

This is Mrs. C. Jones of 33 Yarana Road, Alphington.

Where did you live?

I used to live in Mangalore with my grandparents and then I came down to Melbourne. I lived in Preston. And when I got married I lived in Oakleigh.

How long have you been living in the Northcote area?

It will be 10 years this year.

There were three brothers - Uncle Ted, I never knew him, and my father, which was Alfred Richard, and my aunt which was Amy. Well they lived in a big house at the top of Ruckers Hill.

Do you remember the name of the Street?

It was in High Street, right opposite the Town Hall, and my mother used to say it had lovely statues going up to it.

What was their surname?

Weaver. They were the Weavers. Then father used to say that there were blacks down in the Merri Creek, lots and lots of them, that was their home. They used to come up - there weren't many houses in Northcote then of course, it's a long, long time ago.

What year are we talking about?

It would be in 18 something, I should imagine, it must be. Perhaps the 1880's or 1890's or something like that, but the blacks were there and they used to come up to the house and beg. Grandma and Grandfather used to give them sugar and bread and that. Anyway, one day they came up, my Uncle was only a little fellow, I think about 2½) and they stole him, they took him away. And Grandfather had to go down to the Merri Creek where they were camped and barter with them to get my Uncle back. That's a long time ago, that's in King Billy's time, have you ever heard of him. My other Grandma used to talk about him.

Then of course my father, he was a brainy, very intellectual man, my father. He studied to be a Doctor, which was very expensive in those days, and he passed to be a Doctor, he was a Doctor. But unfortunately he didn't practice, he never took a practice on, he didn't like it after he'd passed.

What did he do for a living?

He was a diamond setter in Gaunt's for years. Made all the watches by hand, beautiful jewellery, and he used to bring home beautiful stones, and my mother said "I never had a decent stone in my life", but father had plenty of them. But he was there for years and years. He used to sit at home with a glass on the jewels and that - I'm mad on jewellery. I think it's born in me of course.

Well father, as he got older, he had a beautiful voice, really lovely, a silver tenor he was, and he used to sing with the German Liedertarl in Northcote.

Where were they practising, where did they go and sign, did they have a Hall?

I think so, I'm not quite certain about that, but he was a very, very good singer.

Now this is your father, what was his name?

Alfred Richard.

What year would this be when he was singing with the choir?

It must have been before I was born, the early 1900's, yes it must have been.

Did you say he had a band as well?

Yes, he had his own band, and he played the cornet and was really musical. His sister used to play the piano, Aunt Amy, and people used to stop outside the house and listen to the beautiful music, the two of them were very, very musical.

Were they living in Northcote then?

Yes, at the house at the top of Ruckers Hill, that's where they lived. And then, I just don't know really, he courted my mother. My mother lived in Mangalore, she was born there, but she came down to Melbourne to live with an aunt because she didn't like the country, and of course they went out together, and as I say, they used to go to the Mayoral Balls.

This was at Northcote Town Hall, you mean.

And Government House, they used to go. I used to be intrigued by my mother telling me of the different people, the madams in that era, and the beautiful dresses they used to have. My mother and father were excellent dancers, they really were, and they used to go there and dance at Government House.

What year was it your Grandfather was Mayor of Northcote?

Well that I can't find out, because I never even saw them, and I can't remember them.

Northcote was a wonderful place, and my Grandfather and others too helped to make it the beautiful place it was. They really did, they worked very hard.

What sort of work?

Voluntary work and all sorts of work you know, like the Councils and those sort of people do, or they should do. They were always in music societies.

Do you know of many music societies that were in the Northcote area in those days?

No, I only remember father talking about the German Liedertarl, I forget how you spell it, but they were all singers. Strange to say, I haven't got a photo of my father, not one.