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Open Foundation Local  
History Project.

"Immigration and Newcastle"

European migration to the New World has been the phenomenon of the past two hundred and fifty years. Political, social and economic forces have shaped the various nations in different ways and within nations regional peculiarities have determined unique and characteristic communities.

The migrant history of Newcastle began with coal. Coal was the impetus for white settlement and the forced labour of convicts as miners constituted its first migrants. Later settlements established by coal companies close to mines attracted a workforce and coal determined the early development patterns of Newcastle(1). In the boom period of 1850 to 1890 the region accounted for two thirds of the colonys' mining workforce.(2) The 'movement by tens of thousands of British immigrants...in the latter half of the 19th century' formed the 'beginning of a highly selective pattern of British immigration.' Newcastle attracted immigrants from the coal mining regions of Staffordshire, Durham and Northumberland. The Welsh too were common in Newcastle at that time and the presence of the British in the area is reflected in the names of the city and suburbs.(3)

The opening of the B.H.P. steelworks in 1915 and the subsequent State Dockyard converted Newcastle into an industrial city, saving it from economic decline as the mines decreased in importance. By 1933 one third of

the male workforce was in manufacturing and only 6% engaged in coal mining.(4)The B.H.P. was without doubt of singular significance.It would shape absolutely the form of the citys' development over the decades and largely determine the character and image of Newcastle.Between 1911 and 1921 heavy industry,feeding on rural and British immigration to the region,achieved a net gain of about 17,000 people and this figure was not exceeded again until the late 40s and 50s.(5)

For Jim and Violet Woodward,arriving in 1927 as part of the 1925 agreement between the Australian and British governments(6),Newcastle proved something of a disappointment.In spite of the presence of revenue producing industries Newcastle,acting as a magnet for people seeking employment,was underdeveloped and workers arriving in the city often found working conditions and opportunities poor.Periods of unemployment were common as heavy industry failed to provide stable employment.(7)The worsening of unemployment in 1928 was a prelude to the depression years following 1929 when in 1933 38% of male wage earners in Newcastle had little or no work.(8)Immigration too had been cut back in 1929 as the Labour party and trade unions opposed the drive for migrants,while the activities of the communist party flourished as readily as the humpies on the outskirts of the city.

Newcastle,up to the Second World War,was classically cast,via the highly selective White Australia policy,in W.M.Hughes depiction of a country'more British than the British' though as Australias first heavy industrial

city it had survived rather than flourished.

Australian xenophobia after the First World War fuelled fears of an asiatic invasion where 'populate or perish' was seen as the only buffer to the perceived 'yellow peril'. The near invasion of Australia by the Japanese in 1942 underlined these fears and was 'the overwhelming justification for postwar immigration.' (9) A program of Immigration was devised by Arthur Calwell, Australia's first minister for immigration, that would 'enhance Australian security and expand its' economic development. (10)

In comparison with Sydney, Melbourne and other emerging industrial centres however, large scale immigration, especially that of southern Europeans, bypassed Newcastle as a result of the policy of decentralisation of industry after 1945. By 1961 migrants comprised only 3% of the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie population. (11)

The family of Gisela Noll, arriving from Germany in 1955, enjoyed conditions that were much improved from 1927. A generally buoyant economy and a guarantee of employment provided them with the means to establish a new life. Land subdivided in the 1920s and Newcastle's planned urban growth resulted in Lake Macquarie Shire absorbing the greater part of Newcastle's postwar expansion. (12) Between 1947 and 1966 the Shire experienced a 154% increase in its population as opposed to Newcastle's 10.5%. (13) By 1957 the B.H.P. employed about 60% migrant labour. (14) The role of migrants in the massive growth of the Australian

economy' (15) is undoubtedly but for Newcastle, founded on coal and British ideals, the arrival of the new Australians did not pass without comment. In July of 1957 the Newcastle City Council entered the immigration debate with the Lord Mayor, Ald. Jones, expressing concern over the 'falling intake of British migrants'. (16) He said that the Federal Government was "flooding" the country with migrants of non-British stock. (17) Ald. Purdue was a little kinder in his evaluation of immigration, he thought it 'desireable that the large empty spaces in Australia are populated as soon as possible.' (!) (18)

In an employment sensitive city such as Newcastle the debate demonstrated a relative intolerance toward non-British races in economic competition. This is in spite of the fact that migrants since W.W.2 have made up only some 25% of the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie population growth and that income in the Hunter Valley from its primary, secondary and tertiary industries increased from about \$94 million in 1947 to about \$546 million in 1966. (19) The slowing of British migration was the beginning of the decline of the White Australia policy and the evidence suggests that the hope 'that migrants adopt Australian citizenship and the Australian way of life' or 'assimilated' has occurred in Newcastle. (20)

The value of immigration to Newcastle is undeniable. The regions economy, since industrialisation in 1915, has seen development and expansion despite setbacks. The social appearance of Newcastle has not changed significantly. It remains essentially a 'British' city but if it continues to encourage development it should

expect to absorb an increasing percentage of Australias  
migrant intake, in a continuation of the fundamental  
pattern of Australian history.

- 1/J.C.Docherty.'Newcastle:The Making of an Australian City'Syd.1983.p8
- 2/IBID,p2
- 3/IBID,p14&15
- 4/IBID,p24
- 5/IBID,p60
- 6/M.Dugan,J.Szwarc.'There Goes the Neighbourhood.Australia's Migrant Experience'Melb.1984.p97
- 7/Docherty.'Newcastle...'p75
- 8/IBID,p62
- 9/R.T.Appleyard 'Immigration and the Australian economy'from Aust.Inst.of Political Science 'How many Australians?'Syd.1971.p3
- 10/Dugan & Szwarc 'There Goes...'p137
- 11/Hunter Valley Region Authority'The Hunter Valley Region'Newcastle,1968.p40
- 12/Docherty.'Newcastle...'p155
- 13/H.V.R.A.'The Hunter...'p40
- 14/Newcastle Morning Herald,17th July 1957
- 15/Dugan & Szwarc 'There Goes...'p154
- 16/Newcastle Morning Herald 9 July 1957
- 17/Newcastle Morning Herald 17 July 1957
- 18/IBID
- 19/H.V.R.A.'The Hunter...'p40 & 68
- 20/Dugan & Szwarc 'There Goes...'p139

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Interviews recorded with Mr & Mrs J. Woodward and Mrs G. Noll in July, 1988.



JIM WOODWARD

Q: Could you introduce yourself please?

J: Yeah, I'm Jim Woodward I was born in Newcastle on Tyne in the north of England.

Q: What year was that?

J: In 1907

Q: What year did you emigrate to Australia?

J: In 1927

Q: What was the reason that you came out?

J: Oh well, I was working but my father was out of a job, not much prospect of getting one.

Q: So you thought by coming to Australia you could improve your life?

J: Yeah.

Q: How did you come out to Australia?

J: We sailed out on the old P&O ship the 'Burma', took us 8 weeks.

Q: Which way did you come?

J: Came round Africa, Capetown, long trip. Pretty rough.

Q: What was the arrangement that you had with the government? Did they pay your fare?

J: We received an assisted passage from the government, and didn't have to pay it back or anything like that.

Q: Did you have to pay a nominal amount?

J: Oh, I can't remember now actually what the arrangements were, I know it wasn't very much.

Q: How did you know to come to Newcastle? Was it being promoted in England

at that time?

J: Oh well, we knew people who were already settled here, there was a lot of north country people here.

Q: Did you find it strange that a lot of the names of the towns here were like names from the area of Northumberland, Durham?

J: Oh no, it made you feel, more at home, but there wasn't much similarity between where I was living here than over there. A big change.

Q: It was a big change?

J: Oh yes.

Q: Was it mostly the climate or just the lifestyle?

J: Yeah the climate and the way the people talked and I was... I remember one time I was asking people, somebody directions, and it was in Railway, Railway Lane and this fella told me to go to Railway Lyne and I'm looking for the Railway Line, oh dear.

Q: What were your early impressions of Newcastle, was it a clean city?

J: No, not particularly clean, I was very disappointed as a matter of fact. I, and most members of the family, if it had been possible to walk back we'd of done it!

Q: Was there a lot of poverty in Newcastle at that time?

J: Oh yeah. We tried to get away from the bad conditions in England and when we got here we found they were just as bad. Unemployment was rife. I used to go to the steelworks three times a day, 7 o'clock in the morning, 4 o'clock in the afternoon and midnight.

Q: Midnight!?

J: Yeah. I did that for about nine months before I got a start.

Q: You did that for nine months at the B.H.P., there were lots of men doing the same thing?

J: Oh yeah.

Q: So, you mentioned that you got a bit of work with the B.H.P. but you didn't stay with them did you?

excuse not to go to work because they didn't just want to go there you know it was, so bad.

Q: They were frightened of the conditions?

J: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Was the communist party very active in Newcastle?

J: Oh yeah, there were, they had an unemployed movement going. There were squatters camps all over the district, people built sheds with bits of corrugated iron and flattened kerosene tins out and did everything, you know, to get a house and these people oh, that was a ripe field for the ...

Q: There was a lot of popular support for them (Yeah) did they do a lot for the unemployed?

J: Yeah, they did quite a bit. They didn't get much sympathy off the papers and the media and things like that but, ah, I know in Wallsend, old Jimmy Oliver he was a communist and if anybody, if the people were in trouble, they used to go to Jimmy. You know?

Q: What were the biggest changes you've noticed in Newcastle since 1927? What stands out in your mind as the biggest change that you've seen?

J: Oh, much more industry here now and the place has spread out at an enormous rate, things were just, well, bushland. I could have bought a piece of ground over here for about £230 quid in 1933 or 4 and I suppose there are 250 houses on it now. You could have made a fortune if you'd known.

Q: If you could have had a crystal ball into the future. What were some of the things you did for entertainment for yourself. How did the people entertain themselves in those times?

J: Oh, there wasn't much going on really, there was (visit houses!) hey? (visit houses) Yeah there was no T.V. of course and not too many people had even wireless sets. No you, ah, had to make your own entertainment.

Q: Is there anything, any big event that stands out in your mind, that you recall more than anything else that happened in Newcastle?

J: Oh, the 1929, miners strike was, that was, you know, caused a lot of

suffering and poverty(1931 we got married!)and then we got married.(What about that time you worked in Sydney for awhile?)The,oh,yes I worked in Sydney in 1931,in a coal yard,watched the Harbour Bridge meet,the two arche meet.

Q:That was a pretty big event in those times ?

J:You could buy a ticket on the railway then,9 shillings and fourpence I used to pay,it lasted a month.That was return fare.

Q:It lasted a month?

J:Yeah you could use it in a month,that was from Newcastle to Strathfield

Q:I remember you telling me once that Billy Hughes even visited this area and gave a speech,was he a popular man?

J:Billy Hughes?No he was,finished then when I came here,it wasn't up here,it was in Sydney he spoke in Croyden and I went along to hear him.But he had no following then.Not in 1931.

Q:You never actually were naturalised as an Australian?Do you still have British passport?

J:No no.No we came out here and we were Australian citizens.

Q:You were considered immediately as Australian citizens.

Q:(Yeah)There was never any need for you to do a formal declaration?

J:Oh no.

Q:What are your feelings for Newcastle now?

J:Oh I like it.I would rather,I'd much rather be here than in Sydney for arguments sake it's;in Wallsend it's not a bad town,I'm quite happy.

Q:Is there anything else you'd like to say before we wind up this interview,any lasting message or impression you'd like to leave the people of Newcastle?

J:I'm81 now,and I dont suppose I've got a great deal of time left,I've had a good life.

Q:Do you feel Australia has given you everything you'd hoped for?

J:Oh yeah,yeah.Yeah we have our own home,we own everything.We dont owe a

penny anywhere,we have all the things we need.

Q:Thanks very much for that,I appreciate it.

J:Good.Good.

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1988

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for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed James Woodward

Date 4/9/88

Interviewer Stephen Gaze

VIOLET WOODWARD

V: My name is Ada Violet Woodward.

Q: Where were you born?

V: Born in England, Northumberland. Throcley.

Q: What year was that?

V: 1905

Q: You mentioned Throcley, is that near Newcastle on Tyne as well?

V: Yes, only a few miles.

Q: What year did you emigrate to Australia?

V: 1927.

Q: What was your reason for coming to Australia?

V: I suppose, boredom, I suppose as much as anything in the one job and my sister was already out here, she had written glowing reports of all the lovely beaches and sent lovely snaps and everything.

Q: She wasn't actually in the Newcastle area?

V: No, she was in Sydney.

Q: What was the method that you came to Australia? Did you come by ship?

V: Came by the 'Moreton Bay'. A very nice ship.

Q: And what was the route used?

V: We came through the Mediterranean, and Suez Canal.

Q: What was the arrangement you had with the Australian Government, did you have an assisted passage?

V: I had an idea it was about £20 but I'm not quite sure.

Q: It wasn't a huge amount?

V: No, it was very little, they wanted migrants.

Q:What were your,actually,was Newcastle being advertised in your area at that time as a place to emmigrate to?

V:No,not particularly.I think it was mostly Sydney.Sydney was sort of picturesque.

Q:Did you come with the impression that there would be plenty of work for you here?

V:Yes,I think so.

Q:Did you actually find things as you expected when you arrived?

V:Well,we came up to Newcastle,I had no intention of staying in Newcastle,my Aunty was living up in Weston,I had used her when I was nominated out,that I had somewhere to come to and so I arrived on the Monday and went straight up to Aunt Adas' at Weston and on the following Thursday happened to see an advert in the newspaper,in the morning newspaper,for this office job and I went and phoned and they said could I come down straight away for an interview that day so I said yes I could be down in the afternoon...

Q:That was secretarial work was it?

V:Yes..that I would be down in the afternoon so I went down in the afternoon and I was accepted for the job and i started work the following Monday.So I was only here a week before I was working.

Q:Where was that?

V:That was at Murtons at the bank corner.

Q:What sort of work was it?

V:Clerical work,I also had to be the cashier too because they used to sell petrol and tyres.Was a retreading firm actually.

Q:Was that the only job you had in Newcastle/

V:Well it was the only one I applied for.I started there with the idea of if I didn't like it well,I had plenty of time to look around.

Q:What were your early impressions of Newcastle when you first arrived here?



V: Oh, can't say I was actually thrilled about it but the beach was nice, we used to go swimming there, we used to go to the baths at night time. And I was very fortunate because I was boarding with some people at Jesmond, it was a little far out, I had to run down through the park every morning to catch a tram.

Q: Were the trams an important part of getting to work?

V: Yes.

Q: Were there lots of other people on the trams, were they very busy or full quite often?

V: Oh yes, pretty well used. There was no other transport and people didn't have cars in those days, very few anyway, it was just a normal procedure. I wasn't here very long till I met Mr and Mrs Woodward and she invited me to go to tea on a Sunday so of course I went and there I met Jim.

Q: And you married?

V: I knew him very very casually in England, I just knew who he was and what he did, he was a bus driver.

Q: The area of settlement you chose as Wallsend, was there a particular reason for that?

V: No I can't remember how I came to be there because I was in Hamilton for a long time and at Hamilton I could walk to work, it was just near the bank corner.

Q: Was it because Wallsend was near the coal mines?

V: No, I just can't think. It was through my sister, that was it, that I came to live in Wallsend, because she got married, she married a chap from the north of England and he was a miner and probably through her that I came to Wallsend.

Q: What were some of the particular difficulties you had as a woman in a new country, any particular problems?

V: Oh none at all just...

Q: Just a matter of changing shoes?

V:That was all

Q:What were some of the things you did for entertainment?You mentioned going to the baths in summer.

V:Yes well,Jim was unemployed and he couldn't afford to take me out a great deal so we only used to go for walks or go to the beach or things like that.Occasionally would go to see a show in town,it wasn't very expensive.

Q:What sort of shows were they?

V:Oh,pictures,just the same as you have now I suppose.

Q:You would catch the tram in again to see them?

V:Oh,it all depends,if you were going to the Theatre Royal which was near the bank corner we just used to walk.If we were going to the Strand we might get a tram.

Q:Do you feel that Newcastle has changed a lot since you arrived in 1927?What are the changes you've noticed?

V:Well,just grown,like everything else

Q:It still feels much the same as when you arrived in 1927.The feeling of the city?

V:Now,yes,its grown quite a lot since we came.

Q:What are your feelings for the area now,it wasn't your intention to stay so very long?

V:No,we finished up going to Queensland for quite a long while.Jims parents were down here and all his family and then my sister went back to England in 1954 and she died there so we more or less came back to be near the family.

Q:Your husband worked for quite awhile in the coal industry,Did that cause any problems for you while he was at work?Did he work shift work for example?

V:Well,in the later years after I'd finished work it was a little bit lonely at night time especially;he was the night shift deputy and he couldn't leave very early or anything,a lot of the men could do their work

and then they could knock off and go home, being a deputy he had to stay until they were all gone and see that everything was alright before he left.

Q: Any moments of your time in Newcastle that you'd like to recall, that you remember as being particularly noteworthy?

V: Can't really say now, just at the moment Stephen.

Q: You also worked for a time with a shipping office in Newcastle?

V: Yes, that was James Patrick and Co. Ltd. they had vessels going between Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane.

Q: Do you remember the traffic as being fairly regular, was it fairly busy at those times?

V: They were special days every week, there'd be one going north and one coming south and one going down to Melbourne.

Q: What type of ships were they? Were they steam ships?

V: Steamships.

Q: Were they small freighters or large?

V: Just small freighters not great big ones. It was quite a lucrative business.

Q: So that time the sea traffic was important for trade?

V: Oh, there was a nightly service to Sydney too from Newcastle, a lot of people used to use that.

Q: Was that a passenger service?

V: Passenger service.

Q: If there was anything you could do differently since arriving in Australia what would that be?

V: A few years ago I would have said I'd go back to England, now it's... more or less accepted as home.

Q: Thank you very much for that interview.

V: You're welcome Stephen.

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I, Alda Violet Woodward give my  
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for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed A. V. Woodward

Date 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998

Interviewer Stephen Gartz

Summary of Interviews.

This cassette contains three interviews with immigrants to Australia who arrived in Newcastle in 1927 and 1955 from England and Germany respectively.

Jim Woodward and Violet Woodward (maiden name Liddell) arrived separately from England on an assisted passage. The reason for their migration was partly influenced by friends and relatives who had already settled in Australia. They arrived by ship, a journey of approximately 8 weeks. Mr Woodward experienced the early difficulties of finding work in Newcastle, expressing disappointment at the lack of opportunity. He eventually found work, after dogged perseverance, at the B.H.P. and later as a deputy at coal mines in the Newcastle area. His personal picture of Newcastle in the years of the Great Depression is of a city suffering the indignities of mass unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment. He speaks of the squatter camps, strikes and the communist party. He notes the changes in the general development of the area.

The experience for Mrs Woodward regarding employment was quite different. She arrived with secretarial skills and experience and found work immediately. She mentions the tram network that was until 1950 an essential part of urban expansion. She describes a fairly typical working class social life, a very British style of life in fact. There are the difficulties as wife to a shiftworker. She worked for a time at a shipping office in Newcastle and describes the regular steamer traffic up and down the eastern

coast.

Gisela Noll arrived from Germany in 1955 as part of the great exodus of Europeans after 1945. She arrived after the Maitland floods and went initially to Greta migrant camp. Her husband and son were contracted to the B.H.P. as tradesman for two years. Their next move was to a garage in Warners Bay and finally they built their own home. The language barrier posed some problems at first but they eventually settled in and adopted Australia as a permanent home.

All three interviewees expressed an initial disappointment for the area but indicated that it was now home for them.

GISELA NOLL

G: My name is Gisela Anna Noll, I'm born in Germany in the township of Bremen.

Q: What year was that?

G: I was born 1914.

Q: When did you emigrate to Australia?

G: We migrated in 1955.

Q: What was the reason for coming to Australia?

G: Well, my husband want to come to Australian and, actually, we only wanted to stay here for five years.

Q: How did you come out to Australia?

G: We came out by plane, KLM plane, and we flew over the Middle East, Darwin and Sydney.

Q: What sort of trip was it?

G: It was a good trip, it took 8 days to come out so that probably the longest plane trip, ever since.

Q: Was that part of the arrangement you had with the Australian government? Did they pay your air fare?

G: Yes, we came out, it cost us nothing but my son and my husband had to be under the contract for the B.H.P. for two years at least and, well, that's it.

Q: They worked for the B.H.P. for two years did they continue working with the B.H.P. after the contract had finished?

G: Yes they did. My husband worked there till the day he died and my son had to do another year apprenticeship as a fitter and turner because Germany was only four year apprenticeship and here was five.

Q: Can you tell us what your early impressions were of Newcastle and

what the conditions were like in those first months?

G: Ah, well, not very nice. I have to admit that, because they put us on the train, to Greta camp and that was the first train after the big flood in Maitland and it was absolutely shocking.

Q: What did the countryside look like?

G: Oh, in that time, dreadful, because everything was under water and under mud you know, that wasn't very nice. First impression we had wasn't 150%.

Q: What was Greta camp like?

G: Well, Greta camp was not very nice either because it was just the soldiers little barracks they put us in...

Q: Was it segregated, could you stay with your husband?

G: Oh no, the men went, got their jobs at the B.H.P., they had to go to a hostel and I was just staying in Greta camp.

Q: Was it difficult for you on your own in the camp?

G: Yes it was, very much so but then again we bought the land in Warners Bay and start to build a house.

Q: Were there a lot of other nationalities in the camp?

G: Yes, every nationality you can think of.

Q: Could you name some of them perhaps?

G: Oh yeah, there are Dutch, Polish, Yugoslavia, everything you can think of, they were all there.

Q: You bought land at Warners Bay and settled there, what were the early years like in Warners Bay?

G: For me it was hard and difficult, the language but the two men gone to work and they picked the language up quicker than I had the opportunity.

Q: Did you build immediately?

G: Well, we first lived for two years in a garage and then we started to build a house.



Q:What were some of the particular difficulties you had as a migrant woman?

G:Well when we first built the garage up here,naturally we had no water connection ,no electricity and that was a little bit difficult but we finally got a great big help from Australian people,helped us to get the water and electricity and all that on.

Q:Do you feel you assimilated quickly,did you make friends easily?

G:Yes,I did made very easily friends with the Australian women particularly and they were very helpful.

Q:What would be the biggest changes you've noticed in the years that you've been here?

G:Newcastle?Well,everything has been built up,there are road tarred which when we came out was only gravel roads if there was a road anyway and all the houses built up and modern,is really getting to a modern stage of Newcastle now.

Q:What are your impressions now of Newcastle,how do you feel about the area?

G:Well,I feel O.K. and I think it is my home.

Q:You don't have any nostalgia for Germany?

G:No,I have been back to Germany,that's about twelve years ago and I was glad when I came back,I'm sorry to say that.

Q:Newcastle is definitely now your home?

G:Newcastle is my home now.

Q:Can we go back a little bit,can you tell us how you came to know that there was land available at Warners Bay?

G:Well the agents went over,or got in,to the B.H.P.,they know when a batch of migrants arrived and wanted to sell land so,my husband bought,oh he came and picked my husband up and showed him the way around here and so they,a lot of German people,they bought land...

Q:In the same street?

G: In the same street.

Q: Were these people you knew at the camp?

G: No, not from Greta camp, but all German people lived in that street.

Q: When you began to settle into the area did you notice that people were a little resentful of the fact that you were here as migrants?

G: Oh, in the beginning, yes. When we had build the garage up and there

was Australian neighbours there, at the back, neighbours and they had a

little boy, was about two years old and the boy started to run over to

us and the woman just didn't want it, him to come, but another week and

the boy still run over to us then she pointed out like give him nothing

to eat, they were probably frightened we poison him or something but...

Q: You became good friends?

G: After about four or five weeks we were the best friends.

Q: You mention also that you had a lot of trouble with the

language, what were some of the things you remember particularly, say, the

shopping?

G: Yes, that was a problem.

Q: How did you manage?

G: Well, managed most of the time buying something in tins when you

could see the pictures on the tin to know what you wanted. So, I saved

all the labels of the tins and studied it then and gradually I got used

to it.

Q: What sort of things did you do for entertainment, the three of you when you were here? How did you entertain yourselves?

G: Oh, well, we had a lot to do, clean the land up and build fence up and

fix the garage up inside so we could live decent and most of the time

it was going like that.

Q: You were busy getting settled?

G: Yes.

Q: What opportunities did you have to meet other Australians? What sort

Q: What things did you do to get away from home when you had the time?

G: Oh, to meet the Australian people? Well nobody around us had cars or anything that's, what, 33 years ago and well we got friendly with the back neighbours and they were all Australian people and we made it as a rule we played cards on Saturday night, six of us and that was more or less our entertainment.

Q: Did you play any sport?

G: Yeah, then they asked me to join their tennis club, which I at first thought I couldn't understand them or something but they were very helpful. So I was the only German migrant in their tennis club. It's a terrific time we had. It was really lovely.

Q: What did your husband and son think about working at the B.H.P.?

G: Ah, it was entirely different from the working condition in Germany because everything was free and open and he often laughed and said every boss you called by their Christian name and no need to take your hat off and say 'good morning mister' or something. You know so it was very...

Q: It was much more formal in Germany?

G: Ohh, oh yes very formal.

Q: So that was one of the things that struck you, the ease of lifestyle?

G: Yes, easy going and that's what we liked and loved from the beginning on.

Q: At what point did you realise that you weren't going back to Germany? After your five years did you make a decision to stay?

G: Oh yes.

Q: You talked about it?

G: We talked about it and there wasn't much talking, we just got naturalised, we had it on our mind not to go back because we loved it here.

Q: Was it because you heard things weren't good in Germany or were you just happy?

G: Well that's why we left Germany for

Q: Was being naturalised, was that an important step for you..

G: Yes, a great big important step.

Q: Did you feel good about it?

G: Yes, we did feel good about it, we thought we belong.

Q: Then your mother came out a few years later as well?

G: Yes, my mother came out when she was 70 years of age.

Q: Did you feel then that your home was more complete.

G: Oh it was nice, it was really lovely to have her here with us.

Q: Did you have any problems getting her into the country?

G: No, we guarantee for her and she, no, we had no trouble.

Q: You've been here now 33 years, in that time your husband has passed away, your mother has also passed away and you're here mostly on your own, your son is working in Queensland, do you feel you're coping OK?

G: Well, yes I, in the meantime I'm 74 years of age now and yes, I get along. I have joined, playing lawn bowls for 24 years now and I belong to the bowling club and well I'm looking forwards for relaxation and mixing with the people.

Q: Most of your friends are from the bowling club?

G: Yes, all my friends, more or less, are in the bowling club.

Q: Are they good help, good company for you?

G: Yes, lovely friends. They help me a lot.

Q: Even though you're here on your own you still sense that this is the place where you belong?

G: Yes. Yes of course, here is where I belong, this is where my family is.

Q: OK, thank you very much.

G: You're welcome.

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Signed L. Nell

Date 14-9-1988

Interviewer Stephen Garz