

INTERVIEW NO.3

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 30th August, 1991.

MISS CLAIRE PFOEFFER
47 CLIFTON STREET
BLACKTOWN. 2148.

**** This copy has been edited**
by Miss Pfoeffler
[Edited changes are added
in *bold italic* script.]

0.34 My name is Claire Anne Pfoeffler. I live at 47 Clifton Street, Blacktown. I was born at Parramatta. Date of birth was the 30th January, 1913. I'm not married. I'm Australian. No children.

1.05 First of all I'll just ask you about your period of residence in the area. How long have you lived in Blacktown itself?

1.13 We moved up here in 1923. That's 68 years back isn't it.

1.23 So you've seen a lot of changes in the area. And just as a bit of family background, what did your father do?

1.35 Originally he had a carrying business in Sydney, a horse-drawn one, and he used to move fruit and pick up cases, like from Darling Harbour, all the ships and from the railway and take them to the markets. I think he had two or three wagons. He sold out there in 1920 and we came up to Seven Hills to live, and from then on he was a general handyman. He did painting, whatever was available he'd do.

2.18 And what about your mother? Did she work at all?

2.20 Well my mother lived in the district at Seven Hills and that's where he married her. Originally, see he was living at Glebe with his parents until the father died and his grandmother at Seven Hills took him and reared him up there 'til he was about, I suppose 15 or 16, he might have been a bit older when he went back to live with his mother again. He could have been older. He was working evidently with somebody with the cartage, the horse-drawn wagons, and then he acquired his own. And then of before we moved up here we went to Seven Hills for three years. That was at my mother's place. The grandfather had an orchard. Seven Hills was all Orchards. Most of it was summer fruit around there and then there was a certain amount of citrus and grapes, but the main part was ... see they didn't know what to put back into the soil in the finish, and the water... so that's how all the orchards went from Seven Hills and around. It became more of a dairy - they had dairy farms, different ones, but we didn't, and then we moved up here, and from then on, and even at Seven Hills, he did a bit of every type of work. So that's how we moved up here. My mother, she lived at home most of the time with her parent, but was a dressmaker, so that she used to make frocks for the different ones.

3.53 And did you build this house, or was it already here?

3.57 No, my grandfather built this house and actually built the one above. He built the first one and that must have been built somewhere, we worked it out, roughly about 1900, and this one must have been built somewhere around about 1908 to a hundred and ten or somewhere like that. It might have been up to a hundred and twelve. Actually this became the first police station, because it was a Trooper Wilson came from Prospect, came over, 'cause the Troopers were the ones that were on the horses. Then there was the next policeman came in, and of course when grandmother was selling the property at Seven Hills we just came up, my mother and I, and just gave the policeman notice. He said "All right, I'll be out next week" - see, plenty of empty houses around - and we moved in. So that was how, in March, I think we moved in about the end of March, 1923, and this is where we've been ever since.

5.00 So you would have been about ten years old then?

5.03 Yes. We went to school up at Seven Hills. Well actually I did go to school at Stanmore, because we lived at Camperdown in those early years 'til we moved to Seven Hills. And then Seven Hills. It was a one-man school up there, he must have had about 30 pupils, and that was Seven Hills North. The school's still there but of course the old building's gone. And then up here to Blacktown.

5.33 Did you walk from here to school?

5.36 Oh yes, there was no motor cars in those days. People didn't go and collect their children. There was no trouble about, well, you know, being careful of who might abduct you, or ... "Don't talk to strange men" you were told. But, oh no, everybody walked.

5.55 There were no buses or any form of transport?

No there was no buses in the early days, but the first bus - I had a photo of one of the first ones - I gave it to the library. I think they've got one and the Historical Society's got one. It was a photo of a picnic and it was ... anyway it's these little buses, like a little tiny mini bus. It was only carry about - it wouldn't carry - no more than about twenty passengers, and that ran from Blacktown Station, Richmond Road to Blacktown Station, out to Parklea. Of course the gaol wasn't there by any means, but that was the outskirts of Blacktown, Parklea, and then coming in a bit further was Headingly and of course, Blacktown. Oh it was more or less only up to Cambridge Street, the equivalent of Fourth and Fifth Avenue going across.

6.55 And is this amount of land that you have here now - that's a lovely big area - and was that the amount that you had to begin with?

7.02 Yes. Grandfather, well see, he must have bought ... actually we've got two sections, or lot numbers as they call it - it should be 41 and 43 and like ours would be 45 and 47. And I think the grandfather's idea was - that's why he built them both on the end - he could have put another house in with a 50-foot frontage see. This is 75, nearly 76 foot I think it is. And the grandmother owned the other. She owned that land, all that was her house, she must have built that with her money, and that was only like a 38-foot or a 40. Most of the allotments evidently - I did see an original map of the area when they were selling in 1880's or 1888 or something like that, for this area and they were all little only small widths. And that's why a lot of the places in this part here and up on the hill, they haven't really got a drive in down for a garage, they can really only park in the front.

8.10 It must be because it's so close to the railway and shops?

8.16 Oh yes, well see they never envisaged motor cars, it was the horse-drawn ... well probably they could get the horse down or something. But most of them would buy two lots. See they'd have the extra piece and the ones in the early days that would build and then if they gave their families ... up the road there was the original old chap and then he gave it to, or his son got it, but then they had to take it off there, so that made it shorter.

8.47 And, Claire, looking at more into the 1940's, say when you were in your early twenties thirties?

Yes, thirties.

9.02 What was the area like then? Has it become very much more built up or have the areas around here ...?

9.08 Not a great deal. Prior to World War II there wasn't a great number of homes. About half a mile, I suppose from the station, or three quarters from the Post Office around was the area. This side would only go ... oh it's Fifth Avenue - you know where Blacktown High School is? Well those avenues, that had been subdivided earlier in the early 1920's or prior to that, but there wasn't many houses in these avenues. And then, on this other side, was the next set of lights, oh that's Fifth Avenue, Sackville Street, well then down further there's another street, that was Cambridge Street. Well that was the border for over here - went right up to Stephen

Street. And then over the other side near the hospital, well most of that, there was hardly anything over there, only just odd homes with large areas of land or poultry farms. And the other part was over Blacktown, down to Waters Road, coming back Bungarraby Road to Flushcombe Road and that was the close, well reasonably close settled. There was often land in between but the homes were there.

10.32 There was nothing much beyond that area?

That was the area of Blacktown, and even on the other side, well there was the showground there. There was only just a couple of houses just near the station and even down the other way where it runs back onto the railway line there were not many homes there. They were older settlements.

10.53 And so this house of course was built of what material ... wood ... timber?

Wood, yes timber.

And it's a nice big house, obviously. How many bedrooms are there?

Well, this part was added. We've got three bedrooms. Well, there's a lounge which used to be the dining room. But see they never built lounges. More or less it was the dining room and the kitchen, and this had ... you can see at the end of the door where you can see where it runs across back down from here ... there's an L-shaped verandah and then dad put this extra piece on to make it a big living room, 20 by 20, so that gave us a big space.

11.35 And you always had an inside bathroom and toilet?

Not the toilet. Oh, no! In those days it was a walk down the garden path, down the back. The sewerage ... it didn't come on until the middle 60's or something when the sewerage started to come into Blacktown. It might have been the 70's before I got it on. I've just got to stop and think. I could find papers, but no, we haven't had it that long in Blacktown. Some of them on the other side got it because the hospital was put on the sewerage, because that was running to Botany Bay or Bondi or somewhere, but it ran to the ocean outlet. And this side, the hill and all around this way, had to run back and it goes back to the Council at Breakfast Creek at Quaker's Hill treatment plant.

12.35 It was quite late for you.

12.39 Oh yes, it was late, because we'd hear about it and everybody would say "When are we going to get it and".

12.44 You had the regular sanitary service?

Yes, most times it was only once a week. If you wanted additional service you either rang them up and they'd come and bring ... if you had a lot of visitors. And then at times if they went on strike or if it was too bad, Dad would have to go and dig a little hole and empty some of it down the back.

13.08 Those were the days!

13.09 They were the days! Now the bathroom - most buildings in the early days - the bathrooms and the laundries were together.

13.21 And what about ... talking more round about the late 40's now, as that's the period we're interested in more, into the 50's when the change started taking place. What sort of appliances did you have in the house? Did you have refrigerators and vacuum cleaners?

13.42 Refrigerators were, yes, and a vacuum cleaner. I know the first refrigerator we got was the Golden Jubilee one that - Silver Jubilee - for King George V and Queen Mary. My mother's sister had been sick and she - it was a terminal cancer that she had - and she came out here so

we got his frig. It was a Kelvinator - a little small model. Well, it was quite a large size but we thought it was big enough in those days, after having an ice chest, and of course you either had to go and get the ice or the iceman would come around if you ran out, and ... can't think when she died now ... it was before - it must have been 1939 or something, prior to war. But after that it was always the fuel stove that ... my mother liked her fuel stove. There were a few electrics around, but, of course electricity was very expensive as everybody thought in those days. And then after the war years Dad bought a small Metters electric stove. It was just the one element on top with a big hot plate around it and then you had the separate oven, and there was only the two switches, one for the top and one for the oven. And we had that for quite a few years. I kept that, well I used to use it mainly, 'cause I lost my mother and father within two months of each other. So of course I'd never done much housework. Mum used to ... or being at the office, at the weekends I be out on a Saturday most times, or towards the latter part I didn't, but in the early days I went out. I worked in town for quite a while and then came out to Clyde and up to, in the latter part, up to St. Marys after the War was over. So then I got the other stove, well that's about 25 years old I think, it might be a bit longer, - an electric one. The old fuel stove is still there but, of course, the damper has rusted up. My brother put a sheet of tin or something over the timber up top to stop the rain coming through. If you lit a fire now you'd smoke the place out!

16.32 What sort of work did you do back in the 40's?

I went to a business college and was trained as a stenographer.

16.53 I'm sorry. This was after leaving school? I should really talk about your school days first. How long did you stay at school?

I went to Parramatta, from Blacktown I went to Parramatta and that was the Parramatta Domestic Science. It was a business one more or less, taught you housework, hygiene and cooking. We had cooking and that, but I only went up to eighth class 'cause they didn't have these year 1s and 2s then. I left and I had the next year ... why I didn't go that far, only up to the eighth, I only just started there and I had a bad knee. It was a bone condition. So I was off school. They gave me deep ray therapy and fortunately it did the trick. It killed the disease in the bone, but I couldn't do any running and I had to stay home from school, so it was a good six months and I started the next year. Well then it came to the eighth class and that's when I left and I went to a business college, Parramatta Stotts. Of course one of the names has already gone now I think, and I was twelve months there with the shorthand and typing, and then I went to town. They would find a position for you in those days so you could go into the main one in town, Stotts, and they'd send you out for interviews in town and around. I got into a - I suppose I had about a month in there - to an advertising place. They wanted a junior girl to do some typing etc. and I had twelve years with the advertising - it was Catts Patterson. That's the Patterson they talk about - George Patterson. He was there with Patterson, but they dissolved partnership later. Once Mr. Catts got out of the business that was the condition, the name of Catts Patterson would drop because they couldn't trade on it. I was still there when War was on and towards the end of the War Clyde Engineering wanted somebody and I thought - "No Saturday morning work". In those days you worked Saturday mornings, apart from a Government concern, if you were in the Public Service you had the Saturday mornings off, and you worked till 12 o'clock, 9 o'clock till 12, and 9 till 5 or 5.30 on the weekdays. When I started in town first the electric trains were not - they were still building them - and 'cause we were down in Kent Street and another lass that was at the office, she used to walk up. She came from Epping. So we'd walk up the back way up Liverpool Street, right up to Central Station and the steam trains started from there, and you'd get yourself settled into a steam train. Some of your friends would be coming home, same going in of a morning. We'd all be on the train together, and of course if anybody got into that seat ... we'd give them looks. We'd travel through to town. You could pick up the trams if you wanted to of a morning, you might have, or you'd walk down.

20.32 How long did the train trip take?

It only took just the hour. Actually sometimes only like 55 minutes. And considering at times, with the electrics because there was extra trains on the line, but some of them were

taking just as long as the old steam trains and they would be all stations to Parramatta and a few other ... Granville, probably Lidcombe, Strathfield, Burwood - Homebush, Strathfield and Burwood and then Redfern, and then to Central at the steam trains. So you used to do a lot of either knitting or reading. Of course the lights were not the best in the winter home for coming home for reading. And from there I came back up to Clyde Engineering and I was out in the aircraft in the office there and then I finally got inside. They wanted somebody in there. 'Cause they weren't doing much really - it was no wonder the War effort cost a lot. 'Cause they were all on cost plus jobs, so it didn't matter how long it took them or what staff they'd have on. And then I went down to an engineering place at Lidcombe, Goodwins, and then after the War was over, a couple of years after, the St. Mary's ... he wanted to move his factory up there and so we got the office part of the munitions area and a big workshop there and moved up. Then I took off for New Zealand with a girlfriend in 1948 and I had six months over there but she stayed on - she's still over there. But I liked New Zealand very much and I worked for the Milk Board on a temporary basis. Actually it was four months working holiday and then the rest was the holiday. When I came back, it was the end of 1948, I went down to Camelia. I applied for a job. Australian Cream of Tartar was the name of the company and that's where I went to. I was secretary there to the Assistant Managing Director and that's where I stayed for the next twenty - just on twenty-eight years. So I retired from there. But in the meantime they changed their names 'cause they were one-third American, one of English and a little bit of New Zealand, and it became Stauffer Chemicals and their different subsidiaries. Well now Stauffer's only got a name - you've got to look under Pacific Chemicals to find Stauffer now.

23.32 They were at Camelia?

Camellia. But it was down in Grand Avenue, down the other side of the Rose Hill Race Course. Colquhoun Street divides the Race Course from the building. Chrome Chemicals was another one of their subsidiaries. That had only been started in the War years, and in this Grand Avenue there was Hardies up at Camelia Station, that was the only station, then Goodyears, Cream of Tartar, oh, Wescos Paints, Cream of Tartar and then you went down to Wunderlich's and Shell ... it was an oil company ... down the bottom end. Up till the War years, the close of the War years or something, the steam tram used to run down George Street, from Parramatta Park gates down to the wharf down on Parramatta River. That was why Grand Avenue was so wide.

24.44 So the electric trains didn't come through here until the 50's.

They came through in 1955 and that was when the official opening ... well once the trains came through ... after the War years there wasn't much in the way of a population influx because see it was only like five years after War was over, but once the electrics came in and electrification went through, well that's where the influx came and it just spread, and there was land that had been poultry farms, they were all being subdivided and of course it spread out and ever since that it's been going and going and spreading more. At times when you go around you think 'Oh that was vacant land, look at all the houses that's going up. And see, even on the way out, on the Richmond Road there now there are so many. A lot of them are housing settlements with the Housing Commissions buildings and others are private homes, and up near the Rooty Hill turnoff, all that was big poultry farms and now it's all homes across there. It's nearly back to the railway line again.

26.01 What happened to all the poultry farmers?

Well most of them, a few of them that was left, they gradually ... well they were getting out and the Egg Board was limiting them with what they could produce, and of course they were getting on in years a lot of them and they either sold out or just gave it away and retired. Or their sons would take over occasionally.

26.28 And what about industry in the Blacktown area?

There wasn't much at all. Even the shops in those days - there wasn't much in that way. Hardly any offices. There might have been, you know, a wood and coal yard or earlier in the

place was a timber mill. 'Cause where the Warwick Car Park is now, just across Sunnyholt Road bridge near the park, that was a timber mill, Stuart's Timber Mill. He used to haul in the logs and that that came from Kurrajong and he'd be cutting up and supplying fire wood and sleepers and different things and he had a bit of produce. I think, no, did he have the produce? No, I don't think he went in for the produce, but then there was a few that just had like a general store or produce only and they supplied the food, poultry food, chaff and everything for horses and cows, 'cause a lot of people would have cows. Or they did in the early stages. We had a cow for a few years. We brought it up from Seven Hills, but then someone had to milk it each time - Dad was the one that had to. But then the milkman started to come, and there was no milk deliveries - not on this side. Whether there was one earlier on the other side I couldn't say, and then they started, and Tom's ... who was the first one ... then Tom's took over, but they'd do the delivery every day you'd get daily milk. You'd leave your jug out on the front verandah and they'd just come and put it in and pick it up.

28.15 When would that have been?

Of a morning. The boys had to do it before they went to school. The father and whoever helped - maybe the boys had to help too with the milking. And then later they'd left school and they would be working at home on the farm 'cause that was out going up near King Langley Road up the hill a bit here, that's where their dairy farm was.

28.41 And did you have other things delivered to the house?

Yes, you could have oh, the baker called. Did he call every day? I think it was locally they called every day with your bread. There was a green grocer came around if you wanted it, or there was a bit of green grocer's shop down the street where you'd buy the things, but mainly I think Mum, in the early days, she probably bought it off them. 'Cause when you're going to school you're not wondering where it comes from. There'd be fruit or vegetables she'd have, or you'd grow some yourself, a lot of them.

29.18 Did you grow much?

No, not a lot, because Dad was working doing odd jobs and different things, painting or repairing or doing so and so and you're on the go.

29.33 Did you keep chooks at all?

Oh yes, we kept chooks. It was down the back there, because the scraps from the house went to it, the peels and that would go into it and they'd be fed. That was Mum's job to look after the chooks and feed them. And there was a separate little division to keep the younger ones away from the older ones.

29.55 And did she shop locally?

Oh, yes. We used to go mainly over here to the corner shop just this side where Ultratune is, there was a shop there, and we'd go over. My young brother - I'd go over to Chilver's with the order Saturday morning but my young brother, the one that lived at home, he was the youngest, e'd go. He'd ask Mum "Now, what do you want today" you know, so and so" and he run through the list and he'd go over there and get the things. He'd make up the order while you waited and it wasn't far to carry it. Over in the main street of Blacktown there were about three grocery shops, fruit, baker, butchers, barber, newsagent and others. And then later on, I suppose it would have been in the late 40's or 50's there was one over in the town and he was about one of the first self-service shops here. It was just groceries and that and you could go around pick them up and just take them to the counter and then carry them home, and it was reasonably cheap. But there was other little grocers down the town.

30.59 So how has the shopping centre changed from those times until today?

Oh, yes. Even up this end for a while there Coles was opposite in Main Street just up from MacDonalds, Woolworths was up there ... and then they were down the town. But see that

made all the difference, the supermarkets nearby that you get the things, and of course that brought them down and of course then when K-Mart developed over that side they went over there, but their lease expired, they took the New World section. Then Woolworths was down the town, their Variety one was down the town, and then of course they all went over to the shopping centre. So it's left us ... I find it better to go to King Langley to shop 'cause it's on the flat more and you can wheel out your trolley to the car. Whereas you can go to the shopping centre over there - you've got to wheel them down and around, or call and get the things, pick them up at the pick-up.

SIDE B

0.02 And what about the health services in the area? What sort of health services were there in the area before the War?

Parramatta was the closest District Hospital, and you went there or down to Auburn. I'm not sure if Auburn - yes they did have a small one, but Parramatta was the closest. Penrith only had a small one, ... Windsor ... and so it depended if there was an accident where you were as to where you were taken to. They had a private hospital here, but only ... oh, Sister Rawlings, Sister Holmes - she was Sister Holmes and married Rawlings later - and it was just up the corner. She did have operation cases there. Then there was another one over on the other side, Sister Overton, but hers was a maternity one. As regards the doctors, there were only about two doctors. Dr. Bennet was the first resident doctor, and then came Dr. Donellan, and there was a Dr. McVean. He came just before the War years. So that was all the doctors in this district. Seven Hills didn't have a doctor. I'm not sure about Toongabbie, going down there, if there was there would only be one. I think Rooty Hill probably had one there. St. Mary's might have had a couple up there. So that if you wanted the doctor you had to ring up. A lot of people didn't have phones on.

1.58 Did you have the phone?

No. We didn't have it on. It was only a few businesses that had phones on in the early days, oh, and a few private people. But most of them you either went to the Post Office and ask them to put a call through, or you went to the State Railway Station and ask them could they put, you know, an urgent call through. So that was all as regards the medical. We didn't have a chemist until, it must have been the late 30's there, when the chemist came in. So you went to Parramatta for everything. There was quite a few doctors in Parramatta. You'd go in there to travel and see them.

2.41 What about buying clothes? Did you have to travel to buy clothes?

Yes, you would. Oh, there was a little general store. There wouldn't have been many clothes. It was more boys' pants and those type of things, or ordinary working shirts and that, but if you wanted anything good you always went to town.

3.03 Parramatta?

3.04 Oh, yes Parramatta, or into Sydney. Anthony Horderns - you could get everything at Anthony Horderns it was such a big firm. My mother would go in and she'd meet her sister from Summer Hill and they'd have a shopping day in town, probably when the sales was on ... and so that she would buy, but she didn't buy many frocks in the early days, for me either, 'cause she could make them. It was cheap that's why, and of course when I started at the office first you could buy materials for about a shilling a yard or something like that - different things, you'd pick up bargains - so you could afford to have about fourteen frocks. You wouldn't wear the same thing every day and you'd have a change - you could go through seven days without having to repeat the wardrobe again. And the same with shoes. You'd either go to Parramatta to buy shoes or ... Parramatta had quite a good shopping centre, there was frocks and dresses places there.

4.22 What about the local churches? Were there churches close to your home?

Yes, they were all on the other side. There was only the three churches that was here when we moved up. There was the Catholic St. Patrick's which is where St. Patrick's Mall is now.. That was the last one, 'cause they moved down to Allawah Street there. There was the Church of England, the Anglican now they call it, and that is now opposite where the RTA is, and the Presbyterians were around in Campbell Street. Colo Lane would mark their Northern side boundary.

5.16 And they have gone now have they?

Yes. Well the Presbyterians moved. They built a new one up in Marion Street, 'cause when they started to develop everyone wanted them. So they went over there, down to Marion Street. The Methodist Church later started, and they built down here on the corner of Prince Street and Second Avenue. Then the Baptist Church started, either before or after, but they're up in Sackville Street and Harold Street. So that became the two churches over this side, but they were not the original ones. Most of the ones that went there were breakaways from either Presbyterians or they may have been Methodists, but they just went to the nearest church to them because there was nothing else. And then gradually the Methodist built their up where the RTA is now and then the amalgamation of the Methodists and Presbyterians, but they still kept the same churches, but then they finally sold these and they built up the back of the hospital. So ... but the Presbyterians have started over in Lalor Park but there is no Presbyterian Church in Blacktown.

6.44 And did the churches play a fairly big part in the social activity of the town in the early days?

Not a great deal, only amongst themselves they would sometimes have a social. Or you'd have your own hall, often people would take part. Often they'd have flower shows or sale of works here, and they'd be down in the old School of Arts, and that was down in the main street. It's hard to remember. Just the top side of where the Bank of New South Wales is coming from the Sydney side ...

7.30 Is that somewhere near the Post Office?

No. Not the Post Office. There's a walkway between the Bank of New South Wales and the arcade - something that runs through - and that was roughly where the School of Arts was, and then of course there was only little odd shops along.

7.55 So there'd be very few old buildings that were there then that would still be standing?

There's practically none! The only one that'd be standing now is the one up ... Bowes Cafe, coming up to Warwick Lane, and it's got the date 1926 on it.

8.11 Is that the Chinese Cafe?

Yes, Bowes Cafe. And I think it's the liquor store next to it or something. They were two shops there, one was a refreshment room, because where the Rural ... the State Bank ... well that was the site of where the old Rivoli Theatre was, well the picture show business, that started in the 1920's.

8.38 I was going to ask you next about recreation and what you did for recreation in those days?

Well I didn't do anything for recreation as regards sport, 'cause I had to be careful. They'd all say "Now don't do this", you know, running. It wasn't so much - it was only the first six months, but I got quite out of it. When I went back to school I didn't take any sport. I did play a bit of tennis prior to that but nothing - I wasn't a tennis player. But most of the people played tennis and cricket, that was the main - or vigoro was another game. Different ones, they'd be in these teams. But there was quite a big following of tennis - they were in competitions. They'd have A, B and C grade or something tennis competitions, and then they had the Tennis Court Association over at the hard courts and they used to play a lot over

there. And a lot of people had their own - if they had enough land - they had a tennis court at the back of their land.

9.46 What about theatre and going to the pictures?

Well, when you weren't in town you'd go to the pictures quite a bit because you wouldn't have time to come home and go back. Actually going to the theatre, it was only on a rare occasions you went to the theatre because the last train in those days left Central, especially the steam trains, well even the electrics, was half past eleven. So you had to watch the time. You had to get up to either Central Station or pick up a tram, whatever you liked. Once the electrics were running to went down to Town Hall Station or Wynyard, but even then you had to be down in time for half past eleven or you waited for the paper train which left town about three o'clock in the morning. What they called the paper train, it was one going through to the Mountains and the Herald, all the morning papers would be on it, and they'd toss them out. They didn't deliver them by the trucks or anything like that, no road transport then. They'd put them out at the station. They'd just pull up and throw it out. The one that had the paper shop came down and collected them, and then they'd have the early morning papers. I think in the early days they never sold them at the station. They'd be open and they'd just collect them. Then gradually some of them became paper boys and they'd deliver papers around.

11.25 And what about clubs and auxiliaries and that sort of thing? Did your mother or you belong to any?

Well my mother belonged to the Red Cross. The Red Cross started in about 1920 here, so she'd been a Red Cross member evidently at Stanmore, and when she came up here she joined up and they used to have a monthly meeting and they'd go to it. The CWA started a bit later - it might have been in the late 30's - well then that was for the women on the land, and they met monthly here. During the War years the Council had what they called the Patriotic Fund and they worked for the servicemen. They had functions in order to get hampers or something, or cakes, or socks and different things. Most of the churches had a guild so that it was the ladies that would go - those that wanted to - and in those days the Ladies' Guild consisted more of organising little functions for the church or they'd do a bit of sewing at the same time, or bring it home and take it up there. But there wasn't a great

12.55 deal of ... there was no library in Blacktown, so ... there was no amenities much at all, 'cause it was really by train you had to travel. I think there might have been one dentist and he was only there for a little while, just only came so many days a week, and then there was a Mr. Last, I think, was the one. He was a dentist. I don't know whether he was on a regular basis or whether he had another surgery elsewhere and he spent so much time in Blacktown, and backwards and forwards.

13.30 So what about the difference there now today, do you think the churches have seen a big change in the number of people patronising churches generally? And do they still have social activities?

Yes, there has been a big change in the churches. There's more... well the population's grown and there's quite a large ... because we've had such an influx of younger people, or they've grown up, and of course they're coming into a centre, and they come, mainly the bigger service, the quarter to ten service, is more like a family service. And then the youngsters can go to the Sunday School section, or come in and then go out. I think most of the churches find that that way they encourage the younger ones with their young families to come. 'Cause it used to be eleven o'clock, so I mean, there was no early service. The Anglican and Catholics have an early service - for years we've had it at eight o'clock and then ... it used to be eleven o'clock, but then it got down to half past nine and now it's a quarter to ten. But they have more of their ... a lot have a kind of a caring group at a church and, more for their own folks. You see sometimes mothers have been sick and they can't cook the meal, and there was a little group and they'd have food cooked and put it in the freezer. Somebody would ring up and say Mrs. So-and-so is not so good, or the family, so different ones would take an evening meal out to them. We had Care Force up here as an office on our church premises. Well they've gone to Rooty Hill now, to the church up there, that's the big office up there 'cause it was more central for Mt. Druitt and the folks that were living around. But we have what we

call a Caring Group. Different ones are sent there or they come up and they don't give them money, but they counsel them up to a certain point, or give them a little bag of food, enough for a day or so and then if there's more, if they're wanting bills paid then they've got to go up to Care Force and present their cases and they take it up from there to see if they're really genuine or what they can do. They try to show them how to budget. I think, I'm not sure about the Uniting Church, they've probably got something going, but they haven't got a centre. The Salvation Army has a centre and St. Patricks has a centre. They call it Centre Care I think it is. It's on the same principle - they are giving them help and advice.

16.42 What about organisations? Your involvement in organisations - have you belonged to different groups like the CWA and such?

No. When I was working, up until I retired I didn't belong to any, apart from the church group there. I was Honorary Secretary there for the Parish Council and the Church Committee, so that kept me busy with their meetings.

But when I retired I joined Parramatta View Club because three of the members down there - we all went to school at Blacktown. Two did - the other one was when we went to Parramatta Domestic Science, that's where we got to know Dulcie there. And also my friend next door belonged to the CWA and I kept in touch with my other friend at Westmead, and also you want two different interests when you're close by, so she joined when she retired. She had to retire earlier because she had hypertension and she couldn't carry on work. So she joined the CWA. Well I go to quite a few of their functions when they've got it on, and then I did Meals on Wheels for nearly 13 years - that was with two other friends, so we gave it away last year - and so that was on a monthly basis we did it. So apart from them, when Blacktown Historical Society started I joined that because that was at night, a meeting.

18.29 How often do they meet?

They meet once a month. We haven't got a proper home - that's the trouble. We've met at different spots there, but we're at the Blacktown West Public School we have a room there, an assembly hall. But the Council did supply - they bought the early public school at Riverstone and it had been acquired by the Masonic Lodge and they built over the road somewhere else. Anyway they bought that, the original school, and they turned that into the Bicentennial Museum. That covers - Blacktown City area covers from Blacktown, part of Seven Hills, part of Toongabbie, around King Langley up to Windsor Road is the border line, up to Riverstone, Mt Druitt, bordering somewhere between Mt Druitt and St. Marys, back down the Western Highway more or less. So it's a large area. I don't go up to Riverstone much. I think they have a meeting every so often, but those that are in the Blacktown Historical Society, there's a certain committee they pick to represent, and they go up.

20.04 How did the - after the war a lot of immigrants came from Europe - how did that affect your life or the life of the community in any way?

I don't think it affected it so much. They were more or less accepted because we all felt sorry for them and what they'd been through, because there wasn't many Japanese came out at that stage, 'cause the way they'd treated our men at that stage, they wouldn't have been welcome. Prior to the War the main groups that was out was Maltese and Italians that were living around the areas, and they all had the market gardens and they would have either been working and their wives was doing ... depending on the size of land they had ... and then as they started to come through there was more Germans came out. We've got German friends. They moved, but they were over on the opposite corner, and they moved - they've been in different spots in the migrant camp - they were up at Cowra I think. They were in Victoria and then sent up there. And the Dutch came out, different ones. But they were accepted. And of course then there's been such an influx now - we're such a cosmopolitan lot these days, we don't know who we've got in the same ... when you count up all their various churches. How many churches we've got around the district now for that particular country.

21.51 After reflecting on your life in that particular period, how do you feel about all the rapid growth that's taken place, and changes that have taken place in the area? Do you think it's a change for the better, for women particularly?

Well, I suppose it has, because a lot of them are getting more help and support with things that they wouldn't have in the early days. Maybe we didn't hear of some of the cases because ... well, women couldn't go anywhere. If they walked off from their husband they had no support whatsoever. There was no pension or deserted wife's pension, so you either had to stay at home, put up with your husband's treatment, or just for the children's sake until they grew up enough that they went to school, started to work and went out on their own, that the mother would then perhaps make a break away. And see pensions were very very low. If you got on a pension prior to World War II or a few years back there, it was only about a pound a week, or something, so it was really a pittance and nobody, you know, it was a bit of a disgrace to think that you had to go on a pension. Now there's so many other places of help, plus all the conveniences. See when the radio came in first everybody had the little crystal set, and then you got one with the valve that was plugged into the electricity. Well, there was no electricity here when we came, but it was out in the street, and it came through later. So everything has been improved all the way through, and then with television, and then the Man on the Moon. You know, you'd often joke about the Man on the Moon but never thought that man would ever land on the moon. And so now with the children, well they've got many more possibilities to improve themselves if they wish too, more facilities and that, yes. And see the library. They can go to the library and check up from school. I don't know the teaching or what's going on or the syllabus is the right one, or they're still not training them in the right way for the three main things, 'cause you hear so and so ... 'but if you don't train the youngster while they're young and ground them in those things, you can't do it afterwards. The same as disciplining the children. I mean, a lot of parents will say, "Oh, when he's about eight or nine I'll put my foot down". But eight or nine's too late, because from a baby they've got to learn by your voice whether you mean yes or no.

25.12 And do you think young mothers are better off with the more urbanised development? They wouldn't be as isolated as when, say, your mother was rearing children?

Oh, no. See there's closer ones around - they've got places they can go. They've got the baby health centre. Well a lot of ... the place didn't have a baby health centre until I suppose the late 30's. It might have been the first one that came here and people would go to it for help and advice in rearing children. Because the way it has developed, so many of the mothers are working that they are not at home to ask advice, or if they are at home with their children while they're small, they've got no neighbours because they're all working and they've got to join something to get in, or to get out.

16.16 Is there anything else you'd like to mention?

Well as regards ... from the War years, more or less, and then it started to drop away, everybody wore hats and you'd always wear gloves. You'd always have a pair of gloves with you, if you went to town or you went to church you'd have your gloves. Sometimes you'd put them on, but anyway you'd have them there, carry them. Hats were most essential. You'd always have a few hats. It was either black shoes or white shoes you'd have, ones for summer and some for winter. Some people just stuck to brown shoes, but there wasn't a variety of shoes as regards the colours and that for every day. And see, the footpaths were not made. If we went to town we'd come home. Well it was nothing to come home at midnight. Well if you caught the eleven o'clock, see you might have caught an earlier train. They were on about a half-hourly or and hourly service. But you'd walk home. You had no fear of walking home. I walked home across the ... across there was the paddock, you know ... and you'd walk up and come home and not a soul would ... you felt quite safe. But these days I don't go out at night, apart from in the car, but I wouldn't go out walking.

27.40 And the landscape's changed enormously too hasn't it?

Oh yes. Well, see when they started first they cut every tree down where they were developing. Now they realise they shouldn't have, so they're leaving trees and there's a lot more trees have grown around, and when you get up to a high spot somewhere along the road and look down you can see so much green around. Oh, no, it has. It's really - it is a city now, but to when you look back and see the dirt roads that we had and the rain would come and the

mud, and most of it was horse-drawn vehicles, there weren't cars. Then it was the early... our first car was a Whippet? ... but anyway it was a tourer and my father and my brother had that, and then he used it for work and taking his ladders and that around. Your speed limit .. I only know you weren't supposed to go too fast.

28.41 Did your mother learn to drive?

She never learned to drive. I learned to drive - it was just in the commencement of the War years - but then I dropped it. I kept my license going but never used it much because petrol rationing came in, you know, when things were ... we had the rationing, and there was butter rationing, sugar was all right I think, there might have been some sugar ... but I know that you kind of got - you got through with things - nothing fancy in the food line. But then I didn't pick it up again until just on 1954. I'd occasionally have a drive, but I had to learn all over again, and after my father died my brother said "If you want to keep that car, you'd better get stuck into it", and I got stuck into it then. But for about three months I wouldn't give anybody a lift, I just used the car and from then on, well I've been driving ever since.

29.41 And would you say, looking back, that it was a harder life then?

Well, I think it probably was a harder life because you didn't have the convenient of a hot water service. To have your bath you had a chip heater. Very few people had a hot water service. There was no gas. The gas only came in, I suppose, the last 30 years. Certain parts got it, but as they brought it through. Only the people in the street that wanted it would they put it up for. I don't think anybody in our street's got gas. So everybody's got electricity. And see all those things have made it much more... life is much more pleasant, and especially once the sewerage system came along ... you got your little house in doors now! You don't have to walk out in the cold and the weather - and the frost or the rain.

30.49 Well thank you very much Claire. That was very interesting.