

OUTLINE OF THESIS CHAPTERS.

**The order of the chapters may vary from how they appear here.

CH. 1. a. ROLES OF THE BENDIGO BENEVOLENT ASYLUM (1925-1935).

b. OTHER CHARITABLE AID IN BENDIGO (eg. Salvos, Red Cross, Mayor's Unemployed Relief Fund) and from OUTSIDE Bendigo eg. Victorian/State Relief Committee.

Much of this has already been researched and written up in my chapter "Reliever of the Destitute". I think it is important to trace through the various stages of the roles played by the Bendigo Asylum in the decade under scrutiny. Smaller organisations like the Salvos and the Red Cross also had a role to play in aiding people, by providing necessities like food, wood, and clothes. (See Interviews and the media.) The Mayor's Unemployed Relief Fund also performed a huge service to this local community in the years 1930-1934.

CH. 2. NECESSITIES OF LIFE.

Watts identified the main three necessities as FOOD, SHELTER, CLOTHING. I want to trace the difficulties people had in maintaining sufficient levels of food and clothing. Where did they get these from? Amounts of both available? Relative to shelter/home, numerous cases in the Asylum records showed there were diverse ways of maintaining a roof over your head eg. renting, owning (cross reference to three x Building Society records), sharing one home and rent between multiple family members or friends. A profile of the size of homes (eg. no of rooms), and the number of residents in a home, can be made using the 1933 Census. Did evictions occur in Bendigo?

CH. 3. A WOMAN'S LOT.

Others research suggests that the greatest pressure was placed upon many women, regardless of their household's composition, because they were at the coal face trying to organise and ensure that food, shelter and clothing were available, while also acting as an emotional support to an unemployed husband, or father (if a single woman living at home), and confused children.

Women can be placed into various pigeon holes. The reality of existence for each, during the Depression, is worthy of examination-

- a. married with children.
- b. deserted wives with/without children.
- c. Widows with/without children.
- d. Single women living at home OR alone.

The Asylum cases and the Council's Box NN correspondence give wonderful insights into the plight of various women in all of categories a. - d. The 1933 Census figures for Women's Income (or lack of it) in Bendigo and district, are quite awesome. There are also statistics of local women's unemployment levels.

CH. 4. NO WORK/NO PAY.

Perhaps the hardest of the chapters is this one. Are the 1933 Census unemployment figures accurate enough to paint some sort of intelligent picture for that year? Can they be juxtaposed backwards to shed light on the situation in Bendigo and district pre 1933? (This thought came from Watts M.A.) I have found

other general unemployment figures for 1930 and 1931 in the Bendigo Council's *Minutes* and the *Bendigo Salvation Army Corps History*. Are these sufficiently accurate?

Individual cases can be followed from the Asylum's records, where numerous reasons are put forward by wives to explain their husband's unemployment eg. poor health (usually miners' phthisis), fire in the workplace, inability to find work etc. (The 1933 Census stipulates various reasons for unemployment too.) The length of unemployment is also sometimes referred to by applicants to the Asylum, and is broken up into time periods in the 1933 Census. The unemployment rate of men in particular industries is clear from the Census too. This can be tied to oral evidence such as Shirley's father's lack of work for years because the Bendigo building trade died during the Depression.

The income for Bendigo and district males is specified in the '33 Census. Some statistics showing little or no income are quite astounding. How did men and their families survive? What did single men do? What role did the Federal government's gold fossicking policy play in Bendigo and district?

CH. 5. THE LIVES OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN.

This chapter will rely heavily on the oral reminiscences of my interviewees. What did children think/know about the Depression? What effects did they see on their parents/ themselves/their home life? Did children leave school early in order to get work to boost the family's finances? Did they still have entertainments and fun? eg. games, sports, Henley regatta.

What was the health of children like during the decade under review? Other people have grappled with this in studies, including Spenceley in his overview of the Great Depression. I am hoping to track down the records of Long Gully, Violet Street and California Gully P.S., which are the schools in the suburbs from which the most number of people sought help from the Asylum. What did the school Inspectors see/comment upon in their reports based on their annual or twice yearly visits? Conversely, how did the health of children attending middle class schools like Quarry Hill and Gravel Hill P.S. compare to that of the children attending the other schools?

What local provisions were made to provide work for school leavers? eg. Boys Farm, referred to in Box NN, Bendigo City Council's records.

There is also some scope to examine the health of younger children who attended the Bendigo Maternal Health Centre. Two boxes of correspondence and records from the Centre survive in the former Bendigo City Council records.

CH. 6. THE POLITICISATION OF THE LOCAL UNEMPLOYED.

This chapter will use Charlie Fox's book to set the Bendigo scene into the wider Victorian context. I need to unravel the membership and affiliations of the various political groups' branches established in Bendigo in response to the Depression eg. UWM, Bendigo Unemployed Ratepayers and Citizens Assoc., Bendigo Trades Hall and Unemployed Assoc., and the Bendigo Unemployed Assoc. Who wanted what? Who helped the poor in concrete ways? What relationship did each of these groups have with organisations like the Bendigo City Council? Box NN correspondence will be particularly wonderful for this section, plus use of the *Bendigo Advertiser* for activities, letters to the editor from them or about them etc.

CH. 7. THE COMMERCIAL IMPACT OF THE DEPRESSION ON BENDIGO AND DISTRICT.

The 3 x Building Societies' Records give a clear picture of how well they did/did not weather the Depression during the decade. They may also show how other businesses, who had commercial loans with them, fared. The tenders by shopkeepers to the Asylum for goods such as wood, meat, and groceries make for interesting reading. Glover's Aerated Water factory records may also be useful. (These have been used as the reference for a series of articles published early in 2005 in the local publication *Bendigo Weekly*.) All these examples can also be cross-referenced to the annual Victorian Chief Inspector of Factories' reports.

CH. 8. SUSTENANCE AND "WORK FOR SUSTENANCE" POLICIES IN BENDIGO AND DISTRICT (1930-1935).

The various legislative changes to the Victorian Sustenance system need to be established because of their impact upon local people. How much food, coupons etc. per family per week? What did *susso* not cover? What was the administrative system for applying for and getting sustenance? eg. Asylum, Depots, the Public Assistance Committee run by the Bendigo Council on behalf of the Victorian Government. (See Asylum and Council records.)

The "work for Sustenance" scheme was not officially introduced into Victoria until 1932/33, yet there is clear evidence in various Asylum records that forms of this scheme were used at the Asylum well before 1930. How/why was it used? What did locals think of the scheme? (Check eg. letters to Editor in the *Bendigo Advertiser*.)

Frank Huelin, a Bendigo man, has left a wonderful account of his life travelling in search of work during the Depression. The Asylum records contain many references to aiding travellers, both local and those passing through. Often, in exchange the men would volunteer, or be asked, to do jobs around the Asylum including painting, repairs, and working in the garden, again all examples of "work for sustenance" pre the scheme's official introduction into Victoria.

CH. 9. EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION ON THE DISTRICT'S MIDDLE CLASS.

There is some evidence of compassion shown by members of the local middle class eg. activities of local Councillors and Mayors to aid people; the work of businessmen on the Asylum Committee; the reactions of businessmen on the Building Societies' Boards. Oral accounts give some idea too of the relative ignorance of the middle class about the plight of others (eg. Gordon G.)

CONCLUSION.

1. A study of the lives of everyday people in one regional community during the Great Depression throws up wonderful insights into how people survive adversity, and what communities do in times of crisis to help their less-fortunate members.
2. The effects of the Depression in Bendigo and district were many and varied.
3. The actual levels of poverty and unemployment are difficult to quantify, but certainly, prolonged difficulties were experienced by many people.
4. Local people used the various types of local and government help available, and agitated for their own aid when needed.

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