

# When Fairfield was just a stony wilderness . . .

*This week in Our Proud Past Miss Waddell, of Arthur St, Fairfield, recalls the early history of the area told to her by her father, John Waddell.*

John Waddell was born in and lived in Fairfield for 86 years. He was Fairfield's oldest citizen.

A horse-drawn tram was driven along Station St, to promote the sale of land as Fairfield was the scene of the first land boom.

It was then a wilderness of briar and outcropping basalt. During the winter it was almost impossible to cross the flooded lowlands over which poured water from Macdonald Lake and north down Fairfield Road.

Street lighting was of the poorest, the hurricane lamp was a great friend. Years later gaslights were placed in the unmade streets.

Transport was poor. My grandfather walked from Separation St, to Heidelberg Rd, then to Clifton Hill to catch a train, which went around by North Fitzroy and the zoo to Melbourne.

My grandmother used to hang a kerosene lamp on the front verandah every night so her hus-

band would not lose his way.

Before this my grandparents lived at Prahran. My grandmother had poor health and her doctor advised her to go to "Fairfield Park" for the clean, fresh air.

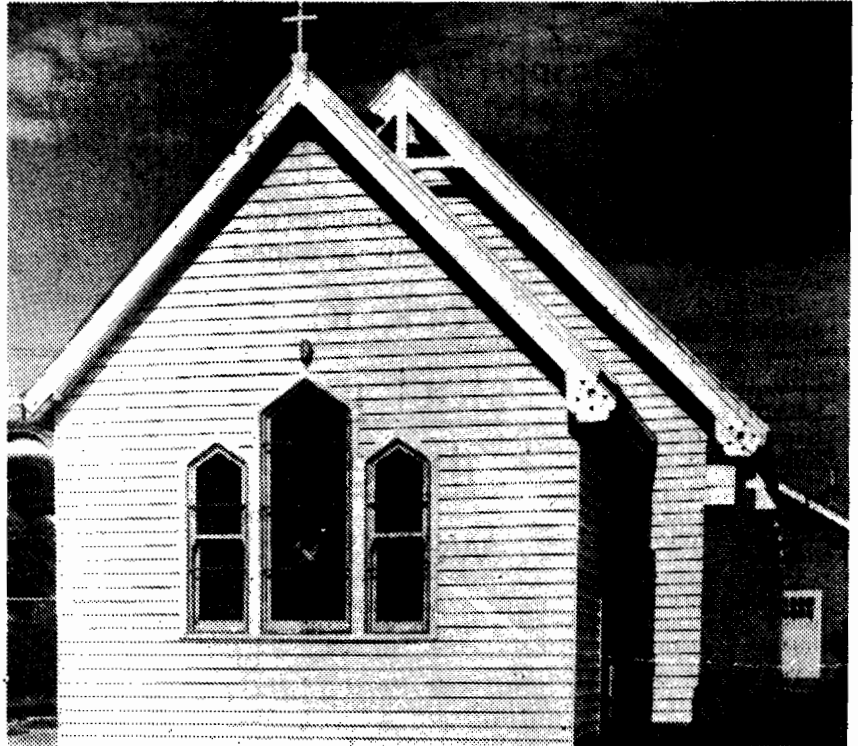
## Swagman

During their time many swagmen knocked on their door. No one went away hungry or without a coin in their pocket. On their way out, many would put a cross on the gate so their mates would know where to call to receive the same.

Before the opening of St Paul's church in Station St, my grandfather walked to Scots in Melbourne every Sunday morning.

Their family were all present at the opening of St Paul's and later the Methodist church in Gillies St.

Grandfather soon joined the Methodist church in Fairfield. He became a trustee and was superintendent of the Sunday school for many years.



The Greek community now have that church and it has a modern brick frontage added. They have retained the lovely old stained glass windows with the bird motif.

## Councillor

Grandfather Mr W. H. Waddell was a councillor of the shire of Heidelberg for 18 years and served as president from 1873 to 74.

He represented Fairfield with councillors Porta and Donnelly in

1891. During this term W. H. Waddell, with Mr Lugton and Stone, purchased the Fairfield hall in Station St, which was later sold to St Paul's church for 30 pounds.

Family links with Fairfield state school were established by the Waddell family. In an unbroken succession of 40 years, there had been a Waddell as a pupil, and all passed through the capable hands of Miss Sachse, the well-known infant teacher.

● The former Fairfield Methodist church of which Mr W. Waddell was a trustee. The picture shows the stained glass panel with its bird motif.