The James Flood
Book of
Early Melbourne

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Edited by H. H. Paynting

James William Flood migrated to Australia from England in 1904 after serving his apprenticeship with Gamages, an English firm of coachbuilders. Whilst an apprentice he built the first horseless carriage made by Gamages in 1897. This was the year that the first horseless carriage ran in the streets of Melbourne.

Mr. Flood arrived in Melbourne in 1905, where he joined the firm of Tarrant Motors. While there he put up the first full sized drawing ever attempted of a motor body in Australia, and whilst with Tarrant's he also designed and built the first Pullman Saloon built in Australia. It was for Dr. Bouton, at that time associated with what was then the Homoeopathic Hospital.

Before leaving England, Mr. Flood worked with the celebrated C. S. Rolls, who, of course, later on was to be associated with Royce and to form the famous firm of Rolls-Royce.

In 1907 Mr. Flood founded the firm of James Flood and Company, which became one of the largest body building shops in the vintage years. Premises at St. Kilda Road were a landmark until destroyed by fire in 1952, operations were then transferred to West Footscray.

The James Flood Book of Early Motoring was published to mark the event of 60 years of business activities; the book traces the history of the early days of motoring in Victoria and includes many photographs of early Melbourne streets. These photographs aroused such interest and, due to the fact that included in "Flood's" collection of photographs were many more of early Australia, it was decided to publish the James Flood Book of Early Australian Photographs. This book includes the work of such eminent photographers as Fauchery, Nettleton, Lindt and Caire, and it proved to be of greater interest to the general public than the Early Motoring Book.

This booklet concentrates on the streets of early Melbourne. It includes some of the photographs previously published in the earlier books; however, it includes additional photographs. We gratefully acknowledge the permission of the State Library of Victoria to publish the photographs on Pages 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 32, 33, 34 and 35; and the permission of Adrian Crothers Pty. Ltd. and the Victorian Railways for their generosity in allowing us to reproduce their photographs of the later years.

The total proceeds of all these publications are to be donated to charity, and more than $10,000 has been distributed to date.

*Melbourne, from St. Kilda Road — old Princes Bridge at left, circa 1865*

This panorama of Melbourne depicts the single arch Princes Bridge which was opened on the 15th November, 1850. The single span of 150 feet was the largest in the Colonies and, with one exception, larger than any in Europe. The material was granite and bluestone; some of the granite blocks weighed 1½ tons and it took eight bullocks two days to drag one of them to Melbourne.

St. Paul's Church, facing Swanston Street, can be seen. This site was originally used as a Hay and Corn Market; the church was completed in approximately 1853. In 1880, the whole building was demolished to make way for the Cathedral of St. Paul, which occupies the site today. Three other church spires in the centre of the photograph are St. Enoch's United Presbyterian Church on the south side of Collins Street between Swanston and Russell Streets, Scots Church on the north-west corner of Collins and Russell Streets and the Independent Church on the north-east corner of Collins and Russell Streets.

At this early date, 1865, St. Kilda Road carried the traffic from Emerald Hill (South Melbourne), South Yarra, Prahran and Toorak.

Princes Bridge is a convenient starting point for a walk through Melbourne. It is the entrance by road from the south, and it lies close to two railway stations, one called after itself — the Princes Bridge Station, and not very long built — the other named Hobson's Bay Station. There used to be a short railway that led to the Bay, and the name still clings to the station, though the lines of the company which worked it have been absorbed into the State system of railways. Old Princes Bridge, which spanned the Yarra with one fine arch, was long the pride of Melbourne. It was opened with great pomp and ceremony, but after thirty years it was thought too narrow and inadequate. Tiresome restrictions had to be placed on the traffic crossing the bridge. It was at length determined to have a new and broader bridge, with a viaduct to keep the roadway at the level that it has a few yards to the north and a few hundred yards to the south. Not without regret did many of the inhabitants of Melbourne see the fine old arch pulled down.

Swanston Street is in a line with St. Kilda Road, and on nearly the same level. The Anglican Cathedral stands on the immediate right.
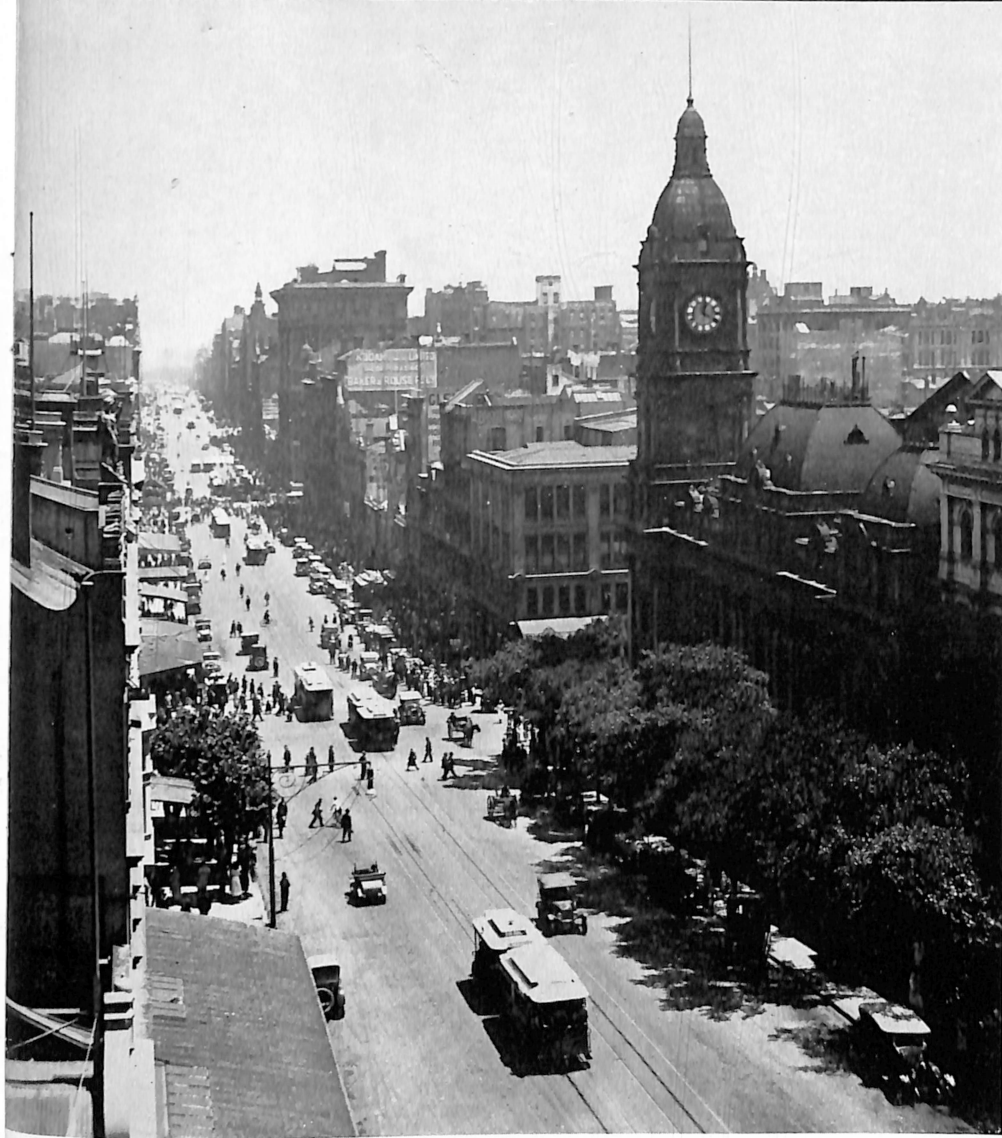
Corner Collins and Swanston Streets.

Melbourne Town Hall, circa 1919.

The Town Hall is at the corner, where Collins Street crosses Swanston Street. Further to the north, the side of the Melbourne Hospital and the front of the Public Library are features in the same street.

The Town Hall is very spacious. It is a fine sight when the Town Hall is thronged for a public meeting, and the audience is held spellbound by an orator; or when it is occupied for a concert by a company of ladies and gentlemen in evening attire; or, again, filled with gay masqueraders at a fancy dress ball. It is generally said that the room will hold four thousand; it most assuredly will not seat that number.