Mrs Field (nee Griffin) gives the following narrative of her experience of Richmond, and recalls stories of people and places and events in the district during her childhood and in her adult life in Richmond.

"My father and his brother were the founders of Griffin and Sons in Nelson. Two of my brothers went away to the first world war, and one was invalided back with TB of the spine and he had to be on the land. He was really a business man, and my father bought a farm which is now known as Green Meadows Estate for him to work on, in Hill St, Griffin St, Churchill Avenue, Polglase St, all that subdivision there. He bought it from a Mr Higgs who was married to a Miss Sutton. Two Sutton brothers lived on the other side of us; they are Oliver and - I can't remember the other's name.

On the corner of Hill St and Queen St was old Mrs Sutton, the mother of the Suttons, who lived in an old house there on the bank. This would be
about 1919 or 1920. On the opposite corner of Queen Street from her was Mr Bill Sutton. I think he was another branch of the family. Up Hill Street, in what is called Dearsley Grange there's a big old house on the right up there in amongst a lot of trees.

There was another Sutton family home but it has been altered. A friend of ours bought it some years later and altered it to what it is now. It has probably been altered since. I haven't seen it for years.

Mr Higgs and his wife had twin daughters with red hair and I think they had something to do with the finance of the Loney Hall behind the Methodist Church.

When we bought the house it was a very old two-storeyed house and father turned it into a one-storeyed house. And up on the hill across the road were two huge gum trees. They were called the Master's Gums, because Mr Higgs was always called
the Master. When we bought the property they asked us if we would never chop those trees down, they were sacred. You see he'd planted them and so we never cut them down - they were beautiful trees. I've got quite a few photos of them actually, colour slides. When my brothers sold the place it was to a Mr Wadsworth and he subdivided it and he cut the gum trees down.

On the hill to the south of that place of ours is a fairly old house where Ralph Gibson lives. There was nothing there of course; that was all farmland and Mr Gibson lives in this house which my husband's uncle built and he lived with my brothers in this old house while they were building this new one. My brothers bached there after the war for a while and ran the farm. Then we moved out from town and lived with them there for what must've been about seven or eight years I suppose, I the whole family. There were quite a number of us. And that ground up there, I think it must've been all Suttons property. From Hill St, from about Sutton St, right
up Queen St, I should think, would've been all Sutton property, where the old Suttons originally settled.

While I was there a cousin came out from England - this might be a bit interesting - and the Prince of Wales was in New Zealand; he was just a young chap - King Edward VIII I suppose he would be. He abdicated. When he was young he came to New Zealand for a trip and he was to travel by train from Nelson to the end of the line. I think he was going down the Coast, but he came out on the train. I would've been about seven I suppose - I don't know quite how old I was. Anyway, this cousin of mine was about 6' 6" tall and he decided that he must see the Prince of Wales so he got me and we had a quarter-mile drive to the road. We had to walk from Hill St right down to the old station, and it was an all gravel road - not many footpaths - and he ran me at full speed with his great long legs all the way down Queen St to about where the Power Board is, and the train sailed through and all I saw was a wave out the window.
My cousin really wanted to see him because he didn't have a chance in England.

There weren't many shops in Richmond, there was a butcher across the road from there, Mr Ted Cross, and there was a Mr Coleman. Ted Cross used to deliver our meat.

When we first went to live up there, there was very little power about then, and I think Mr Ellis had a power station on the Waimea River, and power was brought to some parts of Richmond. We had benzine lamps in the house and my father could never manage them, and he burnt handkerchiefs and his hair lighting these jolly lamps. He got fed up with it so he paid for poles to be put in across country from the last place, and we had power in the house. But it wasn't on all day. Only on Tuesdays was it on because you did your ironing and all the lights in Richmond were on. You see they couldn't turn them off without shutting the power off. (Other than Tuesday) the power only came on at night for the lights. We didn't have such things
as electric stoves, only (lights and) irons. We used to have those Pott's irons beforehand. We must've had about eight or nine of those Pott's irons I think, and we used to put four or three on the hottest part of the stove and then my sister would put a frying pan over the top to keep the heat in. They'd get really hot.

My sister was 17 years older than me. I was very much the youngest. I went to Richmond school but I didn't start until I was about 7½; I had some mysterious illness, nobody knew what it was. Old Dr Washbourn - who built the house that Dr Currfe bought - he used to come up and see me about every week and gave me some horrible medicine and told me not to eat any lollies - that was only because my father made them, and he said I was not to go to school until I was 7½. I wasn't in bed, I wasn't very sick. I don't know what was the matter with me.

Anyway the headmaster of Richmond school was Mr Harrison. We called him Beaky. I suppose you
heard all about him. He was a very tall man. And
the infant mistress was a Miss Hill. I can't
remember her Christian name. She was an aunt of
a Miss Hill who used to be there years ago. Miss
Horner was next to the infant mistress. And then
at some stage there was a Miss Fittall; there were
Fittalls in Richmond too at that time. They lived
I think where Queen St turns into Salisbury Rd.
Somewhere in that vicinity - around the corner.

Old Wilkes used to live in that house around
where the Waimea County is, opposite Wilkes', they
had a house behind the big macrocarpa hedge. Wilkes
in those days were funeral directors and I suppose
they were builders too. Further down about where
Demsen's is was Croucher's bakery - ooh, the lovely
smell that used to come out of there!

I've got the calendar that shows the various
buildings owned by Crouchers.

The chemist was a Mr Ward. He and his mother
I think lived in that old house about where they're
building that new James subdivision in Queen St -
there's a big new road going through there, they've
got it barricaded with drums at the moment. It was
about in there and they had a wonderful plantation
of trees around that house. But it was very "shut-
in" with growth.

Clarrie Sutton, who lived down from where we
lived had the barber's shop, where the Black Orchid is now. That block of shops belonged to Clarrie's
father; he built them. I don't know what date that
would be, it may be quite a bit later, late 1920's.

Where Richmond Drapery is, behind there was a
great big two storeyed house. That belonged to
another Sutton. In front of it was a huge Mulberry tree. Of course they had no shops there at all.

One of the Sutton girls helped my mother in the
house and my sister and I went to her wedding in
that house. She was a Pearl and she married a chap
Holland. I don't know whether they're still living
but her daughter is a Mrs Williams and she had a
shop in Brightwater, and whether or not they're still there I don't know but they did live up Main Rd Hope.

And of course there was Billy May's store. It was a dress shop and material shop and all the ladies from town used to come out there to get their flash clothes made.

I remember going there as a little girl. I think we must've come out from town with my mother for her to get some clothes there. And on the opposite corner was Barry Morley's; it was a big two storeyed shop, in later years it was a fish and chip shop. I don't know what they had in there before that. Where the Arthur Wakefield is, I think that was Mrs Papps' house. I used to play with the Papps girl when I was little, after school. In fact there were two old houses there, one by Wilkins and Field and then Mrs Papps place. But there weren't very many shops, Where Westpak bank is; on the corner of Queen and Cambridge streets there was a big block of shops, two storeyed built in
brick. I've got an idea one is still there where Mr Beresford is upstairs. Or has that been rebuilt?

There was one there but I can't remember who it was run by but he used to sell ice-creams, and that was a very rare thing in those days, to have ice-creams because there were no deep-freezers and he used N to get his ice and make them in a sort of a tub thing I think, and he had ice all around. It was just a sort of a boiled custard I think actually. We had ice-cream in the summer but not after March and not before about November or December - too cold!

I didn't really eat a lot of lollies considering my father's job although he bought quite a lot back home and he used to get things made for me, like special chocolate elephants or I would go in there, and he would get the chaps in the factory to make me a chocolate mould while I waited.

I could tell you a bit about McShane's road tv\c^ WrfuCS vu-0 here not that I remember much as a child but since we've come down here: Well, just past that telegraph post there was a doctor McShane who lived there.
He must've had a practice because not long ago we ploughed up that paddock - Birds lived there and then the house got burnt down - and we found these old bottles there and some old medicine bottles that my sons have got. But that rather intrigued me. This is very swampy land here. I don't know how they built a house on there - it has been drained; it was very wet. There used to be a whole lot of yellow daffodils and things over there but they've cleaned the whole lot out. Around the corner where my son lives was J. W. Barnicoat's home (Ashfield). Haycocks lived there for years and then we bought it from the Haycocks.

We own 400 hectares. First of all we bought 100 acres up the road. We came here in 1940, '41 because they took our farm out in Stoke for the aerodrome. They took it by the Public Works Act, and left us with 40 acres. We'd just been married. So we had to come up here and we bought this place from the Harknesses and they'd lived here for generations in a very old house up there amongst some lovely trees. And the Prince of Wales as he...
- or King Edward VIII came to Nelson and he came out from town in a Landau and he had lunch at Karknesses place! That's long before my time. And they also at a later date landed one of the first planes in Nelson on their place. And Charlie Harkness who had both his legs off was hoisted into this plane and went for a ride. When we bought that we pulled down that house, it was too rotten, but it must have been a very nice old home. They had servants and it was quite a posh place apparently. So we built a place up there but we buried a great big hole of bottles. Charlie Harkness used to bach in it and he had a hole in the floor which he threw all his bottles in. He was a great drinker and he used to just pitch his bottles under the house. When we pulled it down of course there was this great heap of bottles - I don't know how old they were - and my husband dug a pit with the tractor and he just bulldozed them all into it thinking that perhaps we might dig it up and retrieve any valuable bottles. I know a man who collects bottles, his name is Jim Lee and he's been at us. He comes down every year or two and says, 'When are you going to dig up all those bottles?' My youngest son is rather interested in them
but he's away up in the North Island and my husbands gone now, so whether anybody knows the exact spot I wouldn't know.

Up the road further were some very old trees. There was a giant Redwood which was nearly 100 feet high and it was blown down by Cyclone Alison. And all this panelling in this house is made from that tree. There was also an enormous Mulberry tree but over the years it's gone back - it's got enormous branches on it. When we first went there it had a lot of Mulberry's on it but now it hasn't. Laurel trees, Olive trees and two enormous pear trees - they're still there. I don't know how old they'd be but they flower twice a year in Spring and they have a crop of pears twice a year. They are very, very small and very sweet and it's very difficult to get any because the birds just love them and eat them. But it's quite funny in the Autumn, I don't know whether it's every Autumn, but pretty well they flower in the Autumn.

I should say these trees would have been planted by the Harknesses. I think that the Redwoods
would take a shorter time to grow here than in their natural habitat because the weather's more favourable. My son has some Oaks on his property, probably planted by the Barnicoats, and he does a bit of woodturning and said that the N.Z. oak splits too easily, it's not strong enough because it's grown too quickly. Not like English Oak.

My husband's father bought, I think it was Betsy Wendleborn's farm, which is Ray Hunter's now. I don't know whether or not he's sold it but he's got boysenberries and peaches there - on the main road through here. And they lived there for about two or three years I suppose. He started school from there. I don't know how long they lived there. It would have been about 1919 or 1920. He was born in 1914. Then they moved to Stoke and moved to a place that belonged to Mr. Salisbury where Monaco starts. And they bought all Monaco and they owned the Island off the end of Monaco - Fir Tree Island.

There were all the Malcolm's. They lived up Bateup's Road - it goes along Wensley Road and then...
it turns into Patons Road.

That old Malcolm home was built out of straw and clay - a cob house. I think it's been pull-ed down now. They had to pull it down. I used to be friendly with the Malcolm girls and I'd go to the cob house and visit old Mrs Malcolm. I used to go there for tea on a Sunday night. It was quite a place to go to. It had a beautiful garden.

I've got one brother left. I had two brothers who farmed that farm up there. Griffin Bros - Gus and Harry. One was older than my sister and the other was younger. They farmed that land and used to grow early peas and potatoes all up those hills. Ploughed it with a hillside plough and a horse and you could only plough one way, you had to plough a furrow and walk all the way back and plough another furrow. Then in August we picked peas and sent them to the coast and Wellington. Sometimes we'd get a big prize and sometimes we wouldn't get anything.
You see there's no frost on those hills. And then we grew lots of early potatoes and it was always exciting, and I'd go up the hill and rap the potato root and get the big ones for us to have a feed before they dug them. We had an old cat - he lived to about 15 years old. He used to love green peas and he'd walk up the hill and walk amongst all the pickers and stop at everyone and expect them to open up a pod so he could eat the peas.

Up in those Richmond foothills there is at the bottom of the gully a very special rock called an R.t Too', igneous rock- my father discovered it and I think it's to do with volcanic action. And it was one of the very few that were found around here. He got an old chap called Gibbs who was a geologist who taught in Nelson - a great geologist - to come up and inspect it when we first got here.

Also along Marlborough Crescent, at the back of those houses going up the hill there, there were vast deposits of pippi shells and old maori ovens and I think the maori's used to go up there and have their
feasts under the cliff there and there were springs coming out of there. I don't know how those houses can be built there. Actually, it used to slip and it was a terrible place. And then up on the top of those hills you can see a pylon and come down at an angle and there's an old tattered looking gum. Well underneath that gum tree and all up there is a vast deposit of fossilised shells. At one stage we reckon it was underneath the sea. You see the Wairoa River used to flow out around Tahuna. Now it comes out by Rabbit Island.

Also Richmond had swimming baths down somewhere near the tip. I don't remember them but I've heard that they had a swimming bath there and men and women went on separate days. The swimming baths would have been built with wooden pallisades and the tide would come in and fill it up. That was before my time though.

When I first went to Richmond School in 1921, we used to have long lectures by the teacher about leaving paper on the streets. It was a very
dangerous thing to do to drop a sheet of paper or any paper on the streets because of the horses. Because a sheet of paper blowing around would cause a horse to panic and bolt. And I've seen quite a few horses in Richmond when I was a child do this because of flying paper, and someone would rush out and try and catch them.

There were very few cars. We had a car but, there weren't many around. The first one we had was called a Rio, then we had a Model T and he used to go into town on business every day. Go to the factory every day. But Dad used to say to Mother when he went to work in the morning, 'Goodbye Dear - and if I don't turn up tonight you'll know I've been lost in one of the potholes!' The roads were very bad. Not tarseal. We used to have to wear dust jackets and scarves because the cars weren't enclosed, they were only tourers.

We had these linen coats that you put on over your clothes, and they had bone buttons with shanks on them that fitted through the holes. That
was so when you laundered them you could take the buttons off, because everything was boiled in the copper in those days.

And these old dustcoats that were made of a cream linen used to get boiled. And we had big silk scarf things that you tied over your hats to keep them on and keep the dust out of your hair. We were dressed up like I don't know what to get in the car. I guess they had cream dustcoats because it was so hot you see riding in one of these cars in the summer. Thirty miles an hour would be a good speed. I don't know if they went any faster.

Mr Ward the chemist lived in Queen Street. Opposite him on the corner of William Street and Queen Street on the left-hand side as you go up was an old house. I think Mrs Wilkes flat was there; it's probably been sold now but Mrs Howard Wilkes lived in there until she died. The house was owned by a Mr and Mrs Martin. And he was an accountant and I've got an idea he worked for Wilkes. He had a daughter Margaret who had a beautiful voice - she used to do a lot of
singing and she used to teach singing there and she was quite a friend of ours and used to come to our place a lot.

Further down Edward Street and across the road was Mr Kidd's house and he had quite an establishment there. Where Mrs Craig now lives behind the Edward Street Chapel was - I think it was The Stables - her place. He had quite a lot of land in there, he had horses and he kept some cows and sheep. Then further down was the same uncle, Mr Cederman, that built the house up in Hill Street. He bought a place down there too and he had quite a bit of land there. But it was very poor land in there. I think it must have had a hard pan underneath it because the water used to lie in the clay on the top. William Street was never there. We had to go through the paddocks to go to school. We had to come down to where William Street turns into George Street, it went that far, and there wasn't that extra bit through to Hill Street then. We used to come through the paddocks. That was all farmland. There were no buildings there at all. But it wasn't very productive; it was very poor land.
It needed draining and a lot of manure put on it. Talking of that, when my brothers took on that farm in Hill Street, that too was, except for the flat up the drive there was a quarter mile drive where Churchill Avenue goes up, and the stream, and where the hill is - Cliff Taylor lives up there now and Ralph Gibson. That was all Moutere clay and it didn't produce anything. It hardly grew any grass. My brothers of course weren't farmers but they were businessmen and they got the advice from an old chap called Carl Webby, who lived where the riding school is now in Hill Street, and he advised them and they got advice from the Cawthron Institute and they made it into some of the best pasture in the district.

Nextdoor down from the riding school there's an old house. I suppose it's still there. It belonged to Blight's. There was quite a family of them. I used to go there a lot when I was a child. I'd forgotten about that lower part of Hill Street. There was old Mr and Mrs Blight and they had several daughters - one was Jessie who married another Blight, and they live up Redwoods Valley. Whether she's still
alive or not I don't know. Then further down across
the road where Owen Adams lived was an old house.
Some friends of ours, the Cough-eyes-Johnsons lived in
there for years. I don't know who had it before they
did. Then it was bought by Mr Long and they lived
there for quite a long time. I used to go and play
with the girl Long - Pam Long. I don't know where
she is now. She became a nurse. Then further down
on Champion Road across the corner were the Childs.
I think that Norma Childs still lives there. Oh, I
can't think of her name now but I've got an idea she
still lives in that old house on the corner of Hill
Street and Champion Road. On the town side, and
there's an orchard there and quite a number of trees.
Vic and John Sutton bought a house down there but at
a later date. And they also owned - unless they rented
it - some of the land that' Owen Adams had there in that
house that Longs had. Adams bought that land not long
ago. I remember we used to make hay with the Sutton's -
making haystacks there years ago and John fell off the
haystack.
Up Salisbury Road was another Sutton who lived in an old two-storeyed house that's been remodelled. It's quite an old place. It would be perhaps the first house up Salisbury Road. I think the Fraser's own some land don't they? There was John Sutton's house on the corner by the deviation and there was a bit of land, and then there was this two-storeyed house owned by Mr Sutton. He and his wife lived there. They must have lived there for years. They had a son but I can't think of his name now. Their grandson is Richie Sutton and he lives over in Mapua now. I think Richard's mother died and his grandmother brought him up. Next door to that was another old house. I don't know who owned it but it was very old. It was bought by a cousin of mine, a Beatson. It's a two-storeyed old place behind another house. And my cousin Alice Beatson, I haven't seen her for years but she was very old. I don't know whether she's still alive or not. They lived there for a very long time. Then of course the Smallbones were where Waimea College was. This dining table came from the Smallbones sale when they sold out. It's mahogany and we bought it for seven pound. I've been offered over one thousand
dollars for it!

I asked my husband to go to the sale. My family was getting bigger and bigger and I hadn't got enough room around the table. It was an extension table advertised and I said, 'Well if you are going to the sale, would you see what that extension table looks like?' He had a quick look at it. It was covered with books and he bought it for seven pounds. He bought it home and I looked at it and I said, 'that's made of mahogany!' And he said, 'It isn't!' It's a lovely table. I keep it covered to protect it but it's got a crack across it.

Mr and Mrs Smallbone's daughter married a chap Gardiner, Len Gardiner. He and my brothers were some of the first to produce milk for Nelson from up there. He had a dairy farm there and they had Jersey cows and they sort of went into partnership, and they produced it and Len delivered the milk in town. He used to collect it up every morning and take it into town. That would be before there were any processing dairies or anything. A lot of milk was sold from the
Carlton dairy. My husband and his father also produced milk for the Carlton at Stoke. But my brothers and Len had this milk business and when Waimea College started Len sold the place - he had a big clearance sale. He also used to make apple juice - he must have been one of the first because he had an orchard and he used to process the apples and bottle the juice. Sometimes it used to keep and sometimes it wouldn't. And when he sold that place he sold all this apple juice, or I think it was just there and people took it. We had a stack behind our house and sometimes you'd open a bottle and it'd be good and sometimes it wouldn't.

When Waimea College took over they took all the bottles that were left and they buried them up in the playing ground in the college. They were full. There were thousands of them. There was a big heap. I think they had it for a shooting range, I'm not quite certain. But see, my second son, he was the first pupil at Waimea College. He was only a third former to begin with. He was the first day pupil.
He was quite a laugh old Len Gardiner. He was always making people laugh.

Then there was a Mr Hunt down Queen Street here where Mr Fish lives. That's Jimmy Hunt. I think he might have been a Mayor once. He owned a lot of Queen Street. Then this piece of land across here was owned by the Newman's, on the other side of McShane's Road. It was just a piece they had; there weren't any buildings or anything on it. And we bought it from Newman's. I think that Mrs Hunt, I have an idea that Jimmy Hunt's wife was a Miss Newman and I think that's how he got in here perhaps, because she had this land and it belonged to Newman's. Or we always called it Newman's here, that's what it was called. And that was just solid swamp when they bought it and they reclaimed it.

We've got about 300 cows and quite an acreage of boysenberries and kiwifruit and we're putting in apples and I think that's about all. There's three of my sons here on the farm, and we employ two men full-time and a lot of casual labour.
I have a daughter who lives in Paraparam. My youngest son has just moved up to Tearahi - he's a schoolteacher. I'm going up there soon to try out the hot baths!"