth. For those married 10-14 years before, differences over time emerge at the fourth parity. In 1900/01 a small proportion of women who had been married 5-9 years were giving birth to their first child, but it was a larger percentage than before. These distributions imply that at least some women were taking longer to have the same number of children at the end of the century than was the practice in earlier decades.

Unfortunately, the interval data are too crude to be very useful since previous children's ages were given in years. However, it is possible to measure the length of the childbearing span up to the birth in the sample. This should also be taken as an approximation since in most cases only the year of marriage was given and the wedding was assumed to have occurred at the end of June. Despite these failings Figure 5-8 is still

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[9]Since the birth registers give information on father's offspring rather than mother's, the fertility of twice married mothers only refers to the current marriage. Hence, marital duration rather than mother's age is controlled.

Figure 5-7: Comparison of the number of children ever born to wives before and during the fertility transition, Victoria.



Source: *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1911.
Note: Based only on women living with their husband and on the children from that marriage.

able to show that from the third to the eighth birth, children born in 1900 came on average 10 months later in marriage.

Much more rigorous evidence of spacing comes from the sample of suburban marriages collected in the previous chapter. There I used information on the first child born after the marriage to discuss the effects of prenuptial pregnancy. Here the data can show the length of the first birth interval for those who were not pregnant at marriage. Among couples married in 1866 and who had their first child at least nine months after marriage, the mean first birth interval was about 14 months. Marriages between 1871 and 1891 had mean lengths clustering around 16 and 17 months. Only the 1896 marriages took longer to produce a first birth. Their mean first birth interval was 20 months. Figure 5-9 shows that this was primarily due to a greater proportion of couples with three or more childless years.

Earlier I suggested that the more prosperous Melburnians were the first to control their fertility and that among them it was the relatively young wives who were at the

Table 5-4: Birth order of births by mother's marital duration, Melbourne, 1871-1900/01.

Women married 3-4 years					Women married 5-9 years				
Birth order	1871	1881	1891	1900/1	Birth order	1871	1881	1891	1900/1
1	100	100	100	100	1	100	100	100	100
2	88	89	87	88	2	98	97	98	93
3	22	32	23	28	3	89	88	85	79
4	1	1	2	4	4	58	56	50	42
					5	26	25	17	17
N	95	107	185	112	6	7	7	2	2
					7	2	2	0	1
					8	0	0	0	1
					N	205	233	324	165

Women married 10-14 years					Women married 15-19 years				
Birth order	1871	1881	1891	1900/1	Birth order	1871	1881	1891	1900/1
1	100	100	100	100	1	100	100	100	100
2	99	100	99	99	2	100	100	100	99
3	99	98	97	96	3	100	100	100	99
4	96	94	92	85	4	98	100	100	97
5	85	80	77	68	5	97	99	94	92
6	63	61	50	39	6	92	89	88	81
7	31	30	24	13	7	77	80	72	64
8	13	13	9	4	8	56	59	56	36
9	6	4	3	0	9	31	36	38	21
10	1	0	2	0	10	6	20	23	13
11	1	0	0	0	11	2	5	6	5
					12	0	3	3	4
N	126	142	158	132	13	0	0	1	1
					N	92	75	69	75

Source: Melbourne Births Sample.

forefront. This conclusion was based on the admittedly weak evidence of marital fertility rates in different sections of the city. What is really required is evidence on the class or, failing that, male occupational differentials in fertility. Attempts to study this for late nineteenth-century Australia have uncovered little. Hicks (1975, 578-80) compared the occupations of South Australian fathers from birth certificates with those of householders listed in the *South Australian Directory*. After examining the distributions for 1891,

Figure 5-8: Length of the childbearing span for mothers giving birth in selected years, Melbourne, 1871-1900.

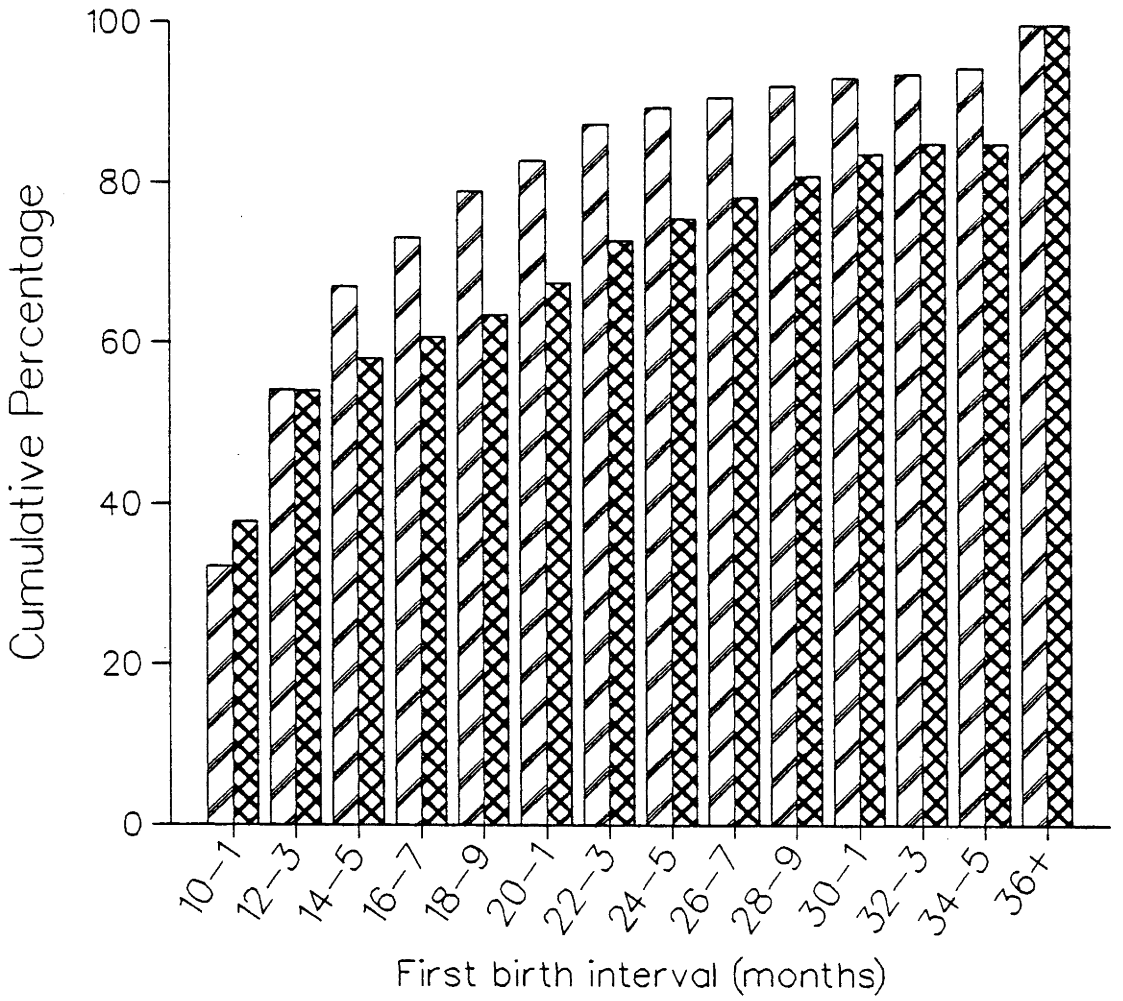


Source: Melbourne Births Sample.

1901 and 1911 he had to conclude that the fertility of men in white-collar occupations remained stable while that of artisans increased and semi-skilled workers and labourers declined. This was so completely unexpected that he turned to Adelaide suburban rate books for confirmation. However, correlations between the occupational structure and the child-married women ratios did not reveal any systematic relationship. Other researchers have used a more conventional approach and confined themselves to the 1911 census returns of husbands' average issue by occupation and age. Unfortunately only the completed fertility of men over 65 years old uncontrolled for marital duration can be examined and, of course, the occupational categories are broad and based on industry rather than status. The results present no surprises. Professional, domestic and commercial workers had the lowest average family size and primary producers had the highest. Transport, communication and industrial workers formed an intermediate group (Jones 1971,315-6). Using the same data Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977, 146) came to identical conclusions but warned

> there seems no strong indication that any of the occupational groups or sub-categories were aiming deliberately at achieving smaller family size; the

Figure 5-9: Cumulative percentage of the length of the first closed birth interval for two marriage cohorts, Melbourne, 1866-91 and 1896.



Source: North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew Marriage and Birth Registration Sample.

variations could be attributed without an extreme stretch of the argument to the likely differences in age at marriage between the occupations.

So far there is not enough conclusive evidence to accept or reject the argument that all classes participated equally in the Australian fertility decline. Hicks's method left too much uncertainty. Even the detailed occupational tables for Melbourne in the 1901 census had such a peculiar classification scheme that I was unwilling to use it to estimate occupational fertility rates. My 1896 suburban marriage sample was too small for classifying first birth intervals by husband's occupation.

Nevertheless, potential occupational differences are too important to ignore. While I cannot study completed family size, Table 5-5 presents evidence of birth spacing in various occupation groups. Now, keeping in mind the fact that the births sample is systematically biased towards short intervals and that all of the intervals are closed, notice the clear incresae in the time between births. The table gives the percentage of all second, third and fourth order births whose youngest sibling is three or more years old.

Table 5-5: Percentage of births succeeding the previous birth by three or more years, by father's occupation, Melbourne, 1871-1900.

Father's Occupation		1871	1881	1891	1900
Businessmen	*	7	21	24	47
		(14)	(24)	(37)	(19)
Commercial	*	25	14	23	49
		(36)	(28)	(44)	(35)
White Collar		14	10	25	32
		(22)	(21)	(44)	(34)
Skilled Manual	*	9	17	26	34
		(93)	(132)	(197)	(99)
Semi-skilled		34	13	27	29
		(35)	(55)	(55)	(44)
Labourer		28	30	14	25
		(18)	(23)	(49)	(28)
Total	*	17	17	25	35
		(218)	(284)	(432)	(261)

Sources: Melbourne Births Sample.
Notes: Restricted to second, third and fourth births of mothers under 40. '*' indicates the percentages over time within occupation groups are significantly different from each other, chi-squared probability $\leq .05$. Number of births indicated in parenthesis.

Children whose last born sibling was dead are excluded as are those with mothers in their forties. The same patterns are found if the percentage is calculated for births succeeding the last child by four or more years. Professionals, businessmen and skilled workers became increasingly more likely to space their births. The same was true for white-collar workers though the differences from year to year are not as great. Semi-skilled workers and labourers had a more erratic pattern and there is not a strong indication that their birth intervals increased from 1871 and 1881 to 1900.

Unfortunately, Table 5-5 cannot be taken as definitive. Complete fertility histories based on family reconstitutions would be the only way to isolate each occupation group's role in the first stages of the fertility transition. However, Table 5-5 combined with Figure 5-6 strongly suggest that the middle class and the skilled working class were the

leaders of fertility control in the 1880s and in the spacing of births during the 1880s and 1890s.

5.3 Voluntary Childlessness

Research is beginning to reveal that voluntary childlessness within marriage was a small but ubiquitious component of early fertility decline in Western populations. As long as the fertility levels of the population from which the data are drawn are high there has been a tendency to dismiss the possibility that any childlessness was by choice. Tolnay and Guest (1982, 202) found that the childlessness studies they reviewed characterized all pre twentieth-century childlessness as caused by sterility. Pittenger (1973) compared measures of proportions infertile by age at marriage from several sterility 'models' and from nineteenth-century census data for a wide range of populations. He did not find close agreement and concluded that the discrepancies were due to an 'absence of really hard data'. While some of the variation could have been caused by fluffy evidence, many of his estimates were from populations already in the initial stages of a transition to lower fertility levels. Failure to consider that some couples may have wanted no children is a prejudice held by demographers akin to their dismissal of spacing behaviour. It has been ignored as much because it does not fit the model of family limitation as because of strong evidence disproving it.

Tolnay and Guest (1982, 204-7) demonstrated clear gradations, after controlling for age at marriage, between series of proportions childless depending on the amount of fertility control practised by the population. While the largest difference was, of course, between populations with no control and those with a high degree of control, the most interesting were the relatively higher childlessness ratios of the populations with only a little fertility control: populations such as the 1861-70 marriage cohort of England and Wales, rural Quebec married women over age 45 years in 1961 and the rural Irish in 1900.[10]

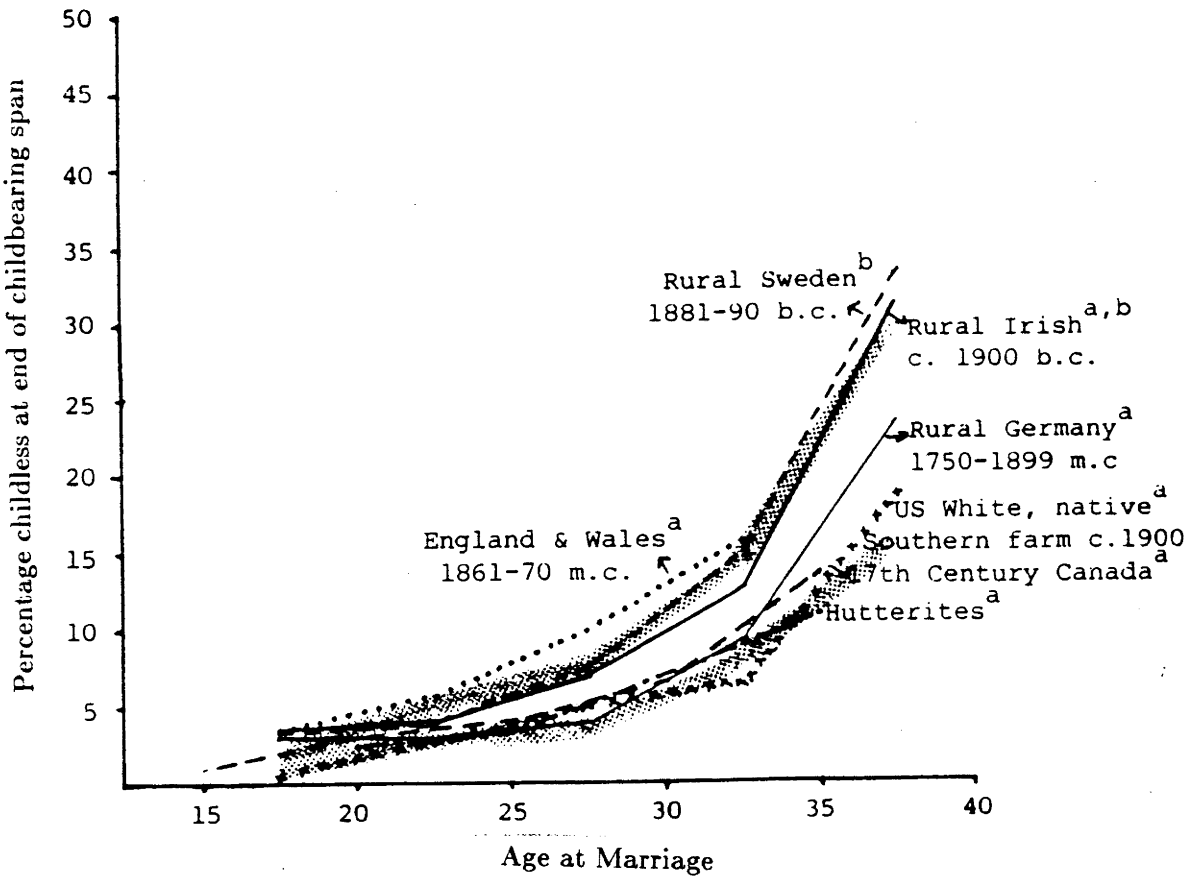
Figure 5-10 gives infertility schedules by the wife's age at marriage drawn from those compiled by Tolnay and Guest (1982) and Pittenger (1973). Despite individual variation between the schedules, there are two distinct patterns: low levels of childlessness associated with populations believed to practise no fertility control, and moderate levels of childlessness in populations known to have practised some control. As

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[10]In their own study of white, native born American women who had been married and who had completed their childbearing years by the turn of the century they found a close correlation between the level of fertility control and the incidence of childlessness (by region) and, on an individual level, the same factors which predicted low fertility also predicted childlessness (Tolnay and Guest 1982, 207-18).

Tolnay and Guest (p. 210) observed, the absolute differences between the childlessness ratios of the two types of populations increase with the woman's age at marriage. They suggested that this was due to two independent factors. First, women marrying at advanced ages were more likely to have roles or values which were incompatible with children. In some cases women developed these during their years as single women and in others they were responsible for their late marriage. The second reason is probably stronger. Sub-fecundity and infecundity increases rapidly after age 35. A woman marrying late and choosing to postpone a first birth could soon find herself incapable of becoming pregnant.

Figure 5-10: Comparison of the proportions childless of selected historical European populations with New South Wales, 1861-70 and 1891-97.



Sources: a - Tolnay and Guest (1982, 205-7); b - Pittenger (1973, 116); New South Wales - Coghlan 1903, 15).
Notes: 'b.c.' indicates birth cohort and 'm.c.' marriage cohort. Broad dotted lines show New South Wales.

Unfortunately there are no sources for childlessness in Victoria. The proportions childless for New South Wales given in Figure 10 were prepared by the state's

Government Statistician T. A. Coghlan (1903). They were based 'partly upon information obtained at the Census of 1901 and partly on the records pertaining to the deaths of married women during the past twenty years' (p. 14). This explanation, of course, is incomprehensible, but his figures do correspond to others shown in Figure 5-10.

Coghlan published these figures in a booklet intended to incite public outcry against declining Australian fertility (Hicks 1978, 144-6). He was convinced that the fall in the birth rate was also reflected in the increasing proportions of couples remaining childless. In the course of his discussions he made the same observations as Tolnay and Guest (1982) about childlessness in transitional Western populations. Coghlan (p. 15) showed that regardless of the wife's age, childless marriages increased from the 1860s to 1890s, particularly among women who married after their twenties. Also, controlling for age at marriage but not for marital duration, he showed that childlessness was considerably more common in the city and suburbs of Sydney than in the rest of the state. The areas with the next highest childlessness ratios were the more densely settled agricultural regions. In other words, the regions one would expect to lead in a fertility transition also had more childless couples. As Coghlan wrote

> The explanation of the difference must, therefore, be sought for, either in the influence of town life or in the occupations of the people. As to the influence of town life, this, so far as concerns New South Wales, may be summed up in the question of artifical checks, the aids to which are more accessible in the cities than in the country (1903, 17).

Coghlan was concerned. His skill, ingenuity and resources as Government Statistician strengthened his conviction that his society was undergoing a profound change. Others could dismiss the fertility decline as a fashion involving few people, as a temporary phenomenon or as a statistical aberration. Even more people would have been confused by the cries of national deterioration which were hard to relate to their private decisions. The average man would have found it difficult to equate national fertility trends with the fact he did not want another child because the three they had were all he could afford and Elizabeth was feeling poorly and the chances for a pay rise were not good.

5.4 Domestic Feminism and the Domestication of Men

Recent works describing the wife's role in the late Victorian household have evoked the concept of 'domestic feminism' (Smith 1974; Tolnay and Guest 1982; Quiggin 1985; Macgeary 1985). Smith, who coined the phrase, used it to distinguish the greater power that late nineteenth-century American wives had acquired. Similarly, studies of working-class life in that period are focusing on the crucial role of the wife and mother in

maintaining standards of 'respectability' or even just avoiding destitution (McCalman 1975; Ross 1982; Gillis 1985; Levine 1985). At the outset it must be stated that to date research on relations within the household have been highly speculative and impressionistic. What is more, I cannot add my own 'impressions' of the homelife of late nineteenth-century Melburians. Such an undertaking would require a careful study of original source materials even to begin fathoming the complexities of everyday life. I must rely on other researchers' judgements.

The Victorian ideal of family and the appropriate roles of men and women have been described so frequently by historians and by the Victorians themselves in their fiction, journalism and private writings that any summary becomes simply a choice of cliches. Here are a few. The nineteenth-century husband and wife were relegated to separate spheres. The husband belonged to the public sphere as a wage earner or employer outside the home. He returned nightly from this heartless world where success or failure was dictated by the iron laws of the market and his own measure of ability and entered his haven, his retreat. Surrounded by tangible and psychic rewards for his toils he was refreshed and rejuvenated. The success of this private sphere of his life depended on his wife, a companion chosen out of love. As a wife she frugally stretched his earnings to make home life as orderly and as comfortable as possible. As a mother she prepared the next generation with a combination of affection and firm discipline.[11]

Historians have had difficulty characterizing how the 'ideal type' Victorian family affected women. Did it make her frivolous by requiring that she invest her energies in the essentially unproductive role of social manager? Was she a perpetually kind, self-sacrificing angel? Was she enslaved by the patriarchal capitalist system? Lately historians have begun to wonder if she was a domestic feminist. Smith insisted that the position of late nineteenth-century wives should be measured against a pre-industrial model. Under that comparison the Victorian woman had greater autonomy, power and respect. The very values and economic regime which promoted the primacy of the conjugal family unit defined a role which only she could perform.

Smith argued that one way women used this extra power was by controlling their husbands' sexual activities. Wives demanded an alternative to the exhausting round of pregnancies, deliveries, nursing and nurturing. Husbands were forced into submission partly because their wives' co-operation was so vital to the maintenance of their retreat, but also because they shared their wives' interests in better health and comfortable home.

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[11]Reiger (1985, 37) has argued that the antipodean version of the domesticity cult put more emphasis on the home as 'a positive fountainhead of energy and righteousness' rather than an oasis in a terrain of impersonal economic forces.

Those historians who have insisted that family limitation became popular because women started taking control of their bodies forget that the husband's co-operation was crucial (Branca 1975, 114-42; Allen 1982; Reiger 1985, 110-25). At the other extreme, Banks (1982) has emphasized economic and status rationales for preventing births which he sees as entirely within the male domain. He ignored the fact that the ideology and practice of the separate spheres required that the wife manage the home. Any perceptions the husband had of the domestic economy had to involve his wife and usually came to him mediated through her. In addition, neither health nor economic reasons explain the rise in childlessness and one-child families. We need to reunite the husband and wife and remember that both were committed to the isolated serenity of the domestic hearth. Concern for the children already born, a comfortable home and the wife's well-being were clearly dictated by the cult of domesticity. Controlling the timing and the number of children was consistent rather than in conflict with that ideology. Four children less than ten years old under foot could topple any of the advantages of the private sphere.

Richard E. N. Twopeny can serve as an extreme example. The son of an archdeacon, he was raised in both England and South Australia. His sketches *Town Life in Australia* (1973[1883]) show him to have been a conservative defender of upper middle-class English values. His life, despite some unsuccessful entrepreneurial adventures, was long, complacent and conventional (Davison 1975). The charm of *Town Life* is in his keen eye for the details of domestic and social life, partly inspired by his recent marriage to a Melburnian. However, despite his interest in fashion, furnishings and schools, he found children, in particular the colonial child, unappealing. He professed 'a holy horror of babies' and he and his wife never had a child.

Of course not all Victorians agreed there was a congruence between family limitation and the ideals of family life removed from the pressures of the larger society. The most imfamous source of Australian pronatalist opinion is the report and evidence of the 1903-04 New South Wales Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birthrate. The five most active members obsessively asked witnesses if they agreed prevention and abortion was immoral. It is not necessary to accuse the commissioners of desiring a greater subjugation of women by sentencing them to a continual stream of risky pregnancies. On one level they feared the social and economic effects of depopulation, but at a deeper level they were deploring the defilement of the marriage bed with the cold calculating rationality of the public sphere. They were uncomfortable with the notion that a married woman could talk to her husband about sex in the way they discussed buying a piano. The commissioners labelled all family limitation, particularly when practised by the well-to-do, as selfishness; the public referred to it as prudence (*Age* 13 September 1893). The Commissioners were behind the times. Their peers had been

limiting their families for at least twenty years and they were unaware of the elevation of domestic economy to a rational science - a movement they contributed to in their recommendations to curb infant mortality.

Yet, even within this bastion of reactionary thought, there was a conflict of how to best live out the ideal of family life. An inkling of the tensions which may have never been aired publicly is found in a question put by MLA W. A. Holman. He was a late addition to the Commission and its only Labor member (Hicks 1978, 9-10). Dr Grace Russell, who practised at the Women's Hospital in Sydney, was asked very few questions by the Commission possibly because they suspected her to be a supporter of family limitation (*RC on the Birth Rate* 1904, vol. 2, pp. 109-10). Holman must have agreed with that assessment because he interjected with one of the very few questions he asked as Commissioner. He read an excerpt from the American magazine *Harper's Bazaar* about a conversation between an American mother and an English gentleman. In response to the Englishman's praise of the joy and attractiveness of the American nursery, the mother explained that it was the small family sizes popular in America which allowed them to lavish attention on their children. The large English families prevented this. Holman then asked Russell if she thought there was support for such notions. She agreed, 'Yes, with a good many thinking women it is a very strong reason for limitation.'

Holman, the future Premier of New South Wales, attended only five of the Commission's meetings and he was the only member who did not sign the report. There are strong reasons to believe that his question reflected his own beliefs and that his disociation from the Royal Commission grew out of a frustration with the narrow approach taken by its President.[12] When selected for the Commission Holman was only 32. Three years earlier he had married Ada Kidgell, a 32 year old journalist from Melbourne and a former student at Hawthorn State School. They had their first and only child, a daughter, while the Commission was hearing evidence. A profile of Mrs. Holman as the Premier's wife appeared in Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* on 17 Feburary 1915. It reads like a blue print of how domestic feminism would develop in the new century. Mrs. Holman was a prolific author of short stories. She was active in organizations for infant welfare and the quality of milk and acted as ghost writer and political helpmate to her husband and the Labor Party. However, at least for this article on the women's page there was still an emphasis on her family life. She is quoted as sighing 'housekeeping and story-telling do not go so peacefully hand in hand. The former seems to take the romance out of one.' It was her daughter, later to be a highly regarded psychiatrist, who 'was her

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[12]Information on the Holmans comes from files compiled by the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

most important contribution to the world'. In private she was outspoken against the traditional sex roles which confined her and other women to being solely mothers and wives. Holman himself wrote a sarcastic but unambiguous letter to the *Daily Telegraph* in 1911 in support of family limitation when he was Acting Premier (Hicks 1978,126-9).

Home-as-sanctuary and, by extension, domestic feminism are often thought of as middle-class concepts. How could a working-class person entertain such notions when living in a three-room cottage hemmed in by equally cramped neighbours on three sides and an open sewage drain on the fourth? It was of course a struggle. However, the 'respectable' working class *did* wage the battle to maintain a clean, well-ordered, sober household and that commitment from both the husband and the wife was crucial if they were to have any chance of achieving those aims.

It is probable that Melbourne's working class placed a particularly high premium on respectable living. The city was populated by those who in Britain had found it difficult to maintain their respectability (McCalman 1982, 91-2). With their transplanted values they fashioned a new society. Hirst (1984) identified three hallmarks of Australian nineteenth-century culture and politics. One was working-class demands for a decent wage when working and a job when unemployed. The second was the very democratic Mechanics Institutes that served as social educational institutions throughout Victoria. The third was the self-help Friendly Societies that united the successful and the unsuccessful in efforts to pursue self-interests through mutual co-operation. These were primarily working-class beliefs and institutions but the moral as well as political power of that class created a national ethos. 'The respectable working man,' wrote Hirst, 'was part of a culture which spread a long way beyond his ranks' (p. 104).

Melburnians were also advantaged because their city was physically capable of providing opportunities for respectability. Its housing stock of detached single family dwellings reflected the demand for an isolated conjugal family home. But cheap land and zealous developers who during the 1880s put up more houses than the city needed contributed to their prevalence (Davison 1978, 140-55; Reiger 1985, 35-7). The appeal of the Australian suburban home was the same for the well-to-do and the poor. To be respectable it was essential to have a steady income (McCalman 1975, 43-75; 1982). If a man had that he could risk moving his family away from the inner suburbs and the sources of most casual jobs. He could even consider making regular payments to a building society and begin to purchase a home. Although I have argued in the last chapter that the desire to own a home was not a likely deterrent to marriage, it was a goal of many mature couples. Building societies boasted that they helped the common man and that claim seems justified (Davison 1978, 175-89).

Buying a cottage in an outer suburb was not the only way to obtain respectability.

> Most workingmen had little gardens attached to their homes, and even the back-street slums of Collingwood had potted ferns at the windows. A brass name-plate, a modest garden plot and a wrought-iron veranda might equip a lowly cottage, as much as a great mansion, to symbolize its owner's aspirations to suburban respectability.

Even in Richmond, McCalman (1982) has decided that there were very few unrespectable or 'rough' families, although there were many very poor families. The personal qualities this required were considerable.

> Respectability prescribed disciplines in behaviour which could alter the conception of the self. In demanding cleanliness, sobriety, extra-marital chastity, thrift, time-consciousness, self-reliance, manly independence and self-responsible, it promoted an ego that was self-regulating, responsible and mature (p. 90).

Both men and women could be judged according to their respectability. However the working-class wife probably had even greater control and responsibility within the home than her middle-class counterpart. Visiting American Jessie Ackermann (1968[1913], 80-1) wrote

> It must be said that working-men have a much clearer idea of the *economic value* of a wife in the home than have men in other stations of life. Not because the wives of workingmen do the actual work of the home -- that cannot be the reason, for there are few houses in all Australia where the women are not forced to do more or less housekeeping because of the scarcity of help -- but in one case, the wife is regarded as a producer equal with the man and in the other, women are usually considered consumers and non-producers, housework not withstanding.

> When a sober workman -- and there are thousands of them among the working-class -- has drawn his wages, he usually turns it over to his wife, retaining a reserve tobacco fund, for his pipe is his pocket god. He does not require a detailed account of expenditure, but expects the housewife to provide proper food, well-cooked, and to make both ends meet.

A sober, responsible, forward-planning husband and a determined, resourceful wife may not have been sufficient to bring about conscious fertility control, but it made control feasible.

5.5 Methods of Fertility Control

Moving from the why to the how, there are no adequate ways to measure the extent of knowledge and use of various fertility control techniques before the onset of the decline in the 1880s. Abstinence, abortion and withdrawal were certainly mentioned in the context of marital sexual relations by the eighteenth century in England and France (Aries 1972). Quiggin (1985, 143-5) has found abortifacient and abortionist advertisements in Australian publications in the 1860s. Charles Knowlton's *Fruits of*

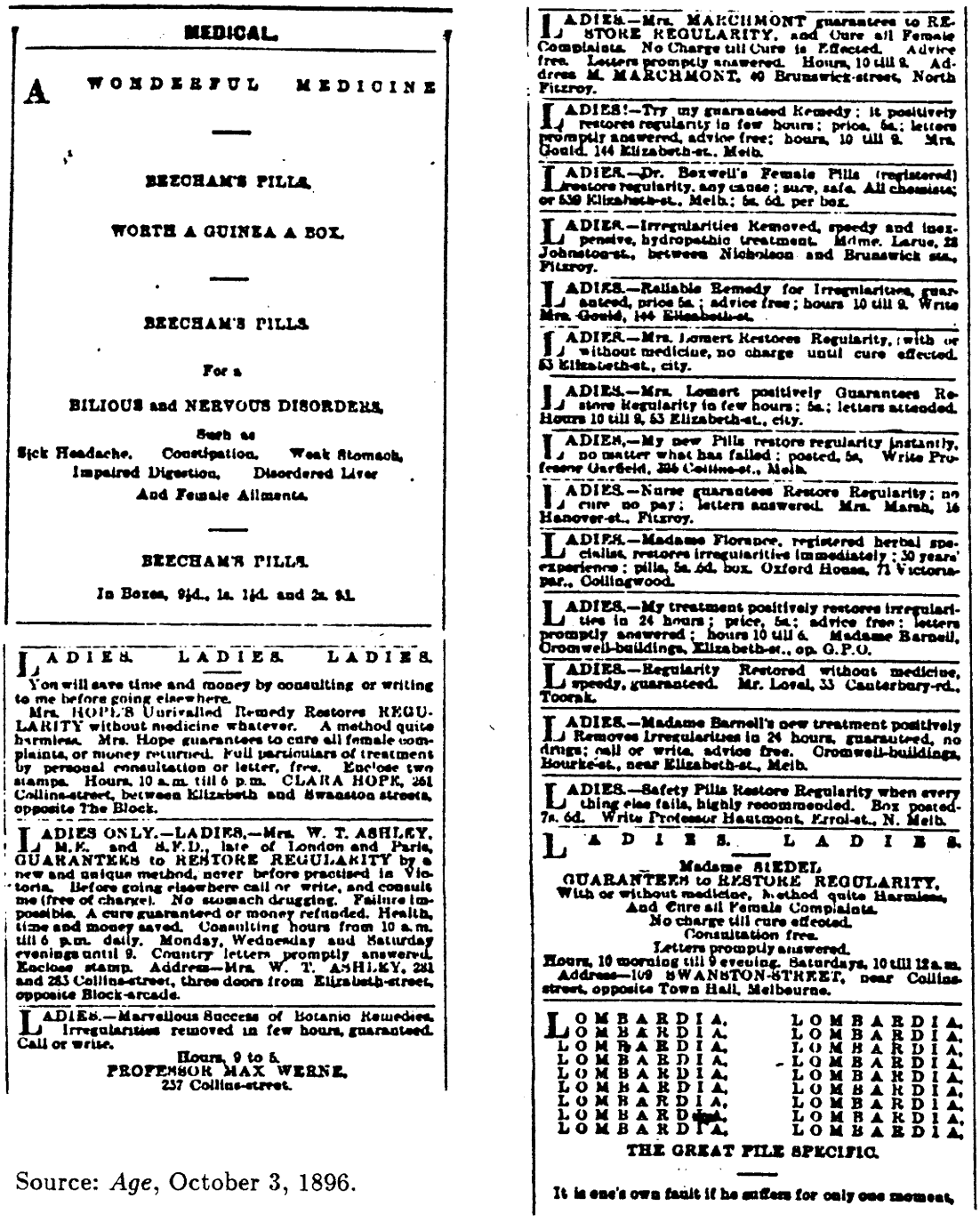
Philosophy which advocated douching was probably available in Sydney and Melbourne before the 1877 Bradlaugh-Besant trial made it famous. In 1878 a Melbourne freethinker published its first 'Australasian edition' (Forster 1982, 77). Other Australian pamphleteers joined in to cater to the small market.

By the mid 1880s advertisements for abortifacients, abortionists and, much more rarely, contraceptives became commonplace in the popular press. Their numbers quadrupled in the *Age* during the mid 1890s. On the other hand the *Argus* only carried advertisements for books about family limitation, not the blatant appeals to pregnant women to 'restore regularity with or without medicine'. On any day in the 1890s a desperate pregnant woman searching the *Age* would have been able to choose from over 20 products and practitioners promising help (see Figure 5-11). At the same time other forms of aggressive merchandising increased. Handbills, pamphlets, lectures and displays in chemist's shops were all responses to the growing demand for ways to control family size (see *RC on the Birth Rate* 1904, vol. 2, pp. 51, 70 and the exhibits on pp. 281-388).

At the turn of the century there were very few constraints on how contraceptives could be marketed. Soon afterwards a combination of legislative controls and voluntary restraint squashed such open advertising. For example, in July 1898 the *Age* stopped all advertisements by abortionists and even those for common brands of abortifacients. This ban came within days after the police apprehended several abortionists. The arrests were controversial, the defendants claimed they had been trapped and the case was eventually dismissed (*Age* 12 August and 5 November 1898). Still the editors had obviously felt uncomfortable that the accused parties had been identified through their paper. As another example, a chain of chemist shops through Sydney had been the city's major condom sellers until the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth Rate was announced. The owners feared adverse publicity, though certainly not from their satisfied customers, and stopped selling all contraceptives without a doctor's prescription (*RC on the Birth Rate* 1904, vol. 2, pp. 36-8, 43-4). The company thrived but only relaxed its no-contraceptives policy in the 1960s (Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977, 29).

The evidence given before the hostile Royal Commission is the sole source for gauging the relative prevalence of particular methods (for other reviews of the evidence see Hicks 1978, 45-7 and Quiggin 1985, 138-46). Some doctors told the commission that withdrawal was the most common form of prevention, but most were not asked their opinion. Virtually all doctors, however, believed abortion was rampant. Wholesale and retail chemists, not surprisingly, stressed the widespread sale of other preventives. French letters, or condoms, were a standard item in all chemists' shops but in 1903 'they were a dying trade'. The growth market appeared to be in soluble pessaries -- cocoa butter tubes containing quinine. Chemists could manufacture them themselves, or buy

Figure 5-11: Advertisements for abortions and abortifacients in the *Age*.



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LADIES.—Mrs. MARCHMONT guarantees to RESTORE REGULARITY, and Cure all Female Complaints. No Charge till Cure is Effected. Advice free. Letters promptly answered. Hours, 10 till 2. Address M. MARCHMONT, 40 Brunswick-street, North Fitzroy.

LADIES!—Try my guaranteed Remedy; it positively restores regularity in few hours; price, 5s.; letters promptly answered, advice free; hours, 10 till 2. Mrs. Gould, 144 Elizabeth-st., Melb.

LADIES.—Dr. Boxwell's Female Pills (registered) restore regularity, any cause; sure, safe. All chemists; or 539 Elizabeth-st., Melb.; 5s. 6d. per box.

LADIES.—Irregularities Removed, speedy and inexpensive, hydropathic treatment. Madme. Larue, 28 Johnston-st., between Nicholson and Brunswick sts., Fitzroy.

LADIES.—Reliable Remedy for Irregularities, guaranteed, price 5s.; advice free; hours 10 till 2. Write Mrs. Gould, 144 Elizabeth-st.

LADIES.—Mrs. Lomert Restores Regularity, with or without medicine, no charge until cure effected. 53 Elizabeth-st., city.

LADIES.—Mrs. Lomert positively Guarantees Restore Regularity in few hours; 5s.; letters attended. Hours 10 till 2, 53 Elizabeth-st., city.

LADIES.—My new Pills restore regularity instantly, no matter what has failed; posted, 5s. Write Professor Garfield, 256 Collins-st., Melb.

LADIES.—Nurse guarantees Restore Regularity; no cure no pay; letters answered. Mrs. Marsh, 16 Hanover-st., Fitzroy.

LADIES.—Madame Florance, registered herbal specialist, restores irregularities immediately; 30 years' experience; pills, 5s. 6d. box. Oxford House, 71 Victoria-par., Collingwood.

LADIES.—My treatment positively restores irregularities in 24 hours; price, 5s.; advice free; letters promptly answered; hours 10 till 6. Madame Barnell, Cromwell-buildings, Elizabeth-st., op. G.P.O.

LADIES.—Regularity Restored without medicine, speedy, guaranteed. Mr. Loval, 33 Canterbury-rd., Toorak.

LADIES.—Madame Barnell's new treatment positively Removes Irregularities in 24 hours, guaranteed, no drugs; call or write, advice free. Cromwell-buildings, Bourke-st., near Elizabeth-st., Melb.

LADIES.—Safety Pills Restore Regularity when everything else fails, highly recommended. Box posted, 7s. 6d. Write Professor Hautmont, Errol-st., N. Melb.

LADIES. LADIES.

Madame SIEDEL

GUARANTEES to RESTORE REGULARITY,

With or without medicine, Method quite Harmless,

And Cure all Female Complaints.

No charge till cure effected.

Consultation free.

Letters promptly answered.

Hours, 10 morning till 9 evening. Saturdays, 10 till 12 a.m.

Address—109 SWANSTON-STREET, near Collins-street, opposite Town Hall, Melbourne.

LOMBARDIA. LOMBARDIA.

THE GREAT FILE SPECIFIC.

It is one's own fault if he suffers for only one moment.

Source: *Age*, October 3, 1896.

from local wholesalers who either produced or imported them. Some chemists told the commission that women often fashioned their own contraceptives. Syringes could be used for douching, often with just cold water. Household sponges only needed to be cut and tied with a string. Even soluble pessaries could be made out of inexpensive items ostensibly sold for other purposes.

We will never know precisely which methods or mix of methods women used and whether there were differences between classes. It is apparent though that there were many ways to prevent births and that not all of them were prohibitively expensive. True, many methods were inconvenient and uncomfortable, others were unreliable, and yet

others were costly. For couples who were determined not to have any more children, but felt too ill at ease with contraception there was always the sleeping porch -- abstinence or very rare intercourse was probably common (Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977, 27). If these methods failed there was abortion. This would have only been used in emergencies. It was expensive and, of course, dangerous although fatalities were extremely rare.

I cannot identify when Melburnians became well-informed about how to control their fertility, but clearly that was the case by the mid 1890s. The handbill reprinted in Figure 5-12 illustrates this. Female canvassers handed these out in Melbourne door to door in 1899 as part of a promotions campaign for a new contraceptive. That alone suggests how readily available information was. The text itself is even more enlightening. It makes no effort to create a demand for family planning. Rather the woman reader is assumed to be already convinced; the handbill is merely intended to persuade her to change her method. The weaknesses of alternative preventatives are described with the implication that these failings were all too familiar.

Figure 5-12: Text from a handbill introducing a new contraceptive, Melbourne, 1899.

"**The information contained in this leaflet should be known by every married woman.**

"**Ladies: It is not proposed to discuss or moralise upon prevention, but merely to describe and compare the various means employed.**

"**The necessity for it is proved, and remedies are daily employed by all classes of society with more or less results, and with more or less injury.**

"**The injection of cold water is popular, but disappointing because it takes place too late, and the injection of any drug in solution has the same drawback, with the addition that the drugs used are all astringent and all injurious.**

"**The sponge and pads of wool are just as unsuccessful, because when removed the cause of risk still remains behind.**

"**The female pessaries are doubly disappointing also because when removed the cause of risk remains and because of the difficulty of application.**

"**The male rubber goods are successful, but highly injurious, and particularly to the wearer.**

"**The remedy most used is the quinine pessary. It has a measure of success, hence its popularity: though nearly all who have tried it know that it cannot be relied upon.**

"**The theory that it acts as a germicide has been proved by the microscope to be incorrect, it being impossible for grease to incorporate with such a fluid. The security derived from it is purely on account of a portion of the grease stopping up the mouth of the womb. Its constant failure is due to this object not being achieved, mainly because of the difficulty of application through natural peculiarities, and because when it melts it runs down, and is no longer in a position to be of service.**

"**A remedy to be absolutely successful must have the properties of all these; it must be an obstruction like the sponge, female rubber pessary and quinine pessary, and it must be in addition a germicide of such a nature that it will effectually incorporate itself with the fluid to be rendered inert.**

"**No remedy previous to the introduction of Silenette had these properties. Silenette renders security certain; makes the application as high up as possible before each occasion. It acts, first, as an obstruction, and, secondly, as a germicide which will thoroughly mix with the fluid and sterilize it. It is easy of application, and will retain its position under all conditions. It is moreover cleanly, does not stain linen, cannot be detected, and is above all things not astringent. It will not relax the parts like grease pessaries, nor dry them like astringent applications and other methods, but can be used a life time by the most delicate with only beneficial results.**

"**Although Silenette is pre-eminently superior to all other preventatives, and will in time take the place of all others, it has been decided that its cost shall be no more than popular means now in use, viz., 12s. 6d. for fifty applications. Obtainable at most chemists; if not, send postal note for that amount, and we will forward, secure from observation, carriage free.**

"**SILENETTE PROPRIETARY, LIMITED.**
"**Victorian Depôt: 300 Flinders-street, Melbourne.**".

Source: *The Australian Medical Gazette* 20 April 1900.

5.6 The Medical Profession: An Example of Public Opinion

Fertility transitions before the United States Agency for International Development and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation were fuelled by a combination of private enterprise and homecraft. The missing component was any formal assistance given by the medical profession. Medical refusal to aid the efforts of their patients who expressed a desire to control their fertility has been variously interpreted as outright economic self-interest, an overly cautious concern to maintain an unblemished respectability, and adherence to a view of women's bodies as essentially mystical. But regardless of the interpretation, with rare and persecuted exceptions, doctors were shamefully absent from the early history of family planning (Peel 1964; McLaren 1978, 116-40; Reed 1978).

The offical organs of the profession seldom mentioned prevention. Abortion was frequently discussed but usually in the same sensationalist style as the popular press unless a doctor was accused. The first possible mention I have found in an Australian medical journal of contraception was ambiguous. In 1872 a small notice expressed distaste for the publication of a 'filthy book' by a Melbourne doctor, probably Dr. L.L. Smith who specialized in treating venereal diseases and wrote popular pamphlets on sex which included allusions to contraception (*Australian Medical Journal* September 1872, p. 280 and also September 1877, p. 280). Fifteen years later an article appeared which began

> The habit of preventing conception is, I regret to find, spreading very fast in these colonies.... Articles of common merchandise are now used for this purpose, resulting both directly and indirectly, but too frequently in ill-health (*The Australasian Medical Gazette* July 1887, p. 250).

This was followed by a litany of the physical, mental and moral ills cheating nature would engender. The theme of the medical dangers of contraception was to become a common medical stance and can be read in some but not all of the medical testimony to the Royal Commission (Hicks 1978, 47-50). But what is equally remarkable about the article is the complete dissociation the author, a leading gynaecologist, made from the patients' contraceptive efforts. His observations of the increase in family limitation was a social observation, not a medical one.

This same distancing can be seen in almost all articles touching on the subject. It was at its most extreme in the *Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australia* from 1901 to 1904, where discussions of family limitation revolved on arguments about statistics between the President of the Medical Society of Victoria, the Government Statist of Victoria and an actuary of Friendly Societies for New South Wales.

Several doctors told the sympathetic Royal Commission of their shock that their female patients 'will talk to me of their inner sexual relations with as much *sang froid* as

if she were talking about having lunch' (*RC on the Birth Rate* 1904, vol. 2, p. 98). But patients felt that medical practitioners ought to advise on contraception and provide abortions. When licensed doctors refused they sought other help. However, it is interesting that not only abortionists, but the providers of contraceptive supplies presented themselves in medical guises. This could amount to outright fraud when abortionists gave themselves medical sounding titles or when women hawking preventives dressed up as nurses (p. 45). But, given the offical medical hostility, it is impressive that women responded positively to this kind of advertising. Clearly controlling fertility was thought to be a medical problem by the public.

In Australia, as in England (McLaren 1978, 78-87), there was a close link between birth control and other forms of medical self help. Mrs B. Smith of North Melbourne was the most political commercial dealer of contraceptives in the city in the 1890s but she coupled her business not with radical pamphlets but with medical electricity and phrenology (Kelly 1982). After the 1898 police raid Madame LaRue dropped from her advertisement in the *Age* offers to restore regularity but continued to invite ladies to use her Electro-Hydropathic treatment for all ills. Sydney medical doctor Alexander Paterson wrote his *Physical Health of Women* in 1890 as much to democratize contraceptive knowledge as to make money and his profession ostracized him as much for the former reason as for his outspoken advocacy of hypnotism (Hicks 1978, 37-8).

It would be unjust, however, to claim that all physicians ignored their patients' pleas. The hostility of some spokesmen does not necessarily reflect the private beliefs and actions of doctors in their consulting chambers and bedrooms. Other respectable public figures who essentially supported fertility control also felt they needed to maintain an ambivalent attitude. Holman did not give public support for a practice he would have discussed in private with his wife, but the other Commissioners were free to condemn it openly. The major Melbourne newspaper editors appeared to be in favour of family planning, but they never advocated it. The weekly supplement, the *Australasian*, ran 'A Plea for Large Families' in January 31, 1880. As the article's title suggests it was disapproving of conscious efforts to limit families. The author, though, assumed that the practice was so widespread, particularly amongst such otherwise admirable people, that the objections had the tone of a futile whine. More than a decade later, after fertility had noticeably fallen, an *Age* editorial cast aside oracles who claimed this was immoral and undesirable (13 September 1893). However, it refrained from direct praise. Instead it described prevention as an inevitable reaction to hard times, one which was used in moderation and unlikely to become more common.

Similarly, doctors who supported family planning preferred to veil their opinion in generalizations and allusions or to avoid public comment altogether. This was even easier

to do in Australia than in England or the United States where some political groups forced the issue into the public arena.

In an ambiguously titled paper 'Injurious Effects of Close Confinement and Overwork' presented to the Australian Health Society, Dr W. H. Cutts spent half of his time sympathizing with the everyday burdens of the working-class and lower middle-class housewife.[13] Frequent pregnancies and too many children were clearly at the root of her problems. Although he does not go so far as too recommend preventives, he does ask 'for the help from her husband she has a right to expect'.

More direct evidence of doctor's involvement comes at the end of the century. The chemists testifying to the Royal Commission stressed they were not alone in providing contraceptives. Wholesalers said they regularly sent supplies to country doctors (*RC on the Birth Rate* 1904, vol. 2 pp. 16, 20). Many clients were still able to buy condoms and quinine pessaries from the chemist shops which had had their consciences disturbed by the Royal Commission, because doctors gave them prescriptions (pp. 37, 58).

In a Presidential Address to the Victorian branch of the British Medical Society Dr J. W. Barrett confessed

> When these methods were introduced some fifteen years ago, many of us rather welcomed them as affording a means of adopting a reasonable and medium course. We saw, in practice, that for many women marriage, with consequent incessant child-bearing, was a diaster; that her life was spent in one round of pregnancies and lactations. Nothing seemed to us more natural than that she should be allowed a reasonable time at all events to recover. It seemed that, on the average, by such measures better children would be reared, and there would be fewer deaths. No one at that time anticipated that these methods might become an instrument of national destruction (*Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia* 20 January 1901, p. 25).

The doctor's counsel to his peers was the same as most public utterances on the subject; he advocated hypocrisy. To the wife with one or two children there should be lectures on the personal and racial penalties of limitation; to the mother of three or four offspring there would be practical advice on how to avoid more.

5.7 Conclusions

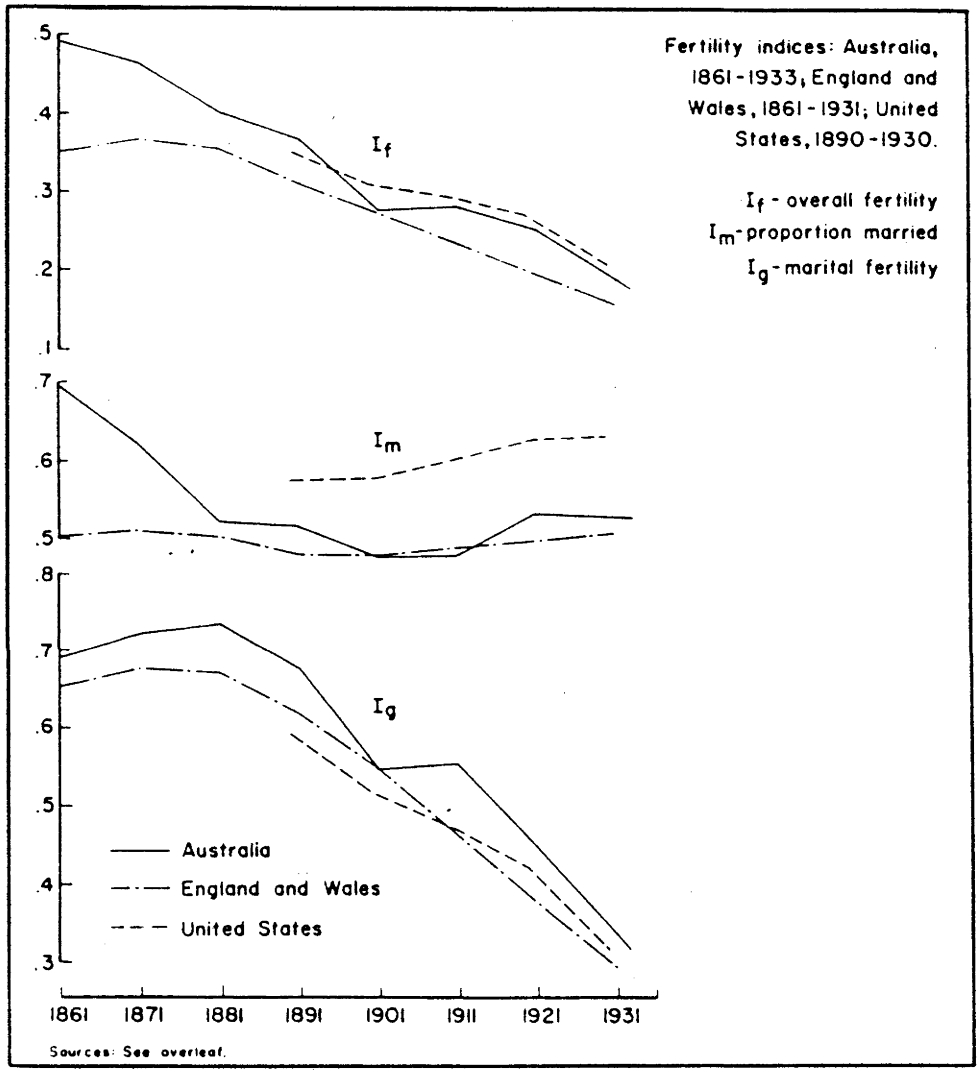
In discussing Melbourne's fertility decline and some of its contributing factors I have not stressed many features unique to Melbourne or even to Australia. As Caldwell and Ruzicka (1978) have observed, a study of the Australian fertility transition is worthwhile not because it was novel, but rather because its timing and apparent causes were so similar to those of transitions in other English-speaking populations. Figure 5-13

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[13]This was reprinted in the *Australasian Medical Gazette* January 1885, pp. 90-5.

illustrates that although Australia had higher marital fertility than England or the United States (except in 1901) their levels and the pace of their declines were more alike than different. Other parts of the story were also the same in each of the countries. Prevention was mentioned frequently and openly in the press from the late 1870s, spurred by the Bradlaugh-Besant trial in the cases of England and Australia. Advertisements for contraceptives and abortion were most prevalent and most blatant in the 1890s.

Figure 5-13: The path of the fertility transition in Australia, England and Wales and the United States, 1861-1931.



Source: Jones (1971).

I have avoided addressing the role of the 1890s depression precisely because of the imitative quality of the antipodean fertility decline. The fall in fertility rates came at the same time as Australia's most severe depression. The lower than expected fertility of young married women and the postponement of births could be interpreted as the deperate actions of impoverished people.[14] However, both types of behaviour were

[14]Three-quarters of American women who were in their thirties and forties during the 1930s depression and had used contraception did so before their last child was born with the intention of delaying births (Dawson *et al.* 1980, 77).

evident in Melbourne a decade earlier, during the height of economic prosperity. It would be an over-simplification to claim that the knowledge and desire to control fertility descended on an ignorant population of colonials as soon as the land boom busted and the crops failed in the early 1890s. The fact that fertility was already being controlled and controlled in those ways allowed it 'to be reduced by one-fifth during the fierce economic depression' (Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977, 6).

Comparative studies are necessary before we can say if Melbourne's fertility patterns were unique. Certainly, though, I would first look for replication in other late nineteenth-century English-speaking cities which were predominantly commercial but had a prosperous and expanding manufacturing sector. I believe that the relatively good fortune which most Melburnians enjoyed, combined with an ethos that encouraged responsible, forward planning, was an essential component to the fertility decline. Consciously deciding whether or not to have a child is a positive act and one way of taking control of one's life. In Melbourne the emphasis on thrift and steadiness and the practice of limiting births were most common among those who were the most economically secure and therefore in the best position to attempt to affect their future.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to discuss how growing up and the decline in marital fertility were related. At the outset this thesis may seem to in the fine social science tradition of negative findings. The evidence presented conveys the overwhelming impression that there were very few major changes in young Melburians' schooling, work experiences or timing of marriage during the last third of the nineteenth century. The much vaunted Education Act of 1872 had no effect and roughly the same proportions of young males and females found work after they left school throughout the period. When the effects of the shifting age structure of the single poplulation are controlled, there is very little suggestion of significant movements in the mean and dispersion of age at first marriage. On the other hand, marital fertility took a decisive downturn. During the 1860s and 1870s fertility was high and showed no signs of being controlled, but in the 1860s the rates fell. Couples were employing methods of prevention to space births as well as to limit them. How then can we hope to discover that an alteration in wealth flows between parents and their children was the catalyst for the fertility transition? Yet a link did exist between how children progressed to adulthood and their parents' fertility. However, uncovering it requires a much more subtle analysis which goes beneath broad generalizations of how people behaved.

The first step in the search for the relationship is a synthesis of the roles performed by offspring within the late nineteenth century family. Class differences were a recurring theme throughout the thesis because members of different occupation groups acted very differently in almost every aspect investigated. Appendix A discusses the limitations of my occupational classification. Having only a brief job title to work from, it was impossible to construct an adequate scheme which measured multidimensional social stratification. I had to settle for functional categories. Unfortunately, this meant the same groupings could include men who rightly belonged to separate social clases. However the class alliances of the majority of members of each occupation group are sufficiently clear to make it possible to abstract from the empirical evidence presented three 'ideal types'.

The difficulties in translating occupations into social classes are most apparent for

manual workers. People in the nineteenth century recognized two groups of working men. The first were the labour aristocracy. These artisans were skilled in trades which had a strong craft union tradition. Through collective action they were able to restrict the numbers of workmen and keep their own wages high. In most cases they were able to have steady employment. Almost all of these men would have been in the skilled manual occupation group used in the thesis, but that category included other workers as well.

Contrasted with the artisans was the bulk of the working class, the working poor. These men had few skills, or skills which were badly remunerated. Most of their work was casual. They were hired for a specific job or taken on only during peak seasons. Survival required knowing when and where work was available. Almost all of the labourers in my occupation group would have belonged to this class. Most of the semi-skilled workers would also have been members of the working poor. However a steadily employed railway worker or a hard working carter or cab driver with a lucrative niche might have been better off than his peers. These men would have had more in common with the labour aristocracy and for convenience we will refer to all men as artisans who had steady employment and a wage which allowed a margin of comfort.

For the moment these two social clases should be thought of as distinct entities. An individual could frequently pass between these groups, dragging his family with him every time. The unemployed stonemason might be forced to pick up day jobs on the wharf as a labourer. The process worker in a factory could be made a foreman who was kept on during slack times and was paid for the Christmas holidays. Yet there is a value in understanding how a reified family from the working poor had to function and what the possibilites were for a similarly artificially constructed artisan's family.

Let us begin with the working poor. Their children had at best erratic schooling. They were less likely to be enrolled in a State school than artisans' children and certainly much less likely to be enrolled at any school than children from the middle class. Those who were enrolled, which was most of them, attended irregularly and shifted schools frequently. We know from the South Australian Hindmarsh Project that very few poor children were academically successful (Cook [Miller], *et al.* 1979; Miller 1984). They joined the work force early and, because they were young, they had a limited number of jobs from which they could choose. Both girls and boys worked in a narrow range of factories: primarily food processing, tobacco, jute works, etc. Boys could also be messengers or newspaper hawkers and many of the girls were nursemaids. For several years young workers from poor famlies wandered within this class of work. Compared to other children of their age, they earned high wages. Eventually they moved towards other semi-skilled and unskilled employment but, as they reached the age of majority, their wages plateaued. Victorian-born men who were part of the working poor tended to marry

younger than those in any other occupation group. The same was true for females but the class differences were smaller. The marriages were more likely to be preceded by a pregnancy as well. Possibly this was because parents would otherwise have discouraged an early match. The young couples may also have felt dubious about their prospects on labourers' wages and tended to let an unexpected pregnancy make the decision for them.

Unfortunately we do not have conclusive evidence on the working poor's fertility. The birth intervals suggested they were not spacing births and age-specific marital fertility rates for the working class sections of Melbourne did not decline during the 1880s, the only decade for which there is information. Nonetheless, doctors testifying at the New South Wales Royal Commission on the Birth Rate (1903-4) insisted that the poor were avoiding births. The frequent generalization that they primarily relied on abortion was probably an exaggeration, but it does confirm that for poor married couples stopping births was far more common than efforts to space them.

The children of artisans shared in the fruits of their father's enviable economic position. Throughout society there was an ambivalence towards the kind of regular schooling we are accustomed to today, but artisans' children went to school more regularly than children from poorer families. Both sons and daughters were able to stay enrolled and to maintain regular attendance during their final years. Some families in this class had the opportunity to choose to keep their daughters at home for some years after they left school. All of the boys went out to work though and for the first few years had the same jumbled work history as their mates from poorer families. But they could be more selective: if the biscuit fights did not compensate for the hard work and the heat at Guest's factory, for example, the disgruntled son of a builder was freer to march off than the son of a wood carter. Eventually the artisan's son, perhaps with pressure from his parents, perhaps on his own initiative, would settle into a job which promised to teach him some skills and give him a chance for advancement. He would marry at about the same age as the labourer's son, but would already be earning higher wages. The work experiences of an artisan's daughter were less predictable. To some extent her ability to learn a skill that she could rely on if she remained single or her husband was unable or unwilling to support her and their children depended on her own and her parents' personal preferences. Her probable lack of skills and intermittent career history were as much a result of the poor opportunities for females to acquire saleable skills.

Middle-class children progressed from school to marriage in much the same way as late twentieth-century Australians. Elementary schooling was valued and attendance was regular. The notable exception of shopkeepers' daughters may have been confounded by self-selection. Grocers who had a high regard for education and were reluctant to pull their girls out of school whenever they could be useful may have also tended to send them

to private schools. In their early teens many middle-class boys and girls continued their education at secondary schools. Boys who left school early started their lifelong careers by becoming apprentices, junior clerks or asssistants with an expectation of advancement. Almost all of the school leaving girls were kept at home. But extended formal education merely postponed those events. Middle-class children did not have that transitory phase of gradually joining the regular work force. Marriage came later for both men and women. Both the artisans and the middle class were controlling their fertility in the 1880s and 1890s.

From the descriptions of how children were expected to progress to adulthood in each of the family types, we can characterize the wealth flows within the family. The children of the working poor made some direct or indirect economic contribution even while they went to school. Mothers might have had their daughters help them in finishing trousers for a sub-contractor to a clothing factory. Boys could do regular chores for a neighbour or help their carter father load a wagon. But these were small contributions compared to what it cost parents to keep them. By the time the children were 13 years old the situation changed. As young youths they were fully productive members of the family. They gave their parents most of their wages and in dong so were almost certainly contributing more than their share of the family expenses. But even young adults from this group were able to amass some savings of their own before marriage. Taking the entire span from infancy to marriage children in these families were neither a net cost nor a net asset. The conventional logic of the relationship between wealth flows and fertility dictates high fertility when parents gain net material rewards from their children and low fertility when children entail net material costs. We see that the working poor were at an equilibrium point. It would take something out of the ordinary to give poor parents an *economic* incentive to control their fertility.

Artisans' children also helped around the house and did odd jobs in the neighbourhood, but their parents received fewer benefits from them while they were in school. Once out of school and employed the boys in some form of apprenticeship continued to earn less than those in the former group until they were in their late teens. If they were working, then the sons and daughters certainly contributed to the family economy but parents were probably reluctant to charge more than the cost of their food and a token payment for rent. The economic benefits flowed towards the children in these households.

Middle-class parents faced a more extreme version of the artisans' situation. Some members of the lower middle class would have expected their employed youths to make an economic contribution to the family. This of course applied only to the boys as the girls were rarely in the paid workforce. Single adult males living at home were usually

economically self-sufficient but they were normally not expected to support their parents out of their salaries. The price of giving children a period of extended dependency was high. Children may have been a source of joy to the middle-class parent, but they were also a very great economic burden. The fertility of artisans and the middle class were consistent with the downward flows of wealth in their families.

However, clearly an adequate explanation of fertility is still lacking. Merely observing that predicted and actual behaviour was the same during the 1880s and 1890s does not explain the decline in marital fertility. Since children in each of our family types progressed to adulthood in much the same way from at least the 1860s, that element of family life seems largely irrelevant to fertility decisions.

Research on periods of great social changes requires a gentle touch. So many aspects of the societies studied are in flux and no two parts change at the same pace. However, even the transitional society manages to maintain some functional congruence between its elements. This is necessary if only for the peace of mind of the people living through those confusing periods. But observers and researchers should not allow themselves to see a static social world where in fact great changes are underway.

Demographers interested in the onset of the fertility transition are by definition studying societies in the process of change. Caldwell has been one of the more sensitive to this fact. In his most detailed discussion on the topic he discussed circumstances when the economic structure of a society was conducive to, indeed should have determined, low levels of controlled fertility (1981). However, contrary to any 'rational' expectation, couples made no efforts to avoid large families. He identified within these economically modern societies a host of cultural factors which upheld high fertility. Subservience to the parental generation or community elders, the isolation of women, or strong religious proscriptions against contraception could all remain intact or take on only a modern veneer in the very midst of an urban, capitalist milieu. Caldwell has emphasized the role of the imposition of schooling which conveys a different value structure because it is one of the few mechanisms capable of breaking down a firmly entrenched cultural infrastructure. He has characterized socieites which are economically new but culturally old as experiencing a cultural lag.

I propose that Melbourne's fertility decline can be best understood by thinking of the society as experiencing an 'economic lag'. Changes in attitudes between spouses and among parents towards children occurred well before the bulk of the population could afford to make their aspirations and values a reality. Those new attitudes were the catalyst for marital fertility decline.

The roles offspring performed as children, youth and young adults in three the family types described above only held when economic conditions were favourable. That

is, the father and husband had to be present, in good health and employed. But understanding the economics and the demography of the late nineteenth-century urban family requires realizing how fragile a claim everyone, from the labourer to the lower middle-class accountant, had on that economic security.

Insecurity was not a product only of the devasting depression of the 1890s. Recently Australian economic and labour historians have been questioning the characterization of 1860 to 1890 as one 'long boom' period. Economic growth does not automatically translate into economic prosperity for all workers at all times, or even most workers almost all the time.[1] Peaks and troughs followed the seasons in a range of urban jobs from food processing to loading ships with wool. In the off-season businesses would dismiss most of their staff or even shut down entirely. During the otherwise prosperous summers a Christmas slump was common and employers gave their workers unpaid 'holidays'. Overlying this cyclical pattern were the unique problems of a nascent manufacturing sector serving a small market in a colonial outpost which was heavily dependent on foreign capital. 'Australian manufacturing even in the late 1880s was characterized by low levels of capitalization, short production lead-times, ... small inventories of stock at hand ... and a chronic scarcity of capital' (Lee and Fahey 1986, 16-17). This boom or bust organization of manufacturing reverberated through the economy. The building trades and the service sector were shook as well. Lee and Fahey's analysis of wage books produced numerous examples of regular underemployment. Consider just one. A firm of painting contractors employed 17 hands in 1881, but only four worked for 51 weeks. The others averaged a little under 11 weeks. Although they had a trade, these men would have been casual workers, relying on their knowledge of the Melbourne labour market to find work.

The consequences for the working class family are obvious. In families where the head was steadily employed 'the division of labour in which the husband acted as breadwinner remained dominant'. But for the majority

> reliance on a single male breadwinner was a fragile arrangement, particularly in a labour market with a large and growing seasonal and casual component and a heavy emphasis on unskilled manual labour. The cumulative effects of male breadwinners' disability, death and desertion forced growing numbers of women and juveniles into the position of breadwinners, although their wages were sufficient only to support themselves at best. And the irregularity of men's earnings from temporary, seasonal and casual labour made it imperative for other members of their families to take paid work (Lee and Fahey 1986, 27).

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[1] In this paragraph and the next I primarily rely on Lee and Fahey (1986). They include a comprehensive review of other work in this vein but theirs has been the most substantial contribution to date. See Fisher (1985) for a similar argument about the family economy of the poor in Sydney.

Unemployment or underemployment put the normal course of wealth flows under great strain. Children, youths, single adults, wives, every member of the family had to contribute for economic survival. An unstable labour market meant that even the well-to-do artisan had to anticipate the possibility of being out of work. One important way of protecting themselves against this was to keep offsprings' transitions to adulthood flexible. At any time the boy working as an apprentice could be pulled out and put into a better paying z job. The daughter helping with home duties could take a position in a factory or bring in outwork. For the working poor whose normal situation already required greater co-operation from all members, longer than usual unemployment would mean 11 and 12 year olds would leave school and every one who could would work harder. The practice of unmarried sons and daughters living at home made it easy to ensure their assistance and discourage improvident marriages. In other words, the form of the ideal process of growing up was tailored to meet the vicissitudes of the economic system.

Throughout the period economic instability and insecurity of employment reigned. Indeed, since the thesis ends with the depression of the 1890s, conditions actually worsened. Interestingly it took external intervention, akin to Caldwell's compulsory schooling, to break the hold that the free market had over families. In 1896 the Victorian Parliament established Wage Boards to set minimum wages in a handful of industries that were deemed to be exploiting workers. By the first years of the new century the Boards had multiplied. They covered virtually the entire metropolitan manufacturing work force and employment in some other sectors as well. In 1907 a Federal Arbitration Court Judge established the principal of the Basic Wage which had been a cornerstone of labour demands in Australia, England and North America for decades. His decision allowed minimum wage determinations to be based on the the amount of money required for a man to support himself and a family. However apart from its political impact, the famous Harvester Judgment had little effect. The bulk of unskilled workers continued to earn less than the real wage equivalent of 42s a week which was the minimum set in the decision. It was not until 1921 that workers were guaranteed a living wage (Macrthy 1967, chapter 2). The Federal Parliament set the Basic Wage as the minimum for all adult male employees and tied it to an official price index. Equally important for Victorians was legislation in 1922 which saved them from the worst aspects of a cyclical economy. Employees working less than a full week were to be paid higher wage rates to bring their pay up to the minimum. Employers also had to give sufficient notice before dismissing workers. Finally, federal old age pensions were introduced in 1908 and by 1911 about one-quarter of Victoria's elderly were receiving one. But it was in 1925 that the amount of the pension was increased to £1 a week, an amount on which one could conceivably live. The 1920s can be justly claimed as the decade that freed the working class from the horrors of an older economic structure.

Now we must ask what changed in the cultural realm during the late nineteenth century. Here we return to the evidence presented in this thesis. I have stated that overall there was no difference in the transitions to adulthood. The static economic circumstances that families faced were clearly the reason for that constancy. Parents were powerless to alter in major ways how much help they demanded from their offspring. Nonetheless they could make small adjustments, when economically feasible, as their attitudes changed. Beneath the seemingly entrenched roles of children, youth and young single adults, three minor changes were uncovered which were very significant. They are worth reiterating here.

The first was that girls, with their parents' support, became increasingly less inclined to be domestic servants. A necessary factor in their move away from service was the growth of the clothing industry in the 1870s, but it was not sufficient. Most girls would have earned far more money as servants. Economic pressures and widely shared preferences reached a compromise. In the 1870s only a rare prospective employer used the prospect of girls being able to sleep at their parents' home as a means of attracting someone to help with chores. By the end of the century virtually all 'nursemaids' or 'useful girls', who were between 13 and 16 years old, lived at home. Certainly the working-class and lower-middle class families who hired young help did not always have the room to keep a live-in servant. But a more important reason for the shift was the development of a new value. An attitude had emerged which dictated that girls belonged at home with their parents, even if she had left school and was working.

The second small but perceptible change was a shift in the definition of what a 12 year old was. The source for this was also newspaper advertisements. Sometime during the 1870s or 1880s it became inappropriate to offer employment to 12 year olds. By 1891 the youngest age mentioned was 13. This was not because of the legal school leaving age. As the Chief Inspector of Factories had argued, children were free to leave school when they passed the standard examination. That was well within the capabilities of most 12 year olds. Nor was there an economic basis to the shift. We are discussing a minimum tolerance level for age, not an average starting age. If an employer wanted to hire a young person and age had carried no connotations of age-graded roles, then he or she would have judged prospective employees based on size, strength or temperament. There are no differences between a mature 12 year old and a seemingly young 13 year old on those criteria. Only if the age 12 had come to signify a child and age 13 a potential worker, would age *per se* have affected hiring practices.

The same redefinition occurred a couple of decades later to 13 year olds. The change was reflected in the 1909-1910 Education and Factory Acts that set 14 as the upper statutory school age and barred anyone younger from working in factories. The

legislation reflected reality. Richmond children in the Edwardian era uniformly left school when they were 14, just as their parents would have left when 13 (McCalman 1984).

The last example of change came from the school registration books. In the late 1880s children were more likely to be attending school regularly - defined as exceeding the minimum requirement. This was entirely voluntary; no legislation had been passed. The same voluntary trend can be seen by comparing attendance in 1884 and 1899 at the Hindmarsh Public School in South Australia (Davey and Wimhurst, forthcoming).

These subtle shifts have a common theme. They indicate a determined movement by parents towards giving their offspring a dependent childhood and some increased measure of adolescent freedom during their first working years. Consider how parents *could* have exploited their children and the very great economic incentive many of them had to do so. Given those conditions it is remarkable that instead they increasingly sent them to school more often, disregarded their legal right to take them out before they were 13 years old and refused to let their daughters join another household.

In discussing in Chapter 5 why couples turned to fertility control I concentrated on their personal traits and attitudes. In particular I focused on the middle-class ideology of the separate spheres and on the working-class concept of respectability. While I explained how these were consistent with the desire to control the size and spacing of one's family, I did not explore their links with how children should be brought up to adulthood. However, both world views shared very clear and very similar desires for their children.

The home-loving accountant and the respectable mechanic and their wives believed that the husband should be the sole wage earner. They wanted their offspring to be primarily students when children, have enough freedom to find a good job as youths and to have sufficient economic independence to marry when ready. The transitions to adulthood which existed were a compromise between what parents wanted for their children and what they could afford to give them. Hence the respectable working-class demand for a living wage which would ensure them of an opportunity to live the way they wanted without the constant threat of impending economic disaster (Hirst 1984, 91-6; Lee and Fahey 1986, 27).

I have argued that economic conditions required that parents retained the rights to their offsprings' labour. I have also argued that cultural attitudes resisted and resented this necessity. Increasingly through the nineteenth century parents found small ways to give their children more freedom. These aspirations came from the same set of values that had led couples to adopt the 'prudential' practice of prevention. Unfortunately, there is only fragmentary evidence that these attitudes emerged just prior to the fertility decline and therefore were a plausible catalyst. The evidence presented here certainly

supports this argument because the changes outlined can only be adequately explained by reference to values. Quiggin's (1985) findings also support the pre-eminence of cultural factors. She found that from 1861 to 1901 the middle-class Australian wife was under more and more ideological pressure to feel responsible for her childrens' spiritual and physical well-being. No comparable work has been done on the Australian working-class attitudes towards the family. Studies of the English working class though identify the beginnings of an articulate movement of self-conscious respectability in the mid Victorian era. However it only gained widespread acceptance later in the century (McCalman 1975; Levine 1985, 188-92). In short, the argument seems likely to be true.

This thesis began with the national image of a naive little boy. Let it end with the image of the street-wise larrikin. His elaborate dress reflected his income, his relatively secure billet with his parents and his own sense of self-worth. His hostility, on the other hand, told of his sense of frustration. In some respects Melburnians were able to take control of their lives. Parents and children were able to make the school system meet their own needs. They were also able to set some minimum requirements for their labour, specifically in the case of domestic service. And, of course, the parents could control their fertility. But, living under a regime of extreme economic insecurity, families could do little else except retain as much flexibility as possible. Our larrikin bore the brunt of that 'flexibility', along with his younger sister who was kept from school two days a week to mind the baby and his older brother who had postponed marriage yet again.

Appendix A
Classifying Occupations

At first glance any information on the occupations of a population seems so rich that it is almost impossible to resist the temptation to use it. Occupation data can describe the economy's structure, and nineteenth-century census classifications which group occupations by sector, materials used or the function of work suit this purpose reasonably well. However, particularly when individual level data are available researchers usually try to use occupations to place people (invariably men or through them their family members) in an economic or social hierarchy (Katz 1972). The discussion in Chapter 3 on the weaknesses and inconsistencies of Victoria's census classifications of occupations indicates that it would be impossible to use them to construct a profile of social classes in Melbourne. For that one would ideally want a means of ranking occupations by the income, wealth, and prestige awarded men holding each job. Such a scale would have enough gradations that it could be used as an interval scale in multivariate analysis. Unfortunately, there is no such classification system for nineteenth-century British and overseas British societies and there is never likely to be one. One obvious reason is that a status or even an economic scheme which relied only on occupation would ignore other important components such as consumption patterns and inherited status and wealth.

However, even if we restrict ourselves to what could conceivably be teased out of an occupation measure, the existing data are woefully deficient. Victorians compulsively asked men their 'rank or occupation' on almost each type of record. Unfortunately, after coding every occupation the researcher still knows very little about a person's worklife. Although I noted approximately 750 distinct occupation titles from the various data sets I collected during my research, only a handful were common. For example, out of the 1,104 grooms in the suburban marriage sample half could be subsumed under only 27 separate occupations. This does not mean Melbourne's economy was so simple that it did not have a complex division of labour. Rather the grooms were following a convention of using a broad occupation title to describe their work. As such it is of little use in describing the groom's work, the responsibilities he held, or the income he received. The label 'blacksmith' or 'engineer', for instance, encompassed a wide variety of jobs and job

settings (Fry 1956a, 327). A 'baker' could have owned a shop and employed a journeyman, worked as a foreman at a biscuit factory or he could have been a bakeshop's carter who gave a hand in moulding bread in the mornings. If we cannot link data sets such as marriage certificates with rate books, and piece together whether the artisan owned his own workshop, masters cannot be separated from workingmen. Also lost is the crucial distinction between the labour aristocracy who had steady jobs and those who faced intermittent unemployment and were forced to move frequently in search of work and patient landlords. Although some industries used much more casual labour than others, all kept on a skeleton staff during slack times and those workers would have been far more privileged.

Without being able to pinpoint the nature of the work we therefore cannot adequately describe the rewards that came with the job. Of course historians can make informed guesses about the prestige or status ranking of some dissimilar groups but it is impossible to validate, for example, whether a tradesman should be ranked above or below small shopkeepers. The more tangible reward of income is just as elusive. There is no definitive source for wages received by each occupation in Melbourne, partly because occupational categories encompass so much variety. Official sources gave a range of wage rates for some types of work, newspaper advertisements rarely mentioned wages, and the wage books of actual firms are scarce, particularly before the 1880s, and those that survived were unusual.

Despite all of these shortcomings occupations are usually the only information on records that can be used to flesh out a person's position and circumstances in the society and economy. If we ignored the data because it was less than perfect we would be left with an unacceptably circumscribed view of the individual. During the first stages of analysis I used an occupational classification scheme designed by M. B. Katz (1972, 1975) for a project comparing five North American commercial cities and for an intensive study of Hamilton, Ontario in 1851 to 1871. It purports to measure the economic ranking of occupations. Five divisions are intended to encompass all males from the most well-to-do to the poorest. The categories do not lend themselves to names and I have followed Katz's example by merely designating them with Roman numerals. Group I is made up of the major professions such as law, medicine, banking, the civil service and the clergy. Most merchants and manufacturers were also included here. Lesser professionals such as accountants, reporters and teachers were in Group II along with smaller shopkeepers and other retailers. The genteel white-collar jobs such as clerk and salesman also were in that group. The middle rank, by far the most numerous, were the skilled artisans. Group IV were the semi-skilled workers. Many had low paying jobs in the service sector, working as messengers, cabmen, grooms or caretakers. Others could be found in the railways, on

ships or in factories. Group V workers were almost exclusively labourers. Katz devised this scheme by verifying where each occupation should be placed according to the average wealth holdings of the men. Wealth was approximated by the value of all houses, shops and land owned or occupied.

When I adapted Katz's scheme to the Melbourne data I used the sample of householders in Richmond, Hawthorn and North Melbourne in the early 1880s which I had collected to describe the social structure of the neighbourhoods surrounding two Melbourne State schools (see Chapter 2, Section 5 for a description of the data set). I could only use the annual value of the house which was occupied, not other property owned. After comparing the average home values for specific occupations with the averages for the stratas I reclassified some occupations. The most important was that clerks were combined with the skilled artisans. I suspect that this would have been a more appropriate place for the Hamilton clerks as well, but that Katz wanted his occupation scale to measure both income and prestige rewards.

After modifying his scale I used it in the early versions of all of my analysis. It had seemed the appropriate choice for several reasons. Hamilton and Ontario were similar. During the time periods of the respective studies both cities were predominantly commercial and populated by British migrants and their descendants. Metal works led the early stages of industrialization because the works were too heavy to import inexpensively and in slack times the foundries could stay in business doing repair work. The building trades also flourished during the self-generated economic boom and other manufacturers of inexpensive items such as boots and shoes benefited as well. In short their economic structures were alike. Since they shared the same cultural background most names for occupations had the same meaning. More prosaically the sheer number of specific job titles was too overwhelming at the beginning of my research. Katz's scheme was intended for a purpose very like mine *and*, in an appendix to a readily available book, he provided a list of occupations and their classification (Katz 1975, 343-8).

However, at the end I had to abandon Katz's scale. I found it increasingly frustrating to interpret my tables because I was unsure of what the gradations meant. In particular I could not distinguish the characteristics which set Group II apart from the others. I was continually thinking of them as half-way between Group I and Group III, but without an individual identity. I finally concluded that a single scale, be it based on economics, status or an amalgamation of both, was not the most enlightening way to investigate the questions which concerned me.

I next turned to an occupational classification scheme designed for the South

Australian Hindmarsh Project.[1] In its expanded form it includes 15 categories: professional and proprietor, merchant and agent, business employee, government and institution employee, seller of services and semi-professional, manufacturer and master, skilled worker, transport worker, labourer and other unskilled worker, servant, primary industry proprietor, primary industry worker, other employed, not employed and unknown. Clearly this is too many and in practice they collapsed several groups or singled out only a few for study (e.g. Davey and Wimshurst forthcoming). While the scheme has some aspects of an economic and status scale, it is primarily a functional division. I found that this strategy had both strengths and weaknesses. 'Government and institution employees' would incorporate chief clerks in the public service making £600 a year and warders in a lunatic asylum on an annual salary of less than £150. On the other hand I was attracted to the idea of including all businesses together regardless of the scale of their commercial efforts.

In the end I designed my own classification which incorporated the most readily interpretable aspects of both schemes. Although I do not claim it is the definitive occupational scheme it has served my purposes. Partly this is because I understood the reasons for the gradations. More importantly though, it revealed differences in behaviour which had been submerged by Katz's scale. I emphasize my early experience because so many occupational divisions used in nineteenth-century studies use a similar approach. Consequently, as I discuss the details of my own scheme I will compare it to the one from Katz which I modified.

As Table A-1 shows, the two schemes are basically very similar. The only significant difference is that the non-manual occpuations have been put into three categories rather than two. Almost all of the Group III workers have been classified as skilled manual workers; semi-skilled workers and Group IV and labourers and Group V are virtually identical.

'Professionals' consist of a very broad class of people. The great professions of law and medicine are included along with high ranking civil servants. So are the clergy, extending from the Anglican priest to the lowly Salvation Army Chaplain. The lesser professions are also included here, that is the teachers, reporters and accountants. Following a well-worn but not very defensible practice, artists and performers are also put in this group, mostly because they are even more inappropriate in any other category. Katz intended his Group I to represent the upper and upper middle classes, which, by no stretch of the imagination, ever included such men as State school teachers. Professionals

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[1]Pavla Miller of the University of Melbourne kindly gave me a copy of the Hindmarsh Project's coding book for occupations.

Table A-1: Number of male householders according to two systems of classifying occupations.

Modified Katz's scheme	Profes-sional	Busi-ness	White Collar	Skilled Manual	Semi-Skilled	Lab-ourer
I	6	0	17	0	0	0
II	55	29	120	22	10	0
III	0	48	18	583	47	0
IV	0	0	8	72	303	0
V	0	0	0	0	1	180

Source: North Melbourne, Richmond and Hawthorn Rate Book Sample, 1882/3.
Note: Female occupiers excluded.

by my classification include many more people. As a group they are the most economically advantaged, but they maintain only a slight advantage over the average businessman (Table A-2). Their property is valued only marginally higher than those of the lesser professionals and small shopkeepers in Katz's Group II.

'Businessman' is self-explanatory. Doubtless it would be useful to distinguish between the owner of a department store and the man with the shop down the alley who sold lollies and fruit. However, the scale of the enterprise simply cannot be inferred from occupation titles. It is much more satisfactory to group together all men who appear to be proprietors of retailing, wholesaling or manufacturing concerns. When in doubt I assigned the occupation to another classification. Hawkers and wood merchants, who were mostly carters, are the only 'businessmen' intentionally excluded.

On the whole businessmen did well for themselves. Many of these men lived in the same building they used to conduct business. It seemed unreasonable to equate the hotelkeeper living in a £100 hotel who may not have been breaking even with a successful manufacturing jeweller whose Hawthorn home had the same value. Nonetheless, the average value of the houses of businessmen not living in their workplace was about the same and on a par with the professionals.

The 'white-collar' group are intended to be modestly paid or commissioned employees. They are the clerks, salesmen and agents. Teachers outside of mainstream education, such as the gymnastic instructor and music teacher, are put here along with

Table A-2: Mean annual value of houses by the occupation of the householder, comparison of two systems of classifying occupations.

	All Dwellings			Houses Only		
Modified Katz's scheme	Mean	Std error	N	Mean	Std error	N
I	93.5	13.1	23	94.3	14.0	21
II	45.5	17.1	292	41.6	2.1	221
III	23.6	0.6	697	21.8	0.5	643
IV	17.3	0.4	383	16.8	0.4	369
V	15.1	0.4	263	15.0	0.3	257
Female-head	21.2	1.2	188	21.1	1.2	182
My scheme						
Professional	52.9	7.8	61	52.9	4.7	61
Businessmen	51.1	2.3	77	45.5	2.2	76
White Collar	27.9	2.9	163	27.1	4.3	91
Skilled Manual	23.4	0.6	677	21.5	0.5	624
Semi-skilled	18.4	0.5	361	17.9	0.4	346
Labourers	15.1	0.4	262	15.0	0.3	256
Female-head	21.2	1.2	188	21.1	1.2	182

Source: North Melbourne, Richmond and Hawthorn Rate Book Sample, 1882/3.
Note: 'All dwellings' only include buildings used as homes, although they may also be shops or workshops.

most managers. Because of their responsibilities and because they had to deal with laws and court proceedings, members of the police force are in this group as well. The values of the houses these men lived in shows what a precarious hold they had on middle-class respectability. They were only slightly above that of skilled manual workers.

'Skilled manual' is probably an exaggeratedly exalted term for the men in that group. The de-emphasis on apprenticeships, the periodic scarcity of skilled workers and the segmentation of many production processes meant that what was, or was for some men, a skilled trade could also be performed by those who had not been formally trained. As a rule I erred on the side of generosity. Virtually all manual workers involved in some form of manufacturing are in this group. The only exceptions are those who were obviously in jobs requiring few skills and paying very little.

'Semi-skilled' contains the rest, except for labourers. As in Katz's scheme they are

primarily in the service economy. While such a category is necessary I am still relatively unsatisfied with it. Many of these men were self-employed. Carters or cabmen, particularly if they had sons, could make a good income. However, this would have required a bit of luck and a great deal of hard work. Some railway and government workers are also in this group. Although wages could be low and it did not require many qualifications to be a porter, it was steady work. Despite my reservations of the classifications of the manual workers, there is a gradation, though small, in the values of their homes.

The specific male job titles I recorded from the rate books, school registers, marriage and birth certificates are listed below according to the classification under which I placed them. No attempt has been made to combine equivalent titles. I also have an unclassifiable section. The title 'gentlemen' may seem inappropriate there. However, these men are not included in another group partly because my scheme is based on functional criteria and is not intended to be a scale. Were it a scale I would still be reluctant to code gentlemen. When tracing individuals in rate books I found that the term was used erratically, frequently describing men who in other years reported relatively lowly occupations. I suspect it had become a convention for rate collectors and probably others to use the title when they did not know the actual occupation.

PROFESSIONALS

Accountant
Actor
Actuary
Analyst
Analytical chemist
Anglican reader
Architect
Army pensioner
Artist
Bank accountant
Bank manager
Banker
Baptist minister
Barrister at law
British Counsel to Eygpt
Broker
Building surveyor
Captain
Chaplain in Salvation Army
Church of England minister
Church officer
Civil engineer
Civil Servant
Civil Servant, Hawthorn
Clergyman
Comedian
Commissioned officer
Commissioner of Audit
Congregational minister
Dancer
Dentist
Doctor
Drill instructor
Electrical engineer
Evangelist
Financier
Government Officer
Governor of gaol
Graduate
Grain broker
Hotel broker
Inspector of Factories
Inspector of Police
Inspector of Schools
Insurance surveyor
Journalist
Law student
Lecturer at University
Lieutenant, Royal Navy
Magistrate
Marine surveyor
Medical assistant
Medical attendant
Medical practitioner

Mercantile broker
Military officer
Minister
Minister of religion
Missionary
Musician
Naval Officer
Notary Public
Officer
Officer in Royal Engineers
Operatic artist
Physician
Police Magistrate
Presbyterian minister
Private gentleman
Professor of Music
Public auditor
Publisher
Reporter
Revenue officer
Reverend, Church of England
Sanitary engineer
School master
Scripture reader
Sea captain
Secretary
Secretary, Asylum for Idiots
Secretary, Life Insurance Co.
Secretary, National Agricultural Society
Secretary, Shire
Share broker
Solicitor
Stock and share broker
Student
Superintendent of convicts
Superintendent, Benevolent Asylum
Superintendent of Hospital
Surgeon
Surgeon dentist
Surveyor
Teacher
Temperance missionary
Town clerk
Town surveyor
Treasurer
Under treasurer
Vet
Wesleyan minister

WHITE COLLAR

Agent
Architectural draughtsman
Assistant Harbour Master
Assurance agent
Attendant, Melbourne Library
Bank clerk
Bicycle agent
Book seller's assistant
Bookkeeper
Brewer's traveller
Canvasser
Cashier
Cattle salesman
Clerk
Clerk in Order
Clerk of Courts
Clerk of Paper
Clerk of Works
Clerk, Civil Servant
Clerk, Railway Department
Clothier's assistant
Collector
Collector, HM Customs
Collector, Metro Gas Co.
Commercial salesman
Commercial traveller
Commissioned agent
Constable
Conveyancing clerk
Customs agent
Customs officer
Dentist's assistant
Draper's assistant
Draughtsman
Drawing master
Druggist's assistant
Education Department
Excise officer
Finance agent
Fishing manager
Furniture salesman
Gas inspector
Government Servant
Grocer's assistant
Gymnastic instructor
Hotel manager
House agent
Importer's agent

Inspector
Inspector of stock
Insurance agent
Interpreter
Invoice clerk
Labour agent
Land agent
Law clerk
Librarian, Bank of England
Mail contractor
Manager
Manager of company
Manager of store
Manager, Building Society
Manager, *Riverina Herald*
Manager, Wright and Orr
Manager, brick works
Manager, bus rank
Manager, iron works
Managing law clerk
Mercantile clerk
Mineral agent
Mining agent
Mining manager
Music teacher
Nursery manager
Plumbing inspector
Police Sergeant
Police constable
Police department
Police superintendent
Policeman
Post and telegraph master
Printer's reader
Public servant
Public servant,
Post Office Department
Purser
Quarter master
Railway inspector
Railway officer
Rate collector
Reader
Sack merchant
Salesman
Sergeant
Senior constable
Sheriff
Shipping clerk
Shop assistant
Shorthand writer
Singing master
Station agent
Station manager
Station master
Station overseer
Stock agent
Surveyor's assistant
Tea salesman
Teacher of metaphysics
Telegraph operator
Telegraphist
Theatrical agent
Timber agent
Timber clerk
Traveller
Traveller and contractor
Truant officer
University employee
Warden
Warden, Lunatic Asylum
Water rate collector
Wool broker

BUSINESSMEN

Agriculturalist
Auctioneer
Baker and confectioner
Baker and grocer
Bicycle importer
Bicycle manufacturer
Bird dealer
Bird fancier
Boarding house keeper
Book seller
Boot dealer
Boot importer
Boot maker and dealer
Boot manufacturer and currier
Boot manufacturer
Boot merchant
Boot upper manufacturer
Bottle merchant
Brick manufacturer
Candle dealer
Cement manufacturer
Chemist
Chemist and soap maker
Cigar manufacturer

Clothing manufacturer
Coal merchant
Coffee House proprietor
Coffee House keeper
Cordial manufacturer
Corn dealer
Corn merchant
Cotton merchant
Customs clerk
Dealer
Dealer in fancy goods
Fancy goods importer
Farmer
Farmer and orchardist
Fellmonger
Fish monger
Fruiterer
Furniture dealer
Furniture manufacturer
General dealer
General importer
Gingerbeer maker
Glass manufacturer
Grain dealer
Grazier
Grazier and butcher
Greengrocer
Grocer
Grocer and brewer
Hall keeper
Hardware importer
Hardware manufacturer
Hide and skin merchant
Horse dealer
Hotel keeper
Importer
Inn keeper
Iron merchant
Land owner
Land owner and farmer
Landlord
Lead manufacturer
Leather merchant
Leather trader
Manufacturer
Manufacturer of horse medicine
Manufacturing chemist
Manufacturing stationer
Merchant
Music seller
Newsagent
Newspaper proprietor
Orchardist
Pawnbroker
Pharmacist
Piano importer
Piano manufacturer
Picture frame manufacturer
Pig dealer
Printer and publisher
Produce merchant
Publican
Restaurant keeper
Selector
Shawl merchant
Sheep farmer
Ship owner
Shopman
Slipper manufacturer
Softgoods man
Somerat Herald
Speculator
Squatter
Starch manufacturer
Station owner
Stationer
Store-keeper
Tea merchant
Timber merchant
Tobacco manufacturer
Tobacco merchant
Tobacconist
Victualler
Warehouseman
Wine and spirit merchant
Wine merchant
Woollen manufacturer
Yeast merchant

SKILLED MANUAL

Baker
Barber
Basket maker
Bell hanger
Bicycle maker
Billiard maker
Blacksmith
Blacksmith and builder
Blind maker

Boiler maker
Bolt maker
Bookbinder
Boot and shoe maker
Boot closer
Boot finisher
Boot machinist
Boot maker
Bottler
Box maker
Brass finisher
Brass founder
Brewer
Brewer's employee
Brick builder
Brick carter
Brick layer
Brick maker
Brush maker
Builder
Butcher
Cabinet maker
Calico printer
Candle maker
Carpenter
Carpenter and builder
Carriage builder
Carriage cleaner
Carver
Carver and gilder
Casket maker
Chaff cutter
Chair maker
China packer
Churn maker
Cigar maker
Clinker
Coach body maker
Coach builder
Coach painter
Coach smith
Coach trimmer
Coffee roaster
Collar maker
Compositor
Confectioner
Contractor
Contractor and decorator
Cooper
Coppersmith
Cotton spinner
Currier
Cutter
Decorative painter
Decorator
Distiller
Draper
Dredger
Dresser
Druggist
Dyer
Electrician
Engine cleaner
Engine driver
Engine driver,
Railway Department
Engine fitter
Engineer
Engraver
Factory foreman
Fancy leather cutter
Farrier
Fender fitter
Fitter
Flag maker
Florist
Flower maker
Foreman
French polisher
Furnaceman
Furniture maker
Furniture repairer
Furrier
Gas stoker
Gas-fitter
Gas-fitter and bell hanger
General smith
Gilder and polisher
Girder maker
Glacier
Glass blower
Glass silverer
Glass turner
Glazier
Goldsmith
Grainer
Grease maker
Grinder
Grinder maker
Gripman

Gunsmith
Ham curer
Hammerman
Harness maker
Hatter
Horse trainer
Hosier
House decorator
House painter
House painter and decorator
Implement maker
Ink maker
Iron dresser
Iron founder
Iron monger
Iron moulder
Iron moulder's furnance man
Iron turner
Iron worker
Jam factory worker
Japanner
Jeweller
Joiner
Lather
Leather cutter
Leather dresser
Leather finisher
Line printer
Lithographic artist
Lithographic printer
Locomotive fireman
Machine fitter
Machine maker
Machine ruler
Machinist
Maltster
Manager of a machine
Marble polisher
Marble setter
Mason
Master
Master mariner
Master builder
Master iron founder
Mattress maker
Mechanic
Mechanical engineer
Metal polisher
Meter maker
Miller
Millwright
Model maker
Moulder
Nurseryman
Oil and colourman
Operative
Organ builder
Outfitter
Oven maker
Painter
Painter and paperhanger
Paper maker
Pastry cook
Pattern maker
Photographer
Pianoforte maker
Picture framer
Pilot
Pipe and tile layer
Pipe maker
Plasterer
Plate layer
Plumber
Plumber and gas-fitter
Pocketbook maker
Pointsman
Polisher
Portmanteau maker
Potter
Poulterer
Presser
Printer
Printer's colourer
Providore
Railway foreman
Railway yard foreman
Rigger
Ropemaker
Saddler
Saddler and harness maker
Sail maker
Saw maker
Sawmiller
Saw sharpener
Sawyer
Sculptor
Ship builder
Ship carpenter
Ship chandler
Ship's providore

Shipwright
Shoemaker
Shunter
Shunter, Railway
Signalman
Signwriter
Silk dyer
Slater
Slaughterhouseman
Slinger
Silversmith
Smelter
Soap boiler
Soap maker
Sorter
Spring maker
Stage carpenter
Stained glass artist
Stevedore
Stoker
Stone carver
Stone mason
Surgical instrument maker
Tailor
Tailor and outfitter
Tailor's cutter
Tanner
Taxidermist
Tent maker
Tin and copper smith
Tin smith
Tobacco maker
Tracer
Tradesman
Trainer
Tuck pointer
Turncock
Turner
Turner and carver
Umbrella maker
Undertaker
Upholsterer
Veneer cutter
Wagon maker
Warp dresser
Washer
Watch maker
Weaver
Wheelwright
Whipmaker
Whitesmith
Wicker worker
Wine tester
Wire worker
Wood carver
Wood engraver
Wood machinist
Wood turner
Wool classer
Wool sorter
Wool washer
Zinc worker

SEMI-SKILLED

Attendant, Lunatic Asylum
Bacon curer
Bailiff
Bank porter
Barman
Beamer
Beamsman
Bill poster
Boatman
Boatswain
Bottle washer
Bus driver
Bus man
Butler
Cab driver
Cab man
Cab proprietor
Car man
Caretaker
Carriage proprietor
Carrier
Carter
Caterer
Cellarman
Chimneysweep
Cleaner
Cloth packer
Coach driver
Coach man
Commissariat
Cook
Cow keeper
Customs employee
Dairyman

Digger
Drayman
Driver
Drover
Fencer
Fireman
Fisherman
Gardener
Gas employee
Gatekeeper
General servant
Gentleman's nurse
Gentleman's servant
Gold digger
Groom
Guard
Habour Trust employee
Hairdresser
Handicapper
Hawker
Hen dresser
Herdsman
Hospital wardman
Hotel porter
Jockey
Keeper
Lamplighter
Letter carrier
Letter sorter
Light house keeper
Line repairer
Litter carrier
Lorry driver
Mail guard
Marine fireman
Mariner
Market gardener
Master carter
Messenger
Messenger, Sheriff's Department
Milkman
Miner
Nightman
Nurse
Nursery gardener
Office caretaker
Omnibus driver
Organ grinder
Organ tuner
Overseer
Oyster opener
Packer
Park keeper
Parker
Piano tuner
Porter
Postman
Quarryman
Railway cleaner
Railway employee
Railway gateman
Railway guard
Railway labourer
Railway porter
Railway servant
Sailor
Seaman
Shearer
Shepherd
Ship's cook
Ship's steward
Soldier
Stable hand
Station rider
Steward
Stock rider
Stone cutter
Storeman
Striker
Teamster
Ticket taker
Timekeeper
Toll collector
Torch setter
Tram conductor
Tram driver
Tramway employee
Trooper
Van owner
Verger
Wagonette driver
Wagonette proprietor
Waiter
Warder
Wardsman
Watchman
Weigher
Wood carter
Wood dealer
Wood merchant

Woodsplitter

LABOURER

Labourer
Labourer and miner
Wharf labourer

UNCLASSIFIABLE

Bachelor
Berger
Brothers work
Deceased
Gentleman
Householder
Nil
None special
Nothing special
Out of business
Private
Retired
Townsman
Workingman
Yeoman

Appendix B

North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew as Case Studies

In the marriage study three suburbs were used to represent behaviour throughout the urban area. Chapter 4 briefly addresses whether this was legitimate, but this appendix provides statistical support for that discussion by measuring the socio-demographic characteristics of the residents of the selected suburbs and constrasting them with those of the whole of Melbourne. It would be fruitless to claim that these three suburbs were the metropolitan area writ small. Still, by understanding their similarities and differences one can predict the direction of the biases and compensate for them while generalizing from them.

B.1 Population growth rates

Melbourne's late nineteenth-century population growth has frequently been exaggerated. McCarty has pointed out that its growth rates were of the same magnitude as those of other Australian capital cities. Nonetheless, at successive stages of development localities within the metropolitan area waxed and waned (Table B-1). North Melbourne, within walking distance of the central business district, grew first. Kew's apparent growth was due to the very small numbers living there in 1861. During the 1870s transport to the city improved and the southeastern suburbs grew at twice the pace of North Melbourne. The boom decade of the 1880s consolidated this advantage and even propelled its growth through the depression which whittled away the inner city's population. None of the suburbs had the same pattern of growth as Melbourne, but after the 1860s their combined rate of increase was almost identical.

B.2 Age distribution

The suburbs studied are best thought of as stable urban communities in the midst of a city, and indeed a colony, in the process of settling down to have a family. The age distribution of the suburbs' population compared with that of metropolitan Melbourne demonstrates this. The urban age composition was shaped by population surges due to international migration and subsequent baby booms. These forces, rather than any features germane to Melbourne or the suburbs, determined the relative sizes of age

Table B-1: Average annual growth rates for Melbourne and selected suburbs, 1861-1901.

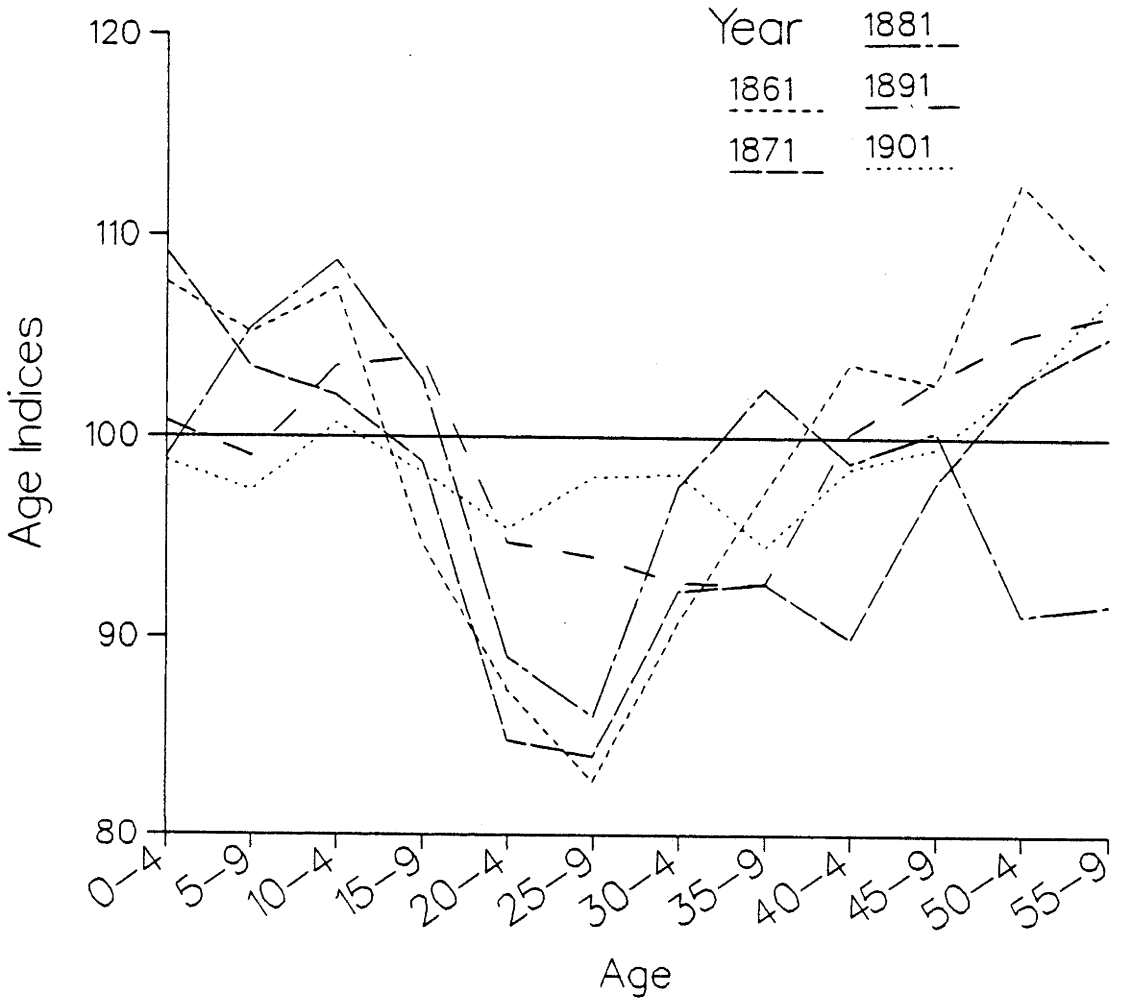
	Melbourne	North Melbourne	Hawthorn	Kew	Total for suburbs
1861-71	4.7	6.5	3.5	5.2	5.7
1871-81	3.4	2.8	5.9	5.7	3.8
1881-91	5.6	1.6	11.8	6.6	5.5
1891-01	0.2	-1.5	0.9	1.3	0.0

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.
Note: Melbourne's borders expand during the period. See Appendix D for the definition used.

groups. The more important issue is whether at any given time specific age-groups were equally prevalent in the entire city and the selected suburbs. Using age-specific indices is a convenient way to illustrate this. Each five year age group is given as a proportion of the suburbs' population and divided by the proportion that age group represented in Melbourne's population. The ratio is expressed as a percentage. That is, if 25-29 year olds were 20 per cent of the suburbs' population and 10 per cent of Melbourne's population the index would be 200 per cent. Figures B-1 and B-2 graph the indices for each census year.

The age compositions of the city and the selected suburbs were substantially different, but the differences were regular and tended to diminish with time. From 1861 to 1881 the surburbs had a larger proportion of children under 15 years of age. Afterwards the difference disappears in the case of males and reverses for females. Similarly, the deficit of young adults of both sexes in North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew diminished. Women aged from 30 to 45 years and to a lesser extent men aged 35 to 49 years were about as prevalent in the suburbs as in the entire city. The indices imply that families with dependent children were a more dominant feature of the surburban population than in Melbourne generally. As the century progressed and greater proportions of Melburnians lived away from the city's centre, the studied suburbs became a more accurate reflection of the entire urban population.

Figure B-1: Age indices of males in the selected suburbs compared to all males in Melbourne, 1861-1901.

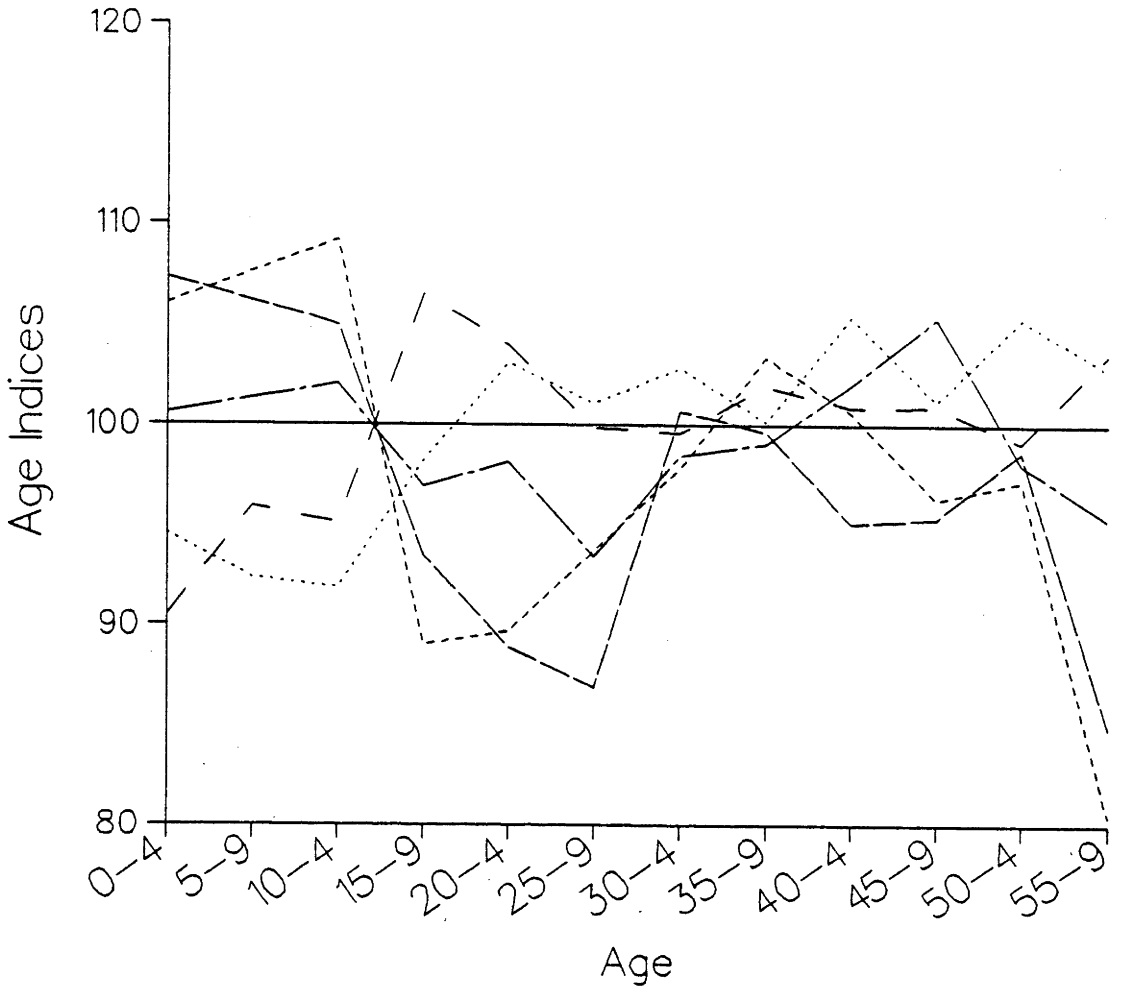


Source: *Censuses of Victoria* 1861-1901.

B.3 Marital status

The marital status of the residents also demonstrates the same features (Table B-2). The presence of never-married women in the suburbs grew through the 1860s and 1870s and levelled out in the 1880s, but all the time closely reflected the pattern in Melbourne as a whole. By contrast, the 25-29 and 30-34 year old males were much more likely to be married if they were living in the suburbs. This difference was almost gone by 1891 because of an increase in the proportions never-married among suburban men. Since young unmarried women lived at home with their parents or worked in other people's homes as servants, women were evenly distributed throughout Melbourne regardless of marital status. In the earlier decades other areas of Melbourne provided relatively greater

Figure B-2: Age indices of females in the selected suburbs compared to all females in Melbourne, 1861-1901.



Source: *Censuses of Victoria* 1861-1901.

employment and housing opportunities for the unmarried man. With the improvement in transport and the growing preponderance of the native-born with roots in the suburbs there was less reason for unmarried men to live elsewhere.

B.4 Birthplaces

Even though the suburbs attracted a disproportionate number of families, the origins of their residents were remarkably similar to those of people living throughout Melbourne. The Victorian-born were only one or two percentage points more prevalent in North Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew. Melbourne's British migrants were more likely to come from England and Wales. The suburbs, on the other hand, had a greater concentration of Irish. This was not because of a bevy of Irish girls working in Kew and Hawthorn mansions, but because North Melbourne was the most Irish of Melbourne's suburbs.

Table B-2: Percentage never-married in Melbourne and the selected suburbs (Surb), 1861-1901.

	1861		1871		1881		1891		1901
	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb
Males									
15-19	99	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
20-24	84	79	83	81	85	85	86	87	89
25-29	50	41	53	44	53	49	56	54	61
30-34	32	23	33	24	33	31	34	36	38
35-39	22	18	22	15	23	23	23	22	25
40-44	16	15	17	12	20	20	18	19	19
45-49	15	13	14	11	15	15	15	17	16
50-54	13	13	14	14	13	12	15	14	14
Females									
15-19	92	93	95	95	97	97	97	98	98
20-24	52	48	62	60	70	72	68	73	78
25-29	23	21	33	28	39	39	38	40	53
30-34	12	9	16	13	22	22	24	29	33
35-39	8	5	9	9	14	16	18	20	23
40-44	6	3	7	5	11	13	12	16	19
45-49	6	3	6	2	8	9	10	11	16
50-54	5	3	6	5	6	8	9	9	12

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.

B.5 Occupations

The Victorian censuses gave detailed information by occupation, but their classification systems make it difficult to construct comparable categories of industrial sectors or occupational status.[1] As an additional frustration occupations were not given by localities smaller than metropolitan Melbourne after 1871. An unpublished thesis by L.A. Fricker (1979) used occupiers' occupations from municipal ratebooks to estimate the distribution of the male workforce in each Melbourne suburb. I use her findings here.

Table B-4 gives the industrial structure of the male workforce in 1861 and 1871 from the censuses. For 1881 to 1901 municipal ratebooks are used. Two of the changes

[1]These failings of the colony's censuses are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Table B-3: Birthplaces of the residents of Melbourne and selected suburbs (Surb), 1861-1901.

	1861		1871		1881		1891		1901	
Birthplace	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb	Melb	Surb
Victoria	26	28	41	43	53	54	57	58	69	68
Other Australasia	4	4	5	4	6	6	9	9	8	7
England and Wales	38	34	28	25	21	19	18	17	12	12
Scotland	11	12	8	8	6	6	5	5	3	6
Ireland	17	20	15	17	11	13	8	9	5	6
Other country	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: *Censuses of Victoria*, 1861-1901.

over time are worth noting. In the 1860s there was a decline in the proportion of agricultural and mining workers. The largest decrease was in Hawthorn and Kew and reflects the demise of market gardening. As these suburbs developed the gardeners re-established themselves farther away from the centre of the city. Secondly, two of the suburbs had a decline in the relative amount of manufacturing employment during the 1880s. The decline in the same sector for all three suburbs combined is due equally to those individual declines and to Hawthorn's more rapid growth. It was during the 1880s that Hawthorn outstripped North Melbourne's population.

The differences between the suburbs are more enlightening. North Melbourne was clearly a working-class suburb from 1861 all the way to 1901. Compared to the other two suburbs it had a disproportionate part of its male workforce involved in manufacturing, building and transport. The latter was due to the railway yards located on its borders. Hawthorn and Kew were the homes for more professionals, government employees and, from 1871, men involved in commerce. The only distinction between Hawthorn and Kew was that the elite suburb had a smaller part of its workforce involved in manufacturing.

The industrial breakdown of the male workforce has an obvious link with the class or status group composition of the suburbs. However, it is a not a substitute. Table B-4 was included because it was the only system of categorizing occupations that could be applied to both census and ratebook data and so give comparable measures over a long time span for each suburb. The town clerk of each municipality did not attempt to produce elaborate classification schemes. He just recorded the occupation the occupier

Table B-4: Distribution of the male workforce in selected suburbs by industrial sector, 1861-1901.

	All study suburbs					North Melbourne				
	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Commercial	21	21	26	30	28	21	20	22	23	24
Manufacturing	26	31	27	23	23	30	36	33	29	29
Building	17	18	16	17	14	20	20	20	20	17
Transportation	13	13	12	11	13	14	13	15	17	18
Agriculture/ Mining	12	8	7	5	5	6	4	4	3	3
Personal Service	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Professional	4	4	5	6	8	3	3	2	1	2
Government	3	2	5	5	6	2	1	2	2	2

	Hawthorn					Kew				
	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Commercial	18	24	35	37	38	21	26	31	30	35
Manufacturing	19	24	20	18	19	10	15	14	16	11
Building	9	10	9	16	10	12	16	7	10	11
Transportation	9	8	7	6	7	9	5	6	7	9
Agriculture/ Mining	26	18	10	5	5	19	17	14	11	9
Personal Service	9	6	2	1	2	7	7	5	2	2
Professional	5	7	10	10	10	8	7	11	13	13
Government	5	4	7	7	9	5	6	12	10	7

Source: Fricker (1978, 204-6).

reported. Fricker was able to use those unadorned occupations to construct an occupational status measure.

In Table B-5 the status distribution of the study suburbs are compared with a composite measure of Melbourne which did not include the City of Melbourne. The large proportion of professional men living in Hawthorn and Kew was the most striking distinction between the three suburbs. The result was that the study suburbs taken together have two to three times the expected proportion of professionals when compared to Melbourne. Hawthorn and Kew also have more minor profesionals, middle-sized businessmen and white-collar workers than North Melbourne. Among the working class

North Melbourne's population was spread relatively evenly among the skill levels. On the other side of the Yarra, the bulk of Hawthorn's working class and, to a greater extent, Kew's working class was concentrated in the semi-skilled jobs. Many of these would have been held by men providing services to the middle and upper classes in jobs such as cabdriving and gardening. However, the concentration should not be exaggerated; Hawthorn and Kew did have labourers and skilled tradesmen. The suburbs taken together appear deficient only in tradesmen.

It would be better if the class composition of the suburbs could be studied from 1861. However, Table B-4 shows that the differences between the suburbs and Melbourne were not extreme, and should not hamper cautious generalizations from the suburbs to Melbourne. The change in the industrial and status structures within the suburbs over time are of greater concern. They are the result, though, of changes in the relative sizes of the suburbs and not of fundamental changes in any one the suburbs.

Table B-5: Distribution of occupational status groups, Melbourne and selected suburbs, 1881-1901.

	North Melbourne			Hawthorn			Kew		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Professional	2	2	2	15	14	12	21	15	15
Minor professions and storekeepers	13	13	12	20	25	25	27	23	21
White Collar	13	13	15	19	20	21	11	21	20
Skilled Manual	29	24	20	13	19	15	9	16	16
Semi-skilled	23	26	27	25	16	19	23	20	21
Unskilled	21	21	24	6	6	7	8	6	7

	All study suburbs			Melbourne		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Professional	14	10	9	4	5	5
Minor professions and storekeepers	20	20	19	17	17	16
White Collar	17	18	18	17	16	18
Skilled Manual	15	20	17	25	25	22
Semi-skilled	24	20	23	24	24	25
Unskilled	9	12	14	14	13	14

Sources: Derived from Fricker (1978).

Appendix C
Brides' Occupations

The following titles were collected from the sample of marriage certificates described in Chapter 4, Section 1.2. I have organized them according to the categories used in Section 2.4 to discuss the effects of employment on age at marriage. In the analysis brides working in the clothing industry and in other forms of manufacturing were combined.

Home

BLANK, At home, At home with parents, Bricklayer's daughter, Dairyman's daughter, Domestic duties, Domestic life, Gentlewoman, Home duties, Household duties, Housework, Lady, Living with parents, Member of household, Nil, No occupation, No profession, None, None special, None in particular, Not any, Private, Private life, Spinster, Staying with relative

Servant

Companion, Cook, Cook and laundress, Domestic, Domestic assistant, Domestic servant, General servant, Housekeeper, Housemaid, Lady's companion, Lady's maid, Laundress, Servant

Clothing industry

Assistant, Costumiere, Dressmaker, Finisher, Machinist, Mantle maker, Milliner, Needlewoman, Seamstress, Tailoress, Vest maker

Other manufacturing

Artisan, Book sewer, Boot fitter, Boot flowerist, Boot machinist, Brush maker, Factory hand, Tea packer, Upholstress

Teaching

Governess, School mistress, School teacher, Teacher, Teacher of music

Other occupations

Actress, Barmaid, Boarding house keeper, Chaplain in Salvation Army, Confectioner, Draper, Farming, Grocer, Head nurse, Hotelkeeper, Merchant, Milkman, Nurse, Saleswoman, Servant Registry Office keeper, Stewardess, Storekeeper, Typewriter, Waitress, Warder in asylum

Appendix D
Definition of Melbourne

The metropolitan area of Melbourne grew during the late nineteenth century not only in terms of population but in area. Agricultural districts designated as shires in 1871 met with railway contractors and housing developers during the late 1870s and the 1880s. When I collected the birth certificates for the work presented in Chapter 5 and tabulated descriptions of Melbourne from census tables I used a definition of Melbourne which reflected that growth. As much as possible the definition argeed with McCarty's (1970, 130) scheme. However, since his criteria of Melbourne for 1881 included only one-half of the population of six districts, I included only the three most populous. The list of suburbs used from the census reports in each year are listed below. Following those are the registration districts used in the birth samples.

The census for 1901 posed a special difficulty because the information on marital stautus of the population by age and sex was only given for the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. Fortunately in 1901 this area is very similar to the ideal definition of Melbourne. The only difference is that the Board of Works district includeed a proportion of three shires: Heidelberg, Nunawading and Moorabbin. The official definition included 80 per cent of Heidelberg but less than 20 percent of the population of the other shires. The total population of Heidelberg in that year amounted to 80 per cent of the combined total population of all three shires. I compromised by sampling all of Heidelberg's births and none in others and used the Board of Works population as the base for the fertility rates.

Cities, towns, boroughs and shires

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Boroondara				X	X
Brighton	X	X	X	X	X
Brunswick			X	X	X
Caulfield			X	X	X
Coburg			X	X	X
Collingwood	X	X	X	X	X
Emerald Hill/South Melbourne	X	X	X	X	X
Essendon				X	X
Essendon & Flemington			X		
Fitzroy	X	X	X	X	X
Flemington & Kensington				X	X
Footscray	X	X	X	X	X
Hawthorn	X	X	X	X	X
Heidelberg				X	X
Hotham/North Melbourne	X	X	X	X	X
Kew	X	X	X	X	X
Malvern			X	X	X
Melbourne	X	X	X	X	X
Northcote				X	X
Prahran	X	X	X	X	X
Preston					X
Richmond	X	X	X	X	X
Sandridge/Port Melbourne	X	X	X	X	X
St Kilda	X	X	X	X	X
Williamstown	X	X	X	X	X

Registration Districts

1871 Brighton, Collingwood, Emerald Hill, Footscray, Boroondara, Kew, Malvern, North Melbourne, South Melbourne, West Melbourne, Prahran, Richmond, Sandridge, South Yarra, St. Kilda, Williamstown

1881 Brighton, Brunswick, Carlton, Caulfield, Coburg, Collingwood, Emerald Hill, Essendon, North Fitzroy, Flemington, Footscray, Hawthorn, Hotham East, Hotham West, Kew, Malvern, South Melbourne, Prahran, Richmond, Sandridge, South Yarra, St. Kilda, Toorak, Williamstown

1891 Armadale, Ascot Vale, Balwyn, Brighton, Brunswick, East Brunswick, Camberwell, Carlton, North Carlton, Caulfield, Clifton Hill, Coburg,

Collingwood, Elsternwick, Essendon, North Fitxroy, South Fitzroy, Flemington, Footscray, Hawthorn, Heidelberg, Hotham East, Hotham West, Kensington, Kew, Malvern, East Melbourne, South Melbourne, West Melbourne, Northcote, Port Melbourne

1900 Albert Park, Armadale, Ascot Vale, Balwyn, Brighton, Brunswick, Brunswick East, Camberwell, Carlton, Caulfield, Clifton Hill, Coburg, Collingwood, Elsternwick, Essendon, Fairfield, North Fitzroy, South Fitzroy, Flemington, Footscray, Hawthorn, Heidelberg, Hotham East, Hothan West, Kensington, Kew, Malvern, Government Statist, East Melbourne, South Melbourne, West Melbourne, Newport, Northcote, Port Melbourne, Prahran, Preston, Richmond, South Yarra, St. Kilda, Williamstown

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