

JILL NEAN.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY.

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE.

WEDNESDAY EVENING CLASS. 7-9 PM.

MARGARET HENRY.

TOPIC: ORAL HISTORY SUMMARY.

LIFE OF MRS. MARY LANTRY AND THE CHANGES

IN THE MORPETH AREA.

Life of Mrs. Mary Lantry and The Changes in The
Morpeth Area.

Mary Lantry was born 7.11.1908, at Brookfield via Dungog.

The early events of her life take place on a small rural farm where she lived with her family. Mary tells about her life on the farm and her education at the local Catholic School. When Mary and her husband married they moved to Morpeth, where she has resided for the past 46 years.

Mary Lantry was one of five children, a daughter of Albert and Alice Ward. They ran a small shared dairy farm for the property owner and his family. Mary tells of helping around the farm, milking the cows in the early hours of the morning, helping her mother do the washing which was done in big cast iron tubs with the use of a wash board, these tubs would double as baths for them to bathe in. They also made their own soaps. The ironing was done with big heavy irons, they needed to use quiet a few of these irons and kept them hot by heating them on the fuel stoves. Making butter was another chore done by Mary; she explains this was done by churning with a stick, It was a very long and exhausting process which was never enjoyed but endured just the same.

In order to get supplies of tea, flour, sugar and other necessities the family travelled by spring van, a horse drawn dray, to the rail station. The train would cart the supplies from Maitland to Dungog, where they would pick it up and cart it back to their property. These supplies would normally last for three months.

Mary attended a Catholic school at Dungog; her education ended in six grade at the age of 14. Her studies were reading, writing and the use of the "Royal" typewriter. Mary had to ride to school by horse, a journey of four miles each way.

When Mary left school she was employed as a Domestic. She worked for a lady doing her washing, ironing and generally looking after the house. Mary worked six half days a week, always with Sundays off so she could attend

the local Catholic Church. Her wages were £1.6 per. week.

Mary married at the age of 18. She and her husband had 9 children, two were born at hospital the others were delivered at home with the help of a midwife and family members. Mary tells of her wedding day in 1927, where they had to row a boat over to Morpeth from the Hinton Bridge as they could not get through by the roads due to a major flood that was raging in the district at that time.

There were 18 Hotels in the main streets of Morpeth in the 1800,s but Mary can only recall two. The Bowthorn Butter Factory was a major business facility for the district, Mary talks about this and explains that her daughters worked there. Sims Metal Foundry was also a wonderful enterprise, making stoves and beautiful intricate iron lace work. Mary also discusses the Port of Morpeth, which in the 1800,s was a busy hive of activity, conv^eying produce and stock down the Hunter River to the Newcastle and Sydney cities.

Jill Nean.
Open Foundation Course.
Australian History. Wednesday 7-9pm.
Tutor: Margaret Henry.
Topic: Life Of Mrs. Mary Lantry and the Changes
in the Morpeth Area.

Presented: 7.9.88.

The Life of Mrs. Mary Lantry and the Changes in the Morpeth Area.

Mary Lantry was born on the 7.11¹⁹⁰⁸ at Brookfield via Dungog. She was one of five children born to Albert and Alice Ward. Her parents ran a small shared dairy farm for the owner of the property. Her father received a small monthly wage for his work, and all the crops grown and cattle slaughtered had to be shared with the owner and his family.

Mary had to help her family around the farm doing an assortment of chores. The milking of the cows had to be done in the early hours of the morning before going off to school, and than again in the late evening. Milk that was left over after everyone received their ^{Share} was sent into Dungog to the milk factories. Butter was made from home from the milk they got from their cattle, ~~this~~ was a tedious and back breaking task, as Mary had to churn the butter with a stick, sometimes for hours on end. Mary also had to help slaughter the cattle, pluck the hens and turkeys and cure and smoke the meats. Perishables were kept in a cool mesh wire safe, hung out in the coolest place one could find.

Mary helped her mother around the house usually doing menial chores such as the washing and ironing. Washing was done in big cast iron tubs; these were kept constantly boiled by placing on the fuel stove. These tubs also doubled as bath tubs for the family to wash and bathe in. Mary's mother always made her own soaps, a process made from oil and dripping. The big fuel stove in the kitchen was kept continually roaring for their daily baking of the bread, stews and for keeping the irons hot. Ironing was an eduring chore, as every item of clothing was made from natural fibres and creased easily, so therefore everything needed to be starched. Many irons were used and these had to be kept constantly hot .

(2)

Necessaries that the family needed from town such as flour tea and sugar, were brought in bulk and usually lasted up to three months. These supplies were conveyed by train to Dungog station, where the family making a special outing of these supply days would travel to the station by a spring van, which is a horse drawn cart.

Mary attended a small Catholic Convent at Dungog, run by the Sisters of Mercy. To get to school Mary had to go by horseback, a journey of four miles each way, riding through fields and paddocks. Her studies at school consisted of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, and the girls were 'skilled' in the use of the "Royal" typewriter. Her education ended in six grade at the age of fourteen.

Mary's only employment was working as a domestic. She worked for a lady doing her washing, ironing and general household duties. Mary worked six half days a week, always with Sundays off so she could attend the local Catholic Church service. Her weekly wage was £1.6.

Mary married in 1927 at the age of 18 years. The day of her wedding a major flood was raging in the district, the wedding party had to row a boat over to Morpeth from the Hinton Bridge in the swirling waters of the Hunter River. The guest were taken by spring cart to Mary's parents house after the ceremony for a lavish reception, where a feast of pressed tounge, hams and game were served.

Mary and her husband moved to Morpeth, where they ran a small agricultural farm, producing barley, millet, fruit and vegetables. During her married life Mary gave birth to nine children, some were born at home with the help of family members, and some were born in hospital. Mary and her husband were hit by many set backs, namely flood, drought and lack of money, even in the hard times they always managed to pull together even if it meant starting all over again.

Morpeth was founded in 1801 by Lt. E.C. Close. Lt. Close was given an assignment of ten convicts and a loan of ten Government cows(1), and so the new town of Morpeth was on its way to being established.

By 1813 some convicts and free settlers had been permitted to cultivate farms at Wallis Plains. A Store Ship, St. Michael at the head of navigation on the Hunter River served these settlers. A small river port was established to handle goods and supplies from Newcastle to Sydney and to carry produce out to these cities. This was the beginning of the port of Morpeth. (2)

Mary can recall seeing many steamers coming up the Hunter River to the 'Queens Wharf', as it was named. The Anna Maria, Archer and the Glider are just three that she can clearly name.

The paddle steamer 'Sophia Jane' commenced a regular run to Morpeth, conveying cargo such as coal, wool, hides and barley. Two hundred tonnes of produce was shipped weekly from the river ports to Sydney until 1931(3). The last ship to visit Morpeth was the 'Doepel' on the 20th July, 1946. (4)

Built in 1907, the Oak store which was known as the 'Bowthorne Butter Factory' received milk and cream from local suppliers. Milk was processed into butter, hand wrapped by the workers and lifted directly from the butter rooms onto the decks of ships at the factory wharf, and there transferred to the bigger cities.(5) Mary's son-in-law worked at the factory from the age of fourteen, delivering the milk by spring cart to the locals and surrounding homesteads.

1. A.P. Elkin. "Morpeth and I", 'Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society'. *Detail* P.2.
2. Armstrong, John "Shaping The Hunter" Newcastle. 1983. P. 8.
3. Ibid.
4. "A.P. Elkin "Morpeth and I", 'Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society' P. 41.
5. Ibid. P.14.

Congestion in Newcastle caused a railway line to be built to Morpeth. The line was always busy carrying bales of wool to the wharves of Morpeth. During her courting days, Mary and her future husband would catch the train to Newcastle for shopping trips and outings to the beaches. Modern transport sealed the fate of the Morpeth^{Line} and it finally closed in 1953. (1)

Morpeth was once a place of disastrous floods. The 1955 flood was the worst the Hunter had known. People were without light and water for a week. Many farmers lost thousands of dollars in stock and produce. Often people were stranded on barn roofs until help could reach them. Many lost not only their stock and property but also their lives. There was no such thing as compensation to help them put their lives back together.

The Post Office, School of Arts, Court House, Campbells Stores and Bond Stores are all well over 100 years old. Saint James's Church of England is over 150 years old and was established by Lt. E.C. Closes's son in 1837(2)

Morpeth today is a bustling tourist spot, featuring such enterprises as Craft and Pottery Stores. It also has all the modern conveniences that the bigger towns have, such as bus services and electricity which was first introduced to Morpeth in 1925(3).

The Heritage Society has taken over many of the old buildings, stores and homesteads, restoring and preserving this Historical Town.

1. A.P. Elkin, "Morpeth and I". 'Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society.' P. 16.
2. Ibid. P. 7.
3. Ibid. P. 36.

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The Life of Mrs. Mary Lantry, and the Changes in the
Morpeth Area Since She has lived here.

My name is Jill Nean, I am a student at the Newcastle University. Australian History is the subject. And the topic of this interview is the Life of Mrs. Mary Lantry and the changes in Morpeth since she has lived here. The date is the 14.7.88. and I am interviewing Mrs. Lantry in her kitchen in her house at Morpeth where she has resided for the past 46 years.

Welcome Mrs Lantry to this interview.

Could you tell me a bit about yourself?

I'm Mrs. Mary Lantry, I'm 80 years of age. I was born 7.11.1908, place of birth was Brookfield via Dungog. I have 9 children.

Could you tell me about your life growing up as a young girl?

Yes. I worked with my parents, a shared dairy farmer they were. I helped with the milking of the cows, washing the buckets and dairy things that were on there.

How many children were there, in your family?

My mother lost a lot of children but there were 5 of us that did survive.

Could you tell me a bit about your farm house?

It was a very plain house we had no electricity we only had kerosine lamps, there was no such thing as refrigerators, freezers or electric fans, washing machines or anything like that. All we had was galvanized tubs, and the big ones always used we had to bath in it too.

And how did you do your washing?

In these tubs, we had tank water and we had to wash in these tubs we make our own soaps and we had a washer board. We scrubbed the clothes on the washing board.

How did you make your soap?

Well my mother made the soap and it was made out of like dripping and I know caustic soda was put into it, I dont know really what else I was only young then.

What about your ironing, how did you manage to do your ironing?

Well the ironing was put on the fuel stove to heat up, and they were either Mrs Potts irons or the old black irons.

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How did you keep your food cold?

Well there was an old wire safe and it was hang out in the coolest place you could get it, to keep the perishable things cold. Things like meat, and then we used like what was called a butter cooler. You'd put a hole in the ground, fill it up with water and put the butter in the cooler and cover it up. Thats how they kept the butter cool.

Did you make your own butter?

We made all our own butter.

How did you go about that?

Well we had a big jar and it had a wooden thing that went up and down and thats how they churned the butter. We always had plenty of milk and plenty of cream.

Did you keep the butter for yourselves, did you sell it to people?

Yes we kept enough cream to make butter for ourselves, the rest of the milk was sent to the factory in Dungog.

What sort of work did your father do?

He did farm work, he had to look after the cattle and cows and that and grow feed for them, he grew vegetables and we did have some fruit too.

What sort of fruit did you have?

We had a big grape trellis which my mother used to make grape jam out of, and we had quinces and we used to preserve them, and we used to make quince dumpling with them.

What about family leisure and outings, things like that?

Well we did^{nt} have much outings, if there was a show on then we'd go one day to the show, and very seldom at Dungog there was a picture show or anything special on we might go to that. I can remember if Worth's circus would come to town we always went to see that.

Can you remember what it was like going to the circus? Was it a big family outing?

Worth's circus was the best one I'd ever been to.

What sort of things did they have there?

Oh acrobats, horse all things like that. Animals, they were really a good circus, in fact one time I did see in Sydney it was pointed out to me where the Worth family lived.

What about family discussions, did you have family discussions where you all sat around the table and talked?

Yes at times, anybody said anything about anybody else my father would say get on with your meal never mind talking about anyone else.

What about of a night time, did you all sit on the verandah?

We only had a very small verandah, in the summertime we'd all be outside playing hides, rounders or something like that, there was no day light saving in those times either.

Do recall your father making you any sort of toys or dolls that sort of thing?

No, no my father had no time for that. By the time he did the farming, grew the vegetables and all that, he didn't have time. Only doll ever I had it was a big celluloid doll when they first come out and I had it for a school concert.

What happened at the school concert, why did you have to take the doll?

Well it was in this thing had to have a doll in a cradle for this concert. But I do remember them buying my brother's guns, you know toy guns like, you would put a cork in the end like and fire it like that.

What about night time did the family gather and sit around the piano or radio?

Yes we used to, we had a piano and anyone else had a piano we would visit there place and have a real good sing a long and that, and we would play cards.

What sort of card games did you play?

Oh always Euchure or Five Hundred it would be.

And were they family outings, would everyone join in?

Oh yes everyone joined in and another game we played was crib, we used to play crib my father liked playing crib.

And did you have to help your father on the farm?

Oh yes! We had to milk the cows, and we only let them out or they would get blown you know, of course my two brothers helped as well you know.

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And how did you get the other food you needed, such as flour?

We always brought it too, by railways from Maitland most of them if run out of anything they'd fetch it home when they picked up the mail. Mail came from Dungog to where we lived my brother when he took the milk to the factory would bring back anything else we required like medicine anything like that.

What did your brother do?

He worked on the farm with my father, my two brothers worked on the farm with my father.

And the milk you got from your cows went to the factory.

Do you recall any travelling sales vans?

Yes. I remember used to be Indians, like dark people you know? They have a covered in wagon, there'd be haberdashery, cotton, needles materials things like that.

What did your mother buy from them?

Oh yes always brought some thing of them, not a lot but always brought some little thing off them.

How often did they come by?

Oh you know 2-3 months. By the time they got around to everyone else around the town, than call back to see if you wanted anything.

Was that an exciting thing to see them coming?

Oh yes, us kids would be all out around the van to see what he had.

Did he have lollies?

Oh yes they carried lollies too. We always got some off him, my mother always brought something off him might not have been much but she always brought something.

Did you pay for your food through money or was it a barter type system?

Do you remember exchanging what you had for something that you just bought?

At that van you had to pay him for them, my father only got paid every month.

Once a month. We would come to Maitland and get all the big items like sugar, big sack of sugar, big sack of flour, big chest of tea, big tin of Saob biscuits. All those things were bought in bulk like that. There was no things bought in pounds or kilos those days.

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How long did those supplies last you?

Months. And when they got down low we'd go to Maitland and buy another lot. I remember when we did go to Maitland we always dealt at the same place and us kids would go with our parents too and us kids would go around and taste all the biscuits.

How did you get to taste the biscuits?

Each tin of biscuits we'd take one out, he'd let us do that because we were good customers.

What were the biscuits like in those days, were they the same as now?

Well you'd buy Iced Vo Vo's and Honey Jumbles and all them just like you would today.

But they didn't come in packets, they came in big tins!

Oh no. Always came in the tins, but there was the smaller ones too. But the Sao biscuits always come in the real big ones.

Did you use the tins for other things?

Yes. You had to keep the things in it, and also Christmas cakes, you know Arnotts Christmas cakes with the parrot on it. We always got them for Christmas. Sometimes mum would make one herself and the Christmas pudding was always boiled in cloth. The Christmas pudding would always be boiled in a cloth.

Can you recall your Christmas's what they were like?

Well they were not like they are today but we always got something special. There was something in like clothes or shoes we never got a lot of toys that were bought today for kiddies. We never had none of those.

And you always made your own Christmas cakes and puddings?

We made our own but we always did buy one of Arnotts or maybe two. If it was a busy time my father had to hire another hand to help with the work but not too often did we do that either.

Do you remember the little sixpence going into the cake?

Threepences always went in the cakes., and we'd be always looking to see who could get the most.

Do you recall helping your mother make the Christmas puddings?

Yes we'd nearly all have a stir at it. But I can remember we had our own poultry ducks and fowls always had plenty of eggs and when the fowls would go off lying a bit my mother would preserve the eggs. And I can remember her saying come on Mary, get here and help me pluck these fowls, it was a job I hated and she kept saying come on, come on and I kept saying in a minute, in a minute and then I got a cut around the legs for not helping (laugh).

What did you do with the feathers and things?

Well a lot of people did save them to make beds and pillows and things like that but we didn't, unless there was an occasional one and then we might do.

And how did you cook your meat?

Well we only had a fuel stove, that's all we had a wood fuel stove. We had to get our own wood from out in the paddocks that belong to the man my father worked for, and they brought it in chopped it up and we'd boil the Christmas cakes and that. And I can remember the fuel stove was named W.A.R.D., ward stove and that was my father's name.

Do you recall your mother saying where she met your father?

Well I think it'd be round up that way somewhere, down way hum. My mother's people lived between Brookfield and Dungog and I'd say around there somewhere he might of. But as far as I know his people come up Branxton way.

Can you recall what the roads were like?

Not as good as today, some of the roads were dreadful, the main roads, but where we went to school we only went through paddocks. We had to open a lot of gates and go through other people's property and that was the shorter way to go to school.

Where did you go to school at?

I went to school at St. Josephs Convent Dungog.

How did you get there?

We rode horses. Sometimes we had to leave the horses at the Blacksmiths to get them shod in the morning and then we would pick them up after school.

What subjects did you do at school?

All subjects. I was not very brilliant, I've learnt a lot more since I've been at school but religion was my main one. I'd always top the class in religion.

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So you dont remember the subjects?

Yes. We did maths and nouns and pronouns, which I hated, and all thing like that. You know?

What sort of games did you play at school?

Well, the boys would always play marbles. Well there was no physical culture. You just did exercise before you went into school, you stood in a line and did exercises before you went in.

Do you recall ever going on excursions?

No none at all what-so-ever.

At what age did you leave school?

I left school at about 14.

What happened after that.

Well I had to help, I'm still on the farm. Had to help mil the cows and things like that. One thing I always did was the washing. If my mother was not well sometimes and the Doctor had to come we would my sister that is, she would always have the room tidy. The hand basin and the towels and everything ready for the Doctor. In those days you always had to have a big bowl and water for the Doctor to wash his hands.

And how did you get your water, did you have wells?

No we only had tank water, but the river was not far away but we never used it.

Can you tell me about your clothing, what sort of clothing did you wear in those days.

To be married in I had, as a bride I had, it was like georgette pleated. Electric pleated the front of it.

Did your mother make your wedding dress?

No. It was bought in Maitland also my going away dress.

What sort of dress did you wear?

It was like a, it was'nt brown but I think you'd call it like a hannah colour or something like that they called it. And the hat was bought from Mc Clouds and the dress was really lovely.

Did you wear gloves?

Yes. Gloves to go with it too.

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Did you have stays?

No we didn't have that, we had what they used to call stay bodis.^{ee}
There what you call bras now. Sometimes my mother would make those sort of things. She did a lot of sewing too.

Did she make all your clothes?

No unless there was something special she might get it made.
But my wedding dress was brought in Maitland also my going away frock and the hat was bought at Mrs. McClouds.

What about clothing that you wore around the farm?

Oh yes, to milk the cows and that in mum always made like what was called a pinafore to milk in and that saved your dress from getting milk all over it.

Did you have to get up early in the morning to milk the cows?

Oh yes. We'd get up early in the morning and my father would make us a great big slice of toast made from the tin loaves and a nice cup of tea, and we'd go to the milking then. And when everything was done and the cows were let out to graze and we washed up the buckets and things, and then we'd come home and have our breakfast. Then after that we'd put on our school clothes and go on to school.

Did you have a uniform to wear to school?

No at that school we didn't have to wear a uniform.

Could you wear whatever you wanted?

Yes you could wear what ever you wanted yes.

Do you recall your first job?

Yes after that we moved from the dairy farm and I worked at a Mrs. Barteners place. I had to work a half a day each day and I got twelve and six a week.

How much would that be in todays currency?

That would be about \$1.25.

How old were you?

Oh, about 15 then.

What sort of work did you have to do?

Mostly house work, she was an old lady.

Can you remember what the house looked like?

It wasn't a very elaborate place but comfortable enough you know for an old lady. She owned it I'd say and her son did live with her and he was a hairdresser.

Do you recall going to hairdresses or salons?

No we never ever did that, inmy younger day when I was going to school my hair was always plated. Pigtails as they call it sometimes.

What did you do with your wages. Did you ever go out shopping to buy yourself things?

Oh yes but what could you buy with 12and 6, not much although it was more than , and I was allow to spend it on myself.

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Do you recall going to the pictures shows?

Yes I remember going to the pictures before I was married and also when I was younger too. Before we married we used to go, not a lot but I remember going. I remember before I got married going to the beach a few times not a lot cause we always had to be there for the milking of cows every afternoon and morning. Sometimes we were allowed one day off to go but it might be my turn this Sunday and the next my brother's turn to have his day off, you know like that.

And how did you get to the beach?

Well we had to come to Morpeth than to catch the train and go to Newcastle by train.

What was the train station like at Morpeth?

Old fashion old thing it was. It wasn't a very elaborate place, we had to get off at East Maitland. The train only went to East Maitland had to get off there and get the train to Newcastle.

How did you get to Morpeth from where you were living?

You had to ride the horse and sulky and you'd leave it somewhere in Morpeth than pick it up when you come back.

Did anyone look after it for you or-

Oh yes we knew the people where we would leave it.

How old were you when you got married?

I'd gone 18, about 18 and 5 months.

Can you tell me about your wedding?

Yes I was married, I had to go from where I lived in a boat to come to Morpeth. I met my fiance at the bridge and the best man and brides maids, and we were taken to the hotel in Morpeth to get dressed there and got married at the (pause).

Where did you have the reception?

After we got married in the Catholic Church we had to go back to the hotel and get changed there than we went back to my parents home at Hinton and the reception was there. Guest, we drove by sulky back cause the flood had gone down and the guest had arrived at Morpeth by train and was taken back to Hinton by spring cart.

What is a spring cart?

Drawn by a horse. Its not a dray but its - years gone by would take the milk to the factory.

Where did you meet your husband?

Well we was always around all these peoples places playing the piano and that and thats where I picked up with him there, going to pictures and that.

How did you feel when you first met him?

Oh well I never thought we might marry, but we did and thats that. He used to visit my place and we'd visit his.

Why did you visit his place, was that family outings?

Oh yes they were family outings we used to go to the same church too.

What sort things did you do when you were courting?

We'd go to the pictures or we'd go to the beach together or go out to these family gatherings and only things like that.

What was your swimsuit like? Do you recall what you would wear to the beach?

You wear, not like, you never had any summer frocks, oh you had summer frocks but not like you'd wear today. Perhaps you might wear your good frock. Cause I never went in the water. I never swam. But we'd meet another couple that would be. There was no such thing as swimming tights, we never had them.

What did you wear on the beach?

Well just this dress. We'd sit on the beach and have our lunch on the beach, things like that.

And were they fun outings?

Well in those days. We made fun of them. They wouldn't today. They wouldn't suit the kids today.

What did your husband do, what sort of work work did he do? When you were married?

He was an agriculture farmer.

What sort of things did you have on the farm?

loosen

We grew ~~loosen~~ and vegetables and hay, we had to mow the loosen for hay. We had to let the loosen go to seed and we had to have it thrashed. And we had some of the best loosen seed that there was ever around. We had the people come to the house to buy the seed and that where we lived.

What did you do with the produce that you had grown. Did you keep it for yourselves?

We used what we wanted from it. Than they used to have what they called a Union. But it was a place where they would auction it and sell it and they sell the hay there too but there were other buyers that used to come around and buy it too. We also grew millet too aswell.

How many children did you have?

I was married in 1927. Then in 1928 I had my first child, a girl. Than in 1930 a second child a girl, than in 1933 I had another girl. Than in 1935 I had a boy but he only lived 12 hours. Some of the children, the third daughter was born at my parents house. Than the boy as I said he only lived 12 hours. Than in 1936 I had another girl than in 1938 I had a son, than in 1942 I had another daughter than in 1946 I had another daughter. Altogether I had 9 children. Than my eldest daughter she died at the age of 19 years and 10 months. Very suddenly, got out of bed and died at the side of the bed. She died of what they call an acute Lobo Pneumonia.

And how did that effect the family?

Well I tell you, It takes a lot to get over, but as you get older you feel, well she was a good girl you know, now I dont have as much regrets as what I did then.

What do you mean by regrets?

Well at first I thought, well why should it have to happen to her. she was a good living girl that went to church every day while she lived, but God's ways are not our ways and I feel if shes not in heaven I dont know where the rest of us will be.

So you are very religious?

Yes I go to church, I have my religion, and I tried to teach all my children even my grandchildren.

How were your births, did you have your children at home or in hospital?
 Three of my children were born at home, the others in hospital. I had a nurse come in and help deliver the children. And I remember one time she didn't arrive until after I had the child and my husband and sister assisted me with it.

How were home births. Were they very difficult in those days?
 Oh yes, I always had a long labour, you know I was in labour a long ^{time} and I was always over due.

Did the children help you around the house?
 Oh yes, we always had our own cows and made our own butter and milk and they had to help to do that. If we couldn't always use the water from the tank so they may of have to take the horse down for a drink.

Did you go down with the children or where they -
 No. As they got older they take all the horses and they'd all have a drink.

And how did you do your washing and ironing and that sort of thing? when you got married?
 Well we only had the old black irons still for a long time, but than as electricity come in I was able to use the electric iron, but I still did it in the old galvanised tubs for a long time until I come to live in the town, later on while you were on the farm you still used the old galvanised tubs.

And did you make your own soaps and washing powders?
 Oh well you know you used to have to use the river water and you had to put something in it to make a lather and that. But I never made my own soap but my mother used to make her own soap. But yes we would buy it in big bars you didn't buy it in packets like you do now. But yes there'd be washing powders, But not all the varieties that there is today.

Do you recall what one you used?
 Yes. I can recall that we always use to have the blue, you know the blue nob. Put it in the blue water to make the water they reckon to use the blue nob that make the clothes white. I cant just recall oh washing soda you used mostly. You had to boil the clothes in the copper.

Did you have set days to do your washing?
 Well everybody nearly always did it on the Mondays. But if you had so many kids you seemed to be doing it everyday. We never had rotary clothes lines. Every now and then you'd see the blokes come around with the clothes props, you know the old clothes props. And you might buy one or two of him. You had that for the wire, there was a wire running from one post to the other to hang your clothes from and you had to have a clothes prop. and you also had to have a broom handle to poke the clothes down when you'd be boiling outside, ther'D be no copper inside.

And how did you go about your cooking?
 On the fuel stove.

Did your husband go out to the bush to chop down trees?
Oh yes, he had to go out in the bush and bring the wood in and that.

Did your children go with him?
Not very often, they were too young then.

Do you recall any of the major floods in the area?
Oh yes the 1955 flood around Morpeth and Maitland was dreadful. In fact I ~~no~~ there were some people in Maitland and Morpeth that drowned.

What about the depression?
The depression we always had plenty of butter coupons because we made our own butter. But I used to exchange my butter coupons for sugar coupons we always seemed to be short of sugar. And I can remember my husband going to Maitland and one thing he bought that was a hat and when we got to Maitland we didn't have the coupons for the clothing, but we knew a fellow who worked there and he bought them home and we paid for them, we gave him the coupons. Because you couldn't get the things without you had the coupons.

What other sort of things could you get with the coupons?
Well I always remember we'd have things here, you'd buy the bread and you'd buy a dozen sort of button things they were and you'd give them to the baker to get a loaf, each one were a loaf of bread.

What were the buttons?
They were like plastic and they had something on them and you knew they were a loaf of bread.

So you exchanged the button for a loaf of bread?
Yes one loaf.

Was there any other sort of thing like that?
You had to have coupons for clothing and food and all that in the war time that was.

And how did the war and the depression effect you?
Well in different ways, like if you were on the farm well I can remember once there was a draught and my husband had to go out and work on a road doing road work because there was nothing coming in on the farm.

No money you mean?
No. There was nothing to sell no hay, no millet was gone out you only needed a shower to bring it out and we didn't get the rain to bring it out ahead.

There was a draught was there?
A draught yes.

How did you feel with the draughts?
Well we managed we never staved, although there was no dole in those days. The only time ever there was anything was if you had a bad flood they would give you and if it went into your house they may give to you. But I dont think we ever got anything. Only time and we got nothing then was just got married and it was up over the windows that time and we was first married.

How did you survive that?

Well we had to get out of that house than. Thats when we moved from there, we had that farm leased there but there was the wedding presents and everything floating around. You go to pull a draw out of the sideboard and it would'nt come out and if it did it fell to peices than.

How were your feelings about that. I mean that must of been-

Well this was his life on the farm brought up to be a farmer and we just had to put up with it. Start again.

How did you manage to start again, what did you do?

We got another farm and if we did well we gradually got things back.

Have you got any personal experiences that you really felt for with your children growing up on the farm?

Oh yes I suppose I have wish I dont know I cant remember how do you mean.

Do you wish there was something there to help you get along better?

Sometimes I so, I might buy something new for the house and I planned this and than we might. Things did'nt go we did'nt get it. There was ~~no~~ such thing as lay-byes or anything like that. If you had the money than you bought it. If you did'nt have the money well than you did without till you had the money.

What about Morpeth, how was it when you first moved here.

This place where I lived belonged to my mother before she died. I came up here to help care for her. I'd say it was about 1945, no it might have been younger, no I think it was 1945. And I used to come up to look at her because she was in bad health and than when she died we brought this place, we brought it out of her estate.

What was Morpeth like then, was it all horse drawn carts and dirt roads?

Oh yes you still had the old mem coming around with the props and things like that. The butcher would call and the baker and get an order what you wanted. But I can remember when my daughter died people were very good, they'd send big bags of cakes and that and I can remember the butcher sending meat to me when she died, and the baker sending things if anything like that occured. When my daughter and my mother died.

What about the railway. Can you tell me about the railway?

The railway well yes there used to be a weighing bridge here where they would weigh the hay down there. And the trains had different times to run, but they only went to East Maitland, and then you had to catch another train if you wanted to go over to Maitland. There was no buses in Morpeth in those times.

What about the ships. Do you recall any ships?

Before I was married I can recall boats coming up the river. Not much after I was married because the siltage in the river would'nt allow it then to come up then because the river was not deep enough. I can remember them dredging the river.

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Can you recall any ships?

Well there was the Archer and the Anna Maria and the Glider. That's three I can remember anyway.

Did you ever go down to see the ships come in?

No. Before I was married you'd be working down on the farm picking peas and beans and the boats would come up the river where you were working.

Do you recall them putting the produce onto the ships?

No I'd never seen them put them on, but you'd see them going back down the river to Newcastle to take the stuff away. My husband, he would know more about the weigh bridge, he would bring the hay over and put it on the truck things like that. But you had to have it weighed, only a certain amount could go. That was by train the weigh bridge.

Did you ever get on the boats to go to Newcastle or Sydney?

Well they did, but I never did.

What about the train station, what can you tell me about the train station?

Well it was a very old place, not elaborate station. I can remember my daughter when she first went to Newcastle to work, she used to get a special ticket, I think it cost her about 2 and 6 a week for it. She'd catch the train, she worked at a lollie factory in Newcastle.

What lollie factory was that?

McClouds I think it was. She would bring home miners friends and the bulgarian rock, she'd bring home for the kids.

What sort of outings did you have with your children?

Oh we'd go to the beach perhaps once a year we'd do that, but we didn't do much. We'd go over to play cards at neighbours places, but we didn't do anything much. Later on we did have a car and we would go to places, perhaps on a Sunday to a trip somewhere or something like that.

What about the Bowthorne butter factory?

Yes I had a daughter work at the Bowthorne butter factory for a while. The oak ice cream was made there, and the Oak butter. And my son-in-law had a horse drawn cart and he used to get the milk from the farms and bring it there. you know horse and van. Now you can buy lots of things from there now, mens overalls, pitchforks and most all anything you know seeds and that. What Patricia did there I think was in the war time.