

I

28TH NOVEMBER, 1983

This is Mrs. Hendry now, of Coburg, formerly of No. 3 Abbott Street, Alphington.

*the top house*

Would you like to just start telling me when you went to live there and all about it?

Well, I just remember going down there in a big van and green paint all over me because I was going over the bumpy roads, you know, and got down there and my youngest sister, there's three years between Jean and I and then there's two between the other one; there was five of us all together, 4 girls and a boy. I can't remember, you haven't got it on there have you?

You were eight years old when you went to live there - that was in 1909?

It could have been, yes.

Now tell me what the house was like then. You were saying there was a brick, a rock fence at the back!

Yes, a rock fence at the back, all rocks it was, and *M.S.K.W.*... used to have a big crop there, she put a crop in every year, a maize crop.

Maize they grew did they?

Yes.

Was that around the back of the

Oh, a big crop, a maize crop, I think they trained a horse too ~~was~~.....*M.S.K.W.*..... they were.

in this vicinity.

What a racehorse? *I think it was Red Lips*

*HOWARTON*  
Howardson the baker used to come there, down of a morning in a two-wheeler *CART* and bring the bread down.

A two-wheeler? A cart with a horse?

*Howart*

Yes. He used to bring the bread down. I used to go to *Harrison's* the butchers down here on the corner for my meat. I always used to go there.

Now tell me what your day was like when you were a schoolgirl, what happened when you first got up of a morning?

Oh, you'd have to go and milk the cow. When the horse had to be shod I had to take it down to Smith's, Farriers - I used to watch them making horse shoes. Nick off and go to school. I was late many a time. The Headmaster used to bring me home, of course, I used to go to Ivanhoe school - it's a fire station now. Then when my other sisters came along, they went to Fairfield school.

And, how did you get to school at Ivanhoe?

Across the creek, across the paddock, up Kennelworth Parade.

And how did you cross the creek?

When it was dry we'd cross across the rocks - dad put a plank across there. We used to swim in the creek. We learnt to swim in the creek.

And when the creek was flooded?

I used to go by train. Go over to Alphington station and pay a penny to go up to Ivanhoe.

That was a fair walk to Alphington station.

We used to have a track - there used to be two, three trees in the middle of the three posts, you know, you get between these posts.

There was a track?

Yes.

No road? There would have been a road.

No. No road. We used to look down and see where the water was, you know, you'd bend down so you'd see where the water was to get across.

Oh yes, and then if the water was too high you'd go and catch a train?

We used to change our shoes or our boots, whatever we had on, you know, there was mostly all boots in those days.

Now when did you leave, we'll call it the toll house because that's what it is ?  
When did you leave there?

I'd be about 21 I think, when I was about 21 'cause I got married and I had to rest then and I left and then went to live in Mercil Road.

So you lived, for a little while there, after you got married?

Yes, then I went to Mercil Road and my husband was working at the Paper Mill then.

And, your parents were Harding, weren't they? Just recently I heard from somebody else about Harding's farm, now, that may have been because of Miskin's crop was it?

No, no, we used to have a paddock up the - Dad used to have a block of land up the top of Abbott Street. He built another house up there, he built two houses in that street, and we used to put the sheep up there every night ....

How many sheep did you have do you think?

Oh, a couple of hundred, they used to get mixed up.

A couple of hundred sheep?

Yes, we used to get them mixed up with a place in Darebin Road - Henderson's used to be on Darebin Road - we used to get them mixed up with Henderson's in Darebin Road. My sister used to have to go and sort them out with the dogs - the sheep.

What, two other people had sheep - Henderson's?

Yes, Henderson's over in the quarry in Darebin Road - they used to live in Darebin Road.

Did they have a lot of sheep too?

Oh, they used to have about as many as we did. They used to get them mixed up and we used to have two sheep dogs and they had to go and sort them out. And taking them off to market when it was time to go to market.

Did you ever shear them or did you sell them for meat or what?

Oh sometimes we used to sell them for - no, the wool.

You used to shear them there at Abbott Street or?

No, dad used to get them done. He used to try but he wasn't a shearer he was a bricklayer, sort of thing.

Yes, your father was a bricklayer. Did he work around the area, tell me some of the ...?

Oh, around the area. He used to always go to work with a collar and tie on my dad.

Did he, even though he was a bricklayer? And did he wear it all day long?

No, he'd take it off and come home and he wore stiff starched .... you know those stiff starched - mum used to always do them for him.

And how did he get to work?

By train or bike - he used to ride a bike. He used to hop off the back of a bike. He used to ride a bike some places and he used to go by train.

So did you have any other things there for a farm, like there were sheep - did you have a cow?

Oh yes, we had cows.

Oh that's right, you said you milked a cow in the morning. Just the one cow?

Yes, one cow, yes, and when they'd dry we used to have a dairy across near Adams' house. Mr. Noel's. We used to go across there when the cow went dry and get milk off him. He'd say "what do you want, the black cow's milk or the white cow's milk" and then the cow would come back into milk again, you know.

Tell me about when there was thoughts of a railway going through your property.

Oh yes, that was - they come - they wanted the titles of the house.

Who did? The Victorian Railways?

I don't know whether it was the Government or the Commission. I don't know who it was now. See, now, your husband said about the Commission, they might have wanted it. I can't find out. And then dad said you can't have them.

What did they want, the titles of the house?

They wanted the titles of the place and dad said "you can't have them", and he said well if you don't give them to me we'll make a fresh one. That upset my dad, very much.

Yeah, now, tell me where did that house come from originally, do you remember?

That's all that I know, he told me that it come from England, it was a toll house.

It did come from England, your father told you that?

Couldn't imagine them bringing a house out, could you.

Oh yes, a lot of houses were brought from England. And, ah, did your father buy it?

He must have, yes.

Tell me what it was like inside the house.

It was a big lounge room there, there was an open fire place there, and that was a little passage-way and that was a bedroom there, and you go out there - a kitchen there and another little room in through there and sort of a ....

How many rooms were upstairs?

Oh, one big long room.

A big, one - oh yes.

A big long one, the stairs used to come up here, up this - just up there.

Outside stairs at the back, were they?

Inside there - up this side of the wall they come up.

Well, it's the side actually, isn't it?

This room here was a pantry affair, you know, and mum had a cellar down there, and she used to put her things down the cellar. But that's where the stairs were, you used to go up there, and you'd come up here and that was a long room, we used to have our beds up there.

Yes, how many children were there?

Five.

Five children, you all slept up there, did you?

No, no - two of my sisters - Jean and I, the one next to me, we had up there. We used to have up there with candle-light, and the others slept down here.

Tell me what you did, all of you, at night times, and the weekends.

Well, we had to knit - we weren't allowed to sit idle. We had to sit and make rugs or darn our stockings, or knit or crochet or do something, we had to do something every night. We had to, we kept occupied. We used to have tank water, no water laid on or anything. We used to have a bath every Saturday night.

How did you heat the water for your bath?

In the copper.

And the bath was outside, I suppose, in the laundry sort of part?

No, we used to have a tub.

A tub? Oh, you brought it in to the kitchen?

In front of the fire-place.

Did you get in one after the other - in the same water?

Sometimes, yes, it all depends how the water was, when the tanks were dry dad used to go along hitting the rungs to see how much water was in them, and put some charcoal under it to keep it clean and put some, a bit of lime and no hot, a hot wash in the night and a cold wash in the tank water in the morning. Mum weren't allowed to wash in hot water.

And, tell me, your mother would have been busy all day long looking after all you children, did she do a lot of cooking?

Yes, she was a good cook, my mother, very good cook, yeah very good. A good old-fashioned couple they were, you know, when you look back there, we appreciate that now, very much.

And tell me how your mother did her washing, in the copper and ?

Yeah, in the copper.

The one, the copper that you'd boil up, heat up for the baths?

Yes, and dad used to have a, he built a corrugated iron wash-house up further, behind this, and then she used to boil it in there and hang the clothes out on the line there and a big garden, and we used to grow all our vegetables. Dad brought home a family of pigs one day - a big pig and about seven little ones, you know, and we used to ride the pig. We used to make our own pleasure, you know.

And what did you do with the pigs, eat them?

No, we sold them as they got bigger. We had to take them over *to machi!* ..... we used to make our own butter - I used to hate home-made butter. We used to make, to get the cream and shake it in a pampas tin till it broke, you know.

A pampas tin?

Yeah, a big tin about..... mum used to empty her flour in and we'd keep one clean and put the cream in and make the butter and we used to have buttermilk for the pigs. We used to have a family of English girls come around - there were seven and they used to have - nearly kill themselves coming over to our place. Mum used to scald the cream on the one fire over the ..... we used to have ..... in the kitchen, and you used to scald the milk on that and, we used to have scalded cream, but I couldn't care less about cream. We used to go shopping every Friday night - late shopping, open Friday-night trading, the train used to run every hour. Went to the first Coles shop that was opened, there was nothing over 2/6d.

The first one in Smith Street?

In Smith Street - that was a Coles, yes.

So you'd get the train to Colling, um?

Victoria Park - walk up Johnston Street - yes, and we used to have to - Gertrude Street there were lace places up there - all laces, mum used to want laces for the dresses. We used to have pinafores - we used to go to ..... *Ivanhoe* school

Your dad bought a piano and what?

We used to sit round it and we'd sing round ..... *a letter piano bought later* of a night time and, or songs a nice song, you know, old-fashioned songs and mum used to like that too.

And then he bought a crystal set, did he?

That was later, that part, in my early married life I think that was, the crystal set, but we used to go to St. James' Church in Ivanhoe to Sunday School. The three of us used to go to Sunday School up there.

Where did you start off at school, where was it situated?

In Heidelberg Road, opposite Kennelworth Parade, and more children come along and we had to expand, we went to a little Rechabite Hall at the corner of Waterdale Road and Heidelberg Road, which is long since gone, and then some of us, some ..... classes went to Heidelberg Town Hall, which is altered also, and we used to have a good old rounder game after school and go home late and cop out for being home late. We used to have a windmill on the side of the creek and pump in the water from the creek to water the - we had a row of strawberries and a row of lucerne.

Oh, pump the water out of the creek for them?

Yeah, to water - the creek, yes.

No photos in the family of the windmill?

No, no, the vandals got to that in later years and broke it down.

Oh, vandals then too, hey?

Yes. In the latter years, that wasn't the early part. When I lived in Gooch Street and when things were bad here and the banks all closed in Melbourne and his father went before him and he followed on to do some work in Africa to get some money. He went there for

And he was bricklaying in Africa because there was more work - yes, and how did you get to Africa - on a ship? Yes, and that would have cost him, I suppose he wouldn't have had much money but it was worth his while to pay his passage to Africa to go and do bricklaying?

Yes.

That must have been about 1901/1902 when he went to Africa. Yes, I was just a baby in arms when he went.

Yes, what about the, what were you saying about the milk in the ?

Oh, mum used to have a cow and we used to take the milk around in a billy to give to people.

Sell it to them?

I don't remember whether she'd sell it or give it away now. We used to go up to Watson and Patterson up there on the corner of Watson and Patterson Street to get pork pieces and you couldn't carry them home.

Pork pieces?

We must have had more than one cow, because I used to mind the cows, there was a big white house up there ..... Dunstan's..... the name of the street.

So you had several cows that were in the paddocks round about, which street were they now?

*Went down Pt  
None on Rd.*

Oh, I can't think of the name of that street now.

Was it land that your father owned?

No, no, no - it was all open paddocks, there was no fence or anything, just anybody's - it was anybody's paddocks then.

Now tell me about the garden you had in Abbott Street.

Oh, a lovely garden. There used to be artists come and sit on the quarry hole and paint it. The artists used to come and paint it.

Do you know any of the artists, who would they have been?

No, I wouldn't know their names - and we used to go over and sit with them 'cause we were kids, and there used to be two old men used to come with a crowbar making holes or making pitchers for them to do the roads, making holes, all day they'd do that just making these holes with a crowbar, putting water in them. If mum wanted to go out, mum used to say go over and watch Mr. Mosely and Mr. Moore.

What were they doing?

Making greystone - making pitchers - and they'd chip them off and make pitchers.

Was this at the quarry there?

Yeah, at the quarry, just oh, not the quarry, in front of the house.

And what sort of things did you grow in your garden?

Vegetables or flowers.

What sort of flowers were you growing in those days?

Oh, anything, everything - lovely - lovely roses mum used to have. Lovely roses. She used to have wisteria growing along here and it was very pretty - it was lovely, you know. All the back yard was all garden.

He built a house at the top of Abbott Street and he built one half-way down. Two big houses. He used to have a, grow turnips up there, great big paddock of turnips and even then you'd bury them in and make <sup>compost</sup>compo - you'd bury them in again after a while.

Oh, is that why he grew them to make compost, or did he - you'd eat themselves?

Yes, the tops, yes, yes - or give them away. He just, he used to like gardening.

You eat the turnip tops did you?

No, we'd eat the turnips raw ..... apples. We used to eat all those sort of things raw in those days. Potatoes and all those sort of things. Mum used to go up with the horse and cart to the Victoria Market and call into the Brewery and get her yeast to make her bread and - it was liquid you used then in the pot and make her yeast and the ..... 'd boil while she was..... and have some ..... tinsel things for the household and table cloths and all that sort of thing.

And ..... all the vegetables, but you wouldn't be wanting wanting vegetables if you grew them I suppose, maybe it's when?

She used to go to some place in town and get a block of, ..... primrose cake for special occasions for us - it was a iced cake she used to buy for us - just a

Birthday or something?

Yes. She used to make a sponge and put mandarins around it, you know, for decoration. Oh, and one day my sister and I had an argument and we didn't agree so she locked me upstairs and I jumped out the side window and she was most amazed when I come round and found me at the back door, she couldn't believe it.

'Cause that, by that photo that looks fairly high up at that window?

My mother took me to the circus one time, I've got a photo of me sitting on a horse down at ..... and th horse, we used to ride a horse everywhere, and that's why I'm bandy now I think. I used to have to go all the messages and that on horseback.

On horseback, did you, where did you go?

Down to Fairfield - there used to be a grocer's shop just across - that's all empty now, I walked past this morning and down to Harris' the butcher's down there.

Yes, what shops were in Station Street then that you used to go to on horseback?

Harris' the butcher's - he had two shops, he had one up there further too opposite the Salvation Army, and there wasn't many grocers open. That was a grocer's shop, that double-storey place, just down from the, on the right-hand side.

There were Croft's there then, or National Store?

No, on this side of the line. It's a double front, it's empty, I seen it this morning.

Oh, I know, that little place in the shopping centre

Yes, that used to be the grocer's shop.

On the south side of the railway line?

Yes, on the right-hand side.

And that's where you used to go on your horse?

I used to ride down to Heidelberg Road, see, or whenever I got the wrong meat I had to go back again, because it was the wrong meat, you know, bladebone or something.

Tell me about when your mother had more children.

Well, she had my brother and she had a big space of 11 years; then she had a new baby, my father brought the baby sister home and so we had a baby sister, and we were amazed because we didn't know anything about it, we didn't know, couldn't make out where she come from, she was gorgeous, she's still gorgeous, you know.

And where did your mother have her children?

She was born in Nurse Hooper's in Darebin Road. Remember Nurse Hooper? It used to be Bishop's the Bottle Yard up there too and that's still there I think.

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