

Introduction

This is the story of an industrial suburb on the fringe of the City of Melbourne told by people who have lived there most of their lives. Nearly all were born before the Great War, many are in their seventies and eighties.

Their recollections, transcribed and edited from taped interviews, are of the ordinary fabric of life in Collingwood; memories of work and play, of shopping and family life, of local faces and places, as well as of the Wars and the Depression.

The twenty-five Collingwood residents whose memories are collected here learned in one way or another that a small group in the community, the Collingwood History Committee, thought it important to record their stories.

Some were relatives, neighbours and friends of those interviewing; some

were contacted through friends and acquaintances.

Twenty of those recorded were women, five were men. The two oldest residents were born in 1889; thirteen were born before 1900 and nine before 1910. There are three municipal divisions in the City of Collingwood — these are known as Collingwood, Abbotsford and Clifton Hill. Of the sixteen interviewees born in the area, seven were born in Collingwood, three in Abbotsford and six in Clifton Hill. Two were born elsewhere in Melbourne, five elsewhere in Victoria, one in Tasmania and one in Ireland.

Twenty of the twenty-five were still living in the municipality at the time of the interviews which were held between 1976 and 1979.

In the recording sessions a number of broad topics were covered recollecting home and family life, school and play, shopping, work and recreation. There are memories of

transport of the day and institutions which range from churches and missions to hotels and wine saloons. Special features of Collingwood life discussed were, of course, the football club, which to many is Collingwood; the riotous days of the larrikin pushes; and memories of perhaps Collingwood's most celebrated son, John Wren.

The names of the residents generally appear when they are quoted at length, however names do not appear for the few who wished to remain anonymous or for some of the shorter passages.

The first sub-division and sale of land in the area to be known as Collingwood was held some fifty years before the first resident interviewed was born. So as a preface to the transcripts of the taped recollections, this book opens with written recollections of those who came to live there in the nineteenth century.

