

**INTERVIEW NO. 32**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 28/2/92**

**MRS. EDNA VIDLER**

**2 Bruce Street**

**BLACKTOWN 2148.**

0.33 My name is Edna Vidler. I live at number 2 Bruce Street, Blacktown. I was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> of the twelfth, 1908. My nationality is Australian. I am widowed. I have four children.

**0. 55 First of all I'll just ask you some background questions about your family. Were you one of one of several children?**

Yes. Ten.

**One of ten?**

Yes.

**Where did you come? Were you in the middle or...?**

I was second eldest. Yes, the eldest girl really.

**1.12 And what sort of work did your father do?**

My father was a painter.

**A house painter?**

Yes.

**And your mother - did she work?**

No. She was too busy having children, I think really, those days!

**Yes, exactly.**

Yes. She used to work round the house. She was a marvellous gardener and all that kind of thing. No, she never went to work as such.

**1.34 Right. And were you born here in Blacktown?**

No. I was born in Sydney. I may have been born in Simmons Street, Newtown, I think I was born. Some of us were born down there and the rest of the family were born up here.

**And so how old were you when the family moved to Blacktown?**

I was about 12.

**1.56 Oh, right. And where did you live?**

Well my Grandmother used to rent a house up on the corner of Bungarribee - there's a garage there now! - Bungarribee and Flushcombe. Because, years ago, Flushcombe and Bungarribee only went to there to type of thing. This new section which goes down this way wasn't built. And we had a big... there was a big verandah right round, you know, the triple around here? We had one of those like that. And my Grandmother lived there and then they bought a property over Bungarribee Road, which is over that direction, and then my mother moved up - and we all moved up there.

**So you all lived in the house that had been your Grandmother's?**

Yes.

**2.48 And so your earliest memories - when you first moved up here what was it like? What was the area like then?**

Oh, well, dust roads! You can imagine! No, all dust roads. They used to put...in fact my brother-in-law used to work on the Council, and they used to put that shale!

**Oh yes.**

They did that for years and years and years. The roads didn't get anywhere with it. If they'd started sealing the roads like here now, many years ago, we would have had good roads all round Blacktown. But of course they put all this shale on which didn't do anything. It made

them - after a while – it made a real dust-bowl. And it bedded down and that was it, and so we didn't have good roads for many, many years really.

**3.27 And were there a lot of houses around?**

No. Not many that I remember.

**Did you have neighbours close by or...?**

Oh, let me see now. No I doubt whether there'd be hardly anyone up where we were.

**And was it bush or...?**

Oh, yes. A fair bit of bush, yes. There weren't many roads and there weren't many houses! People lived all those years ago...

**And so that would be actually, oh, about 1917, 1918 you're talking about?**

Yes. Something like that, yes.

**So that's a long time ago!**

Yes. That's right!

**4.01 And you went to school locally did you, at Blacktown?**

Oh, only for a little while. I went to the Blacktown school for about two years I suppose, maybe less than two years, and went to Parramatta High School for a little while.

**Right.**

Of course years ago you didn't ... well you could go for your Q.C but I think I left when I was about 15 and went to work. I did tailoring.

**Tailoring, did you?**

Yes. Tailoring in Parramatta. Phillips Street, Parramatta.

**4.29 How did you get to school and to work when you went to Parramatta? I suppose you took the train?**

Oh, train. Train - everybody took the train!

**That was about the only transport around here then I suppose?**

That's right. The old steam train! (Laughs) No ... I mean, these days they make a fuss about going to Sydney, but we all went. My children all went to Sydney and worked. Thought nothing of it, years ago!

**4.52 And what would your mother's daily routine have been in those days? I suppose she was just busy keeping the house running?**

Oh, yes. Well that's right, and she used to grow quite a few vegetables. She was quite a gardener. She loved to have a nice flower garden in the front.

**Did you have a lot of land around the house?**

Oh, yes. Quite a bit really.

**It was a big block?**

Yes. Oh, yes. Right down the back - it was quite a big block - and an enormous big barn down there. It has a lot of memories, the big barn. We used to play chasings around it!

**Did you?**

Yes. And you'd look underneath, you see, and see who was chasing because there was a bit of a gap! You'd look under there and they'd never catch us, see, for the reason we'd see them coming and we'd take off! (Laughs) It had some marvellous memories, that old house!

**5.32 So you had a happy childhood there?**

Oh, very happy! Yes.

**5.36 And did you mother do all the housework and the shopping and things herself?**

Oh, yes.

**Did you have to help very much?**

No. I think I went to work after a while. Yes. We all went to work, more or less. But my mother used to go to Parramatta and do shopping, 'cause there weren't many shops in Blacktown, and you could go to Parramatta and get meat, I remember, at Cash's the butchers who were there for many years. In fact I went myself eventually, when I got married and had children. We used to go there and you'd get meat quite cheap, but you had to carry it of course, but I mean in those days you didn't think much of that did you. Carried on the train!

**Carried on the train, and then walked from the train?**

Yes... There were no buses. Well, you just did it as a matter of course. I mean you had no choice! Everybody did it and they didn't think anything of it!

**You just accepted it?**

Yes. That's right. Because, well, if you can't get a bus, well what do you? You've got to walk!

**6.26 That's right. But did you have a bicycle or anything like that?**

Well I did eventually. I did get myself a bicycle eventually. Yes. When my mother moved eventually up this way I used to go up and see her on the bicycle. I think there were quite a few people had bicycles, because it was quite a quick way of getting around. Yes.

**And if you wanted to go across country and not on the train line?**

Yes. Oh, I didn't go much distances really, but when my mother lived up there, and I think I lived ... well, I've been living in this house for over 50 years. Probably I mightn't have been ... I might have been just down there. We used to live just down there and I used to ride my bike up to see my mother.

**7.04 Did you. So you worked then until you got married. did you?**

Oh, yes. I worked until I got married.

**And what sort of work did you do?**

Oh, I did tailoring.

**Until you got married? Oh, right.**

Yes. That was my trade really - I did tailoring. And then I had children. I had four children, and my husband got killed in the meantime. When my daughter was two - actually before that - I bought this block of land, would you believe, for 20 pounds. And it was 330 feet long. Could you imagine it!

**For 20 pounds! What year would that have been?**

Oh, well we moved up when my youngest daughter was two and she's 54 now, and it would have been about two or three years before that I bought the block of land. Of course there was a bit of depression on then and I sort of had ... well everybody would work for practically nothing, you know, just to get some little whatever. And I had part of the house built - this house - only the shell.

**What year did you get married?**

Oh, let me think now. I was 22 ... 1908 ... 1930 it must have been.

**8.26 So you were married then, and you didn't move into this house though, until later?**

No, not until my younger daughter was about two.

**And you lived with your in-laws did you?**

Yes. I did for a little while, yes. 'Cause they lived down there and - just down there, actually, not very far - and I lived down there until my mother-in-law died and then I think I bought ... possibly bought the block of land after that, I think, off one of my uncle-in-laws.

**Oh, did you?**

Yes. 'Cause he owned ... of course years ago this was all ... no roads much. Just more or less land. And then I sort of saved up - I used to save up like mad! I used to grow all my own vegetables and make the children's clothes, made my own!

**Was this after your husband had died was it? Because you're saying 'I' bought the house and 'I' did this...?**

Yes. After my husband died. Yes.

**When did he die?**

Before I was ... I was about 32 when he died. He was killed in an accident up the street.

**9.20 Goodness! So you reared your four children on your own did you?**

And my youngest one wasn't even born when he was killed.

**Really!**

No, I was only three months pregnant. Anyway, one learns to cope. Yes.

**Yes.**

'Cause I used to, as I say, when I came up here eventually I used to grow my own vegetables - down there I did too, actually - make the children's clothes, make my own, make some of my clothes up for my son because you get things given to you and of course you save money by doing that, and growing most of the vegetables.

**9.55 And how did you manage, because there wasn't a pension in those days was there?**

No, but I used to get something from the ... I'm not sure what they used to call it then! It's Social Security now of course, but I'm not sure what they called it years ago. It must have some other name for it ... something similar. I was lucky I got a sort of pension given to me.

**Did you?**

Yes. By the Government. Yes. So of course I was able to manage.

**I didn't think they had pensions in those days.**

Well they must have, because otherwise how would some people live. I mean, when you've got children you can't go out to work.

**10.25 No. So you didn't work at all?**

No. I didn't work until my youngest daughter was 16. But I did - that's not quite right - I did a bit of housework over Prospect way. One day a week I used to go. But we didn't get very much I think, maybe about ... I can't recall now. It wasn't very much those days of course. I mean the wages when I went to work was only about twelve and six a week! Can you imagine? And I think I probably got about a pound or something like that for the day's work, which was more or less housework. It was quite nice and I had a very nice lady that I used to it for. But other than that that was all I did.

**11.02 So what would your daily routine have been like? Would you have...?**

Well, actually, by the time you get children off to school...

**Did they take themselves to school, or did you have to take them?**

Oh, yes. Oh no they could walk to school because, when I got up here of course, there was all paddocks. No way was there anything - you could probably go from here to school in about seven minutes, because you could walk right through you see. And there was no busy roads to speak of really.

**They had to cross the railway line though, did they?**

Yes. But there was a bridge there. Yes, crossed the railway line on the bridge. They managed to get to school. I don't remember ever taking them. I think perhaps the elder ones took the younger ones eventually.

**11.41 Yes. And so what did you do during your day?**

Well, I'd sort of clean the house I suppose and then I'd probably do a bit of gardening and then all that kind of thing - cook the evening meal eventually.



**And that filled your day. And did you go shopping locally or did you still have to go to Parramatta?**

No. I went to Parramatta too. Yes.

**And carried all the shopping home?**

Yes. That's right. I remember going to Cash's, the butchers. There was quite a ... everybody used to go to this butcher shop I think 'cause they were so cheap, and you'd get very nice meat too.

**12.11 And what was the shopping like in those days? You could have things delivered couldn't you?**

Oh, I'm not sure. I never ever did anyway! No I never did.

**But the shopping was perhaps more friendly and more personal than it is today?**

Oh, yes. Oh yes, I remember up on the corner of Sunnyholt Road, which is just this way now, and Devitt Street which is the one ... there was a shop there called Chilvers. They were there for many, many years, Chilvers. But of course all the corner shops were rather expensive weren't they? Of course they still are. They don't get the deals that the big companies get do they really?

No

So I probably didn't get very much. I got a few things.

**13.03 And so what did you do for recreation? Or did you not have much time, I suppose, to go out?**

Well eventually, before I came up here I had a tennis court built down there.

**Oh, did you?**

Yes. Because 330 feet block it would have been way down past those units. Way down to there. And my brother, he was very good, he helped me.

**Was this part of your land was it?**

Yes. And we built a tennis court on that and eventually of course I used to do that up. Then I eventually got the lights on which was a bit of money raiser really. And I used to play tennis eventually down there.

**Did you?**

Yes.

**And let the court out to local people?**

Yes. That's right, yes. A bit of income coming in!

**And that was a fairly popular sport in those days too?**

Oh, it was years ago it was very popular. It still is!

**13.53 And did your children all play sport too?**

Well my son did and my daughter ... two of my children played. Yes.

**And did you go to theatre much or picture shows'?**

Theatre? No, not really. No we didn't. We didn't have much money those days to go to the theatre.

**No.**

You might have to go to Sydney anyway.

**14.14 And what did your children do for entertainment; say in the school holidays and that sort of thing?**

Well they occasionally went to Balmoral. I remember I used to take them down there. And we used to go to the Tivoli occasionally, which was good fun. I couldn't stand it now though, with all the ... (laughs) ... the bad fella would come out and, you know ... at the Tivoli?

**The pantomime?**

Oh, yes. And all the children would scream out, you know. Of course you were young then, you could take it. I couldn't take it now I'm afraid! (Laughs). But we used to go there occasionally and we used to go to Balmoral occasionally to the beach.

**Did you stay there at Balmoral?**

Oh, no. Just went for the day.

**You just went there for the day did you?**

It took quite a bit to get there, because you'd have to go by train and then, I think, bus I've got an idea, to Balmoral. It must have taken about two hours, but still. It didn't matter really. And we used to go there, oh, maybe occasionally.

**It was a day's outing?**

It was quite a treat for the children. And going to the pantomime, as I say, that was a very big treat going to the pantomime. Other than that they used to play around. They amused themselves. Years ago children amused themselves. We had no television, they didn't have the television. They ... I don't know! Everybody amused themselves years ago.

**Made their own fun?**

Yes. Of course they did. Yes. When we were children we did. We didn't have any of all these facilities they have these days!

**15.38 You were saying you were playing chasings as child...?**

Yes. Played chasings and oh, my mother was good, I remember she used to play hide the button! She'd hide the button and of course we'd all - quite a few of us - and we'd ... she'd say 'You're hot!' and everybody would rush over there, you see, where you're hot! (Laughs) And that filled up quite a bit of time. And we used to like that. That was good fun!

**16.02 And did you have birthday parties and that sort of thing when you were growing up?**

I don't remember many of that kind of thing.

**With ten children, she must have been very busy?**

Yes. Well of course the whole thing is someone married before the young, the last one, was born. I think a couple had married. They're spread over quite a number of years.

**16.24 Did you mother have anyone around to give her help with the children? Did she have a Grandmother or somebody nearby or an aunt?**

No. Well actually my Grandmother lived with us for a few years, but she was elderly I think, and I don't think she ... it was the other way round I think, if anything! (Laughs)

**So your mother really had to cope on her own fairly much?**

Oh, yes. And I think we did too. We coped on our own. We don't ... I mean the modern young person is very fortunate. Look at the help they can get now. Pre-school and all this kind of thing. We didn't have any of that. But we ... it wasn't there, so we didn't worry about it. It was never a...

**17.08 What would you do if you were sick or if one of your children were sick? Was there someone who could help you with your children - a neighbour or family?**

No. Not really. You just sort of went to the doctor I suppose and learned to cope.

**17.23 And what were the health services like in Blacktown. then, when your children were growing up?**

Health services?

**There was no hospital was there?**

No! No hospital, no! Because the hospital has only been there about less than 30 years. We would have had to have gone to Parramatta. which I did a few times, because I have a son that's accident prone!

**Oh, really?**

Oh, yes. (Laughs). He was always doing something! I remember him - he was nine! Because down there was all ... those houses weren't built - it was a big creek right through there, and my son was paddling and there must have been glass in it and he came flying home, bleeding. He'd cut his tendon right through on a piece of glass. And of course, well it was on a Sunday, and fortunately too, and of course hospital those days, not like now - they encourage parents to come - but you put them in and suddenly you wouldn't see them until the Sunday after, in Parramatta Hospital. So of course, I think the ambulance took him down to Parramatta Hospital and poor Bert was put in there, and it wasn't until the Sunday after I could see him.

**Really!**

You just weren't allowed! Not like now - they encourage the parents to come don't they?

**They stay overnight and everything!**

That's right. Not then! And then would you believe, three years later he did the same thing!

**The same thing again?**

Not down there! The same foot, the same tendon, but he was playing with some children down ... they were having what they call 'a fly-over' on the railway there and he was being dragged on with a piece of iron apparently. And of course Bert would have to be the one. He cut his tendon again!

**So another dash to hospital?**

Another dash to hospital. (Laughs). And then in between that and that he fell out of a tree and took a bit of bone off his elbow. That was my son!

**The others were all right were they?**

Yes. We often laugh at that. And would you believe Bert is nearly 57 and all those years back you know, and a little bit of bone came out only about three years ago.

**From his elbow?**

No.

**From the tendon?**

Yes. Isn't that funny. A little bit of bone worked out.

**Goodness!**

Incredible isn't it?

**Yes. Working its way all those years!**

That's right. Amazing!

**19.57 And was there a doctor nearby? A local doctor?**

Oh, yes. Up the street, up near the school there was a doctor.

**And did you have a telephone on that you could ring?**

No. No. We'd just take the children up.

**If there was an emergency you'd have to take them all with you.**

Yes. With the pram. I had one of those good prams, you know, not the real modern ones. A proper pram.

**Right. A cane one?**

Oh yes. A proper pram. They were good. You'd put one at the top and one at the bottom and put your groceries in between! (Laughs) You know, amazing how you coped, 'cause no-one had anything different.

**No.**

No-one knew anything different. You just coped because...

**You felt that was the way it was?**

Yes. That's right. That's how it was, too, really. Everybody coped and nobody expected ... well you didn't expect anything because it just wasn't there. You didn't think about getting any. You used to learn to cope yourself.

**20.50 And did you make jams and do a lot of that sort of cooking?**

Oh, yes. I used to make jams and pickles and some preserves - all kinds of things, years ago. I can't be bothered now! (Laughs). But, you know you keep busy because you do all that and then of course making the children's clothes and all this kind of thing. You keep busy. And do a bit of gardening.

**You had plenty to do?**

Yes. That's right. I used to keep busy. I'm never bored. Never bored now either. I never understand people that are bored.

**No there's always something to do isn't there?**

'Cause I do a fair bit of charity - when I'm well - I do a fair bit of charity work.

**Do you?**

Yes. Oh, yes. This is what they call The Lantern Club. It's for deaf and blind children at North Rocks. The Lantern Club.

**The Lantern Club.**

Their motto is 'affording light to the blind and guidance to the deaf' and so that's the Lantern. And I belong to Red Cross and the Hospital Auxiliary.

**Do you?**

Yes. I've belonged to those for many years.

**Would you have belonged to things like that in the community back in the '50s?**

No. No. no.

**That was in the later years.**

Oh. Yes, later. Much later actually. When I retired more or less, because when you're working you don't get much time for those kind of things really.

**22.11 And what kind of work did you do when you went to work again? Did you still do tailoring?**

Oh. tailoring, yes. I worked up at Anthony Squires in the men's tailoring.

**In Sydney?**

No. St. Marys, yes. I worked there for 15 years. It was when my youngest...'cause I got help from the government but when my youngest daughter turned 16...

**That was it?**

That's it. You don't get any more help, or you didn't - you probably don't... oh, you might now.

**No, you don't now either.**

No. . . . Anyway my children said 'Oh, Mum!' It was quite a shock, you know, when you get the letter to say that you no longer get help and you think 'Ooh . . . So luckily there was a fair bit of work then, so I went and got my job back. But my children said 'Oh, Mum we can help to keep us'. Oh, no you can't do that. So of course I went to work. I think I was there for 15 years up at Anthony Squires.

**You'd worked there before had you?**

No.

**No, you'd just done tailoring before?**

Yes. Tailoring in different places.

**23.07 So what was it like to go back to work again after such a long break?**



Oh, you get used to it after a while. Then, I think, I ... yes at first I used to get taken. People would pick you up and take you, like in their car. .And then I got a little Volkswagen - not that one, another one - and then I used to take people myself, because everyone likes being taken to work because, you know, instead of going by train and then walking you're taken right there and it only takes about 20 minutes. So we used to go in my car eventually, about four people. I remember on a foggy morning - 'cause we used to get some terrible fogs - and I can remember them. You couldn't know what the fogs were like, the real heavy fogs. You couldn't see more from here to there. .And the people put their heads out there and here (laughs) trying to show us the way because it was so foggy!

**Really!**

Yes. But we managed anyway.

**24.02 And how did you manage your family finances? I mean it must have been difficult for you when you were just getting the government allowance?**

Well it was, it was, but then of course, as I say, I made the children's clothes and grew most of the vegetables and it helps.

**24.19 So when did you notice the area round here start to change and become a lot more built up, more homes being built and... ?**

When the electric trains came through.

**Oh, right. So that would have been in the...**

Oh, now don't ask me when that was.

**It went through to Penrith in 1955, so it would have been then I guess?**

About then, yes. That's when Blacktown started to go ahead very much, because we've got the electric trains, which makes a difference.

**Yes. And a lot more people came to live out that way because it was more accessible?**

Yes. That's right, yes. That is so really because people do ... they don't like to come where it takes them about two or three hours to get to the city.

**That's right.**

Even now they make a fuss, you know, about getting into the city, people do.

**It's not really far.**

No. Years ago everybody just did it because, well, you either went in by train or you didn't go! And nobody took any notice! Now they make a fuss. I think 'Oh, well I don't know!'

(Laughs)

**25.19 And how did you feel about it when the area started becoming more populated?**

Oh it didn't worry me really. I thought it was quite good. Because if you have a better populated area the more shops and all that kind of thing.

**And better facilities?**

Yes. Better facilities, that's true.

**And did the shops improve around here?**

Oh, yes. They would have, up the street.

**More supermarkets and that sort of thing?**

Not so much supermarkets. Oh, of course in latter years there's been quite a few supermarkets.

**But in the '50s?**

Oh, no. There wouldn't have been. There would have been only more or less the big corner shops in the '50s.

**25.56 And did the health services improve too? The hospital was built in the '60s wasn't it?**

The hospital must be nearly 30 years old. So it would have been about '60. The Blacktown one, yes. I think it's about 28 I have in my head, something like that - one section of it - and of course then the maternity. They built the maternity not so many years ago, the maternity part of it. But the old part that was probably about 30 years ago I think.

**And you're still active in the Auxiliary?**

Oh, yes, yes. Well I am mostly when I get back to it. (Laughs)

**And you will be again.**

Yes. Well I hope I will, anyway.

**26.40 And did you find you had a lot of friends. say back in the old days here, did you have a lot of friends with neighbours and that sort of thing? Was it a friendly community?**

No. Not really, because when you go to work you don't get much time to socialise, as the saying goes. And I often wonder now how I did the tennis court up and played tennis, did my work and went to work. You were a lot younger then of course, you can do things.

**You must have been pretty energetic all the same.**

Well, I probably was too. Probably was. But you often, you know, look back and think 'Oh, how did I do all that?' But then of course I mean to say, thirty years ago or something like that, well you're a lot younger and a lot more energetic and so on.

**27.24 And did you have a lot of electrical appliances to help you like vacuum cleaners and... ?**

No. Oh, vacuum cleaner, yes. We had a vacuum cleaner.

**And an electric stove?**

No. I had a fuel stove which is over in that corner - it was. It's only the last twenty years, I suppose, that I had this house renovated. It was weatherboard and fibro before. Not finished. Across the front was straight across the front. But when we sold the land where the units are now. Three blocks through this street - myself, the people next door and the lady on the other side - we sold the three blocks through that way, and they then built the units. Yes. But we

didn't get a lot of money because they wanted to put the sewer on and, you know what the Councils are, they want you to spend a lot of money and we didn't get very much as it was, because all those years back we didn't much. But still, it was out of the way. I found that was ... well when you're working it's a bit hard to cope trying to do all that. So I was really glad to get rid of it really, and get a bit of money and I was able, when I was working, able to get the house renovated and make it more modern.

**And so when would that have been?**

Oh, that would be over 20 years ago.

**Yes. So that would have been in the late '60s or something would it?**

Yes. Something like that, yes.

**28.48 And you used your fuel stove up until then did you?**

Oh, yes. They were good, the fuel stoves. You know, you didn't know anything different, but they were good because you pop them on and put a big pot of soup. My mother used to have, you know, those old fashioned boilers.

**Oh, yes.**

Every Saturday she'd put this big boiler of pea soup on. Beautiful, it was. And let it boil there for hours! Used to get soup bones and split peas and all that kind of thing, and everything used to go in but the kitchen sink, as they say, and let it boil there for hours and it was really beautiful. And we used to have basins of this, not little plates; we used to have a basin full.

**Did you?**

Yes. Oh, yes. And we used to have visitors and they'd have a basin full too. It was really nice. The old pea soup's really nice. But then I used to do more or less the same with my fuel stove. I used to cook lovely rice puddings, cream rice. You know you put them on and let them cook for a couple of hours. Really lovely!

**29.46 And did you have to collect the fuel for it too?**

Oh, yes. I used to go across there.

**Did you do that too?**

Oh, yes. I cut my leg once.

**Did you?**

Yes. Going down there, 'cause it was all - there was no houses down there – it was all timber and bush. Yes I was going one day and I cut my leg - a real V-cut actually! Where is it now? I can't think which leg it was! This one! Round about here somewhere!

**Oh, you can still see the scar there!**

Yes, and oh, my children of course were going to school, and I come up and I thought ... we had a side entrance, well we used to, now it's an air conditioner there. But I remember trotting through the house there. It was only lino on the floor. There was blood all round the place and I thought 'Oh dear' and I tried to wipe it up as best I could, and then I think I went up here because there was a private hospital up here at the top of the street. And they sent me to Parramatta. And that's all I was worried about - that my children'd come home and find this blood and think 'Oh, what's happened to Mum?' (Laughs) Anyway, eventually they put a stitch in it and sent me home. Anyway, that's one of the things about getting the fire wood.

**To do the cooking!**

Yes. That's right. You just did it. You didn't take any notice really. And then, I think, after a while you could buy a few blocks of wood, you know and just chop them up.

**31.07 And did you have a refrigerator?**

Oh, yes. I probably ... oh, yes. I had one eventually. A green one, which I had for years and years.

**Before that did you have an ice-chest?**

Yes. The ice-chest. You used to buy the ice. Everybody had an ice-chest. And before that, many years ago, they had a little meat-safe kind of thing. I don't know if you'd remember those? They'd have like a meat safe...

**No, not really.**

...and you used to put wet bags out in front of it. It wasn't very satisfactory, but still. You couldn't get ice and that kind of thing. That's when my mother had children. That's going back a long while ago.

**And she couldn't get ice?**

No. No ice around then. It came in latter years. because everyone bought ice-chests then. Yes.

**So she had to manage with nothing?**

Yes. That's right.

**And it was really hot out here too?**

Oh, yes, it would have been. But you'd put a wet bag over it and it's amazing how you cope when you have to, and you don't know anything different. You see, that's the point.

**END SIDE A**

**SIDE B**

0.14 Yes it is, the fuel stove is very economical because, you know, especially if you can get the wood, pick it up yourself, it doesn't cost you very much and of course wood years ago was quite cheap. You'd cook a big pot of pea soup on top of there and then you'd cook all the things and rice pudding in the oven. It was absolutely really beautiful. In one way I was sorry to see it go - in one way - but then of course in the summer it's rather hot!

**Yes. In the winter it would be great.**

It would be lovely in the winter. Yes and the biggest garbage users! (Laughs) And you get used to them and, you know, you don't know any different?

**0.55 No. And what about the churches in the area? Did the churches play a big role in the community in those days?**

Oh, a reasonable role. My children went to Sunday School down there... because I belong to the Uniting Church and of course then; many years ago it was Methodist it wasn't Uniting. And they were down in Peters Street - not Peters Street - oh, just across from the railway anyway. And my children - or a couple of them - were baptised there. All of them were baptised there. And they went to Sunday School there. But then they moved up into the new K-Mart and they call it Peace Memorial and they moved up there.

**That's a modern church then is it?**

Oh, it was but now they've got a new complex over in Bungarribee Road. Very nice complex - the Uniting Church. Of course they're uniting with the Presbyterian and the Congregation, the whole three. And they still say...they don't say United because they are still Uniting. But they call it the Uniting Church. But of course they have very nice churches in Blacktown - several.

**Big modern ones?**

Oh, yes. And I mean a lovely Catholic complex down in that direction, and other - Greek orthodox - oh, many churches now in Blacktown.

**And did they have social activities through the Church?**

Oh, yes. I think the Churches always have had, yes.

**2.19 And did you belong to any Ladies' Guild or anything like that at the Church?**

No. Not years ago I didn't. When you work you don't get much time to belong. But I did when I left work I did. I joined what they call the Ladies Association. I still belong to it now even.

**Right.**

**2.38 And after the war when the population started to increase out here, did you notice the arrival of a lot of European migrants who came out this way to settle?**

No. Not a great ... I don't remember ... no, I don't remember quite a lot.

**Don't you?**

No. I think only in the last few years that I think they've really come out this way. Well I've never struck any really. No. I think it's only the last...oh, I don't know ... maybe ten years, maybe less that they've come out.

**There were a lot of market gardeners and that's one of...**

There still are really, out Windsor way, and all those places.

**But not around here so much.**

No. There were a few dairy farms, but they weren't right around here either. They would have been perhaps about three kilometres out in that direction. There were quite a few dairy herds around, but apart from that... and there wouldn't have been any market gardens around here because Windsor's the place. Windsor and all that direction. And out off the Western Highway up a bit further too you see market gardens, but...

**There weren't any orchards or anything like that around here either?**

There would have been a few orchards with fruit. Yes, with fruit. I remember we used to - when we lived up in Tusculum Road, when my mother's children - oh there used to be oh, a couple of hundred yards up the road, there'd be people with their own fruit. We used to sneak under the thing and pinch some. (Laughs)

**Did you?**

I think all the children did that! You know, you'd go under the fence and pinch a few bits. You wouldn't do that much harm, but ... I think nearly all the children did it! (Laughs)

**It was the excitement of doing it too I suppose?**

Yes. That's right it was something, you know, it was really funny.



**4.40 And what was the industry like around here? Was there very much industry in Blacktown?**

No. There was a sawmill. Not a great lot. There was a sawmill up there now where the carpark is - a big sawmill there. There was there for many years, the big sawmill.

**So that was the main thing?**

Yes. That was where my husband worked in the first place. It was quite a big sawmill and of course all those years back they used to have ... like wood was used for all kinds of things. And then there was another one up on Bungaribee Road, another big sawmill there. But apart from that no there wasn't much industry I don't think. I can't recall any factories many years ago.

**So people had to really go out of Blacktown to find work?**

Yes. They did really, unless they worked in the local shops. They'd have to go to Sydney or different places like that to work.

**5.33 And has that changed? Is there much industry here now?**

In Blacktown? Oh, there are quite a few now. Not so much right in Blacktown, because it's not an industrial area. but out all around there's - I'd say, three or four kilometres out all around Blacktown - there's a lot of industry around now. Sharp for instance. They have their place on the Western High way not very far from Blacktown, Reservoir Road. A big Sharp complex there.

**Oh, yes.**

**6.14 And did you keep any animals when your children were small?**

Guinea pigs!

**Guinea pigs did you?**

Yes. (Laughs) I think all the children had guinea pigs! And my son had ducks - he was going to make his fortune - he had ducks!

**Oh yes.**

And of course that property across there, my father-in-law owned, and Bert eventually had quite a few ducks and he put them over there. He bred them. And I can tell you a couple of stories about that! I remember in wet weather of course ... so we used to bring them and put them in my laundry, which I had a laundry down there. Down where the barbecue is. There's a big laundry there. And of course wet weather ... oh dear, well, ducks are messy little things as you can imagine! And I remember having a brick here and a brick there and a piece of wood there and that's how I'd have to do my washing! Walking across these bricks!

**Oh dear.**

These bloomin' ... all these ducks! (Laughs) Oh what a horrible mess it used to be. Anyway, eventually the ducks grew up and they were put over there. And then some wretched dog got in and tore the wire and oh, my son was... 'cause he was going to make his fortune with these ducks, and there were ducks flying in all directions! It was a real terrible shame! Some flew over there and some flew ... they had a big brick pit down there. That's something I forgot to say. A big brick pit down where the swimming pool is now, there was a big brick pit. Well some went down there. They went in all directions, these ducks. And poor Bert, he was quite upset. This wretched dog got in and there were dead ducks everywhere. Oh dear oh dear! That was one of my son's ambitions!

**And did you have any pet dogs or cats or anything like that?**

Oh, they were always having pet cats. The children would bring them home. And we had a cattle dog once, and it was starting to nip people, so I think we ... I'm not sure what happened to that. It was a stray that came and they're a bit of a pest, you know, the cattle dogs. I don't think it lasted very long.

**And did you have chooks at all?**

Oh, yes we had some chooks. They were over there too! And of course you were allowed to have chooks years ago. But not now of course.

**They are too noisy now... and because of the Egg Board regulations?**

Oh, apart from that they ... yes that's right. We had some over there. We had a cow.

**Oh did you?**

Oh, yes. Had a cow. My son used to milk the cow.

**8.36 So looking back on those days then... and what life was like for you then... and what the area was like when your children were growing up here... how did the changes that have taken place affect you? How do you feel about the population growth and more houses and more traffic and all that sort of thing?**

I don't mind. With all that kind of thing one gets better facilities for your home and that kind of thing, don't you.

**Yes.**

More electrical appliances which make it very much easier to run a house and all that kind of thing. You get a nice fridge and nice electric stove and a nice microwave and all this kind of thing!

**All the mod-cons!**

Which make it very much easier to run a home, yes.

**9.25 And what about the friendliness in the area? When you go shopping and that sort of thing? Do you find that's changed?**

Oh, well...

**Because it's a bigger place?**

Yes. Yes, well you know less people I think. Because years ago everybody knew everybody. Like when I - not that I go to Club very much, I don't – but they say, when the Club was small everybody knew everybody.

**Which Club is this?**

The Workers' Club. Yes. But no-one ... because it's too big now. It's very big now. And I suppose if you go quite often ... but I don't belong to any clubs. Actually some of the Seniors -

well that's their business - they go up there all day. I couldn't be bothered doing that I'm afraid. I've got more to do with my time. But they go up there three or four days, some of them. They don't do anything else.

**That's their form of entertainment?**

Oh, that would bore me! No. But still everybody's got a different idea of filling in their time and all this kind of thing.

**10.24 And what do you do now to fill in your time - when you are well?**

Normally? Oh I don't have any problems! Because by the time I go to one, two, three meetings which are at different times and I go - I used to, not so much now - but I used to go and help with some of the stalls. And I'm quite a gardener as you can guess! And my thing is doing plants. And a lot of people give me margarine containers and I put little plants in. First I grow them in the ice-cream containers and then I put them into the little margarine containers and put them on the stalls. That's my thing! That's what I would do. That's my contribution. And years ago I'd have four garden parties!

**Really!**

Yes. For different organisations. I used to have two in the spring and two in the autumn.

**Oh, well you've kept busy!**

Oh yes. Kept very busy. I used to enjoy it. People would come and you'd have them out here on the lawn and it's a very nice day really. Nice social relaxing day. And oh, I made quite a few thousand dollars over the years.

**Really!**

Yes. For the different organisations.

**11.27 So you've done a lot of voluntary work as well as paid work?**

Oh, yes. I have for that. Well I belong, I think, to the Hospital and the Lantern, it must be 18 years. Yes. 18 years I belonged. And then the Red Cross is not far behind.

**11.46 And what about security in the area? You know in the old days people say they hardly ever locked up and now you do?**

Very true. You didn't lock your back door. Now you wouldn't dare go out without locking it! No. I had a robbery not so very long ago actually! Got into my garage and took my lawnmower and, you know, the whipper-snipper thing I had. They took it. But before that I had - 'cause that front part is covered now, but years ago it wasn't - and I used to put plants out there. Kids would pinch them!

**Really!**

Oh yes. I had about three of them. Once in the house. I had about three robberies. Now I've got a burglar alarm! (Laughs). But here last April someone got in to my garage and took that. And also now I have a security system down there.

**As well?**

Oh, you've got to have bars everywhere. It's ridiculous!

**It's a shame isn't it?**

Yes, it is.

**That's one of the ways that I think the population growth changes things, doesn't it?**

Yes. That's right, yes. Yes. It's a pity when that happens really. But of course you did years ago - you went off and you wouldn't think about closing your back door! You know, it was quite safe. You'd come home and it would be just as you'd left it! Now....

**13.00 And how do you feel about the change in the landscape from the more open bush sort of environment? Do you miss that at all?**

Oh, sometimes I do, but you've just got to go with the times, really. Oh, no. The trees are nice, but I don't like trees on top of my house, 'cause I don't! I don't like ... when that big storm was in January down that way, and the trees are right on top of the homes! No way. I like them. They're beautiful over there.

**Yes. To look at!**

But no way do I like them on top of my home. I think it's too dangerous. Because there are so many homes that trees have fallen down, and it's a wonder people haven't been killed really, when you think of it!

**13.43 And what about the ... there have been, I suppose, quite a few old houses and old landmarks around the place that have been demolished for more modern places, do you...?**

I think that's a shame, really. I think they should ... like the old Church over there. That was a really beautiful old Church.

**Which Church was that - the Uniting?**

The one over there. I think it was called St. Barth...

**Oh, St. Bartholemews, yes.**

That was a lovely Church. In fact I was christened there and baptised there.

**Were you?**

Yes. In that Church. It was a beautiful Church. That was left - it was a pity - it was really left to the vandals. Of course the vandals get in. But now, after all this time, they're trying to do something about it, which they should have started years ago and done something about it. They did, but they left it and then of course the vandals get in again. You can't leave anything but the vandals get in!

**And it deteriorates.**

Oh, no. They get in - like the cars - they strip them up, set them alight don't they? Take them way out there! They're not happy with stealing; they've got to burn them, which is terrible!

**14.50 And so do you think that people growing up out here now – the way in which the life-style has changed - do you think it's better, say, for a young mother bringing up her children now than it was when you were bringing up your children?**

Well, yes. In a way, because I think they get more facilities. I mean they can send their children to pre-school now if they wish. Which of course we didn't - although we didn't miss it. What you don't have, you don't miss! (Laughs) But the modern mother - and lots of them have to work unfortunately - and they do have facilities to send their children to preschools and all that kind of thing. But well it's just how it goes really. So you're very fortunate if you live in this day and age in more ways than one!

Because with science, like the way they're coming up with all the different things. I mean if you'd got a sort of a thing years ago, well you more or less died from it didn't you? But these days of course with all the different remedies and all these things that they ... well they've got much more chance of being ... like me with this pacemaker!

**Your pacemaker!**

See what I mean! I'm not sure these have been in but they are a great thing really.

**Not so long I think.**

No I don't think so. But they're a great thing really to help people.

**16.10 So, looking back on your life you don't feel that you had a hard life particularly, or that you were hardly done by?**

No. I don't think so. You know, you accept it because as I say, you didn't know anything ... maybe if you had have contrast then and now you might think, but ... that wouldn't have worried me, I don't think, either. I mean everybody's lived their own life and they were happy. We were happy!

**You had a happy life?**

Yes. That's right. My children were happy. There you are!

**Well that's a good story! Thank you very much for your time.**