

LH. You want to hear principally about the wild life, do you?

G. No, I'm principally interested in the caves and the history of the development of the caves. Would you tell me how you believe the caves were discovered?

LH. Well, you see Bowman was the first man, he had wild cattle there, cattle all over the place. They went as far out as Jindabyne (Bowman's wild cattle). He resided at Currango. I have an old Tumut paper somewhere where his daughter was born there, in 1840 I think. Of course there was no such thing as a midwife in those days. It was known as Currangorang, and he was telling my grandfather when he first discovered the caves. He was looking for cattle and he found them sheltering in the Arch there, and I've told the same story ever since.

G. Oh, I see, he told your grandfather this.

LH. He went into the cave with a candle, into the N..... Cave, and got his pit sight after a while, (this is at variance with the accepted story, that Bowman lived at Talbingo), with those huge stalactites looking down at him. There is another place, in Peru, where the same quick-formed stalactites are to be seen. They're formed out of the same matter and at the same rate of precipitation. You see very small crystals, I was telling a party from Victoria going along one night, and I was trying to put the wind up them. The electric light was not on in those days, but the path was all fenced in.

I said, Oh no, the cattle used to come and camp here. There was a fine kind of mist that was falling down. I says "we'd better have a stop" So we stopped and there when I lit the candles there was a big old roan bull. They all seemed to know where to go to the shelter. There was a lot of wallabies there in those days. There was time when we were there, there was no such thing as rock wallabies, but the rock wallabies were there until almost the time when we left, but the foxes are gradually wiping them out.

G. You say there were'nt any there when you first went there?

LH. Not rock wallabies. There were great wallabies, and the black wallaby. He was the swamp wallaby, and the other one was the scrub, a grey one, you might have seen them there, like kangaroos. Well, on the upper reaches of the limestone belt near the Copper Mine cave there are a lot of wallaroos. They're very much similar to the Kanga, very heavy and powerful. They'll give a dog a worse time than what a kangaroo, but the kangaroos up there, they're all brown and white scrub, there's no red Kanga, they only live on the plains those red Kangas.

G. This story of Bowman's has only been handed down, it hasn't been written anywhere or recorded?

LH. No, it's not been recorded here.

G. Do you know exactly what the date was? Can you be sure about it?

LH. I wouldn't be sure of the date. It was 1834 when he discovered that cave, and you'll

There was also evidence of the cave being discovered before then.

G. I see. That was in 1839, according to Trickett?

LH. It might have been.

G. Well, that's the date he gives here. That's what Murray there.

LH. Well, they took away a pack load of specimens in those days. They put in a day there exploring those two old caves, and it was the time the big controversy was existing between N.S.W and Victoria between the two main branches of the Murray. They maintain till this day the Murrumbidgee is the true branch and all this part of the Riverina would have been in Victoria. Murrumbidgee, you know, heads up from~~Notes~~ Point, only about 16 miles altogether from the caves up to the head of the Murrumbidgee and then a good heads on the other side.

G. And after the discovery I take it the caves were just opened. There was no control over them.

LH. No control till 1888, and Murray was the first caretaker. He had been living in and around that country for a long time and used to work for Gibbs. Gibbs was a man who had a big station down there at Billabong, out at the other side of Cootamundra, and had that country known as Yarrangobilly which had a rough and tumble wooden fence right from the head of the Murrumbidgee along the range right down overlooking Dodd's home. Yarrangobilly in those days was known Dodd's home in those days was known as South Yarrangobilly. That's where he had one of his headquarters, and then he had another one where his manager lived up at what we call Nickoneeda Flats, where you see peaks as you look to the north, there was a big swamp over there and that country was known as north Yarrangobilly, but all the country that ran into below the caves there all the fall, that was all known as the north paddock. There was a big wire fence about 6 feet high, what on earth they wanted to make it so high in that day for, just ordinary plain wires, ran in there, just that bend above the big cliff, you know that big cliff above the Castle Cave where the river takes a bend; well the fence ran in there, and that used to divide the north and the south paddocks. It ran right over across the old Dodd's home road, and then straight on past the country and down into the Tumut River up above where the dam's going now was the dividing fence. Well, Murray used to work for Gibbs, and he was appointed there as a caretaker. He'd been a sailor in the early days and he was a pit storer, he'd done a lot of pit storing, pit stored those logs for building and shooting sheds etc. He's been a man of great expectations. He drank a lot. He stopped everybody from writing names in the caves. He was appointed there on the Wilkinsons and the Bridles had their names everywhere in those caves .. Bridles, a place called Bridle's creek. They were the first to bring the bullock waggon down Guldinia, not the hill you see there now, it went in the Jindabyne Creek, about a mile up above where we stopped.

G. Were your family at the caves at this time?

LH. Oh no, my father, he got married in 1879 - 1880 and I was born 18 months after, in Tumut in 1881 (5.9.81 ?). My mother carried me on the saddle up to Kiandra where my father was, and another brother in law was building a post office.

G. And how did your father get involved in the caves?

LH. Well, we lived at Yarrangobilly. I went to school here (Tumut) till I was nearly 10. I was only 9 when I went to Yarrangobilly and he got on the land up there and he had been associated with his father who had done a lot of building here. He was the first man to build those bricks here, in the early days all the bricks was made with clay and straw. They used to get the grass trees and put in them and clay to bind them. The old blacksmith shop in front of where I was born was all made of Egyptian bricks and there was a place where my father was born has just been veneered, that was Egyptian bricks on the outside. You can't see where the old hospital was, they've pulled most of it down and are making a road through there now, round the Royal Hotel. You see there were big unsightly blocks in those days, like no-man's land in the centre. Everybody had their cow and their horse there to use up the grass.

G. When did your family move down here?

LH. We moved down in 1904 from the village to the caves, and Bradley was a very illiterate man, but his daughter used to do the work for him. We slipped in there when his father-in-law was killed. Murray was caretaker from 1887 - £75 a year he got, (Bradley says £35 (15 Oct 61)) and whatever he could make out of putting up guests. He sawed most of the timber in the first place for the first lot of little cottages that was down there. That was Murray, but they were locked up in 1888, the two Glory Caves. There was nothing much thought of them till Kerry came along. Kerry had heard there was a good cave there, but it hadn't been opened up, and as far as he knew nobody knew where it was. So he got in touch with Murray. Murray said he used to work for Gibbs in the early days. His son, Jack Gibbs, was stationed up here for about 2 years. He had a friend over from New Zealand who was suffering from T.B. He was an artist, and he painted all those cliffs in the early days. That was 1884. They found the Jersey Cave. Got the names of

Dickson and Jack Gibb close to where Lady Jersey's Shawl is, just in I found the names there when I was doing the wiring, written in 1884. I made enquiries, went down and saw Jack Gibb. He told me they found a lot of caves round about there. They did nothing else but explore caves in those early days. There's another good cave up by the Copper Mine cave. My mother was in there when she was only a child, Copper Mine cave, you go in way up a lot of and a creek, hundreds of yards then you get up in a top level cave. There's nothing else but shawls, she said. It was not as beautiful as the little cave, with all the draperies hanging down like sheets, but I never got into that cave because you had to have a ladder to climb up. You go into the Arch and a lot of people think that's the end of it. It's just a small hole in the top and you go in there, then go down again, and you get into this beautiful cave with all those shawls.

G. Is there a name for this cave?

LH. It's known as the Little Cave, it's all a beautiful arch just like a great railway tunnel.

G. Do you know Trickett's Cave?

LH. No.

G. Is Little Cave downstream from the Copper Mine up high on the hill?

LH. Yes, below Copper Mine, and when you leave the Copper Mine you go down and the river runs underneath; it's just like a big boat sitting on a lot of water. You see this big pool of water and all these holes in the side. They were known as the port holes, like portholes on a ship. Sometimes you'd get there in the afternoon and see the beautiful reflections on the ship. Well, when the river takes a turn and goes and runs into this clump of rocks high above the water, 150 ft. or more, there's this arch on the hill like a big railway tunnel. You go in some distance and think you can't go in any further, but you wind your way in through some cracks and there's a great stalagmite there. These are slow formed ones, about 20 ft. high, more like a symmetrical kind of thing, like the Jersey Cave, you know like

G. Do you know who discovered this Copper Mine Cave and the Little Cave?

LH. Yes, my uncle was the first to discover that, Jemmett, my mother's half brother, Joseph Jemmett, soon after the Kiandra diggings opened, because he also found copper there and of course he thought he was made. He had this great big sheet of copper in a rock, and he travelled down here to Tumut, only travelled at night, slept in the day in the bush, thought he was going to be robbed.

G. When was your mother born?

LH. In Victoria, can't place the date. 84 when she died in 1939 and father died in 1943.

G. Mr Jemmett found both Copper Mine and Little Cave?

LH. Yes, and there was no such thing as a wallaby to be seen in those early days, and no dingoes, when they first were there. I had an old photo I gave to the Historical Society of this. They took and pulled down the old pub which was run by Hobb and Bray - Wine & Spirit Merchants in Sydney - who were catering for a travelling public. Then there was another pub on the top side, run by Pat Lynch. Now they pulled the old place down Hobb & Bray had there - that's at the village, and they put it on the ground and that was the one I photographed. They had their bullock team there, and the road used to go past the front along the river, right up over the top of Fiery Mountain, and then down the Long Plain till it came to Rules Point and then on to Kiandra. That was the main road those days. Rules Point - man who had a lot of sheep there, he had them in a big yard protecting them from the dingoes. His name was Rhule. You'll probably find names in the Glory Cave and Old Bill Harris, no relation of those HARRISES that were at the Glory Hole. He had a lot of white horses out on the Boggy Plains and on the Swamp.

G. Can you tell me something of the HARRISES round the Glory Hole? They ran the farm there, didn't they?

LH. Yes, he was a butcher and he took a piece of land and he used to leave the cattle there or slaughter them there, or if it was covered with bad snow, drive them into Kiandra on top of the hard snow at night time them in Kiandra. He always had a fleet of pack horses, six pack horses when he was operating there. It was in the early eighties because I remember my father telling me when he had been doing the P.O. at Kiandra, we went down through Glory Hole to see the old Harrises down there - old Henry Harris.

G. Why was it called Glory Hole?

LH. It was a glorious place to be in. There was no snow there, nice little recess in there.

G. No connection with the cave?

LH. No, just a coincidence, and that's how the Glory Caves got their name, from that little settlement. That was the distinguishing name between the Yarrangobilly Caves, the Copper Mine and the Glory Hole. They got their name Glory Hole because it was close to Glory Hole.

G. Nothing to do with the hole in the roof?

LH. No, nothing.

G. I was told Glory Hole was a mine term referring to a shaft going up to the daylight.

LH. No, the Jersey Cave probably entered down through that hole. You see, that hole is an enormous big thing there, but that corresponding heap of rock inside would nearly compensate for the great big escarpment up above.

G. The Dunns ran the Glory Hole farm after the Harrises didn't they?

LH. No, there were no Dunns there. Harrises owned that farm right up to the time the Park Trust took it over from them.

G. I see.

LH. 3 Harrises and 2 children buried there close to where the old pine tree stood. That was the old grave yard.

G. Did they also grow crops and things for the Caves House?

LH. No, nothing for the Caves House at all. He used to grow potatoes and turnips down on the flat. It's all covered with gum trees now, and all that flat down to where the big fishing hole is at the end there, all his cultivation there, and where you see the cleared ground up around the house, they used to grow a bit of barley up there in winter. Then it would run to seed in the spring time, then it develops into oats.

G. You mentioned Jack Gibb in the Jersey Cave, but there's a story about the Marshall brothers discovering the Jersey Cave in 1861.

LH. Yes, they found the entrance hole there. Marshall, he was a teamster who used to go up to Kiandra to do a bit of hoarding in the summer time, also grazing for his bullocks. She was a blonde woman who used to play the accordion - she used to ride sidesaddle and drive the loose bullocks along.

G. They wouldn't have got over the drop.

LH. They never got any further than where you could look down into the hole. I excavated all that place. There used to be a ladder there come right up to the top and you had to crawl through to get onto the ladder.

G. What was the ladder made of?

LH. The ladder was made of steel. They had a little bit of a wooden ladder there before they got one made in Sydney.

G. Who put the wooden one in there originally - Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Kerry or?

LH. Oh, it was probably the Gibbs. I was up there, I could show you where you got in there under the organ pipes. See, I excavated all through there to make

G. The ladder wasn't there when Mr. Kerry went through, was it? He had to climb down a rope, didn't he?

LH. Yes, they went down on a rope and old Billy Dwyer, a chap who used to roam about down there, they called him the bushranger. Used to gather up other people's stock and take them away. It was a great place for thieving and thieving went right on up till we left there, people robbing the stock and taking them across the Murray there, get them over and across the border past Tumberumba. You could never trace them. My word, we had a lot of terrible trips was a terrible trip, and then there was the other people round way. Percy B. Clarke, he had the beasts - he was going to kill old Franklins in Police came along, fellas from the depot, and he says "Do you want to kill a beast?" "Yes, yes" he says, "I'm no good at shooting. If you can manage to shoot, you fellas, you have to learn to shoot before you can leave the depot, I understand." "So" he says, "You see that bullock there, well", he says "you take him, aim at his forehead". Well, of course they shot Franklin's beast. "Damnit," he says "you went and shot the wrong one. You'll have to let me skin him now," he says. "You should see those fellas go, trying to skin the beast." Franklins as far as I know, they got lost. I always said that Beatrice, I think she's a granddaughter - Tom was her grandfather. But why on earth the Franklins wanted to go through there, they wandered right through Bombala to the mountains there and got up to Federal Territory, and then went down there and through got into Brindabella and took up Brindabella country. "Well", she says, "They got lost, and the Franklins have all been lost ever since." She used to come to the caves there with parties, with people from the Federal Territory. She used to supply them with horses and she had a chap there that would pitch the tents. She used to drive the 4-wheel drive and carry all the cooking gear and everything along, up at the Head along the plain, then they'd come down through Rules Point. Then they'd go from there to the caves and see the caves. Sometimes they'd start some dances at the caves.

G. Do you ever take anyone out to the Coolamon caves?

LH. No, I've never been in the Coolamon Caves. I started to walk in there one day, and I was fishing there, and I got a big lump of stone, threw it in and it sounded as though it was never going to hit the bottom. I know the very well, very small caves. It's beautiful limestone there. I fished there a lot, used to ride over from Yarrangobilly, about 2½ hours to go over there.

G. Can you tell me something about guiding in the caves? Some experiences - you were there for many years.

LH. Oh yes, I done development work with all those steps in the caves, those cement ones, except in a few near the Lake Jersey skew-whiff. They would have been cleared out altogether now time didn't permit used to do those things in the winter time. I put 9 years hard work altogether in the Jersey Caves, and the wiring was all carried out under my supervision. They said "Oh, you can't do this and you can't do that." You might want to see some of those big caves where they've gone. One big cave goes out of sight from the transform and goes through a bit of the cave, a little place where no one can crawl through, and goes into the Queen's Chamber where the big stalactites are. Well, you couldn't get into that cave ½ ton weight. I said "We'll get in alright, because we'll wait till there's a few tourists in, we'll get them to take them in, I'll take the lead and I'll them a man at each awkward place to pass it on to the next one." We'd roll the cable right up the track, unroll it all till you've got them spaced about 10 to 15 feet apart. I said "Now every one of you people grab that cable and follow me".

G. When were the first electric lights installed in the caves, and in which caves?

LH. This was the first one.

You see that figure with the pair of legs there, there's three beautiful crystals like that one just behind that. I don't know whether you noticed them or not, did you? I was going to take those out, those pillars. You see that pillar with the pair of legs had been a complete column and had 6 or 8 inches broken out of it by earth movement and then when there is water running down a stalactite a column there will be more on one side than the other; that accounts for one leg being thicker than the other, you see?