

MELISSA WITHERS

OPEN FOUNDATION 1988

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 7-9PM

LECTURER; MARGARET HENRY

"The Bank of New South Wales - a Short history of
Maitland Branch and the life of it's early beginnings"

The first thoughts of a monetary system for the new colony of New South Wales, began with the need to replace the barter system operating within the colony. Within the first three months of the new Governor's arrival, Lachlan Macquarie, he had turned his attentions to the question of this vital replacement.

This intent led to a recommendation, to establish a bank, and to that fact he wrote to Lord Castlereagh on 12th March 1810.

Discussions between Macquarie and the Judge Advocate, John Wylde, were given swift action. Macquarie gave instructions to his secretary, J.T. Campbell, to invite a selected few of the merchants and magistrates to "a friendly consultation on a subject of much interest and importance from a commercial point of view." 1

That meeting was held on the 20th November 1816 at Judge Advocate Wylde's offices, ~~to~~ which fourteen people attended.

In March 1817, the newly formed bank was almost ready to open. After suitable premises had been selected in Macquarie Place, a two year rental of 150 pounds per annum was reached. The first day of business for the new Bank of New South Wales was Saturday 5th April 1817. The new bank was now established.

Expansion, for the bank, came after the depression of the early 1800's and by the middle of the 1840's, business was starting to regain it's strength. During this time the bank began to expand enthusiastically. It built it's first country branch in Bathurst N.S.W. and then on the Hunter River at Maitland N.S.W.

The inspector's letters of the 6th & 10th May 1853 were sent to the board of directors in Sydney and they approved ~~to~~ the lease of premises in main street Maitland for the immediate opening of a branch. The assistant secretary of the Bank was to go to Maitland immediately and take a supply of notes and coin and other stationary so that new business could be commenced.

On the 17th May 1853, the board of directors appointed Mr Edward Swine, to the position of clerk with a salary of 125 pounds per annum.

On the 27th September 1853 the board agreed to pay money for the extension of the banking premises in Maitland. In Novemebr of the same year, the board approved that the salary of the Manager should now be 500 pounds per annum.

In October 1854, it was resolved that an allowance of one guinea be made to the messenger at the Maitland branch.

During the month of October 1854, numerous forgeries were made on an account held at the branch. The Manager wrote a letter to the Board of directors in Sydney. The bank instructed to advise Mr Saunders, branch Manager at the time, that no blame could be attributed to him and that he had acted with ordinary caution.

The bank ran a survey of the various jobs done by each member of the staff to assess request for salary increase. It was found that the salaries were to be increased and new salaries would be computed from the 1st January 1855. The clerk, Mr Swire from 200 pounds to 250 pounds per annum and the junior, Mr Close, from 100 pounds to 125 pounds per annum.

In the first half of the year 1857, a new bank was set up in Maitland. It was the Joint Stock Bank. This bank offered interest on deposit's and the Bank of New South Wales did not. The Manager of the time, requested that he be allowed to do the same in order to compete with this new opposition, but permission was refused, although it did allow him to refrain from charging a transfer fee on exchange's with Sydney.

During September 1858 the bank decided to assess the availability of land to be purchased, with the view to building a new bank. On the 4th November 1859, a piece of land for 1500 pounds was purchased in High Street Maitland with a frontage of 97 feet by 454 feet. The builder chosen to complete this building was dismissed in June 1860, when the Bank declined to accept the surities offered by him.

In October 1862, the Manager of Maitland branch advised Sydney that there had been a robbery of the mail leaving for Tamworth on the 17th and that a parcel of 274 pounds in notes had been stolen. The steps were then taken to have the notes prevented from being paid.

In June 1863, to match the interest given by the Joint Stock Bank, the Bank of New South Wales would offer the same rates of interest, 3, 4 & 5% on fixed deposits for 3, 6, & 12 months respectively, but the fact was to remain unadvertised.

In August 1888, the sum of 287 pounds was spent on repairs and additions to the premises at Maitland and the large sum of 30 pounds was to be used to purchase new office & household furniture.

Between the years 1863 & 1892 the Bank made numerous donations to the flood relief in Maitland. In May 1892 the bank donated 20 pounds to the River Embankment Fund at Maitland. Other bank's in the district were also contributors to the many relief funds that had been set up

in the district for the many victims of the flooding.

Maitland Branch remained the same virtually up until 1960, when the old building was demolished and a new structure erected. At the time it was a most modern building in old world Maitland and most bank staff were keen to work there. That building is still standing, although renovations to the interior and to some extent the exterior, will be undertaken during 1988-9.

F O O T N O T E S

1. R F Holder Bank of New South Wales - A History
Volume 1 1970 Sydney pg 11

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. Holder R.F Bank of New South Wales - A History
Volume 1 & 2 1817-1970
Sydney 1970 Angus & Robertson

T A P E S U M M A R Y

This interview was conducted with Mr Edward Swinton, a retired bank manager of the Bank of New South Wales . Mr Swinton joined the Bank of New South Wales in 1933 at Uralla N.S.W. at the age of 15. The interview starts with Mr Swinton recalling the first days of his banking career. It recounts his first salary, and how a wages freeze was applied for two years to his wages during the height of the depression. He describes the country way of life for people of the thirties and how the community in general treated the bank staff of the day.

In 1939 the bank transferred Mr Swinton to Fiji after he had volunteered his services. He relives his many memories of the famous people he met aboard the ship that was to transport him to the Pacific Island, where he was to spend his next 3 years. He recalls the simple way of living on the island and how during that time he travelled extensively throughout on working for the Bank. He acquaints us with a few amusing moments of life at one of the branches and tells of the incident where one of the branches was robbed and no clue to the whereabouts of the money or men responsible were ever found.

When World War II broke out, he was still in Fiji. When the bank replaced him, and he was to be sent back to Australia, he found it difficult to get a ship home and when he did, he then became stranded in Auckland, New Zealand for 5 weeks without the bank paying for anything. When he finally had secured a passage back to Australia, he recalls that German raiders had been seen in the vicinity and the ship had to sail as far south as practicable and then on to Melbourne, where the ship finally berthed. From there he had to make his way back to Sydney, at his own expense, where he then joined the Army. He was sent to New Guinea. He served with the Army for 4 years.

On leaving the Army in 1946, he rejoined the Bank and was then sent to country N.S.W., where he served in various small towns before moving to Sydney, as his son had become ill. He continued to work in Sydney for over 10 years and on becoming manager, he returned to the country. After a few more years he returned, once again to Sydney where he remained until his retirement.

Mr Swinton now lives in retirement in East Maitland with his wife.

Melissa Withers.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE

1988

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research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
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for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed

Ed Swinton

Date

30th July 1988

Interviewer

Melissa

This interview was taped on the 6th August 1988 with Mr Edward Swinton, who worked for the Bank of New South Wales from 1933 to his retirement 40 years later.

Well I suppose the starting date is the 9th February 1933 when I joined the Bank of New South Wales at Uralla. I was not quite 16, well I'd lived away from home with relatives before and I had to go and board with an old couple there and he was 87 and his sister was 85 or something like that and he was a friend of Billy Monkton, who used to roam with the outlaw Thunderbolt. He wrote a book later on called "Three Years With Thunderbolt", I often used to hear stories about Thunderbolt and he was shot and buried at Uralla. Anyway it was there was 5 on the staff at Uralla including the Manager and I was the junior and the first job I had was addressing envelopes and I'll always remember that I must have addressed five or six hundred of them things in the first three days I was there and in those days you dipped your pen in the ink well and blotted carefully it wasn't as easy as writing these days. Um and then I suppose I did the usual juniors jobs like the postages and helped the Ledger Keeper write up his passbooks and things like that. Um because I suppose you still have them but auditors come around every now and again. There was a very much feared auditor in those days whose name was called Finch always known as Jacky Finch. He had a glass eye and he used to look over his glasses at you and you never knew which was his glass eye (Laugh) But ah they all used to hold him over your head sort of thing if the postages didn't balance and what not you know Jacky Finch would get you. Anyway he came one day. They always used to land in at five past three. There'd be a knock at the door and in would walk the auditors and grab the Tellers cash and grab the postage box balance them and I was a hapenny out the first day he landed (laugh) I'll never forget that I was very scared about it. But ah we did the usual things in those days we balanced ledgers and everything on Mondays not on Wednesdays as it later changed to and I suppose it was the same or probably is the same now but if you didn't balance you stayed there until you did whether it was 12 o'clock at night or 2 in the morning you had to balance that night.

MW: not quite as harsh now

ES: It was then. We ah you didn't go home until everything was balanced. There was one famous occasion where the ledgers were out a penny, wasn't in our branch, but we used to hear about it and they searched for three days and three nights for that penny and eventually they found a fly had got into the ledgers and been squashed and his leg had come off and made a penny (laugh) But ah I forget where it happened I knew the branch at one time, But ah anyway um in those days kids in Banks got pretty good times and in town people asked you out and all that sort of thing. I went up to a place with a message one day and the people there said Oh are you the new bloke from the bank are you and I said Yes and Oh you better come up on Saturday Afternoon all

the people come up here and their relations used to come into town on Saturday afternoon and they'd play tennis there and that's how I got to know people was ah playing tennis every Saturday afternoon. Of course in those days Saturday was late shopping night too, it wasn't a half holiday for anyone except banks and Post Offices in those days. But um all the shops opened untill about 9 oclock at night. It was a really it was a good day 'cause you met everybody that came in from the country who you got to know people that way but ah Uralla was really a nice little town, it was a friendly town and what with tennis I played hockey ocsasionally with the local team we used to go up to Armidale and play up there. Armidale was only 13 miles away , ocsasionally you 'd go up to Armidale to the pictures at night. There was a service car went up and you could get the midnight train back. So you know that was an outing.

MW: And how long did you stay at Uralla Branch?

ES: I stayed there 18 months and then I was shifted to Lismore. In those days Lismore and Maitland were said to be the worst juniors jobs in the whole bank, and ah I was sent to Lismore it really was a very busy job too, we had 10 banks there and we did local exchanges twice a day and the clearing house was in the ah Queensland National Bank which was next door to the Wales in those days and you used to take all your work in and it was written up in books in those days, you didn't have machine slips or anything you wrote every cheque separately in an exchange book and took those in and then you raced back into the Wales and you machined everything and made sure the totals were right and then went back into the clearing house and signed for them you wern t allowed to sign for them utill you d checked them but later on they relaxed a bit and ah and we were allowed to sign just for the total and bring them in and machine them and if they were wrong you rang the other bank up and checked it over the phone that was a little easier. But it was a very good town Lismore and I had a terrific time there a good crowd of young people and I used to there was a lot dances and that sort of thing on to go to a lot of amateur theatricals I did a lot of those there ,Rosemarie and Country Girl and Brewsters Millions.

MW:And there was no girls working in the bank at that time?

ES:We had two girls two or three on Lismore staff, incidently one thing I did mean to tell you harking back to Uralla they had girls in banks in the First World War they took them on as a temporary measure sort of thing and they had an old file, you know the spikes that you put things on pieces of paper on well each ledger keeper had a spike in those days and each time you posted a cheque you put the cheque over on the spike and they used to say you wern't a true ledger keeper untill you had spiked yourself, put the spike through your hand and I saw a girl do that one day not in Uralla but in Avalon Beach actually she slammed a cheque on it and put it straight through the palm of her hand, but ah they had a spike at Uralla which had a removable bottom on base on it and inside that base was a little slip of

paper and it had the signatures of all the staff of the bank in 1916 on it and one of them was the earliest women taken on in the bank during the war and she was my mothers cousin, she later married one of the local graziers around Uralla and she was still living there in fact she is still alive now, she would be 94 now. That was quite interesting, I suppose it s still there shouldn t think that they would have destroyed it, has these 5 signatures of all the staff of the bank on it.

MW: Then after Lismore?

ES: Ah well I stayed in Lismore two and a half years and incidentally I was a little bit lucky there as there was a relief job coming up on the 4th ledgers there we had 4 sets of ledgers there and I tried very hard to let me have it . Anyway they put another kid on and he was a mate of mine there and they put him on and he paid a cheque that had been raised from 1 ponund to 10 pounds and of course it cost him 9 pounds he had to pay the 9 pounds back so I still reckon I wouldn t have paid it but it was a very bad and how he did it I don t know, but I spose I would have too you know, you do these things at times so I was a bit lucky there, but I stayed in Lismore two and half years before I was sent to Barraba and I was sent to Barraba as ledger keeper and in those days nobody thought of ah preparing anything for you like a boarding house or anything and I got to Barraba the train got there about one oclock in the afternoon and I landed there and it was show day and I couldn t find anywhere to board (laugh) eventually I got a room for the night down one of the local pubs so I had somewhere to sleep at least that night and the next day I found board at a pub at one of the other pubs but I was paying two and six a week more than I was getting in salary so that wasn t very good I had to get a bit of help on that and the bank never gave you help on anything in those days that would be the last thing they d think of but ah I didn t mention before I started on a salary of 104 pounds a year and about six months after I joined that was pretty much still in the depression and all salaries in Australia were reduced by 8.33% I think it s the only time it s ever happened that wages have been reduced I don t think it s ever happened since anyway instead of reducing mine they left me on the same salary for 2 years and then gave me a rise of 3 pounds a year which was not an awful lot of money I don t think but anyway that was that. Barraba was another little town like Uralla and a friendly little place like Uralla and the people were good and actually I d been to school with a lot of people from around Barraba and Uralla for that matter and so I new a fair amount of people. Anyway I only stayed in Barraba 6 months and then I was sent down to South Grafton as ledger keeper there, that was a slightly bigger branch ah I ah it was more well it wasn t a coastal town but you were closer to the coast we used to go down to the beach on a Sunday by ah sometimes they d put on an excursion train on down to Coffs Harbour and sometimes a ship would go from Maitland ah South Grafton to ah Coffs Harbour and ah you d

get up and get the ship at six o'clock in the morning and get down to Coffs Harbour at 10 o'clock then you'd leave again at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and be back about 8 o'clock at night but ah that's how we went to the beach in those days very few people had motor cars there just wern't that many cars about I s'pose

MW: And then after South Grafton what did you do then?

ES: Well from South Grafton I was sent to Suva and Fiji I'd put my name on the circular for it back while I was in Lismore to ah they used to call for volunteers in those days and I put my name down for Fiji for some reason not New Guinea for which I was very pleased later on and anyway I was sent to ah Fiji on the ah Maraposa which by any standards even today is a luxury liner but it was a beautiful ship, a big white ship, and I shared a cabin on it with a fellow named Garnet Carroll and he was the agent for in those days for Fullers Theatres in Melbourne and ah later on he became General Manager of Fullers Theatres but he was on his way to ah Auckland to ah pick up the Marcus Girls you probably wouldn't remember them but you'd remember Bob Dyer well Bob Dyer came out with the Marcus Girls in those days and ah that's how he came to Australiabut ah Garnet introduced me to a lot of people on the boat and I had a wow of a time but ah there were some very famous people on it as well people who were famous then, one was Ella Shields who had been a leading actress in London from the First World War onwards course she was pretty old by that time but she was a great old lady and I got to know her quite well, we became friends on the ship and I used to have supper with her every night but she always had a little bottle of stout for supper, she died not long after the second World War ended I remember seeing her death, she must have been nearly 90 then, she was as lively as a cricket and she to dance with her you'd swear you were dancing with a young girl you know she was light on her feet. Another traveller on the ship was Ruth Draper and she was ah she used to a monologue I don't know what they call them now but ah she could sit on a blank stage on a chair and carry on a conversation you could see that see everthing she meant you to see sort of thing she um was quite famous on the stage in Sydney and Melbourne in fact she was world famous.

MW: In what year did you go to Suva?

ES: Oh 1938 that was and I got there in August and the first Munich crisis was on in September and we all thought war wasgoing to break out then but ah it didn't it was another year before it broke out. Anyway I ah spent a year in ah on Suva actually I was sent to Suva as the result of a forgery too they only had 2 ledger keepers there in those days and they sent me over as a third ledger keeper and ah it really ah even for three ledger keepers it was a pretty heavy job and it's no wonder the forgery had been paid without query and the then General Manager who was later Sir Alfred Davidson um personally wrote to the ledger keepers there and told them he didn't hold them to blame for the forgery, he

knew they were overworked and it was such a good forgery. Anyway I was sent to Lavouka as second officer and , incidentally, talking about the war the day I left Suva to go to Lavouka was the day War broke out and ah we used to go up to Lavouka by ship, by Burns Philp trading vessels and they wouldn't let us out of the harbour that morning because they thought there was a German raider hanging about 30 miles outside the harbour, so we sat on the ship about 2 hours before they'd let us out of the harbour, eventually they let us out. It's only about 6 or 8 hours trip up there. We got up to Lavouka about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I went down the, we went on to some of the other islands and then she called in the next day on her way back to Suva and the feller I was taking over from got on the ship and went back over to Suva so it was just a swap over really as they only kept the second officer there 12 months. Lavouka was only a little island, there were only 19 Europeans on the island about 2000 Chinese and Japanese and probably about another 2000 Indians and that was it amongst the Europeans there were only 2 European girls. There was no picture show on the island, there was no telephone to the main island if you wanted to go to Suva for the weekend you hired a launch and ah went accross to the main island and where the launch used to drop you there was no wharf or anything you hopped out of the launch about 200 yards out and you always took a pair of sandshoes with you and waded accross the reef on to the shore and prior to leaving Lavouka you'd send a cable to Suva and got a taxi up there to meet you and then when you were going back to Lavouka you'd do the same thing in reverse you'd got the taxi up and waded out and met the launch back to Lavouka. That was the way you got away for the weekend.

MW: so you were only on Lavouka for 12 months?

ES: yes . They kept the manager there 2 years , but ah the manager that was there when I was there was married so things wern't so bad for him but the branch was never intended for a married officer and it was just a little building with some space upstairs that really wasn't upstairs you climbed up a ladder to ah get up there and that's how they used to go home at night sort of thing they climbed up the ladder or whenever they went up to the premises they climbed up the ladder and got into their quarters that way. But ah we had an old Fijian messenger on the staff there, I think when I was there he must have been nearly 80, probably more which was very old for a Fijian most of them died when they were about 60 somewhere between 50 and 60, in those days. But ah old Norman used to tell some tell us he'd been there since I think he joined the Bank sometime in the First World War and he'd been there ever since sort of thing. He was a great old feller old Norman. But ah Lavouka at one time was the capital of Fiji but then they shifted it to Suva but you still got a few ships into Lavouka and they came from all over the world, they had crews on them from all nationalities nearly all the crews while they were in Lavouka, they usually spent 8 or 10

days there loading copper and that sort of thing, and ah they all wanted to play something so we ah became ah quite proficient at various lot of sports there we used to play cricket and football ,well rugby and ah soccer and hockey water polo was something too we used to play and I even played basketball there at one time. It was not that I was proficient at any of them. Anyway, from Lavouka I was shifted over to Latoka and ah I spent 12 months there but Latoka was a very busy branch and incidentally all the staff lived on the premises there too we all had our beds upstairs, the manager had a residence of his own but none of the rest of us did and we used to run 3 agencies from Latoka ah one at Ba which is now a 17 hand branch I think and one at Tavua and one at Vatukoula which were the big Gold mining centres, and we did the one at Ba twice a week and then on that was on a Tuesday and on Thursday we went on to drop ma feller at Ba and the other 2 went on to Tavua and Vatukoula and did those. I don't know if I mentioned that we used to go out by taxi and ah we had an Indian as a Police escort and he used to sit in the front seat with a rifle and fixed bayonette and no bullets I don't know what use he would have been I don't know but um incidentally there had been a robbery in Latoka of the ah agency cash which was done up the night before and put in a big tin box and put in the strongroom and they used to go down the next morning and take it out and put it in the boot of the car and away you'd go but this morning they went down to get the cash and it was gone. They never found it but they found the empty tin box incidentally in the jungle accross the road from the Bank but they never found the cash. There were ah that auditor that I mentioned a while ago at Uralla, Jacky Finch, was the auditor sent over to investigate this disappearance of this cash and ah although he never pinned anything on the staff he sacked 5 of them including the Manager.

MW: But it was never proven that they had anything to do with the robbery?

ES: No not a thing but he didn't like the he well he said the manager was guilty of negligence the other 4 were sacked on their mode of life around the town, he didn't approve of that but there was, Latoka at least, was a very hard place for ah young single men because the CSR company was the big company there and ah they wouldn't mix with anybody else but themselves, um they were the only married people there and they the bank people, had literally no body to mix with at all so they as you can imagine led a pretty wild life but ah Jacky Finch pinned this on them he put in a very bad report about them and the branch and their life around the town. I saw the report some years later it was 72 pages so you can imagine it was a pretty scathing one. Anyway from Latoka I went back to Suva for 6 months while I was waiting for a ship home to Australia and by thay time the ah Japanese were in the war and ships became very scarce and eventually one came in and I got down to ah Auckland and I was stranded in Auckland for 5 weeks well a bit over 5 weeks really

MW: And the Bank didn't ...

ES: No way that was part of my holidays

MW: They didn't pay for anything, it was all up to you.

ES: No, they left that to me and I had been ah just a bit of a sidelight untill I just before the ship came in I had sent most of my money home to Sydney and I anyway managed to get by in Auckland and I had a pretty good time there too while I was there I knew a lot of New Zealander's from the Fiji days, they gave me a very good time there. Eventually, they ah a ship came in and we all got back to Melbourne they took us darn near the South Pole while they were doing it and ah we crept down the coast of New Zealand and then right down south and then back up by the coast of Tasmania and across into Port Phillip Bay to Melbourne and then I got a train there and back to Sydney and incidentally my people then lived at Uralla although they hadn't done when I was in the Bank there. I spent a couple of weeks with them and then joined the Army. I spent four and a half years in that and then I when I came out of the Army in 1946 I went out to Narrabri, I'd asked the bank to send me somewhere where I could learn security work

MW: Did you specify an area or did you just say anywhere and they picked ...

ES: Well I'd just asked them to send me somewhere where I could learn securities and they said well how about Narrabri and I said yes that's how I got there, and when I got there I found the Manager there then had been the Manager when I first joined the Bank at Uralla and ah so it made things a lot easier for me, he was a very strict old man, a stern man and he was a good bloke really his family were very good to me. He was one of the few managers that I know of that, cause the Bank was very hard on their staff in those days really and harking back to those Uralla days I know he'd paid a allowed another feller there to overdraw his account and then he paid it off himself rather than let the Bank know about it and he spent a lot of money on it about 800 pounds or something like that, a terrific lot of money in those days but I know he paid it off and used most of his own savings to do it but anyway um I was only at Narrabri about 6 months and then they sent me out to Collerrenabri and that was a 3 handed branch ans I was second officer there, incidentally Peggy and I got married while I was out there, it was a friendly little town and we had a pretty good time one way or another but it was a very very hot place and I had a thermometer hanging on the wall in the teller's box beside me and it hit 119 degrees there one day I hesitate to think what it must have been outside in the ah sun, anyway from there I was sent to Walgett, and that was a different kettle of fish altogether, it wasn't a friendly place like Collerrenabri and they used to say the people took 7 years to forgive you for going there in the first place but ah they ah never bothered to know you really one or two did, not like Collerrenabri or Narrabri and those places and Uralla, the country people in Walgett had nothing to do with the towns people or anything

MW: And when was that in Walgett?

ES: Ah that was 1948 I went there, then in 1950 um we came down to Sydney, well actually we had to because our eldest baby was sick and um I started at Hornsby then I was a teller at Hornsby for several months and then I ah did a lot of relieving around Sydney, well mainly on the North Shore and ah in 1955 no 1953 I was sent to Pymble as second officer and I spent 2 years there and then I was sent to Gordon as um security clerk there. I spent 4 years there and from there I ah actually while I was at Gordon I did all the ah local survey work for the branch at St Ives and ah I used to do the agency out at St Ives. I drew maps and got population trends from the local council and all sorts of things like that, it was quite a lot of work in it. In those days St Ives was nothing like it is now, it was just a little village and there were very few shops there and we ah we had our agency in the corner of the local delicatessen store there

MW: It wasn't the prestige suburb that it has become now?

ES: Oh no not in any way the ah Commonwealth Bank has an agency there which they used to run two or three days a week same as we did and ah anyway ah eventually it started to grow and got very busy so they started to build premises there but they just built the front of the premises there, which was used as an agency but it was so constructed so that they could put the rest up if and when it became a branch. They could put the rest of the building on to the ah this part that we used as an agency and ah eventually we heard that the Commonwealth Bank was going to open a branch there so the Bank decided that they were going to open a branch, so they very hurriedly got to work and built the rest of the building or put some more on to the building and ah eventually we opened a branch there. Anyway as I say they decide to open a branch there and they well actually it was only a sub branch in those days it had a manager and one other um I'd been at Gordon 4 years then and my manager tried very hard to get me made manager there but they wouldn't play and ah anyway from there I went down to North Sydney as security clerk which was a very busy branch and securities there it was a very heavy job actually ah one of our big customers there in those days um people you read a lot about in the papers these days were the Waterhouse's and ah there security packet was about 3 feet wide and it was all old system stuff which you probably you know a little about ah as you can imagine there were documents, they owned nearly half North Sydney actually in those days and ah

MW: That would have been at the beginning of the 50's would it?

ES: Yes ah no it was in 1959 I went to North Sydney I then spent 12 months there and then ah I was sent to Parramatta to relieve the Managers clerk supposedly for 1 month but I finished up staying there 6 months

MW: And by this stage were there any more girls starting to join the bank?

ES: Not acutually..

MW: Not then either?

ES: Ah not any more than there were all the time

MW: They stayed pretty much the same amount.

ES: Yes um they had, we got one girl in Gordon and when I got to Gordon we didn't have any girl's there and I was the typist being security clerk and ah I was a 3 finger expert sort of thing I used to the bosses typing as well as my own typing and in those days you did your 8 or 9 returns every week not every I don't know how often they are now eventually they cut it down every month but um but then we did them every week so there was a lot of work involved in that job alone but eventually we got a girl there and she was a typist there which made my job a lot easier but ah just a sidelight on that the Bank didn't approve mixed marriages in Catholics and Prodestants in those days and this girl ah was getting married and had a hell of a fuss because ehe was marrying a Catholic boy anyway they got married and she stayed on the staff and that was another thing they didn't like married women on the staff but she had her way and she stayed so that was probably that as the start of the more..

MW: The turning point?

ES: A more relaxed attitude on the part of the Bank but ah when I went to Parramatta we had ah 4 girls there, 2 were typists and I just forget what the others did remittances or something like that I spose but um the Manager and I was the managers clerk we shared a typist and then was a another a typist for the accountant and sub-manager they shared her and all the rest of the staff did their own typing if they had any to be done but ah then from there I went to Avalon Beach and I know there were two ledger machinists and we had a typist, I think there was a 4th girl there too but I'm not quite sure now there may have been only 3 and ah so I spent 2 and a half years at Avalon Beach as accountant and ah I was sent to Nundle as Manager that was my first branch and it was a nice little town Nundle ,friendly people I liked being there and from there I went to Rylstone and we didn't have any girl's there but I think from memory they changed one of the staff and they shifted him and put a girl in his place just before I left there I think that was the branch

MW: What year would that have been?

ES: That was 1968 then ah and I was sent back to Sydney from Rylstone to Chief Security Office what is now Legal Admin. and I stayed there for not long I think I only a couple of years I was retired early from the Bank at 55 years and I retired from Legal Admin. and I was there 4 years and ...

MW: So that was 1972 when I left the bank

ES: Yes 1972 when I left the Bank

MW: And had that been a nice, had that been a good 40 years working for them?

ES: Oh I never really liked the Bank put it that way ah I never enjoyed it.

MW: But it gave you some good times?

ES: Oh it did yes, we had some very good times, had some pretty rough times I suppose but 'cause it was an unsettling

period too it when I was in Suva there and Fiji when the war broke out the bank wouldn't let me come home until ah 1942 it was before I got home.

Mr Swinton now lives in retirement with his wife in East Maitland N.S.W. and his time and information is greatly appreciated by the interviewer Melissa Withers. This tape was done for Open Foundation Australian History Class 1988 and it is hoped to be of some aid to future students of the University of Newcastle.