

Cecil Piper

**Cecil Piper**

**Interviewed by Klaus Hueneke**

**28 June 1982**

*Transcribed by  
Heather Drury, 1993.*

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Side 1

Interview with Cecil Piper on his farm on the Goobarragandra River.

- KH: Now we've already written down where your parents were born. Both were born in Tumut, and your mother was born in 1877 and your father in 1868. Do you know when they got married? Any memories of the year?
- CP: The first child was born in 1901 - it would have been in 1900.
- KH: In the year of Federation!
- CP: Yes, in the year of Federation.
- KH: Do you know anything about their parents?
- CP: Yes. My mother's parents were Tom and Joanna French (nee Kylie?). They were both born in the Tumut district - I don't know what year they were married. They had a big family, and they had grazing property on Brungle Creek in the Tumut district, and their old home was called "Bullewi<sup>Bullawayarra</sup>arrow" - that's the name of it.
- KH: This is on your mother's side?
- CP: On my father's side, Grandfather was born in County Cork in Northern Ireland and m'Grandmother was born in Tumut. He was Samuel Piper and Grandmother's name was Amelia Lowther; and they had four children. They lived at Bombowlee Creek and the name of their property was "Dotswood". The first child, Alfred Piper, was born in '64. They selected the property in 1861. They hung on to that property right up until 1956. It had all been handed over to me after I came out of the Army in '45, and I lost the lot - it's all gone. None of it left. M'father was essentially a stockman/drover/horsebreaker and finally station manager at Goobarragandra Station.
- KH: Did your parents have very much education? More than you, or less than you?
- CP: My mother had a reasonable education. She went to school at a Public School at Brungle Creek close to where she was born. My father went to a night school at Bombowlee Creek. They were all grown up young men and women, and the only way they could get schooling was to band together, and the parents paid a tutor, and they went to school at night because they had to work in the day-time. That was the only education my father had, along with his brothers and his sister.

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- KH: And your father was mainly - well initially, he would have been a stockman, and then worked his way up to be a station manager, did he?
- CP: Well, he worked his way up to be a station manager and he was station manager for 30 years at Goobarragandra, with two different owners. The first owner was a man, Armitage. He owned Bongalong Station in the Cootamundra/Muttamurra district, and the father managed the station for him for 4 years, and it was sold to Mr W.W. Killen of Merreby Pastoral Co. in the Riverina. Mr Killen later became a Member of the Legislative Assembly.
- KH: When you were talking about your mother's background, she was a French, is that right? Was she related to the Dan French that we may have talked about before with regard to the mountains and gold mining?
- CP: Yes, she was his sister.
- KH: Oh right. I didn't make that connection before.
- CP: Yes, we didn't mention her before, I don't suppose.
- KH: Well, you may have in passing. And your mother, did she work before she was married?
- CP: No - no, she didn't work. As I said there, she was a domestic, if anything, she was a domestic at home. She never went out to work anywhere.
- KH: She never worked in a shop in Tumut or anywhere?
- CP: No - never worked away from home at all until she was married.
- KH: So it was much more common practice for girls to stay at home until they got married?
- CP: Stay at home, and be strictly watched and looked after.
- KH: So they'd be at home, and then they'd find a bloke, or a bloke would find them, and then they'd go into another home?
- CP: They'd go straight into another home. Yes. The first home that my father and mother had on Bellevue was constructed of all timber, except the roof. The roof was galvanised iron, but the whole of the rest of the house came off the property, stringy bark timber, stringy bark split slabs, and round timber adzed square, for a floor.
- KH: Oh, right. I've seen that at the Fin Mines. I think I saw some benches done like that, and some sleeping platforms.
- CP: Yes, that's what the floor was like.
- KH: And you had four brothers and sisters?
- CP: Just the two sisters and a brother.
- KH: So there were four of you altogether, two boys and two girls? And would they have all been born in Tumut?

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- CP: Yes, we were all born in the house on the property.
- KH: On Bellevue?
- CP: Yes, we were all born there, and the midwife - I think that's the word - was Mary Ann Piper, an Aunt, who delivered the four of us at home. And that went possibly for my father and many, many others that lived in the Tumut area, and not only the Tumut area, but all parts of Australia at that period of time.
- KH: Were you all born close together, or were you spread out?
- CP: No. The oldest one was born in 1901, the second one in 1903, the third one -
- KH: You would have been the third, wouldn't you?
- CP: I would have been the third one, on 30 May, 1905, and the fourth one, the other boy, on 8 July, 1908. So we were all close together.
- KH: All over seven years - four children in seven years - a year and a half to two years between you.
- CP: About a year and a half. The first two, there was one year between them.
- KH: Can you just tell me just a little bit about your brothers and sisters? Any outstanding sort of characteristics?
- CP: Well, the oldest sister is still alive. She was a governess on Cooinbill Station in the Riverina when she was 18 years of age. She came back after two years and taught the subsidised school at Goobarrangandra, where she was one of the first pupils. Then she went to Burrangong District Hospital at Young and trained for a nurse and became a nursing sister. She was married; her husband is deceased. She has one son. The second child, Nora Alice Piper, she was born in 1903 and passed away in 1908. And I was born the next one, and I'm still alive - only just, perhaps. And the other brother, then he was born in 1908 and he passed away on 14 August, 1936, at Bombowlee, on the property where he was born.
- KH: How did he die?
- CP: Accidentally shot -
- KH: What, while rabbit shooting or something?
- CP: Possibly either rabbit or fox shooting, possibly it was rabbit shooting. Late in the afternoon he went to shoot a rabbit or something for his dogs. He was there with his Uncle Alfred Piper, and he was accidentally shot getting through a fence.
- KH: Oh, the old story -
- CP: Getting through a fence, or getting <sup>over</sup> the fence.
- KH: Did he accidentally shoot himself?
- CP: Yes, He was a big man, 6 ft 1 inch, and he always carried a rifle

CP: (cont.) or a gun in his right hand like as if it was a walking stick.

KH: With barrel upwards?

CP: And getting over the fence, according to the reading of the tracks and the signs and the marks, he used the gun as a safety measure to get over the fence and hit the hammer on the rail.

KH: The other guy, wasn't with him at that moment?

CP: No one with him. On his own. He was found dead the next morning at daylight by Henry Stokes and William Piper, a cousin who lived not far away.

KH: And what was the story with an older sister? You were the third. She was the second. She died when she was 5.

CP: Yes - she was born in '03 and died in '08 - that's right. She was 5 years old.

KH: Just a moment ago you were saying ---

CP: I can remember her as plain as if she was sitting there now on the chair. We had a photo of her for a long, long number of years, in little toddler clothes and I think that is what's helped me always to remember her. We had that little photo of her. She's buried in the old cemetery in Tumut, now known as the Pioneers' Lawn Cemetery.

KH: What did she die from?

CP: Diphtheria. It was a very, very prevalent thing, diphtheria, and people lived a long way from doctors or hospitals, and the only transport, of course, was horse-drawn vehicles, horseback, or bullocks - in our case we had a horse and sulky.

KH: So, it was very difficult to get to any hospital, even if there was medication available?

CP: Medical attention was pretty scanty, and possibly - possibly men-folk away from the home and children would be sick and their father may be droving, or away breaking in horses, or anywhere at all that might keep him away from the home for days at a time. And no telephones, of course, no wireless, no means of conveyance, except a horse and sulky, or you could ride on horseback. Lots of the old hands just had a pair of bullocks and a cart.

KH: So - in terms of education, you all went to the same school, the subsidised school on the property, and you all had between 7 and 9 years of schooling?

CP: It was opened in - 1911, and it closed in 1921, they were the years.

KH: So your oldest sister didn't get any schooling until she was 10 or 11?

VP: Oh, she went to school at Bombowlee before we came to Goobarragandra.

KH: Oh, I see.

CP: My brother and I, we started school at Goobarragandra. I left when I was 13 years of age and my brother finished his education at the Public School at Lac\_malac, 9 miles from Goobarragandra.

KH: Why did you have this conflict with your teacher? Why did you have this blue?

CP: I don't think I can tell you. I couldn't tell you. - I mightn't be able to remember that.

KH: Oh, I see -

CP: I got a very severe caning with a big quince stick from our old school teacher Mrs Lindsay, and I went home - in fact I didn't go home. She told me to go home. And I went home, and my father told me to go back to school the next morning, and I said, I'm not going back to school at all! And he didn't press the point. And so I left school when I was 13 years and 3 months of age.

KH: You seem to have done very well since. You must have done a lot of reading along the way.

CP: I suppose I did. I read everything I could get m'hands on up till the time I was 30. I haven't had time since, to read. Except now - I'll read from now on, while I'm here.

KH: And what's your brother - your older sister became a nurse. What about your brother? What did he do before he died?

CP: He was a stockman/horse breaker, and very, very noted buckjump rider, one of the best that was ever seen in the Tumut district, or in any other district of New South Wales - a noted buck jumper.

KH: So in those days, being a horse breaker could be a full-time profession?

CP: It was - it was that. It was a specialist's job.

KH: He'd go from property to property, breaking in horses?

CP: Yes, breaking in horses. Up until 1930 we got £1 a head, and from 1930 on we got £2 a head to break in horses to the saddle and the brother and I, before he died, we had a breaking-in *Sulky*, a breaking-in gig they called it, and we'd break in a horse to saddle and harness for £3 a head, the whole job for £3, and £2 to break it into the saddle. My brother and I, we broke in horses prior to 1925 for Blowering Station, a Mr James Armstrong, a North of Irlander, for \$1 a head. We broke in

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CP: (cont.) 30 horses. We would ride to Blowering Station, catch the young horse, one each, and lead them back through the mountains to Goobarragandra Station, finish them off - break them in - and lead them back, or ride them back to Blowering Station, and he paid us one miserable pound a head. My brother was 14 and I was 17 when we finished them.

KH: How many did you do?

CP: 30 - we got £30 for the best part of 6 months work, between us. Everything was very, very hard. I suppose things were cheaper, of course, but when you look back now and think we got £30 for 6 months work, more or less -

KH: Two of you - £15 each. And was he married, your brother?

CP: No.

KH: He didn't get married? Was there a tendency to live at home for a long time then?

CP: I think there was - to stick home, if you could get anything at all. In the case of my brother and I, from the time we could carry them, we set rabbit traps and caught rabbits. And we got to become, like many, many other thousands of Australians, professional trappers, and during the winter months you could make very good money. And of course, on Goobarragandra Station there was 20,000 acres and 20 million rabbits, possibly.

KH: That was the worst time, of course, wasn't it? When you were a teenager Australia was swarming with rabbits, wasn't it?

CP: The 1914 drought, that was the year that W.W. Killen bought Goobarragandra Station, 1914, one of the worst droughts in the history of Australia. The rabbits were so thick, my brother and I had a piece of broom handle each, about 3 feet long, and we could run and chase and we could pick them up by hand, they were so miserable and so thick, and we could knock them over with the broom handle stick, as many as we liked, the whole day long. You got sick of looking at rabbits and chasing rabbits.

KH: And how much did you get for a skin?

CP: Oh those? We didn't get anything. It was the middle of summer. We didn't even skin them. We'd heap them up and they were burnt.

KH: What, because the pelts weren't worth much?

CP: No, they weren't worth much. They would be worth possibly about 11 pence a pound in the summer. In the winter months they would be worth about 2 shillings a pound.

KH: That must have gone up considerably, because I think Leo Russell was telling me, but that would have been later on, I think, during

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KH: (cont.) the Depression, after that time, they went up to more than that. I think they were 7 or 8 shillings each. I can't remember exactly.

CP: 1928 - I was home on holidays from the Kidman country in the corner of New South Wales, and that winter a neighbour and I, between us, both quite young fellows, we got up to 5 shillings a pound, in 1928. Today they are worth something like 2 shillings in old currency per rabbit per skin.

KH: How about foxes? Did you ever go for foxes?

CP: We used to catch foxes in the traps, in the rabbit traps.

KH: 'Cause the foxes pelts are very valuable now, you know, the foxes pelts. They're very sought after.

CP: At that time that I speak of, up until I was 20 years of age, we'd get 10, 11, 12, up to 15 shillings for a fox skin. That was the top price. It would have to be a very good fox. We trapped them because we were not allowed to use firearms until - the first firearm that I had, I was 16 years of age and had to get a licence from the Police Department to have the gun. I shot a lot of foxes with that over a period of years. But up until that time we were not allowed to have firearms.

KH: On a different topic. Did your father or any of your uncles fight in the first World War?

CP: No, none of them in the first World War.

KH: So the War didn't really affect your family directly?

CP: No, it didn't. We were at Goobarragandra Station for the full duration of that War, and, as I say, I had started work when I was 13. I went droving with my uncle when I was 13 years of age -

KH: That was 1918 - the end of the War.

CP: Yes, 1918, the end of the War, and I came back, of course, to Goobarragandra and then I was given work on the Station at £1 a week. A £1 a week was the first job I had, apart from that little droving trip in the first place.

KH: And there would have been other people in the Tumut district, young blokes older than you, who went off to the War in 1915, I suppose?

CP: In 1915 one of the pupils from the old Goobarragandra School, Frederick Tutty, who was reared on the river here, he enlisted when he was 15 years of age - he was born in 1900 - and on top of that there were - another boy who went to school with us, Norman Patton, a local boy, and 3 McNamara boys. They were all pupils of the old school at Goobarragandra. They all went to the War.

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- CP: (cont.) All came back except one, Harry McNamara, out of that batch. Harry McNamara was the only one that didn't return.
- KH: Did any of them fight the Turks?
- CP: I don't think they were at Gallipoli. I think they were mainly at France, in the great battles in France is where they fought.
- KH: Did you talk about the war very much in your family at home?
- CP: Yes - the war was a nightmare, a terrifying thing, I think, to all people, both children and adults. I think it was a terrifying thing. And we were rationed - you could only get a certain amount of sugar, a certain amount of flour, tea, all the necessities of life. We were rationed strictly, and naturally the war was very much in everybody's mind. The rationing was, if anything, more severe than it was in the second World War. We were isolated greatly, of course. We had no telephone that we could get first-hand news of the war. We had no wireless - there was no wireless to be had - it was unheard of in those days. The first wireless I ever heard was in 1931 when I was well up in years.
- KH: Gee, eh, 26.
- CP: I was working on Bootra Station. it was a Sir Sydney Kidman owned station out there at Milparinka, and the Manager rented a wireless from Broken Hill so he could listen to the cricket. And of course it was a very great novelty in that way out-back station in 1931.
- KH: And during the Depression, did your father continue to work on the property? Did he have work all the time?
- CP: Yes, he was never put off. His pay cheque came along right through. He retired in 1939.
- KH: So you really didn't feel the Depression so much?
- CP: Well, I did.
- KH: You did, yourself?
- CP: I was out there, in the Tibooburra district. I went to work on Urisino Station from February 1925. Thus I severed my contact with Goobarragandra for a long period of years, except when I came home for holidays. And I worked as a stockman for Sid Sydney Kidman for the best part of 10 years, except for the holidays when I came home. And I worked myself up to become overseer on Bootra Station in May 1926, 14 May 1926 I signed on as overseer and I was given £6 a week and board and lodgings, everything supplied. It was a fortune, absolute fortune. I had worked previously around the cattle camps and on the same Kidman stations for £2.18.0 a week. So, I was very lucky. it was like being crowned King, at my age. I was 21 years of age. And then, when the Depression came, I left

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- CP: (cont.) my overseer's job, foolishly, in December 1927. I came home, and went back again, and I was put on to work on the same Kidman station for £3 a week. That was the Depression. I had to sign a statement to say that I didn't have a Union ticket before I could get that job. Many staunch Union men burnt their ticket and got a job, and many of them didn't. They humped their swag for 3 and 4 and 5 years without a job because they wouldn't burn their Union ticket.
- KH: Which Union was this?
- CP: Australian Workers Union.
- KH: Gee, very proud - come hell or high water?
- CP: Yes, my word. No - they wouldn't part with them. But lots of them did. If a man had any sense he would have burnt it because he could get another one. I burnt mine, anyway.
- KH: Oh, I see. You belonged and then you burnt it?
- CP: I was starving.
- KH: Oh, I see. Your stomach becomes more important than anything else, I suppose.
- CP: I got off the train at Bourke and I went back in 1928 and I carried m'swag from Bourke to Tibooburra - that's something like 200 miles - 250 miles, and in m'swag that I carried was a saddle - I wouldn't part with m'saddle. I had a lovely little light pony saddle manufactured by Blakeney & Murphy, saddlers in Wynyard St, Tumut, at that time, and I was very lucky. The people that I had worked for as overseer heard that I was there and humping m'swag and I was put back on the wages list at £3 a week.
- KH: That's half of what you were getting before.
- CP: Half of what I was getting.
- KH: With regard to schooling, I was going to ask, did you have any sort of pre-school or kindergarten as we know it?
- CP: No.
- KH: Do you remember any other outstanding things about your schooling there, I mean apart from when you had your difficulty, or whatever it was, with your teacher and you finally left.
- CP: There was always about 12 of us, 12 children at the school - the greatest number was 18. We played "rounders", as we called it, a peculiar game, but it was well known all over Australia, in small schools especially, where there was a limited number of pupils. And we also played hopscotch -
- KH: The boys did this too? Hopscotch wasn't confined to the girls?
- CP: No, the boys did it too. There wasn't enough girls to go round. The boys did it. Apart from that I don't know of any other games

CP: (cont.) that we played at school at all. And, of course, the minute we left school we were off to set our traps, one and all, all the boys.

KH: Who looked after you during the day before you went to school? Did you just sort of hang around Mummy's skirts, or -?

CP: yes - I was 6 when I started.

KH: Because Mother would have been home all the time?

CP: Yes, home all the time.

KH: And Dad was away out on the farm or doing odd jobs and so on?

CP: Mother would never leave the house. My Mother stayed at Goobarragandra for the 29 years and she would go to Tumut three times in every year. That was the only time she would leave that property. She would go to Tumut three times a year. Dad would go to town quite frequently, maybe every fortnight/three weeks - drive his horse and sulky to town, and of course, bring home all the necessities, food and kerosene for our lamps - no electricity in those days, of course. I've seen my Mother sit at night with a cardboard shade over the top of an ordinary upright kerosene lamp, after she'd finished her full day's work and washed up at night, and read till 12 o'clock, with the aid of that kerosene lamp.

KH: Yes? What sort of things would she read?

CP: Mainly books, mainly books. She never left the homestead. She never went away. She had no entertainment of any sort whatsoever. We had a piano from 1915 and she used to play the piano occasionally. She was a good piano player.

KH: And the three times that she went into Tumut a year - that was mainly for shopping, was it?

CP: Just for shopping - clothing - clothing for herself and us youngsters. Apart from that - she'd drive to town in the sulky. For a long time Dad drove her to town the three times a year, and in later life, when my brother and I and m'sister got older, we drove and took her to town. I suppose in the 30 years they were at Goobarragandra they would have gone through about ten different sulky horses.

KH: So - do you remember anything in particular about school?

CP: Yes. The first school teacher we had, she was Miss Nellie O'Keefe of Wyangle Station. Wyangle Station was adjacent to our old Bellevue home at Bombowlee, and my brother was only three years of age, and he went down to the school. He shouldn't have been, of course, and the teacher apparently got annoyed with him, and she got him by the arm and pulled him and pushed him out through the school door, and in doing so, she pulled his collarbone out -

CP: (cont.) broke his collarbone, or pulled his shoulder out of joint. And of course, he was in great distress, and only being three years of age he couldn't talk too much about what it was. He didn't know what it was, and nobody else knew what it was. But finally Mum and Dad decided that his collarbone was broken. And by some miraculous stroke of luck, or something, there was a doctor staying at a homestead a mile from the Station, on the opposite side of the river, belonging to a German couple named Henkel. He was staying with them, and they went down and got him, and he came and put the arm back to where it should be and strapped his arm to his body, and it was to stay there for six weeks. When the bandage - when the thing came off, his arm was stuck to his stomach -

KH: Oh dear! It had grown there?

CP: It had grown there. They had to have a doctor again, and this time, of course, to Tumut, to a Dr Mason, and I don't know how they did it, or what they did, but he had a sore tummy and a sore arm for about three months after the original six weeks.

KH: So they never took his arm -

CP: They never took it out. The doctor told them, leave it there -

KH: And he would have had some trouble getting it there under his clothes, all bandaged up?

CP: Straight on to his tummy and bandaged up. 'Cause, it was a well-known fact, and something I never forgot and I won't ever forget until the day I die, the agony he went through while - before the bandage came off, because the bandage came loose and dirty, of course, and he used to move his arm and he'd scream. No one then woke up to it. I don't know how Dr Mason -

KH: But he must have had a wash and things. They would have seen -

CP: They'd wash his body, sponge him all round. I suppose they'd sit him in the tub up to his navel, and then sponge him all round and wash him. It was growing to his stomach - and he was only three years old.

KH: Well, tissue does that, doesn't it? That's awful.

CP: It'll take over. Especially being so young and tender. An older person, it may not so quick. But, there it was, and I don't know whether it ever happened to anyone else in this country, or this world, or not, but it happened to him. He always had a scar. There was no mark on his arm. His arm was right. But he always had a scar across the lower part of his tummy and up on to his chest.

KH: And was his shoulder all right after all that?

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- CP: The shoulder was right. He used to fight like murder. His shoulder was right.
- KH: Did the school follow a particular religion, or anything like that? Or was it just a general education?
- CP: A general education. No religion. We had children of different religions - we had Catholics and we had Protestants. We had Church of England. We used to have a Scripture lesson - that was the only religion I can remember. We had a Scripture lesson. I don't know exactly what that consisted of, but the teacher read out of a book and it was something to do with religion.
- KH: One of the stories out of the Bible probably?
- CP: Yes, it could have been. It was a little book. I remember it was a little book for Scripture.
- KH: It was a subsidised school. So it was subsidised by the New South Wales Government, was it?
- CP: Yes, subsidised by the Government, and I suppose possibly some of the other parents contributed to the salary of the teacher, but we folk *boarded* the teacher on every occasion. We had a number of teachers, eight different teachers over that period of twelve years, and without exception, they boarded with us at the Station. So, I assume that the teacher paid no board, because the salary would be very, very small, and in the later stages it was very hard to get a teacher because -
- KH: Too isolated, and things like that?
- CP: Too isolated - too rough - too rough. One teacher, I can't think of her name, when she applied for the job, she wanted to know what music there was in the home where she would be living. And there was no music, of course. There was no piano at that time. So my father went to town and he bought a big gramophone, a beauty. And he brought it home, and nothing must do him but to set it up on the table about one o'clock in the morning and start it going. And my brother and I heard this commotion - and we'd never heard anything like it in our lives. I can remember it very plainly. We both got up and we got the door of the bedroom slightly ajar and we were watching him playing this gramophone. Cylindrical -
- KH: Yes, the old cylinders. Yes -
- CP: That was the only music that was in that house.
- KH: Well, that would have been quite an event, wouldn't it?
- CP: Oh yes. Oh, that was terrific. We had it for many years. I think - I think about 1935 it was taken to Tumut. It had a broken spring. It was taken to Tumut to a man named Gordon that had a furniture

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- CP: (cont.) secondhand shop and furniture factory, and he was a bit of a mechanic of some sort. And we left it with him. And when we went to collect it, it was nowhere to be seen. All we had was the funnel and the records, and no machine. He said he didn't know what became of it, so that's all we could do. He didn't know what became of it, and neither did we.
- KH: That would have been quite a valuable thing at the time. It would have been quite expensive, wouldn't it, in comparison to other things?
- CP: Well, I daresay it was. But in the back of m'mind, whether it's right or not, it was £16 for the machine, the great big funnel, the amplifier and a dozen records. I could be wrong. But today, the same machine - there's one in the Museum at Cooma. And I went in there and was standing looking at it, and the curator of the Museum, he came and stood looking at me for a while, and he said, "Did you think you'd buy it?" I said, "Yes, I might." I had no intention. And he said "You'd never have enough money to buy that." So I suppose it's worth thousands of dollars. - Incidentally, I've got one!
- KH: I see!
- CP: It's here, in this old house, and a hundred records with it. It's worth a fortune.
- KH: In good condition?
- CP: Yes. The oldest records in the world, like way back. And it's a two minute one. The one we had was four minutes. This one's a two minute one, built many years before the one we had. But at the moment I'm short of a funnel. The funnel got lost somewhere or other.
- KH: What about discipline? Were the teachers at the school pretty strict?
- CP: Yes, they were very strict, very strict teachers. But as I remember, as I remember, as I look back, they had the job before them, because some of the children were well up, some were down, 5 and 6 years old, 6 years old, and some of them were 16. Oh, they had their work cut out. And that school that my father went to, the night school, at Bombowlee, I don't know how they taught them anything in the night, because the teachers had a job to teach us anything in the daytime.

(End of Tape 1, Side 1)

Cecil Piper

Cecil Piper

Interviewed by Klaus Hueneke

28 June 1982

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Side 2

Interview with Cecil Piper on his farm on the Goobarragandra River.

KH: But you would have been pretty isolated though from the outside world, especially your mother, and the children too, by the sound of it, with you up the top of this valley. It would have been a very primitive track back down to Tumut.

CP: It was the worst road in Australia, the worst road in Australia. And we had a much heavier average rainfall then than we do now. The rainfall in years after 1915 - I haven't got the record prior to 1915 - but I've got them from 1915 to 1924, and there was as much as 80 inches fell, and quite often 40 inches and up to 60 and 80 inches fell in the period between 1915 to 1924.

KH: Yeah? What is it now?

CP: About 30, and scratching to get 30. Yeah, almost back to at least a third, and they say the average rainfall at Tumut is 32 inches and we scratch to get 30. Last year we got it - last year we got it. This Goobarragandra River would be a raging torrent the whole of the winter for 6 months of the year. If you got across it you were very lucky, on horseback. You were very lucky to be able to do it at any time during the winter.

KH: All the other children that you went to school with all came from surrounding properties or Goobarragandra itself?

CP: Well yes, all in the Goobarragandra Valley. Yes. 18 I think was our biggest total.

KH: And some of them would come to school on horseback, wouldn't they?

CP: They'd ride and walk. The longest distance was 2 miles, and with the exception of the youngest one of that family, the rest of them walked to school. The youngest one had a pony; when she finished her school days she had a pony. She used to ride to school. The rest of them walked.

KH: Did you have any particular mates that you remember?

CP: Yes - yes - I had a mate, a little bit older than m'self - Cribb, Freddie Cribb. He's a descendant of this family that owned this place, Cribbs. But he had sisters and brothers. But he and I were roughly the same age, and my sister and Florence Cribb, one of the same family, they were pretty good pals - they palled up, they palled up.

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KH: Were there any children that you weren't allowed to play with?

CP: Oh no, it was all in.

KH: You mucked in together?

CP: No, no - there was no snobs amongst us - no clique -

KH: But as far as you were concerned, you were very close to the school? You were just over the hill?

CP: Yes, we had a hundred yards to go, built on the creek, 100 yards from the homestead.

KH: Do you remember any particular subjects that you favoured over others?

CP: The only thing I was any good at was Old English History and Dictation. I could - I done well at Dictation and Old English History - I could learn it like poetry.

KH: Ancient History?

CP: Ancient History, old stuff. I could learn it that way.

KH: Do you remember any of the text books that you used?

CP: Oh, readers they called 'em. We had 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th - just readers.

KH: And the teachers brought them with them, did they?

CP: No, they must have got those from the Department, from the Education Department because they were all - Oh no, they must have come - we had drawing books, copy books. I think most of that stuff must have been supplied by the Education Department - I wouldn't be sure of it.

KH: Were there particular teachers that you really liked? I mean, you might have had, what, 4 or 5 teachers when you were going to school?

CP: Yes, I had about 4 or 5.

KH: Did you feel you responded to one or two of them more than the others?

CP: One teacher, the one that gave me the flogging, was an old lady, Mrs Shadwell - I didn't get on with her at all, right from the start. But a Miss Kendall, a little, young woman, Miss Kendall, I was very fond of her, and whatever she told me to do I'd do. She was the 2nd teacher, the 2nd teacher. Then Mrs Shadwell came, and then a cousin of mine - she was the last one that taught me, a cousin of mine, in 1918. But only one teacher I got along with real well, and that was Miss Kendall.

KH: How long was she there?

CP: Oh, she was there about 18 months. Only a young woman. She had a rough time too. She wasn't as big as some of the girls, and she wasn't much older. One girl, her name was Frank, Norma Frank,



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- CP: (cont.) she was the oldest girl in the school, and the little teacher gave her the cane one morning, or attempted to give her the cane. And the girl took the cane from her and broke it up and threw it out the door. So much for her punishment.
- KH: Yes. - Would you have had Empire Day? Did that go back further than your childhood?
- CP: Yes, we had Empire Day - oh yes, all hell's own trouble. Yes, we had fires and crackers. We had a bonfire - we used to have a school bonfire.
- KH: And you got hold of crackers as well, did you?
- CP: We got crackers - we got crackers -
- KH: Would your father have gone into town to get the crackers?
- CP: I assume that he would <sup>have bought them.</sup> He was very wrapped up in Empire Day - I don't know why. And he had a 32 Winchester Repeating Rifle, and in the midst of the fireworks, and when everybody's attention was off him, he'd load the rifle and fire 5 or 6 shots and make a little bit extra noise. My son has still got the rifle, an antique, of course.
- KH: Did you like Empire Day?
- CP: Oh yes, I was fond of Empire Day. I couldn't get enough crackers to let off.
- KH: Sounds like my daughters.
- CP: They're all the same.
- KH: Oh yes - I buy two big bags, but <sup>it's</sup> still not enough.
- CP: Oh yes - children all love crackers - noise - commotion. I suppose it's still just as popular.
- KH: Did anyone get injured on Bonfire Night?
- CP: I don't ever remember any accident - no. My mother would be there and a lady, Mrs Cribb, the mother of the boy Freddie, she'd be there. She was a big robust lady with a very severe look on her, and she seemed to have her eyes everywhere at once. So there was no accidents - not that I remember, anyway.
- KH: And the cane which was given - was it given very often?
- CP: Yes, they'd lambaste you at the least excuse. I don't know whether - we may have been a lot of bad kiddies perhaps, or something, but we seemed to get more than what I thought would be a reasonable share of the cane.
- KH: What sort of things did you get the cane for?
- CP: Oh, the same things as all kids get the cane for, I think.
- KH: Like not being quiet?
- CP: Too much yap. And another thing - we all had a great habit, as far as I can see, of going outside. At the least excuse, we'd

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- CP: (cont.) go outside. We wanted to go outside. We had to go outside.
- KH: That was probably to get out of school.
- CP: To get out of school learning lessons. The school - it was built by my father and the men working on the Station. It was just green timber and galvanised iron walls and roof - flat roof. It had a fireplace in it. I remember one particular incident in relation to the school. We, somehow or other, the boys caught a wombat, an old wombat, and this boy Freddie Cribb skinned him, and he was used as a mat for the teacher - a fur mat for the teacher. Pegged out. He was hard as a piece of board. And the Chinaman wool merchants used to come round with their buggy and horses and buy sheep skins and wool and rabbit skins and fox skins and anything at all that you could sell them. And they'd invariably camp at the Station, their horse in the horse paddock and their vehicle away somewhere. So we decided, these boys and myself, a boy named Alan McNamara, that we'd sell the Chinaman the wombat skin. So we go down to the Chinaman and we tried all roads to get him to buy the wombat skin. <sup>He's</sup> sitting up on the top of his buggy, cutting plug tobacco with his <sup>horne</sup> hawk. I never forgot him. He wouldn't buy it. So I walked round, and the back of his van was open, and I threw the wombat skin at him and hit him in the back with it. And he came off the seat of the buggy with the tomahawk in his hand like a streak of lightning - and of course, we weren't there - we were gone. So we had to retrieve the wombat skin and it went back to the school.
- KH: So the floor of the school was dirt, was it?
- CP: No, it was a wooden floor, a board floor - a flat roof -
- KH: Couple of windows?
- CP: Yes - it had one window anyway - a door and a fireplace. Only had one window.
- KH: Very simple. And a few benches for sitting on? Any desks?
- CP: Oh, we had desks, we had desks and stools. We had proper inkwells, so we had proper desks. We had proper inkwells.
- KH: And the whole thing was big enough for up to a dozen pupils?
- CP: A dozen. We had up to 18. It had to be extended. It was built in 1911 and then at some period between then and 1922 it was extended. There was a bit more put on to it for some reason - so another family either arrived or grew up, and it had to be extended.
- KH: So, apart from your English History and Dictation, you would have had - what? Arithmetic and -

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CP: Yes, we had Arithmetic -

KH: Geography?

CP: Yes, Geography, History, Transcription -

KH: Science, or anything like that?

CP: No -

KH: No Science, no Chemistry, no Physics -

CP: No - no Music -

KH: No Music, no Art -

CP: No. We used to draw - we'd draw. We had a drawing book, a big drawing book. I don't know what we drew. I suppose we used chalk, maybe crayons, possibly - I'm not sure about crayons, but we'd draw with chalk - we must have had coloured chalks, I think, coloured chalks. Some of the bigger ones might have had black ink, maybe.

KH: Did you have Botany, or Biology, or anything like that?

CP: Yes, I think we might have had Botany - yes, we did have Botany. We had violets and -

KH: Yes, you'd draw little flowers and leaf shapes and things like that perhaps -

CP: We'd collect flowers and bring them and press them and press them in books and so forth. Yes, we had Botany. We'd draw a flower and then we'd go and find it in the bush. And we'd bring it next day and we'd press that flower in our book wherever our drawing was. That was - yes, we had Botany.

KH: Did you ever - was smoking a big thing when you were at school? Was it tough? Was it the done thing to be smoking, or was there no access to cigarettes then?

CP: Oh no, no. I don't think smoking ever came into that. That tobacco would have been prohibited at the homes of all those children because there wouldn't be any money to buy it, and they had no pocket money. There was no such thing as pocket money. We'd get to the Tumut Show. There'd be the only one outing we'd get to for the full 12 months - one outing, and we'd probably have 2 shillings - that'd be all we'd have.

KH: When you were punished with the cane, did you tell your parents afterwards?

CP: Oh yes, I went straight home. I can remember very vividly - I remembered for a long time. I went straight home and told Mum what had happened, and she asked me straight out what had happened, and I wouldn't tell her. And then she said, Well, I'll find out, because I'll ask the teacher when she comes up.

KH: Yes. 'Cause she's living in your house, isn't she?

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CP: Yes, in the house. You go back to school, she says, go back to school. I wasn't game to go back to school. The old girl told me to go. I went out and I sat on the woodheap and I knew when the old chap come home, I thought that he'd skin me alive. I was sitting on the woodheap, and of course, school was out. All the other kids were home, and I wasn't game to go back inside because Mum had told me to go back to school. When he come home, he went straight in. He didn't look at me. And he was told what had happened, and he come out. And he asked me what happened, what I did, and I told him what I did. It wasn't a very nice thing. And he said, Well, you've got to go back to school in the morning. I said, Well, the teacher told me to leave school, and she told me she hated me. And he said, Only just because she was wild, he said, and she should be wild, he said. I ought to flog you m'self, I should. And I thought he would. And he didn't. And the next morning I got up, and everybody got up, and my sister and brother went to school, and I went out and sat on the woodheap again. And he just come out and looked at me and said, Catch your pony - catch your horse. And I went and caught m'pony. I knew I was right. And away we went, away we went riding. And he told me never to repeat the offence anywhere in the world or in Australia. And of course I knew all about that. Anyways, right from then on I was his sort of dog - I followed him about every day on horse. I had done it previously. I had ridden - been riding for years.

KH: Oh, this was when you were actually dismissed from the school? Oh, this was when you were 13. Oh, I see. Was that the only time that you were caned?

CP: No, no. I was flogged. They used to flog you over the back, over the rump and over the back. You lean over and they whack you over the shoulders, down the back, anywhere - hit you anywhere at all - a big quince stick, too. As thick as that poker and all.

KH: Oh - it wasn't across the fingers?

CP: No, no. None of our pupils would hold their hands out.

KH: They had to turn over -

CP: The girl Frank put her hand out, and when the teacher hit her on the hand she grabbed the cane and broke it up and threw it out the door, straight through. I've seen m'brother get my cane. I've seen my brother put his hand out when he was very young. I've seen him get the cane. Mrs Shadwell, the same one that walopped me, I've seen her cane him too, on the fingers - they'd be almost broken, you know. If you hit a kiddie on the fingers you could break his fingers. Across there, of course, it would

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(DP: (cont.) hurt, would be terrific pain, but you wouldn't break his fingers. But if you moved your hand at all, you'd cop it on the fingers. And if you pulled your hand away quick, you'd get it anywhere - across the thumb or anywhere. Oh, they caned you, no mistake about that. I saw an incidence once, the bigger boys, Fred Tutty, Tommy Cribb, Roly McNamara and this Freddie Cribb, they were fighting, and it looked as if the three - the McNamara boy and the Cribbs - turned on the fellow Tutty. He was the biggest boy of the lot. But anyhow, they were fighting right on the bank of the creek and the old school teacher, this old one, she come out with the stick, and she got right up to them before she saw them. So she into the lot of them. She didn't pick any one out, she hit just wherever she could see a head. She hit - and they were still fighting. And anyhow, they finished - they're down on the ground, down on the ground, and she whaling into them - 'cause she started to scream then - and I never forgot that either. I was pretty small, and I thought, <sup>by</sup> gosh - what <sup>an awful</sup> woman!

KH: Oh dear! Did you have any organised sports activities or anything like that?

CP: Yes. Yes. We'd have school picnics. We'd have foot racing and so forth then. And I remember we'd have school picnics on the banks of a creek about more or less central. I don't know how often we had them, but that was the only social event attached to the school, the school picnic. We'd have foot running that day. But we didn't have any organised physical instruction or sport. We just played rounders, or we played marbles, or we chased one another - we played hide-and-week -

KH: Did you play British Bulldog?

CP: No. No -

KH: You know - running from one line to another and you had to be caught in the middle like - you run across a field and one person's in the middle, and the first person that they touch also has to be in the middle. And then those two, in turn, have to catch others, as people are running through their field.

CP: Yes -

KH: British Bulldog. It was an old one -

CP: Our rounders was similar to that. We'd be bowled - like it was a little bit like the Yankee -

KH: Oh, baseball -

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CP: Yes, baseball. We'd be bowled, one bowler and three of us all round to catch you out. And you run to - you'd have your home base and your given places - you'd be safe if you got to these points - and oh, it was a great old game. I've heard different people talk of playing rounders.

KH: So, you never went to visit another local school, or anything like that?

CP: No. No - the nearest school to us was Lacmalac, 9 miles away. We had no contact with them at all, actually.


KH: Did you take your lunch to school?

CP: Well, we didn't but the other children all did.

KH: You'd go home for lunch?

CP: We'd go home for lunch. The other children would bring their lunches, but those that come two miles, some of them, or a mile and a half - some of them had to cross the river - two different lots had to cross the river over a <sup>suspension</sup> bridge -

KH: What sorts of things did they bring to lunch? What did they have for lunch?

CP: Oh, I don't know. We'd go home and have dinner. We never had any 11 o'clock play lunch of any sort, <sup>wed</sup> play. We'd play like hell, but no play lunch, and we'd go home for lunch. But I don't know what they'd have. But in lots of cases they were poor families. They were very poor families, every one of them. In every instance, they were very poor families. One man was a dog trapper, Fred Feint,  the dog trapper - did I mention him in my story?

KH: Yes, you told me, and Feint's Ridge -

CP: His family, and then McNamaras, there was 13 in the family of McNamaras, and the man was just a shearer - contract fencer or shearing - anything he could get to do. And then the Cribb family, the father worked on the Station - all he'd get would be about £2 a week - 50 bob perhaps. And then another man, a German family, he was a drover. He'd be away for months and months and months, droving. Another couple, two children, that were reared by an old couple, and the only living that old couple had was their goats, and about 50 sheep and a milking cow. So they had a very poor existence, and there were children, and they weren't their own children. They just reared them - some relation -

KH: So they might just have a bit of bread -

CP: Bread and fat and cheese and a bit of salt. Most people always had meat. Most bush people right back, even my own people at Bombowlee, they always had meat. Probably two or three neighbours

CP: (cont.) would kill a bullock, and the same would apply here.

And in the case of the Cribbs, they got meat from the Station - that would be part of his payment. The old people that reared the two, they'd be short of meat quite a lot. But these people that lived here, they always killed their own meat. That was something I think, in Australia, in the Australian bush all over, I think the main source of food was meat - meat and flour. I think they would always have meat 90% of the time. And they all made their own bread, of course. There was no bakers, or butchers, or anything like that. My mother made her own bread for 24 years. The last 4 or 5 years she was there, there was a mail, and it used to bring bread from Tumut. The rest of it, she made her own bread - the whole time.

KH: So, you had a baking oven?

CP: Yes, she had a big range, a big stove with a big oven - a double oven in it. She baked her own bread in the dish, you know, the bread dish. She made her own butter, of course. And the only jam, the only fruit we ever had was all made there in the homestead. There was never such a thing as buying jam or buying tinned fruit. No. It was all made there by her - the whole lot.

KH: And did she look after the garden too? Did she grow the vegetables?

CP: No. Dad grew the vegetables - between him and me. There was a chap - he was cook for the men, and gardener, and milked the cow and so forth - he helped with the garden. But for the main part, Dad himself did the gardening.

KH: And do you remember anything in particular that you did after school? I suppose you'd go down to the river. Did you go fishing?

CP: We fished - we fished a lot, and we swam a lot, just because we were right - it was a beautiful river to swim - a beautiful river to fish in. In those days there were plenty of fish. Not so good today. There's a fisherman for every fish today. That Freddie Cribb and I, between us, we've caught 30 and 40 fish in the day, fishing. 'Cause, that was a great source of food, too, especially for those other people. I know, we'd catch the fish and I'd clean them, I'd clean them and bring them home, and my brother and me, we never saw them again. But she always cooked the fish and they were very nice. Homemade bread and homemade brownies, of course, she made brownies, and scones, plain scones or raisin scones.

KH: When you went fishing, would some of them have used nets, or was it always -

CP: No, always the trout lines -

KH: A hook and a worm or something - or a grasshopper?

CP: Yes, a grasshopper, and when the old gentleman, W.W. Killen, when he bought the place, he was a keen trout fisherman. He came from the north of Ireland also, that old chap. He was a keen trout fisherman, and he showed myself and my sister how to catch fish with the fly, and we never forgot it. I can still catch fish with a fly. But in the first place, of course, it was worms and grasshoppers, frogs, blowflies. Blowflies are great bait to catch fish with.

KH: Are they?

CP: Umm, great thing. It was a little bit of an intricate business to catch the blowfly. Fairly smart fellow. So you watched till the cow passed her manure, and the blowflies would be all over it. And you'd get a little bush, and you hit the blowflies and the manure - whack - with the bush. And the manure would be full of blowflies, trapped - they couldn't get out. And you'd pick them out and put them straight on the hook -

KH: Oh yes. While they were still steaming, eh?

CP: Yes, while it was still steaming. It was the only way you could get the blowflies - you couldn't catch them otherwise - it was too smart. But he was great fishbait. The fish would rise for him - he wouldn't sink - he'd float on top of the water and up they'd come. It was Freddie Cribb that introduced me to that one. Showed me how to do it.

KH: But your parents, by and large, believed in schooling? I mean, they must have, in order to accept having the teacher as a boarder, and I mean, there were several years when you could have worked on the farm instead of going to school, for instance. So it was some expense for them to send you to school?

CP: Oh yes. It must have cost - we had to buy all our own books and ink in those days - 10 pence a book and 6 pence for a bottle of ink, and so forth. I suppose we had to buy all that stuff ourselves. And my father, even though he was manager, he would have got about - when he first went there I suppose in 1910 he mightn't have got any more than £2 a week, and he'd get up - I suppose when he finished, when he finished in 1940, he'd probably get no more than £10 a week, if he was getting that. Probably. I don't know. He'd never tell you. He'd never talk about anything.

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KH: Your mother had no other way of earning money?

CP: No other way.

KH: I mean, in the town, they could have done laundrying, or making clothes, and other things like that at home, or ironing.

CP: Nothing. She used to knit for us, that's all. Knit men's socks, and wash and iron, and make the beds, and do the lot - do the cooking. Everything attached to that house. I suppose, I suppose m'sister helped her, perhaps, at times, when she got bigger - perhaps she did. My father wouldn't pick up a tea towel or a dish cloth. He wouldn't do anything whatsoever in the house. Apparently his father was the same, so I suppose it was handed down.

KH: So the roles are very sharply defined - his was outside the house and her's was inside the house.

CP: Exactly right. He wouldn't even pull the blankets up on his bed if it wasn't made. Very grim man. He never ever flogged me. All he had to do was to grunt and I'd freeze. Very grim, hard, bitter fellow, with an unholy set on Catholics - and my mother was a Catholic.

KH: Oh dear. So would that have caused friction at home?

CP: Oh well, it caused her a lot of heartache. Her own brothers and sisters weren't encouraged to come and see her, or she wasn't encouraged to go and see them.

KH: So she must have felt quite isolated?

CP: Very isolated -

KH: And she would have got bitter too, I suppose?

CP: In later years - in later years some of them used to come along and see her, and perhaps she'd get, once in a blue moon, to go to her own old home or something like that. But her mother, I don't know about her father, her mother was Joanna Kiley, that was Captain Kiley, a very strict Irishman. He owned what they called Kiley's Run, and that Kiley's Run is now Red Hill Station out *Adjungbilly* way there. And they were the strictest Catholics in the world. And I think from the day she married my father 'til the day she died, her mother never spoke to her again, so it was bitter on both sides.

KH: Because he was a Protestant? Oh dear.

CP: His father coming from the north of Ireland made him ten thousand times a Protestant. I married a Catholic. My first wife was a Catholic. But they loved her, and she was fond of them, and she got round them. She had her own winning, lovely, friendly little way and she got round them. My mother, of course, she worshipped her. But the old man, being a Protestant, I thought, well,

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CP: (cont.) there'll be trouble. But it was never mentioned in my case. So he knew, of course, it was no use to mention it.

That was it.

KH: So, it was a very closed community on the Goobarragandra, wasn't it?

CP: Yes. It was a very, very closely knit community.

KH: There wasn't much space, was there? There wasn't much to get away - you couldn't get away from it. You had to come to terms with it.

CP: You had to be right here. You had to learn to live with it, and you had to learn to live with everybody else. For the greater part, I'm sure, that everyone was friendly and happy with one another. I suppose we boys, like all other boys in all other communities, we fought and wrangled and scrapped. And I suppose the girls told tales about one another, same as any other place. But apart from that, we were a pretty loyal mob to one another.

KH: Must have been very hard on the teachers who were kind of outsiders, in a sense, to come into this fairly closed community and to get on top of this diverse group of kids.

CP: Oh, the kids - some of the kids - some of them were 14 when they went to the school. Some of them were 14, and had not been to school.

KH: Right. Quite a challenging situation.

CP: Yes. That little girl, she probably was about 20, weighed about 5 stone, and some of those other girls, big hulking bush girls, 14 years of age, could pick her up and break her neck.

- I'll put another stick of wood on -

KH: Yes, my word, it's getting a bit cool, isn't it?

CP: I've got some good dry sticks here.

KH: I'll just put this on pause I think.

KH: The machine's just had a pause. We're back to the interview again.

CP: 1907. I was 2 years old, and the father was working for this same man Armitage that owned Goobarragandra in later years. And he used to go to Yarrangobilly Village, and there was a special lease of 15,000 acres there that Armitage had. And Armitage would send up 3, 4, or 5,000 sheep and they'd be adgisted on this lease for about 4 months of the summer. And we, whole family, 1907, there was only my sister and I, and the baby, Norah, the other boy wasn't born, we'd drive from Bombowlee,

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CP: (cont.) from Bellevue, to Yarrangobilly Village with the sulky.

My father would ride behind, and drive the milking cow. And all our worldly possessions would be in that sulky, the food for a week or a fortnight, our clothes and our blankets, and everything that we had. And at Yarrangobilly Village we lived in 2 little bark huts, two little bark huts. The two of them put together wouldn't be as big as this room. They were about 50 yards apart. I can remember them as if they were drawn on the wall there. One we slept in, one we ate in. We all slept in the one little bark hut. And we'd stay there for the summer, and then go back to Bombowlee. And we did that in 1907, 8 and 9 - 3 years, and then in 1910 we came to Goobarragandra. I can remember several incidents that happened there. There was a school at the Village, and I think perhaps some of the other children went, but of course I didn't - I was only 3 years old. There was a whole lot of us children playing, and the German family from up here, Henkels, they had 3 children, 2 girls and a boy, and the oldest girl got on a bulldogs' nest, and she jumped and she danced and she screamed and yelled and *coeed* and turned purple in the face, but she wouldn't come off the nest. And of course, we wouldn't go near her. And they were giving her particular hell. So there was an older boy, a boy called Boyd, Bertie Boyd and he's still alive in Tumut, *fairly* old man, probably 81, 82 - my sister today is 81 - he run and grabbed her and pulled her off the nest and he dumped her into the creek, *Brownlie's* Creek. Probably the only thing that saved her life because she would have been bitten probably 20 times by bulldog ants - and it was probably the only thing that saved her life. He had the sense to dump her in the creek. She still had the ants on her. And another incidence, there was a day's sports. This was in 1909, the last year I was there. And I can see there was a fight - a fight started. I don't know eventually how many men fought, but there was a fight started between a man named Mick Maxwell from Queanbeyan and George Day. He was the father of George Day, the man that owned Talbingo Station. And they fought. The boy Maxwell was 15 years of age and Day was a grown man. Anyhow, while the fight was on, there was a man on grey horse raced over the top of me, full gallop, and he didn't hurt me, unless he made me silly, like I am now. But for years afterwards I remembered that grey horse. Yes, we lived there in two little bark huts. Mum would have had a camp oven and a couple

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CP: (cont.) of billy cans and that's all she would have had. And we'd stay there for 4, sometimes 5 months of the summer.

KH: And your father was working as a stockman in the area?

CP: Father was working as a stockman, looking after those sheep for Armitage of Bongalong Station.

KH: That George Day was the father of George Day out *at* Wagga now? The one who was then the manager of the *Chalet*?

CP: Yes, that's the man that's at Wagga. George was his father.

KH: Yes. "Cause I went to interview George -

CP: Billy Day's grandfather -

KH: Yes, that's right -

CP: I told Peter Day - he's another one, a grandchild. He was here in Tumut one time, and I saw his father - his grandfather fight Mick Maxwell at Yarrangobilly in 1908.

KH: A good story, eh? At the age of 3 you had a good memory.

CP: I told George about it. George wasn't born - he was younger than me - he wasn't born. But he'd heard about the fight many and many a time. My father said that if they'd - he kept stopping them - he said he kept stopping them. And he said that if they hadn't stopped them, the boy Maxwell would have beat Day - and old Day had a reputation. He could fight, and so could George. So could all of them. The big fella, Gordon, George's son Gordon, he's down there about Junee somewhere, and he's a wheat farmer. He could fight - he was an enormous man.

KH: The Days were all good fighters, were they?

CP: All good fighting men right through, from start to finish. The little fella, Peter, he's the grandson of the real old George, he's Buster Day's son, he can fight like a thrashing machine, and he's about 5 ft 6 or 7, solid built, and not a word - a man of very few words. He'll stand and look at you, and he'd drink there alongside you at the bar for two hours, and he won't say anything. Never gets drunk.

KH: Well, to go back to the formal sort of interview. All I'll do now is mop up any more things that I've missed with regard to schooling. When you were 13 - 14, and in a sense your schooling had come to an end for one reason or other, did you actually talk about your future with your parents, or did you just slip into going along with your father, becoming a stockman just by being with him?

CP: I followed in his footsteps absolutely and without any preamble of any sort - just natural thing.

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- KH: You didn't have secret ambitions to be something else? You didn't want to continue your education -
- CP: No. No - the only thing I wanted to be was a soldier - apart from that I wanted to be a soldier - 'cause the First World War boys wouldn't let me in. But apart from that I was a stockman, and I was already a good rider when I left school. I was already quite a good - handy with a horse and I got better and better as the years went on. No, I had no ambitions to be anything else but a stockman -
- KH: Did the school, did the teachers at all discuss that sort of thing with you?
- CP: They might have with the girls, but they never did with me. <sup>They might</sup> have done what my sister does. My sister, she left that school and she went to Lacmalac, and a tutor there taught her to play the piano. She become a piano player - very good, excellent piano player. And, of course, she was going to be a school teacher. She did teach school, and then she was a governess, and then she became a nurse. My brother finished his schooling at Lacmalac, and he finished when he was 14. He ended up exactly the same way as me with the teacher - and it was a man teacher. He called him out to give him the cane, and he took the cane with him and walked out the door and got on his horse and rode home, and didn't come back again. So we both finished up the same way. He was 14 - he was 14 when he left.
- KH: So you never went back to Tech. or anything like that? You always stayed in the bush. You always - you just went into droving -
- CP: Yes, I went droving when I was 13, and I worked in on Goobarra-gandra Station at all sorts of jobs on the Station, helping to muster, and helping to break in horses, and catching rabbits and everything that goes in the bush -
- KH: Your parents didn't mind?
- CP: No, they never made any - the only thing that my poor old mother wanted me to do was to become a Mason, and I laughed at the idea.
- KH: You mean a stonemason?
- CP: No, a Mason -
- KH: A member of a Society -
- CP: Yes, what did they call them? a goat - what do they call them? They call them something -
- KH: I've never heard the nickname for Masons -

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- CP: They were very influential Society, of course, and very big, but I had no interest in the Masons of any sort. The only Mason I was interested in was the doctor, Mason, and I didn't have to go to him, fortunately.
- KH: And did the other people - the other boys especially that you went to school with - they finished up - I mean, they followed that sort of course too?
- CP: Well, in every case, in every case, they were people on the land. They either had land of their own, or they were working as a shearer or a stockman or a contract fencer or something of that type, and I can't recall any of them, not one of those school mates that I had, became anything else than either a stockman, a station manager - several of them became station managers, which was quite an event in your life, if you became a station manager. You were looked up to, and you got a little bit more money. You were a little bit influential. Apart from that they were horse-breakers, boundary riders, shearers, fencers, anything you like. I can't remember any one of them doing anything else.
- KH: In those first years, like after you left school, when you were at the age of, 14 to 18, do you remember any particular events that stand out, or any noteworthy things that were unusual in terms of your lifestyle, like were there unusual people that came into your life then, or - like people you'd never met before or going to a new town. Like you must have started to feel that you'd like to widen your horizons apart from the Upper Goobarra-gandra Valley ?
- CP: Well, the only things that I can recall of any event - travelling buckjump shows would come in the district. Travelling buckjump shows - big flash things under tents, with roped rings and fat, bucking horses, and showy men and girls - lady whipcrackers, and so forth, and of course, we'd break our neck to get to them. And we'd be offered 5 shillings to ride the mule, or 2 shillings to sit on the bullock for 5 seconds. Something of that sort. So - thus we found entertainment that appealed to us right up 100%, and of course, we would try to ride mules and donkeys and bucking bullocks. So, it was a lead up to becoming a rodeo contestant.

(End of Tape 1, Side 2)

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- K: So that, by degrees, you got involved in more and more of -
- C: Horse work - buckjump riding, the horse breaking, and became a rodeo contestant at a very early age; and every possible chance I got I'd ride a buckjumper or get on a buckjumper. You'd have sports in a buckjumping contest at your local Shows, Agricultural Shows, and you'd go miles and miles and miles through the bush on horseback to compete at these things. And I became quite smart at rodeo activities - bullock riding, and bull riding - not bull riding, there was no bull riding then - bullock riding, buckjump riding, bareback buckjump riding, camp drafting - all to do with the horse - the horse and the cattle, and everything that went with station life, and anything you could find that would break the monotony of station life. You'd risk your neck, your arm or your leg to get to somewhere where there was activity, where there was excitement. And of course, I don't know about in all cases, but in my case I loved the limelight. I thought I was very, very, very smart. I wasn't - I wasn't over good. I bulldogged the first bullock that was bulldogged on the Tumut Showground. In conjunction with Peter Wilkinson of Tumut I rode the first bullock that was ridden on the Tumut Showground, and I drafted the first bullock that was ever drafted on the Tumut Showground. I competed in rodeos during the Depression years out at White Cliffs - helped to organise the rodeos and competed there as an active rider. I competed in rodeos up in Cairns in North Queensland during the War, when the Yanks were running rodeos. So I've had a long involvement and connection with the game of rodeo, as well as all the station life activity. I rode a bull on Bootra Station with a saddle - the boys on the Station bet me a pound of tobacco that I couldn't ride the bull. So we tied him to a post and put a saddle on 'im and I got on 'im and they let 'im go, and I rode the bull and I got m'pound of tobacco. And that pound of tobacco was worth about 10 shillings. That was in 1930 -
- K: When you were 25.
- C: Yes.
- K: How long did you stay on Goobarragandra Station?
- C: Well, I stayed there 'til - from 1910 'til 1925, or in the vicinity of Goobarragandra Station droving and odd jobs, besides working on the Station. And then I went to Wanaaring, Wanaaring township and Wanaaring Station, 118 miles west of Bourke, in February, 1925.

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- K: It seems like a long jump - an incredible jump - from an isolated valley on the Goobarragandra to go right out west -
- C: Well, in 1924, a mate and I, Bertie Cavanagh, who was a cousin, we were brumby running on the Cotter River in the Federal Capital Territory, and we were living at <sup>Yaouk</sup> Station. We had relatives there - Albert Lowther, one of my cousins was married to a Cochran, and a Lowther girl was married to a Cochran man - and we had connections there, of course, and we made it our headquarters. We were having a great old time there brumby running. My first brumby run was on a half-broken-in horse belonging to the same James Armstrong of Blowering Station. He was a big blood horse. We had Rud Cochran, Tommy Pierce, and a man called McCracken, and m'self and Bertie Cavanagh. And Rud Cochran started the mob of brumbies to run them to the running yard and my mate made a cigarette and lit it. And the brumbies smelt the smoke, and they veered off and didn't go into the running yard, and it left us to either let them go, or catch one. So Bertie and I took to them. He had a pony he borrowed from Frank West of Cabramatta and I had this big blood horse. And he couldn't get right in amongst the brumbies, but I did, on the big blood horse - he was fast - and we had good going for about a quarter of a mile, and he threw me the halter. He said 'Take the halter, and you'll catch one'. I took the halter, and I put it around the brumby filly's neck - about a 2-year-old brumby filly. I put it around her neck, but I couldn't get it on her head. It was my first brumby run in all of m'life. And I took m'eyes off the timber and the trees and the logs, and my knee hit one tree and threw me out of the saddle. I hung in the iron and the horse kept going, and he wrapped me around another tree, and the stirrup leather pulled out of the saddle. And of course, I was fairly stunned. He went on with the brumbies, and I lay there and I saw all of the other men - the four of them - gallop past me. They were 50 yards away, and I was too hard hit - I couldn't speak. So, I got over it. They came back and they found me and they got me horse and they even found the stirrup leather and iron. And I spit blood for six months after that. That was my first brumby run.
- K: And your last?
- C: No - I've had a lot since, and I've caught brumbies. It taught me a lesson - that when you're putting a halter on a brumby, keep your eye on your own horse as well. Watch the both of them.



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- C: (cont.) Big Arthur Cochran said I went both sides of a tree - I went one side and the horse went the other.
- K: That's the same as Jimmy *Nankerris*, Jimmy *Nankerris* from down at Corryong. The same thing happened to him down in Cascades country, and he was very badly injured. His head went into the tree, and he was unconscious for a long time. <sup>and</sup> So you were lucky!
- C: It hit me there and wrapped me round/across the chest, and oh, I spit blood for  six months. And we left. We came home then after that. And we got this job, the two of us, out at Wanaaring Station, fencing, in February. After coming brumby running from the Snowy Mountains, we arrived at Bourke by train after about four days of travel. We were handed over a 1914 T-model Ford, and we headed for Wanaaring township, 118 miles away. We bogged the T-model Ford on the first big sand hill at Goonery, half-way between Bourke and Wanaaring, and we finally caught the coach - left the T-model in the sandhill - and caught the coach when it came through and went to Wanaaring, and started our work. And that job was for the people that owned Goobarragandra Station - that's how we got the job -
- K: Oh, I see, they owned that property as well?
- C: They owned that property. They'd bought that property, and we went there to work. We fenced for the whole six months and then we decided that fencing was not for us. There was cattle men, and horses, and buckjump riders, and breaking-in to be got, and droving to be got, so we signed off from W.W. Killen and went with Kidman, Sir Sydney Kidman. And I finally left - that was 1925 - and I finally finished up with Kidman in December, 1933.
- K: So you were with him for 8 years?
- C: 9 years. I packed m'horses in Tibooburra and rode to Tumut, 700 miles! That finished me with the 'back country'.
- K: Oh right! That's when you did some really big overland droving?
- C: Yes - yes. I saw a lot of the cattle out there, a lot of cattle out there. And that, in 1925, was where I met my present wife. She was 16 years of age and I was 19. Her father managed Urisino Station.
- K: And when you came back here you married - you met your first wife?
- C: I married my first wife in January 1934. As we said before, she passed away 22 April, 1937. However, from then on, it was a different chapter of my life.

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- K: And so your first job was really, in a sense, it wasn't formal, but your first work was on Goobarragandra Station; from the age 13 to the age 25, you were working on Goobarragandra Station. And you were mostly, what, getting about £1 a week?
- C: Oh, probably got up to 30 bob a week. That was from 1918 to 1925 - I wasn't 25, I was 19. I was 19 when I left Goobarragandra, and I started work there in 1918. And I worked there until 1925 and I went to Wanaaring.
- K: Oh, I see - from the age of 13 to the age of 19 or so.
- C: But I did live there from the age of 5.
- K: Yes. What sort of hours of work did you have?
- C: Oh, we worked, sometimes 8 hours, sometimes 12 hours - just depended what had to be done. If you were 5 miles from the homestead at dark, you came home. If you were 5 miles from the homestead at 3 o'clock, you got home for tea. We mustered sheep - we shepherded sheep in the back of the mountain country of Goobarragandra. The dingoes were bad, and sometimes we would have to shepherd sheep and guard them at night. Other times we'd camp in the back when the mustering time come - camp out in the back at the place called The Hole or Back Creek - parts of Goobarragandra Station. And there we would work possibly 12 hours a day. And you would work every day. My father would, if possible, always have Sunday off. His father was a religious man, I was told. He didn't believe in working on Sunday. Neither did my Uncle Alf - he didn't work on Sunday.
- K: What about you? Did you work on Sunday?
- C: I didn't take any notice. If we had the day off on Sunday I'd be on m'pony and I'd be off somewhere to see or meet or talk to somebody, or go to a dance, or those bush races, or anything at all. Didn't matter to me what day it was. I never had, never ever, any feeling of religion of any sort. You would have to describe me absolutely as a heathen. Never ever entered my head that there was a 'super being'. I couldn't - I couldn't bring m'self to believe that.
- K: Even on those long - like, you had many nights, many hours on your own. You were quite self-contained? You were quite happy?
- C: No, no. My God was Nature, Nature. Out in that semi-desert country, watching cattle at night, like watching a mob of cattle for 2 or 3 hours, and at certain times of the night, especially just before daybreak, you couldn't even hear the cattle breathe, you couldn't hear an insect, you couldn't hear a bird - you could hear yourself

C: (cont.) think. Two or three poets have touched on the thing.

One poet, in the poem 'How He Died' - "the wonderful hush of the night". And the other poet that I remember - I can't think of the name of the poem at the moment, was "the hush before the dawn". You can only experience that when you are hundreds of miles away from people or habitation, on your - absolutely on your own. Your mates are sound asleep. You're watching a herd of cattle, maybe 500 or a thousand head, and at that particular time, the hush before the dawn, you could hear a pin drop if it fell on top of Mt Kosciusko. And I worship Nature - Nature is my God. What invented Nature I would never attempt to try and solve in my own mind.

K: You're quite happy with that? You've come to terms with that?

C: I've come to terms with that. It's a very, very sore point with some of my children and with my present wife.

K: So, when you die you will go back to Nature - or you're always part of the system, just in another form?

C: A completely different form. You'll hear the Minister at the graveside say 'We do not die - we do not die - we go somewhere else'. But we die - we die, and there is no somewhere else. We're dead. Nature, the most wonderful, the most glorious thing. And I suppose, apart from a Mother's love, Nature is the most beautiful thing in the whole of the universe - this universe, or if there are other universes, the same. But anything above that I cannot bring myself to believe.

K: But you believe - you would accept that you live on in the minds of other people?

C: Yes, you do, you do. But, as the pop singer said 2 years ago, I know the game, you forget the name, I won't be here in another year if I'm not at the top of the count. You stay in the minds of your Mother. A Mother never forgets perhaps, but Jim, Jack, Tom, and Harry would not care two hoots whether you were here tomorrow, or whether you were here a week ago. For instance - for instance, there'll be the Prime Minister, there'll be the sanitary man, there'll be the head stock and station agent - when he's dead someone takes his place immediately, and no man, no man is ever missed to the extent that he hopes that he would be missed.

K: Good. - - - And with regard to working on Goobarragandra, would they also have had women employed as part of the main property? There would have been servants and that sort of thing?

C: No, no. No servants. We had a - we called him 'The Cowboy'. He was a Jack-of-all trades, mostly. Sometimes we didn't even have him.

K: But I mean at the main property, the people who owned Goobarragandra. They would have had servants, and so on?

C: Oh yes. They had housemaids and cooks and even housekeepers and grooms. That was the people at Bongalong Station, Armitage, and in the case of W.W. Killen's family, on Merribee Station. Merribee was a big merino stud in the Riverina, and those stock came from Merribee to Goobarragandra in the summer and went back to Merribee in the winter. And those people came to Goobarragandra - the year they bought it - in 1914, and they brought with them their cook and their housemaid and their housekeeper. And, of course, that was the known thing, the understood thing, in all squatter families in Australia, in New South Wales especially, and I would think all over Australia. That type of people had something that was handed down to them from their ancestors and their own families in Great Britain, Ireland or Scotland.

K: But the men and women had very much separate jobs still. Even in those situations it was the women who were the cooks and the servants -

C: Yes, the woman would be the cook - quite often it would be a married couple. The husband would be yardman - he'd milk the cows and he'd cut the wood, and he'd do outside jobs, and his wife possibly would be cook. Not always a married couple. Then there would probably be a governess - in isolated stations, probably 50 miles from a school, or a hundred miles from a school, in Australia sometimes 200 miles from a school, and until the children got big enough to go to a boarding school or a grammar school or some university, they'd be taught by a governess, and they would all be at home as one great big family, and, no doubt, they lived like kings.

K: But do you think that the women employees were treated equally with the men, would you say?

C: I would think so. I would think so - with the - mostly those people, mostly those people were wonderful people, although they had wealth and power and a flash buggy and a nice pair of shiny horses, as compared with my family, with quite an ordinary cob in an old sulky, I think that by and large, people were treated right. I think so. That was the case with the Killen family anyway, and the Armitage family, and I know, on the Kidman stations, they were all the same. They had a governess there. They had a cook, they had a yardman, quite often they had a housemaid, and those people were treated just as good as their own children, as far as I could see.

- K: Oh - so there were a whole series of traditional occupations filled by either female or male and that was all very much part of the tradition, and that was maintained?
- C: That was maintained throughout. Oh definitely. You had the cowboy, you had your housemaid, you had your governess, you had your cook, and in places on the real big stations, especially if there was a family, say 3 or 4 or half-a-dozen children in the family, they'd have a housekeeper as well, beside the boss and his wife.
- K: Right. So the people that you worked with, you really in a sense didn't go off to work like people do today - where you had a different - where you went to the office and you had a different lot of people there than the people you related to at home. I mean, the people you worked with were also, in a sense, the people you lived with, or you knocked about with when you went to the rodeo.
- C: Yes - it was the same people. You worked with them the whole year round. You went to entertainment with them, you went to competitions with them, you went to picnics with them, you went to the pictures with them. There was no set rules. There was no industry attached to my life. I never came in contact with industry of any sort. It was all rural life in the country of New South Wales, and I never came up in any way against industry and all its trials and tribulations. It never affected my life whatsoever.
- K: No -
- C: And I'm 77 years old -
- K: Yes - that's quite amazing really!
- C: And that goes for thousands of country people in Australia - all over Australia, from the Kimberleys to Victoria to Melbourne, and from Sydney to Perth.
- K: And when did you first belong to that Trade Union you were talking about? The Australian Workers Union?
- C: Oh, I got that ticket in 1929 - the shearing shed - no, I'm wrong there. I got it in 1927 at the shearing shed at Bootra. The union rep. turned up and there <sup>were</sup> half-a-dozen of us stationhands had no tickets, and there was a real hooray. So we all agreed, Yeah, 'course we'd have a union ticket, and they cost about 5 shillings. We had them. And I had that ticket and it was sent to me - posted to me every year, and the bookkeeper at the station paid it, and so on. And I still had it. And I just held it up in front of the station manager and put a match to it like that, and he said, 'Righto, go and put your swag in the hut' -
- K: Oh, and you got employment during the Depression when you went back there?

- C: Yeah -
- K: On the whole, do you think that belonging to that union changed the relationship between employer and employee?
- C: It did at that time - it did at that time. Though the station manager never dreamt of having a union ticket, and of course his master, his boss, the squatter, he wouldn't even read it. If he fell over it, he'd boot it. It gradually altered - it gradually altered. The Australian Workers Union done the greatest job in the world for Australians. But as years went on and other branches struck out from the Australian Workers Union, and we got the Builders Labourers Union, and we got the Bank Clerks Union, and we got the Shire Employees Union, we got a hundred unions, and today we could do well without any of them.
- K: They might disagree!
- C: I've run my life now. It doesn't matter to me whether there's a union or whether there isn't -
- K: But you never sort of got involved with the administration of the organisation of the union?
- C: Never - never affected me at all I think. All I did -
- K: You just stayed in to the extent that you had to or you felt obliged to?
- C: Yes - we had to do it, or the shearers would have stopped. Then the boss would have said, 'Well, you so-and-so bastards have a ticket, and look at the trouble', and he would have been the last man to have a ticket himself. But it never came up - it never affected my life whatsoever. I burnt that ticket, and I never had one any more until 11 years ago, when I worked on the Snowy - same thing cropped up. I had to have one. So I was from 1930 to 1969 without a union ticket. And I was never without work in the whole of m'life - never missed a day's work. But it's a different story today.
- K: Well, of course, your working environment was always nature, wasn't it? It was always the open air. For a lot of the time you were under open skies, weren't you? You couldn't - would there have been things that you thought could have been improved - like your wages, for instance?
- C: Oh yes, we did. Oh, I'm quite sure the Australian Workers Union has done a wonderful job - a wonderful thing for the Australian people. The Australian Workers has done a wonderful job. It's got - the conditions were bad - they were tough, they were tough. For instance, in that period when I first went to that station as

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- C: (cont.) overseer, the boss - the first year the boss was there, the second year he was away, and I was overseer, and I was also manager. And a new book of rules come out on shearers' conditions, and they had to have this, and they had to have that, and they had to have - Jim, Jack, Tom and Harry had to be looked after. And there was only m'self and a very inexperienced English book-keeper there. And we had nothing - we had nothing that the book said - we had nothing at all. We had no proper ablution places, we had no proper toilets - we had nothing. This place 200 miles north of Broken Hill. And he said, 'What are we going to do?' He said, 'There's the book'. I said, 'Just let it go exactly as it was last year', I said, 'and see what happens!'. There's nothing else we could do. The sheep were there in the shed. The shearers were there in the huts - and this book of words. The rep. 'd come round and handed it over. I said 'Just let it go - don't do a thing - let it go'. <sup>They</sup> got up in the morning and away they went and they shorn and they cut the shed right out and we never had any trouble. Whether we were just extremely lucky in ourselves, or else the rep. or some of the shearers that had shorn at that station perhaps for 2 or 3 years had a little bit of time for the old boss. But, oh, we had nothing. Those men were washing out of kerosene tins cut in two which they'd been washing out of for 50 years - no fly proof eating up joints - toilet was the roughest thing - far worse than that one. Oh no, they done a wonderful job - wonderful job. They gone too far now - some of them.
- K: Did it change during your time there? Like the following year, was it still the same?
- C: We got away with it. I wasn't there the next year - the next year. I was there '26 and '27, and '28 I was home here for holidays, so I don't know how they got on. When I went back I wasn't an overseer - I was back on £3 a week in the hut. So I don't know what happened.
- K: So you wouldn't have ever felt that your health was affected by the conditions under which you worked?
- C: No, no - it never affected my health. I was the healthiest thing in the world, and I could live on anything - everything if I had it - and I could live on anything. For instance, I stayed for 18 months at Yanterra Station, m'self and a half caste, and we never saw milk, we never saw fresh vegetables, we never saw butter; the only vegetables we had were tinned peas and haricot beans, which were awful things - repeat on you for a week. We had no suggestion

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- C: (cont.) of any cereals of any sort, because we had no milk - we did have skim milk - and I stayed there for 18 solid months, and I got Barcoo Rot twice in the 18 months.
- K: Is that scurvy or something?
- C: Scurvy - Barcoo Rot. Scabs as big as 2 shilling pieces all over you, from the tips of your fingers to your elbow, and under your arms and round your belly where your belt touched you.
- K: What do you call it?
- C: Barcoo Rot - a well-known Australian complaint in the back country. It was all brought about through no fruit, no vegetables, nothing whatsoever in the way of laxatives in your food line at all. The first time I got it, I cursed and I swore, and I swore that I'd pack up and I'd leave, and the old boss - he was a pretty good old fellow - an old Kidman station manager - 'Oh', he said, 'I had it a dozen times', he said. 'It won't hurt you - you're too fussy'. And I thought, 'Oh well -'.
- K: How long did it last?
- C: Oh, it'd last about a month to 6 weeks. And the only hope you had - the only thing that saved me - I would have gone clean mad if an old lady where I used to get m'mail, 15 miles away - a very old woman, a Mrs Blore, and she lived at a place called Koalli on the Broken Hill to Milparinka road - and she said to me, 'You go home', she said, 'and I know you won't do it', she said, 'but if you don't you'll be very bad', she said. 'Put as much Epsom Salts', she said, 'as will fit on a sixpence', she said, 'and put it in a glass of water and drink it every morning'. And that's what I did. And I did that, I suppose, for about a month, and it was all gone. And of course, the second time I got it, I knew what to do. The old Epsom Salts. Not Kruschen Salts - the old ordinary Epsom Salts - about a shilling a ton it used to be. Just put as much - I think it was a sixpence she said - and put it in a glass of water. Stir it up, she said, and drink it. Horrible stuff - horrible stuff, bitter as gall - but it cured me. And, of course, the next time I got it, at the same place, 12 months later, I knew what to do.
- K: Was there nothing you could do to get some natural substance?
- C: If you'd a been at the station homestead, and getting fresh vegetables and good bread - we were living on damper and corned meat, you know, all the time. We'd have fresh meat every time we killed, about every 3 or 4 months - that salt meat and damper. We had prunes - we could stew prunes. We had custard powder. We had powdered milk. We had tomato sauce, and we had coffee, but we had nothing in the way of vegetable.

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K: No tinned vegetables either?

C: No, there wasn't even dried potatoes then. During the war we got dried potatoes - they came from Batlow. They were worse than the haricot beans. But - that's all we had in the way of food. But we did have dried apricots, dried apple, dried things, and dried prunes. They weren't tinned prunes, they were prunes dried up. You'd soak 'em for 24 hours and then cook 'em and eat 'em. Same with your corned meat. It'd be like a lump of green hide and you'd soak it in a bucket of fresh water for 12 hours, and pour that water off and cook it. But we had to keep it in bags - just roughly dry salt it and keep it in bags. And at the end of the 3 months or 4 months, it was pretty horrible stuff. Besides that, it was full of sand from the sand storms that blew across the desert.

K: What did you do against that?

C: Nothing. Put up with it. You'd be riding behind a mob of cattle in a sandy desolate country in the mid-day, boiling hot sun, and a sand storm 'd come up and it'd probably be blowing straight into your face. If you had a handkerchief you'd tie it over your mouth, and your eyes 'd be full of sand, your food 'd be full of sand. It'd be in the sugar and the tea and the flour and all over the meat and everything. And I put up with it for the best part of 10 years. It did me good. It taught me a lot of lessons. It did me good, but the lessons didn't do me any good!

K: That was from the age of 19 -

C: The age of 19 to 30. Till -

K: Well, we can go by years if you like. 1925 -

C: Yeah, the beginning of 1925 to the end of '33, except I came home 3 times to Goobarragandra for a break.

K: Oh, you did. You got some better tucker then, did you?

C: Oh, when I was overseer I got the job. The scurvy, that was before I got the job of overseer. When I was overseer I was on the pig's back - I was getting the best of food.

K: How long were you there, just as a worker - as a stockman?

C: I was at that place for 18 months, at Yanterra, only m'self and the half caste. I had different mates. The wife's brother was with me at one stage. And m'old mate Bertie Cavanagh, the brumby runner from up here with me, he was there with me at one stage. But for the main part, m'self and the half caste, a fellow called Albie Ebbsworth, a little fellow about 9 stone - a smart little fellow - a good little mate - cheerful, happy little chap - came from Tibooburra I think -

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K: So, you were there for a couple of years before you became overseer?

C: Yes, I went there in the beginning of '25 and I got the job of overseer on 14th May '26 - just about 18 months.

K: So you were home and hosed for a while then, weren't you? You were sitting pretty!

C: That's right, and I didn't have sense enough to stop there. I wanted to come home - come home, of course. I wanted to come home and have a look. And when I come home there was a raging drought, and they got word from down below to say that an overseer would not be paid. There was no need to pay him because he wasn't there - he was gone. So when I went back, of course, I was just an ordinary stockman.

K: So you were there as an overseer for 2 years, was it?

C: Yes, from May '26 to December '27 - 18 months. So they gave me 3 years - 3 years I was out there before I had a break of any sort. So I wanted to come home and have a look. I did a droving trip - I did a droving trip from Goobarragandra to Bredbo - picked up 1500 wethers for Goobarragandra and Bredbo and brought them back to Goobarragandra while I was on holidays. I saw that in my father's diary last night - I'd forgotten all about it - it was there, the exact date that we went, and the exact number of sheep that we delivered and when we delivered it and where we put them - in his diary.

K: So, because you came home for a break you couldn't get back into that same position when you went back?

C: The position wasn't there - the drought was so severe -

K: So you might have lost it anyway?

C: I might have lost it. The drought was so severe -

K: And they just didn't have the money -

C: And I think I had become very unpopular with the old manager himself. There was a man named Middleton from down on the *Anna-*branch, part of the Darling River, drew a Western Lands Lease. He had 2 lovely daughters. And they were 40 miles away. And I had an old car of m'own and I used to go to see them at the weekend. And I used to waste a lot of time. I might go Friday night and I mightn't get back 'til Monday morning. I'd go to a dance at White Cliffs in the meantime - a hundred mile - take the girls. And I was beginning to get very unpopular with him. So I think he was very, very pleased when I packed up. 'Cause he said to me one morning, 'Why aren't you out?' I was having a shave - in the

Tape 2 of 3, Side 1

C: (cont.) bathroom - living in the homestead with the boss and his wife and kiddies - 3 kiddies - and I said, 'Oh, I took the men out' I said, 'I'm just havin' a bit of a clean up'. 'What are you cleanin' up for?' he said, 'You should be at work'. And I said 'I'm goin' to a dance at White Cliffs'. He said, "Are ya?" and away he went and stamped out really. I knew then I was getting very unpopular, but I was young - I was young. I was only 21 years of age, and a pretty girl was a pretty girl. And there was only one every 300 miles.

K: I'll say. Out there - it was understandable -

C: Beautiful girls - lovely girls -

K: So - but even afterwards you still wanted - I guess you could get work there. Back here you couldn't get any -

C: No, you couldn't get any. He'd gave me the job - but I had to burn my ticket. That was strict orders through the Kidman office in Adelaide. I had to burn m'ticket, because if he'd put a man on at £2.18.0 a week or £2.10.0 a week, at the end of 6 months, well a man could have said 'I want 4 quid a week' - he couldn't do it. But a lot of men, they wouldn't burn their ticket. They stuck to it - starved to death, half of 'em.

Dog barks and whistles!

K: So you came back. You were away from 1925, and came back in 1933. And how long did you then stay on Goobarragandra?

C: Well, I stayed there with m'father. I got married there in '34. We stayed there with m'father, and he left in the end of '39 and I took over the job as manager. And in the meantime, of course, war had broke out. I finished up at Goobarragandra the end of 1940 - the end of 1940, which was exactly 30 years from the day I came there in 1910.

K: But you came back here in 1934 -

C: 1933 - I came back at Christmas time in 1933.

K: Well, did you go back to the same house that your parents lived in?

C: Yes, up here. Same old house. And I left there and it was sold to Mr John Killen from Brindabella, Goobarragandra Station was. He sold Brindabella and he bought Goobarragandra, and of course, the war had broke out, and I was in the Light Horse as well as being manager of Goobarragandra Station. So I had a lot of decisions to make. I had a wife and a baby boy, and a 6 year old girl and a 6 year old step-son. So I decided that I'd go to the

Tape 2 of 3, Side 1

C: (cont.) war. I applied for permission to leave the Light Horse.

I got out of that - an honourable discharge from the Light Horse. And then m'Mother said to me 'Well, I don't see what you want to go to the war for. There's thousands of young fellows, and you've got a wife and you've got 3 children - and you'd go to the war?' So I didn't go to the war at all 'til the end of 1941. I had 12 months working around Tumut, in brickyards and sewerage drains, and a droving trip if I could get it. And I'd had it - I'd had it. I didn't take too well to the pick and shovel. So I enlisted in the A.I.F., and of course, that took me out of the workforce 'til the end of 1945.

K: But when you first got married with your new wife - with your first wife, did you also live in your parents' house?

C: Yes, we all lived together.

K: And did your wife have the baby - your first child - at that house too?

C: Yes, the baby was born in Tumut.

K: Oh, in Tumut. By then transportation had improved and so on?

C: Oh well, yes. We had a car. Me father had a Willys Whippet, 6-cylinder Willys Whippet that he bought in 1929 for £199. And he still had that car when war broke out. He sold it after I left and went into the A.I.F. He sold the car.

K: He must have been fairly well off then to be able to afford a car at that time?

C: Well, I suppose in actual fact he was well off. But he still owed money on his own property at Bellevue at Bombowlee. He was still paying off money that he'd borrowed over the years to fence it and build a home, and so forth. The home - the first home he built in 1900, was burnt down in a bushfire in 1905, and that was a nasty blow to a working couple with 2 children. And he had to set to work and build another home. And he built that in 1905. And we lived there in that home for 5 years, and we came to Goobarragandra, and he rented that old house at Bombowlee for many, many years to different families. So in those days he had quite a good job, and I suppose he got quite a good salary, in the latter years especially.

K: Did you all live together?

C: All lived together. Very happy - very, very happy family. No problems of any sort.

K: So those years from '34 until you joined the Light Horse, you were quite, in a sense, a much more settled family man by

Tape 2 of 3, Side 1

K: (cont.) comparison to the period before?

C: Yes indeed.

K: And perhaps the period after as well?

C: Yes indeed. That's right. I settled down and worked like a nigger on Goobarragandra, and I was getting £3 a week. And, of course, that's a long time ago, and £3 was £3. We were getting meat. Meat was supplied on the station. I was paying no rent, no electric light, no rates. I had no motor car of m'own - I wasn't wasting money driving out. Petrol - he bought the petrol for his own car.

K: So, were you able to save any money? Was that an aim?

C: No, we couldn't save any money -

End of Side 1, Tape 2 of 3

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

K: It was just that period, especially, I guess, those 5 or 6 years when you came back from out west - came back to Goobragandra again?

C: Yes.

K: Did the situation with regard to the home change during that time? Like, you were away for a long period of time. Did your parents - was the house bigger by then or were there people who were boarders in the house by then, or anything like that?

C: No, only at times, at times, the people, the owners came and boarded with the family and they paid their board. They boarded with my Father and Mother. Of course, my sister was gone. She was living - she was a trained nursing sister at Young, and later gone to Sydney and married, and the son/brother had grown up and he was a working man, not working on the place - he was working at different places.

K: And your younger sister had died?

C: The other little girl had died way back. She never came to Goobragandra.

K: So when you went back to Goobragandra, it was just your parents on their own?

C: Yes, myself and my wife.

K: And your wife. And they did at times have boarders?

C: Yes, they did. The owners came, the owners of the property came and they would stay probably for a month -

K: Oh, with your parents, because they were in the main residence?

C: Yes, they'd stay there with them. And of course when they came it was pretty crowded with myself and my wife and baby and Father and Mother and two or three of them. It was pretty crowded. But in 1915 additions were built to that place - I forgot about that - three rooms were built on to the original old homestead. That was the idea of the Killen family that owned the place. They could see there was no room and they built three extra rooms which made the place about eight rooms and a couple of verandahs etc etc.

K: Was that a slab building or weatherboard?

C: That building was different. It was unique. It was built in 1905 by the then owner, Mr Arthur Pether. He was a brother of Lazy Harry's from Talbingo Pub. And he built it out of squared bush timber for uprights; and on the outside the whole thing, the whole outside walls were adzed slabs. They were slabs but they were adzed by an absolute magician with an adze. You'd have sworn they were cut in a sawmill - they were all adzed and all fitted to overlap so that the rain and the wind didn't blow in. And the house had a

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- C: (cont.) 12 ft ceiling. It was cypr~~ess~~ pine - every inch of it was pine lined. It was a beautiful home - big and roomy. Big rooms. Only four big rooms, but they were big. And a big, an enormous kitchen and an enormous big cooking range - what we called the living room - and two big bedrooms. And then, of course, in 1915 they built these three rooms on to it. And they built a bathroom and a laundry. When we first went there Mum had to wash outside with a boiler sitting on a heap of rocks. I wasn't very helpful to her either.
- K: But there wouldn't have been much opportunity for everyone to have their own room, for instance?
- C: No - it was pretty cramped.
- K: Were you sharing?
- C: We kids, I suppose, we two boys sometimes we slept on the verandah. Before those three rooms were built we slept on the verandah and the sister and the school teacher, for a long time used to have to have the other room. And then of course, Dad and Mum had the bedroom, and kitchen and bathroom. So when those people came, they realised it was impossible. So we put up tents, I remember, the first year they came, before those three rooms, we put up tents and there was also a very, very good hut built for the men down away from the homestead and it had verandahs on it and sometimes we boys 'd camp down there.
- K: But in the 1930s, when you returned, you would have shared a room with your wife - and the baby would have slept in your room as well, would she?
- C: Yes - the baby would have slept there. Those three extra rooms were there then. And of course, there was only Mother and Father - sister and brother were both gone. There was plenty of room then. Until those three rooms were built there it was very cramped. But it was a beautiful house, as houses go. It was knocked down with a bulldozer two years ago. Now it's a heap of rubble. You can just see where it was.
- K: Was it still in fairly good condition?
- C: No, no. The cattle had got into it. It stood there from 1905 to two years ago - it stood there for 75 years.
- K: So it had four rooms initially and then there were three rooms added. And you had this outer outside cottage as well?
- C: Yeh, we had that - a good, big hut - a beautiful hut. It was a slab hut - very well built hut - and mostly any men that worked on the place at that stage lived at home. They didn't live in the hut. We had the hut.
- K: They lived in other cottages on the property?

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- C: No, they lived in their own homes.
- K: Oh, they came and worked there?
- C: They worked there. They'd ride in every day. And the furthest away would have been about four miles - and within the boundaries of the station. Some had a little holding, about 40 acre holding, a 100 acre holding. The station might be right round.
- K: Do you remember anything about the decor of the furniture and that, in the 30s? Did you have cedar chests, for instance, or anything very ornate - ornate sideboards or ornate chairs?
- C: No, no - the furniture in '38 was the same as the furniture in '28 - exactly the same. No difference, except that there was a piano, and of course, a few extra beds and corner closet cupboards in the new rooms. No difference.
- K: You didn't have anything like a cocktail cabinet and things like that?
- C: No, nothing like that. There was no grog ever allowed in the house. My Father, if he brought home a flask of whiskey, he'd drink it before he got home and throw the flask away. No grog. So I never had a strong drink in my life until, I told you, I had one in the pub at Milparinka, and the barman went crook on me. I had port wine and lemonade. Not so with my brother. He started drinking earlier in life.
- K: Was there an area that you might call a living room where guests might be entertained?
- C: Yeh, we had a living room. We called it the dining room. A very big room with a fireplace - a big fireplace in the kitchen and a very big dining room. And we had a dining room table and I suppose half a dozen chairs, and a couch and two sideboards, where Mum would keep her few cherished bits of crockery. She didn't have a glass cabinet or anything like that.
- K: So, did you have a living room as well as that large dining room?
- C: No - that was the only one. When they built the three rooms, one of those was a dining room - one of those was a dining room, so the first big room did become more or less a living room. We ate in the dining room. That's all we did in there. We ate in the dining room. We still went to what we always called the "dining room"
- K: But there was nothing super suave - there was nothing like taking food into another room on a tray or on a traymobile - even when the manager was there?
- C: No. When the owner was there, his own staff cooked in the kitchen with us and Mum assisted in the cooking. And that food was taken



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- C: (cont.) into what was our dining room. They ate in there, and we ate in the kitchen.
- K: Oh, I see. Oh, yes. There was a definite distinction there.
- C: There was a distinction that way. Oh yes. My word. We ate there.
- K: You might have eaten the same food - *a hallway*
- C: It was exactly the same food, but it was just *a hallway* between us.
- K: But they might have wine with theirs, mightn't they?
- C: I doubt it, I doubt it. He was a teetotaller. W.W. Killen himself was a teetotaller. He had three sons and one daughter. One son - two sons were airmen in the First World War, and one fellow had a crash in France, and was bunged up in the legs. But I never saw any of them the worse of drink at all - never saw any of them. In fact, I don't suppose I ever saw any of them have a drink. When the old man died, old W.W. Killen died, the oldest boy took over the reins and he managed Merrilee Station and he was the boss right here. No, they didn't have any cocktail cabinet, that crowd.
- K: Was the dining room only kept for that purpose? Like, were there rooms that had restrictions? Like, if you wanted to flop down there and read a magazine, you could?
- C: We'd read there, and we had our big gramophone in there on the table. And when we got the piano, we had it there, and my sister used to play, and my Mother occasionally. If we had visitors, they'd be there, and if Dad and Mum were away, we'd throw the furniture aside and we'd dance there - do a dance around.
- K: Just the family?
- C: Oh no. We'd get the Cribbs over, and we'd get the McNamaras, some of them, and we'd have a little bit of a dance, and m'sister would play the piano. But apart from that, it was the only break and the only time that room was ever used for anything.
- K: Did you sing at all?
- C: No, no. I never heard any of them sing at all. Some of the others could sing, but none of my family could sing - not one of them.
- K: Did you have singalongs? Did you stand around the piano?
- C: No, no, I don't think so. Not to my knowledge.
- K: She'd just play the tune and you'd dance. You might dance a jig, or something like that?
- C: Waltzed, schottisched -

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- K: Do-si-do your partners - that sort of stuff?
- C: Two-step, etc etc. But very small. Just a small, little group of us - perhaps half a dozen. After the War that sing-song/singalong business sort of got going. When the soldiers come back from the War, things altered in 1918. Of course, we were growing up, and we got mixed up in the little bit of entertainment after the War.
- K: - - - - What about the power in the house in the '30s? You wouldn't have had electricity?
- C: No.
- K: Gas? Did you have gas?
- C: No. We just had kerosene - kerosene lamps, and wood.
- K: Wood for your wood stoves?
- C: Wood stoves and wood fires.
- K: What sort of a hot water system did you have?
- C: We had a big fountain - a big fountain hanging in the fireplace and alongside the big stove. And we carried the water from that to the bathroom, in buckets.
- K: You never had a bath heater either?
- C: No -
- K: Not in the '30s?
- C: No - not even up till the '40s. The only heating system of water was that big fountain when I left Goobragandra in 1940.
- K: Just buckets, and bucketted into the bath?
- C: Empty it, and fill it up again.
- K: What about washing - washing clothes?
- C: Oh, we had a very similar thing to what I've got out here. And then when we had got the bathroom we had a bathtub in there and a dish sitting on a wash-stand, and <sup>a</sup>jug. In the bedrooms, in the bedrooms, the two bedrooms, there was a wash-stand and a jug and basin -
- K: Oh, you had that?
- C: But we never used them!
- K: They were for decoration, were they?
- C: We never used them. Never ever used them.
- K: What about washing clothes?
- C: Well, Mum had an enormous cast iron boiler - I suppose it would hold about 10 gallons of water - and it was sitting up on a series of stones and two iron bars out in the open. And she did her washing there. And the clothes line was a very ordinary one, with a couple of props from one post to the other. And that went -

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- C: (cont.) that still went, I'm sure - I'm sure the clothes were still boiled in that thing, that boiler, outside that bathroom - or laundry - or whatever it was supposed to be - and they were carted from that into the bathroom or the laundry combined, and washed in the tub and hung out on the line. And that was the system of boiling the clothes - took the place of a washing machine - a big cast iron boiler out in the open. And that stood there for 30 years on top of those stones. It was taken to town - it was taken to town and it was sold for about 2/6d when I went into the Army.
- K: - - - With regard to refrigeration? Did you have a frig - a kerosene frig?
- C: We never even had a Coolgardie safe. We had a gauze wire screen thing hanging up under a porch. We never had a cooling system of any sort whatsoever. We had a water bag - cold water. Nothing whatsoever.
- K: Even when the manager came, in the heat of summer, and so on?
- C: No, no. There was nothing, nothing whatsoever at that place, at that house. Never was. Out in the back country I struck those Coolgardie safes first - those water cooled by evaporation, you know. They were all types of them out in the back country - they were invented - got bigger and better as they went on.
- K: What about a wireless? Did you have a wireless?
- C: No, no. Never had a wireless. There never was a wireless at Goobragandra Station from 1910 to 1940 - there was never a wireless there. We had one - my parents got one in Tumut during the War - the first one our family ever had, and they got it during the War, probably about 1943, and it's standing inside that room there now - that old cabinet one -
- K: Yes, I noticed that. Did you have a telephone?
- C: We got the telephone on to Goobragandra Station well after the First World War - well afterwards. I would have been out at - it would have been after 1925 we got it on.
- K: Oh, you did. Was it used very often?
- C: Oh well, yes -
- K: Did it play a big part?
- C: Oh well, it would have helped. It was amazing. Yes, it was an amazing difference, yes indeed.
- K: So, you would have had a party line, wouldn't you?
- C: No, it was a direct line from Coolamon Station, Coolamon Station, seven miles from Goobragandra. It was a direct line from that Station to Goobragandra Station. No one else touched it or interfered with it - it was one single wire.
- K: Coolamon Station?

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- C: Coolamon Station is now Clear Water.
- K: Oh, I see. So you were separate?
- C: We were separate. We could ring Coolamon Station, I think. I'm not sure we could do that. I think we had to go straight through to the Post Office at Blackmine.
- C: I think we could do with another drink?
- K: Yeah - right. This is your life story! This is your life! Now one of the things is actual detail day of that household on the Goobragandra - say in 1938. Now, your first wife died in 1938 -
- C: '37 -
- K: '37?
- C: 22nd April, '37 - she was 30 years of age -
- K: So by '38 you were living there again by yourself?
- C: Yes.
- K: With your son?
- C: Father and Mother -
- K: But with your son - the first child was a son?
- C: No - a little girl. She was there - she was there.
- K: What sort of hour did you get up?
- C: Oh, goodness me - my Father would be up before daylight - the jackass would be second up compared to him. And of course, that little girl - that little girl was out of bed; the minute he moved she was out of bed. That meant that my Mother and I had to be up also. So I suppose the whole lot of us were up by 6 o'clock in the summertime, at least - no later in the winter - exactly the same time we had to be out of bed.
- K: What were the different things that you did - each person - say in the first hour or two?
- C: At that stage now - at that stage there was no men working on the place. They'd reared a boy - Father and Mother had reared a boy - his mother died in 1924 on the Station - and his name Neville <sup>Auckland</sup>. They'd reared him - and in '38 he was a big lump of a boy and living there with them, treating him as their own child. They'd reared him. And he (I'd forgotten about this) used to milk the cows.
- K: When did he start there then?
- C: He was born in 1924 before I went to Wanaaring, and this is '38 -
- K: That's 14 years -
- C: He was starting to milk the cows and get the wood - and he and the little girl - she used to follow him about - he was a great help to her - a great companion really. He was another young person.

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- C: (cont.) And we had quite a lot of cattle there. And the fences in the meantime over the years had deteriorated to such an extent that the cattle were always on the wrong side of the river, or in the wrong part of the place, or not on the place at all. And on top of that, we had 2000 sheep. So m'Father and I were busy, very, very busy, and the days were just as long as ever, and the rabbits were in hundreds of thousands, and it was a full time job to try and keep the rabbits down to the extent where some grass would grow for the stock. That was the position in '38 and '39.
- K: What did your Father do in the first break before breakfast?
- C: Oh, he was always first up, I think, all his life. He would light the fire - he'd light the fire and he'd probably go down to the cowyard to the boy, and between them -
- K: They'd do the milking -
- C: They'd do the milking. They'd milk three or four cows, and that milk, of course, was used in the house. The little girl - there was extra milk poured off for her. And Mum, my Mother still made her own butter. And of course, we had cream galore from those good cows. And he'd invariably come back, my Father, carrying a bucket of milk and leading his horse, leaving his saddle on. And quite often he'd be leading the saddle-horse by the mane - no bridle lines or anything. He'd a bucket of milk in one hand. I've seen him do it a hundred times. And he'd get to the far side of the house and call out to someone, anyone, who'd like to give him a bridle to put on the horse -
- K: And your Mother - she'd be making butter, would she? Or preparing -
- C: Getting the breakfast, of course.
- K: Which would be - what? Porridge?
- C: Porridge - yes. Rolled oats - yes. No Wheat Bix. And of course the little girl had to be fed and looked after. And they worshipped her - they worshipped the little child, the two of them.
- K: So, they'd reared all four of you - then reared this boy, and then reared your daughter -
- C: Reared my daughter - reared her right up until she finished school - right up until she was 20 years of age. When my Father died, she lived with my Mother - never lived with us at any - not any lengthy period. Mother and she became so attached to one another that you couldn't separate them - one'd be unhappy without the other.
- K: And this breakfast would be eaten in this dining room - I mean in this <sup>extended</sup> kitchen?
- C: Yes, in the kitchen - the big old kitchen with the kitchen table

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- C: (cont.) in it that was, oh goodness me, twice the length of this table - the kitchen table - the big stove and the big stove, of course, supplied a fair amount of comfort -
- K: Um, warmth in the winter time -
- C: In the winter -
- K: Did you talk about anything much at breakfast time, or was it pretty quiet? Your Father was a pretty quiet sort of bloke, wasn't he? Pretty bitter and quiet?
- C: He didn't talk much at any time, unless he was drunk. Might have been a bit extra. Yes, he had a reputation of a grim, hard man of the old school. Although I suppose, as I said, he never flogged me - never gave me a hiding. If he had have been terribly hard, I suppose he would have done, because I deserved it a lot of times.
- K: And in the '30s, your Mother's activities would have still been very similar to what they were when you were a child?
- C: I would think so.
- K: Still in the house most of the day?
- C: Still in the house all day - all day.
- K: So that the roles that your Father and Mother started with when they were newly married continued practically all their life?
- C: There would never been any variation - never any variation. Unless it was a different type of food turned up, or something, and they had to learn how to cook it.
- K: What did you have in the evenings?
- C: We always had porridge, and we also always had chops for breakfast because we were supplied with meat.
- K: That's in the mornings - porridge and chops. What about night? What did you have at night?
- C: Well, we'd have a roast meal at night. A cold dinner. Of course there'd be only Mother there for dinner and the little girl -
- K: You mean at lunchtime? Oh, that's when you had your dinner -
- C: No, no. We'd have dinner at night then. We'd have a baked tea, we called it - lunch, we called that dinner always. I still call it dinner - I can't break the habit of it. We'd have a baked dinner, or we'd have boiled mutton and vegetables, and we'd have, in the summertime we'd have a lot of junket and jelly and stewed fruit. There was fruit all over the place along this river, everywhere. Every person had their own fruit. We'd have stewed fruit and we'd have junket, or we'd have custard, seeing as we always had plenty of milk and cream. That was about the sum total of the food - and it was all cooked there in the kitchen and eaten in the kitchen.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- K: That's where the warmth was, too.
- C: Yes.
- K: What about after the evening meal?
- C: My Father went to bed -
- K: And Mum?
- C: Read till 12 o'clock.
- K: Every night? In the '30s, she was still an avid reader?
- C: Yes. She was blind in one eye, blind in one eye. She had no glasses. She'd hold her hand over that blind eye and read with the one eye, hour after hour, hour after hour.
- K: Gee eh! That was her sort of escape in a sense, was it?
- C: Her escape - that was her only escape.
- K: She could go into other worlds? She could enter ~~the~~ world of other people?
- C: Yes - and the only variation from the humdrum slave-type life that she led from the day she was married till she left Goobragandra.
- K: What did you do after, in the evenings?
- C: Oh well, I suppose at that particular stage I'd be dividing my attentions between trying to read a book or trying to entertain the little girl until she went to sleep, at that particular time. Or perhaps out before dark trying to shoot a rabbit or set a trap, or whistle a fox. The full day was used up, I can assure you, from the time we got out of bed in the summer time, maybe well and truly before 6. But in the winter time it would be still dark at 6 -
- K: And in the '30s and '38 were there any other paid or half-paid workers in the household? Your Mother did everything?
- C: She did the lot, because there was only just our small, tight little group.
- K: Would you have paid your Mother and Father something towards the running of the household from your wages?
- C: No, I never did in the whole of my life - never ever.
- K: Even when you were there with your wife, earlier on?
- C: No. We bought half of the groceries then. We always bought half of the groceries. They'd bring the grocery bill, and we'd pay half of it, of course. Oh yes, that was understood. And of course, there was extra little things for the baby which had to be collected ~~and~~ of course ~~the~~ wife paid for those.
- K: Who decided how the money was to be spent? Did your Father or -
- C: Yes -
- K: Your Mother? He was the banker and accountant, was he?
- C: He was the lot. He was the lord and master, in every sense of the word.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- K: Did you actually keep books on this, or did he just -
- C: Yes, he did. Yes, there's a box full of his books. I was going through them last night - the cost of a thousand items. It would completely surprise you to see the price - 6d for a plug of tobacco, 6d for 2 lbs sugar, 75 lbs sugar 17/6d. Quite a lot of the accounts are there - bills from storekeepers in Tumut.
- K: I'd like to have a look at those later on -
- C: Oh, it's terrific - there's a dozen different - and in my Uncle's books, they go back to 1901.
- K: Would you let some of those <sup>out</sup> to be copied?
- C: Wouldn't make no difference whatsoever now -
- K: They might be worthwhile. Where would you have bought your clothes in 1938?
- C: T.N. Learmont, Tumut. He was a men's clothing department only. T.N. Learmont. Groceries would have been bought from W.W. Learmont, a brother.
- K: Shoes from the same place where you bought the clothes?
- C: Yes, everything from that shop -
- K: And they would have been mainly riding boots, wouldn't they?
- C: Well, for my part, yes, they would be.
- K: What about household appliances? Cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, machinery?
- C: Well, Tumut, F.L. Baker.
- K: Oh, he was the same guy who - Bob Hughes bought his goods from - the Hughes family up at Kiandra.
- C: Yes, they'd be the same people.
- K: Yeah, I've seen the label before.
- C: F.L. Baker - were in what is now known as the Tumut Co-op Store in the main street.
- K: Would you have bought anything on Hire Purchase? Would there have been such a thing in the '30s and '38? Would you have used that?
- C: No, nothing on Hire Purchase - no. Prior to F.L. Baker, Grill owned the store, and Grill's name is in that cheque book that I just had there - prior to F.L. Baker. Grill built the store.
- K: Do you remember any major household purchases in '38, like any - I mean, this is probably a bit difficult -
- C: Not in '38. No.
- K: How about new clothes? What sort of clothing would you have bought in the '30s?
- C: I would have bought all jodhpurs and elastic-sided boots - and gay coloured shirts - almost similar to what I've got on today. I'm

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- C: (cont.) very fond of a new hat. I'd have a new hat every six months if I had the money to buy it. I always wore leggings with m'jodhpurs - never without them -
- K: A hat, very rarely, I suppose?
- C: Yes, I never took m'hat off! The only time I took m'hat off was when I sat down to have a meal.
- K: You'd sleep without it, wouldn't you?
- C: Yes.
- K: Was there anything that was delivered to the household in /38? Bread from Tumut in '38?
- C: Yes. In '38 we had a mail run and a baker. The baker used to bring bread in '38. Mail and bread - that was delivered to the Station. Mail twice a week and bread probably three times a week. Cooper - Cooper's Bakery.
- K: So your Mother didn't have to bake bread anymore?
- C: No, it was left over from then on, and we had the mail from Lacmalac Post Office.
- K: And you would have kept chooks, I suppose?
- C: Oh yes. We always had chooks, never without them.
- K: Did you ever have pigs or anything like that? Pigs? Goats?
- C: We had a couple of pigs - a couple of wild pigs. We'd catch wild pigs and bring them home and fatten them up. We mostly always had a pig. Dressed the pig, and we'd have a bit of fresh pork, etc.
- K: Did you have goats?
- C: No, we never had goats.
- K: Cows - you had cows, of course?
- C: Yes, we had plenty of cows. And we had plenty of fat sheep for mutton.
- K: Did you ever exchange any of your products - like did you barter with anything?
- C: No, no.  
And our sheep were poor - and I went and got one that belonged to someone else .
- K: That's called something else, isn't it?
- C: It's not barter.
- K: But rabbits - you would have still had rabbits in the '30s too, wouldn't you? And fish?
- C: Plenty of rabbits.
- K: Blackberries. Did you use blackberries at all for jam?
- C: We didn't have any blackberries.
- K: Oh, you didn't have any?
- C: There was none there.
- K: None in the Goobragandra in '38?

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- C: No. When I left there in 1940 there was two patches of blackberries.
- K: How about further up the valley?
- C: No, none at all. Two tiny patches of blackberries. That was all that was on Goobragandra in 1940. Now there are 500 acres of blackberries. No one knows how.
- K: Did you ever go into town to have a meal or anything like that - to Tumut?
- C: Ah yes, yes, in 1938. Yes, '37, '38, '40, we'd have a meal in a cafe or a hotel -
- K: Was there a Chinese cafe in Tumut by then?
- C: No. All Dago. Yes, three or four Dago shops.
- K: Italians? Even at that stage?
- C: Yes.
- K: So it's not a recent phenomenon?
- C: No. They were there well before the War.
- K: Was that very expensive - eating out in Tumut?
- C: Oh no, not - I suppose it cost enough for all the money we would have had. Yes, but nothing like the price today.
- K: Did you like going out like that?
- C: Oh yes, oh my word, yes. It was quite a novelty. As I say, we didn't do it very often, I'll tell you.
- K: But you would have had a whole series of other celebrations, like birthdays? You would have had celebrations, wouldn't you?
- C: Oh yes. We'd have a big birthday cake, and an extra special bottle of lemon squash.
- K: And you still had Empire Day?
- C: Yes.
- K: What about Melbourne Cup? Did you get involved in that? In the '30s, the Cup wasn't a big thing?
- C: No, no. We never got involved in the Melbourne Cup. my Father was a great man for races. He used to go to the races in Tumut quite often. I never became involved in them.
- K: You didn't have a wireless then, did you?
- C: No.
- K: So you wouldn't be able to listen to the Melbourne Cup.
- C: We hardly knew it was on. We hardly knew it was on, I tell you.
- K: What about Christmas? Any particular things at Christmas?
- C: A big plum pudding, and cream or custard. That's one thing my Mother excelled in, was that plum pudding. And possibly we'd have a tin of preserved fruit for New Year's Day.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- K: Did you sing songs at Christmas time, or anything like that?
- C: No.
- K: Did you ever have a Ball or a bigger gathering at Goobragandra homestead, like for the New Year?
- C: No. The only dance that was ever at Goobragandra Station to my knowledge was the end of the War, when the people of the River banded together and gave the returned soldiers a welcome home - the only time to my knowledge that ever a dance at the Goobragandra Station, and my Father and his first cousin Billy Piper had a row and offered one another a fight. Just as well we didn't have them too often.
- K: What about Easter? Did you do anything special? Did you have Easter eggs and things like that? Did you have an Easter bunny who came and -
- C: No, we had nothing like that. Easter - wait a bit. Good Friday - we didn't eat meat. That was the only difference in the whole routine.
- K: And your Mother, being a Catholic. Did she get away to church then.
- C: No.
- K: What about Christmas Day?
- C: No. She never went to church. She never got away to go anywhere. My sister and I, we did go to church at one particular stage of my life, I can remember. My sister and I did go to church, to the Presbyterian Church in Tumut. The Minister, the Reverend McGowan, he had a family, a girl the same age as us, and a boy. And we got friendly with the two children, and that's the only reason why I went to church, on account of the girl. And my sister went to church because her mother advised her to do it.
- K: Did you go to any baptisms, or anything like that? Do you remember any children being baptised?
- C: Not that I know of.
- K: What about your own daughter?
- C: Oh well, the little girl was christened - that's all. That's the only time.
- K: ANZAC Day. Do you remember anything special? Did you go into Tumut for ANZAC Day in '38?
- C: No, no. Not prior to the Second World War.
- K: It wasn't a big thing?
- C: No, it wasn't a big thing.
- K: Even though it dates back to the First War -

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- C: The Old Diggers, of course, they kept it up. There wasn't many of them in Tumut. It wasn't a very great affair at all. I never even thought about it. And my Father not being a returned soldier, he never thought about it either. And as far as I knew, none of the Returned Diggers from the First World War in our group were ever members of the RSL - never.
- K: You never joined? Well, up til '38 you weren't a member of the RSL? Your Father wasn't?
- C: No. I'm still not a member of the RSL. I went into the Tumut RSL the first ANZAC Day after the War (the Second War) and there was an old soldier from the First War - he happened to be sitting alongside me when he had to sing God Save the Queen. Everybody stood up but this old man. I nudged him in the ribs - come on. He wouldn't move. So one word led to another and I yanked him up onto his feet, and he jabbed me. He hit me. And the Secretary of the RSL came, and of course there was a shindig. And I said, "All right, you know what to do with your dinner, and your RSL too", and I never joined it. And that done me the greatest turn in the world. I've never pulled the lever of a poker machine. They've helped me right down to the ground. And I'm still not a member of the RSL.
- K: Yes. You have to learn when to say no to those things.
- C: I think so.
- K: Were there any other special things that you might have gone to as a household, as a - in those days there would have been five of you -
- C: Only the Tumut Show - that would be the only thing we would go to - possibly, possibly at that stage, 1938 and 1939, we might have gone as a body to the Tumut Show, because as I said before, there was my Mother and myself and the younger brother - he came home frequently - he was home quite a lot. He didn't work on the Station at that particular time.
- K: Were there any visiting circuses or anything like that? Or vaudeville, or any side show things like that?
- C: There would be circus -
- K: Would you go in?
- C: We'd go to a circus, but my Mother wouldn't go. My Father wouldn't go to it either. But we young people, of course, would go to a circus and enjoy it thoroughly. And of course, there were all the travelling buckjump shows. We young people would be there - my brother and I - and the boy that they reared, and all the young fellows around, and a lot of the girls would go to the buckjump shows - something different - and come along perhaps about every two or three months, four months.

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- K: What about the theatre? Did you have pictures? In 1938 would you go to the pictures?
- C: Yes, there was pictures I suppose, I suppose. Beyond all doubt I went to pictures all my life. I went to moving pictures. That's one thing I completely forgot. The old silent pictures, in the Oddfellows Hall in Tumut - I went to those from the time I was 15 - I forgot all about that. And my sister and I, too, we both went, and my brother. We used to drive from Tumut - from Goobragandra to Tumut. We'd go to the pictures and drive home again in the middle of the night. The same applied to a dance, a dance at Lacmalac, or a dance in Tumut, or anywhere in the locality at all, we'd drive to the dance from up here and dance possibly till daylight, and then drive back home. Or if we danced till two o'clock, we'd still drive back home in the night with the horse and sulky.
- K: You did this in /38 too? Would it have been horse and sulky?
- C: Oh yes.
- K: Wouldn't have been your Father's car?
- C: No, we had the car. We had the car then. That's right.
- K: You'd borrow your Father's car. You'd get into town more quickly.
- C: Oh, a completely different matter. From 1929 on. He didn't encourage you to take the car, I can assure you.
- K: Neither did my Father.
- C: Wouldn't answer you when you asked for the key. It was his car, in spite of the fact that he got £5 as a trade-in on one that I bought here from White Cliffs in 1927. He still didn't consider that I had any authority whatsoever over that Willys Whippet.
- K: Did your parents ever have card nights, or anything like that?
- C: Yes, yes. Over the years we played an awful lot of '500' and then Euchre. Not so much my Father. Not so much my Father. He'd go to town and he'd play Euchre in the pub with the boys. But he had some kind of a feeling in his mind that cards wasn't a moral type of thing that young people should be mixed up in. But we did. Mum loved the game. She loved a game of Euchre or '500', and so did my wife, and my brother and sister - and any young people who'd come along, of course. Naturally cards was everything.
- K: /Cause you didn't need much light to play them by.
- C: No. If we'd had a light like that it would have lit the whole paddock up.
- K: Did you ever have any dinner parties in 1938?
- C: No.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

- K: Did you ever drink - well, you didn't have much alcohol, so if you had a card night it would be just a cup of tea, or something like that?
- C: Tea, yes. Tea or coffee.
- K: You wouldn't even get a little nip of anything?
- C: Nuh. You'd get a nip of nothing.
- K: Your Father did all his drinking at the pub?
- C: Yes, at the pub. And as I said before, he had a flask. He'd finish it and throw it away before he got over the hill to the house.

End of Side 2, Tape 2 of 3

Cecil Piper

Interviewed 28 June 1982

Tape 3 of 3, Side 1

KH: Would you have had newspapers delivered in '38 as part of the mail?

CP: With the mail, yes.

KH: What, once a week?

CP: Twice a week - the Tumut and Adelong Times and The Sydney Morning Herald delivered twice a week. My Father 'd meet the mail. He'd open all the papers and sit on the verandah before you got anywhere in cooee of him, and when you arrived the wind would have had them blown all over the place, and you'd have to go and gather 'em up, you know, to read them.

KH: And you didn't like that?

CP: Nobody liked it. You had to put up with it.

KH: Any magazines? Any monthlies or anything like that that came? Anything on the land? No magazines about sheep dipping and the latest sort of technology -

CP: No, no. If you got anything on that it would be sent from the Head Station by the owner or the manager down there, and it would be a penny circular type of thing. No, there was nothing like that. There was no talk of drenching - drenching sheep or drenching cattle. The only thing we did, we dipped the sheep.

KH: What about books? What sort of books were available, say, for your kids - for that boy that was in the household as well - or the children of the house?

CP: Well, my Father didn't read books at all. He only read the papers. For my part, William McLeod Raines and Zane Grey, any Yankee western stuff, Australian bushranging stories or poetry books. And my Mother read the books, Zane Grey books - and <sup>another</sup> very, very favourite author was Steele Rudd, "On Our Selection," etc, etc.

KH: Would you have used a local library at all, or would you have bought the books?

CP: We bought the books - or - or possibly we may have exchanged the books with some neighbour around.

KH: What about the kids? Any special -

CP: Oh well, the boy, of course, read what he could get hold of.

KH: Did he have comics in those days?

CP: We had no comics. No - he had no comics. <sup>(laughter)</sup> He was never allowed to have comics. No. Ridiculous nonsense!

KH: No Phantoms? No Donald, Scrooge McDuck??

Tape 3 of 3, Side 1

CP: No he didn't - he had nothing like that, that boy, at all. And the little girl, of course, had some little books that Mum used to read to her and I used to read to her.

KH: But what sort of things - he was a young boy then, growing up as a teenager in 1938, becoming a young man - did he go off by himself to special things or -

CP: No, he had a very quiet life. He started to work, work on the place when he was about 15/16. 1938 he wasn't working - he used to help outside and that sort of thing. No, I can't -

KH: So if he did go out, it was generally with the adults?

CP: With me or my Father or younger brother, perhaps. The younger brother had a very soft corner in his heart for him - he was very fond of that little fellow and helped him a lot. The fellow and myself didn't get on. We used to get to cross purposes quite often. I don't know why. My fault, of course - too cranky.

KH: But in terms of your parents, your Father - his activities of going to town, for instance, and going to the pub, was very separate from your Mother. She wouldn't necessarily have the equivalent - I mean would they go off to town together? She would go to a group of ladies meeting, or something?

CP: Never saw a ladies meeting in her life.

KH: No?

CP: But he went to the pub quite frequently, and quite frequently came home well the worse of liquor - quite frequently - in the dark - full gallop - in a horse and a sulky. A wild man - a wild man in his youth and a wild man right up till he got too old to be wild.

KH: And mainly wild when he was under the influence, or wild at other times as well?

CP: He was brumby running and buckjump riding and droving and cattle duffing -

KH: But was he wild in a sense - in the way he handled his wife?

CP: No, not so much. He was a bit inclined to brawl and he'd get into trouble and it used to perhaps backfire a little on mum - on the family. He was 6 foot 2, and he came home one night to Bombowlee in 1909 - he had two black eyes - and he was 6 foot 2 - and Mother was annoyed. She put the hot <sup>packs (?)</sup> on them and was putting something on them, and she said, "Who were you fighting with?". I can remember as well as anything - him lying there in the cottage in bed. "Oh", he said, "Smith" he said. Smith wouldn't fight a bloke as big as himself". So I thought Smith must be a hell of a big fellah - he was 6 foot 2, m'Father. He weighed 15 stone. Smith must have been a big chap.



- KH: Understatement! - - - Oh, this might be a bit difficult. Would the children have had activities by then which the adults didn't know about - like, would this young bloke have been into drinking or stealing or smoking??
- CP: Oh no, no, by no means - by no means.
- KH: Would he have belonged to any organised social groups like Scouts or anything like that?
- CP: The boy - no, he was never a Scout. He was taught by a governess, or he went to boarding school at Lacmalac - a public school at Lacmalac and boarded with different people there. No, he was a boy quite apart from the average run of the boys inasmuch as he was very shortsighted, had a squeaky voice and an unprepossessing look altogether. So - he's still the same, and now he's 50-odd.
- KH: Who did you feel closest to at that time in your household - to your Mother?
- CP: Yes - yes - I would say so. And that probably went for the whole of my life, possibly, I think.
- KH: But your Father always had the greatest authority?
- CP: Always.
- KH: What sort of decisions did your Mother make? As to what sort of clothes the others would wear? And would she - what sort of decisions did she make about your daughter, for instance?
- CP: Oh well, yes - I suppose she would have had more say, of course, in the conduct - entertainment or whatever that my sister had. Yes, possibly so.
- KH: But your Mother would have been the one that would have, say, had most to do with the <sup>r</sup>values, with the way your attitudes might have shaped because they would have spent more time with her in the house, and so on.
- CP: Yes - yes - possibly -
- KH: Like their manners - behaviour when they go into town and so on.
- CP: Yes, yes. That's right.
- KH: She'd be the one who'd remind them how to hold their hands, or not to get dirty, wouldn't it?
- CP: Yes - yes. That'd be so. I would think so. Yes. My Father was very, very, very strict in the clothing he wore - his general appearance. He'd never go to town without - in a full suit and his necktie and his white collar and his best hat and his shoes polished that you could see your face in them. So actually his general bearing should have had a very good effect on our later style of life, I would think, anyway. In spite of the fact that my Mother was a

- CP: (cont.) kindly, generous, soft-hearted, useful person, I think that possibly his attitude toward life affected the three of us. I don't know about that boy, whether it affected him at all.
- KH: Oh, he must have picked up things somehow.
- CP: Yes - yes. He did. He's a prosperous boy today. He's got a home at Talbingo and he's got a very, very good job at the Snowy Mountains Council, and he's quite well-to-do. So, if they didn't do him any good, they done him no harm.
- KH: So - a major crisis in your 30s - 30s for you - was the death of your wife and your second child - and finding your feet again after that?
- CP: Yes - yes. That's quite right. It was a very, very great shock - a very great shock. It's something - an experience that only those who go through it actually realise the full portent of the thing - it's like half your life going. It's something, perhaps hard to explain, but it's very explicit.
- KH: Did you have very much to do with the relatives of your Mother of your Father during the '30s. Like, would you have gone visiting them and so on?
- CP: No, not in the '30s. I was beginning to know them all, beginning to know the younger generation of my Mother's people, and we were friendly.
- KH: Would you call on your relatives, or would they call on the relatives in times of need?
- CP: No - no. My Father would probably call on his relatives - the Piper side. But my Mother, the whole of her life after she was married, she lost 90% of contact with her own people, and of course consequently, we didn't come into the picture with them either. I had the feeling all the time that they disliked m'Father - they disliked him. And although he was hard and he was bitter, but in a lot of ways I was loyal to him. So I think that under those circumstances I didn't contact with them much.
- KH: So the two lots of grandparents must - they would never have had very much to do with each other at all?
- CP: No.
- KH: One was Protestant and one was Catholic for a start -
- CP: From north of Ireland. There was one thing about him, he was religious; if a Protestant can be religious, he was religious, and Michael, the old drover fellow - he was a religious man - he wouldn't work on Sunday. My Father didn't believe in anything like working Sunday. Somewhere along the line there was religion handed down from that first old Samuel Piper, from County Cork.

KH: Do you think there was much affection expressed with in your family? Like, did your Father or your Mother show much affection towards each other?

CP: Oh, not to any great extent - not that was anywhere noticeable whatsoever. They were both very, very fond of we young people. They both were very loyal to us, didn't matter whether we got into trouble or whether we didn't. Whether we done the wrong thing, or anything like that, we were never actually stood on the mat for it. They were more affectionate to us, but not to any extent whatsoever towards themselves. I feel, I might be wrong, but I feel that in many, many, many cases in the days from 1940 back to 1840, very little affection was shown in families. For instance, my Father always called his sister Dinah Piper. He didn't say Dinah - he called her Dinah Piper. Alf, the older brother, if he referred to my Father, he'd always say Israel Piper. You'd never hear him say Israel was here, or Dinah came over to see me, or -

KH: What about any cuddling or anything like that? Or touching -

CP: Wouldn't think so, under any circumstances.

KH: They were very private?

CP: Yes.

KH: Your Mother might have cuddled your daughter though?

CP: Oh well, she would.

KH: How about the boy that they nurtured?

CP: She was terribly fond of me and she worshipped the younger brother that got killed. She worshipped him. They both worshipped him. They both worshipped him, and when he died - when he was killed - it hit very, very hard and my Mother never ever got over it. She had a photo of him, an enlargement of him, and she'd look at it every night before she went to bed. So it was a very, very sad affair in their lives, and it did alter their attitude towards one another, to a certain extent. Not much.

KH: Do you remember when you first discovered that boys were different from girls?

CP: Yes, when I was about 3 -

KH: That early?

CP: Yeh, well and truly.

KH: How did you find out?

CP: I was playing with a little playmate on the banks of the Bombowlee Creek at Bellevue. I think I was about 4, or 3 or 4, and she was the same. And I discovered that she was a girl.

KH: Did you think about it much?

CP: No, not to a great extent.

KH: What about the further stage? What about discovering all the intricacies of sexual intercourse and so on, and reproduction -

CP: Oh dear!

KH: You can leave these out. You don't have to reply to these if you don't want to.

CP: Well, I'll get another wine -

KH: They've got a section here on male and female relationships -

CP: Well, male and female relationship was the same in 1938 as it is in 1982. And it'll be the same when it's 2002.

KH: In the actual detail, yes. (I think just a touch for me) - But I think what they are particularly interested in is the attitudes and whether or not these matters were discussed openly. You know, like how much children at a particular age actually knew about it, or whether babies came from under a cabbage leaf. And, you know, whether any of these things were really explained.

CP: I think - I think that, unfortunately, that there was not very much discussion between mother and daughter, or mother and son, or father and son. In my case, there was none whatsoever, between my Father and I about sex, he never mentioned it, and he knew damn well that it goes on. But my Mother probably did talk to my sister about it, possibly in a very, very private - behind closed doors, I would think. But that was a big mistake, of course. The modern idea is quite different. Whether it is any better or whether it's any worse I wouldn't give an opinion.

KH: No - no. So that on the whole you certainly never discussed these things with your Father?

CP: No.

KH: Did you discuss them with your Mother?

CP: No, never.

KH: She never enlightened you in any way?

CP: No. No.

KH: Did you find out much from your friends? I mean, from your mates?

CP: No. I found out for myself - from their sister. I found out for myself -

KH: From your mates' sisters - I see - the direct approach! Did you learn anything about birth control methods? Anything to do to prevent pregnancy?

CP: No - no. Nothing whatsoever prior to '38. No, nothing whatsoever.

KH: Really?

CP: I - I was a pretty shy fellow. I didn't perhaps have to go into those matters much.

KH: You mean, it wasn't a problem because you weren't confronted with it on many occasions?

CP: No. There is such a thing as luck.

KH: Yes?

CP: One thing I believe in.

KH: Yes, I see. But you would have had - I imagine, if you were like me or anyone else, you would have had considerable interest in the opposite sex and you would have had considerable interest in making more intimate approaches if you could?

CP: Oh, by all means. Yes. As I say, right from the time I was 3 years old. But I never - there's a horrible word, horrible word, and it's "Knockback" - and I got plenty of 'em.

KH: Would you have - and this is optional - would you have sexual intercourse before you were married?

CP: Not with my wife - not with my wife on either occasions - no. But I did have sexual intercourse, I'm sure, long before I left school. when I was 13 years of age.

KH: Right - I see. So you would remember who that was with? But you ~~wouldn't want~~ to name them, I would think?

CP: That's not done, is it? Even though they might be dead -

KH: Yes. What were your thoughts about it then? Would you have thought about it much. Of course at 3 it was just a discovery -she's different to me. But at 13?

CP: I thought about it a lot -

KH: That was quite early, I would have thought?

CP: Yes, it was. But I thought about it a lot, and I had more sex - yes, this is true - more sex and more enjoyment out of sex between the age of 12 and 18 than I've ever had for the rest of my life. After that I either became completely stupid, or too slow to catch grubs at a funeral.

KH: More self-conscious too, I suppose, by then.

CP: Not so infernally cheeky.

KH: Right.

CP: That's the point, isn't it? Possibly you begin to learn a little bit about the rights and wrongs of some things, maybe - maybe.

KH: Did you ever use any form of contraception at that time?

CP: No, I'd never heard of such a thing -

KH: Just luck!

CP: Just luck. There was an old man lived here in this house. He's dead quite a long time ago. And he said that he rolled his French letter in *powder*. But I have it on good authority that the only

CP: (cont.) French letter he had was *the one the saddler made for him out of a bit of basil* [(?!)-not clear].

KH: And did you tell other people about your <sup>intimate</sup> experiences?

CP: No, no. There was, and I hope, I sincerely hope there still is a certain code of honour, or rules, or whatever you like to call it, that you don't mention a lady's name, no matter whether she is quite popular with the boys, or whether she is completely different. I have never, never in my life, never ever admitted to any person that I've had sex with any woman. Never ever admitted that I've had sex with any particular woman -

KH: Oh, you've never named them. But you would have talked about it generally? I mean you might have wanted to boast about it, or something?

CP: Well, you may have done - not to any great extent I wouldn't

KH: No. Do you remember anyone having a miscarriage or anything like that, in the '30s? Around, near, very close to you? I mean perhaps your wife, or perhaps other people?

CP: No. No. Definitely not my wife. No. That's a thing that I have never ever really understood. I know now what it is - after all those years. But for many years I didn't really, I suppose, even think about it. But I know, in one particular instance, in the '30s, of a quarter caste girl - a quarter caste aboriginal girl, in the White Cliffs area - the White Cliffs district, who apparently had had six miscarriages - six, one after the other. I don't know how many years in between, I don't know how many months or weeks. And that astonished me. It was something I could hardly believe. But I understand that it was perfectly right.

KH: What about abortions? Did you remember anything to do with abortions in the '30s?

CP: No. No -

KH: Ever hear of a person having an abortion?

CP: No, I don't - I honestly don't think that I know, or could name any person, any woman, that has had an abortion. I'm sure that I could not name one woman, to my knowledge, and there must be thousands of them.

KH: What about homosexuality and relationships between males? When would you have first learnt about that, or when did it first come across your consciousness?

CP: Oh well, during the War - during the first years in the Army.

KH: Not until after 1938 - in the Second World War?

CP: No. Well after that.

- KH: Well, that's all right.
- CP: I never heard about it. Never took any notice of it. Hardly ever believed it. But during the War I realised that it was a fact.
- KH: What about amongst females? When did you first get an idea that it was all something, in a sense, I suppose male homosexuality has been longer in the public consciousness or whatever than female. Would it be a very recent thing?
- CP: Apparently it's not so recent.
- KH: But I mean, in your mind?
- CP: Oh yes, in my mind. It would be something that I never ever dreamed of. Never ever dreamed of. I couldn't see how the hell it could happen, but it does happen. No, I had no information on that at all - I knew nothing about it. I know it's rampant. It goes on and on and on, and quite a lot of women get more satisfaction from that than they do from a man.
- KH: Right. Right.
- CP: But what the hell they do, I don't know. I'd like to. I'd like to see them at it.
- KH: Did you know any male homosexuals during the War?
- CP: Only one - only one poor fellow, and he's dead. It was in an Army camp at Caboolture. He was kicked to pieces - kicked to death. He wasn't kicked to death - he was kicked to pieces. You couldn't find a piece as big as that <sup>Cassette</sup> of him.
- KH: You mean actually physically destroyed?
- CP: Oh yes. The soldiers kicked him to bits - kicked him to pieces. There was nothing of him left. He, poor unfortunate wretch, he approached a cook in the camp. He approached a cook in the camp, and of course the cook just ignored him and laughed at him, and told the boys about him. And you get even a hundred men - a hundred men - two hundred men, or five hundred men - in this case it was 60 men. And it got around that he was this and he was that, and he admitted it. There was never enough of him gathered up to bury him. And that's the only time in the whole of the 2nd World War, in my experience, that I came up against it.
- KH: Christ!
- CP: You couldn't find as big a piece as that of him. There was nothing of him left.
- KH: Did this happen -
- CP: In front of everybody - in front of the officers, in front of - even in front of the Padre.
- KH: Which camp was this?

- CP: It was at Caboolture, on the Queensland coast, north, just north of Brisbane, and there were only 60 of us in the unit, I think. And we were there for <sup>Specialist training</sup> ... We used to go from there to Caloundra to another group.
- That's what happened to him. That's the only one -
- KH: Did they shoot him first, or anything like that? They just punched him and -
- CP: No. They kicked him to pieces. Any Australian contingent in those days would be different now because there's more and more of them. There's policemen, there's soldiers, there's taxi drivers, there's plenty of homosexuals today. But in those days any homosexual that admitted he was, or was found out to be in the Australian Army, and in the Yank - in the American Army too - would have suffered the same fate.
- KH: Christ! It was just covered up, I suppose.
- CP: Oh yes. He would have been accidentally killed - accidentally -
- KH: Yes. Yes. What were your first thoughts when you heard about homosexuality for the first time? What did you think it was?
- CP: Well, I was absolutely surprised, and couldn't believe it - couldn't believe it. But as time wore on, I realised it was a fact, but I still can't understand - can't understand. There's millions of women. There is a saying, an old, old saying, in the world, "If you can't get a woman, get a clean old man", but there's plenty of women.
- KH: If they're all turning into lesbians, there'll be less of them - not that that's necessarily happening. Now, this is on a different - we'll leave the female/male thing for a while -
- CP: Yes, forget about it <sup>it</sup> don't worry me now.
- KH: Was your Father the only one who had a licence to drive the car in the '30s?
- CP: Er - my sister had a licence.
- KH: But you didn't?
- CP: Oh yes, I had a licence.
- KH: Your Father had one, your sister had one, and you had one - and your Father would have paid cash for the car?
- CP: Yes. He paid £199 cash for it - from Alec McKenzie, a car dealer in Wynyard Street, Tumut.
- KH: Did you ever talk about <sup>class</sup> in Australian society in the 1930s? Like the differences between yourselves and the guy who actually owned the property?
- CP: No, I wouldn't think so. I don't think it would have come in - not here - no, not in '38. No.

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- KH: Do you think there were classes in Australian society then?
- CP: Oh, there were classes. Yes, there were classes. I struck classes in the droving days when I'd go to a homestead to - a station homestead - to ask for grass for my horses, or ask for someone to sell me 10 lbs of flour or something to see me through. Oh yes, I struck class, and there was class all over Australia - lots of class. It's becoming more pronounced -
- KH: More pronounced, do you think?
- CP: Um - definitely becoming more pronounced. The nob's are beginning to realise that they are on the outer - on the outer. There's a thousand *Commoners* - can't think of another word at the moment, to every one of those who, through heredity or whatever, feel that they are a little bit above you or I.
- KH: Which class do you think you belonged to in the 1930s?
- CP: In the 1930s I belonged to a class of the most free and easy people in the world, the Australian bushman.
- KH: That was good. You felt happy about that?
- CP: I felt very happy about that, and I still feel happy about it - still feel happy about it. An old dog trapper that I knew on Urisino Station, *Bung* Harris at Yaouk, Kevin Jones from Adjungbilly - yes, Kevin Jones from Adjungbilly - one million men *if* we knew their names - those were the people that I belonged to.
- KH: Did any member of that household in '38 belong to a political party? Did you have much involvement? Would you have been Labor Party supporters or -
- CP: No. In 1938 we were a household of National Party voters. I've never voted Labor in m'life. My Father apparently hadn't. My Mother, through having been over-browbeaten by him, never voted for any other party but the National Party or the Country Party, whichever it might have been, and my sister had married into a family over at Young, where she trained as a nurse, who were staunch Liberals. So there was no division whatsoever as far as politics was concerned in our house at that time.
- KH: So you knew who the others were voting for at an election?
- CP: Well, we said we did - we said we did. I heard an argument, an altercation, between my Father and the Labor member for Hume, Arthur Fuller, in Tumut, in the main street in Tumut. My Father walked past Fuller's shop and he said something to him about the Labor Party. And Fuller come out of the shop like a shot out of a gun - he was a member for Hume, a Labor member. And they had

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- CP: (cont.) a real ding-dong set-~~to~~ there on politics in the street. And I don't know who come off second best, but I know that it taught me a lesson - there's always two sides to every picture. And even today, in our political upheaval, our industrial distress and trouble, there's two sides to every story, it just taught me a lesson. And I've always voted Liberal or National or Country Party or whatever they called themselves, even though I've worked for a living all m'life.
- KH: Who was the Prime Minister in the 1930s and late '30s, do you remember the Prime Minister before the War? It was Curtin during the War, wasn't it?
- CP: Curtin - Menzies. Menzies, Curtin -
- KH: Menzies was in for a year. Was it 1939?
- CP: Yes, and Curtin took over.
- KH: Was it Lyons before that?
- CP: Well, it might have been Lyons. I can't remember. ~~I~~ can't remember that, you know, as I didn't take a hell of a lot of interest in it.
- KH: I think it was Joe Lyons.
- CP: I do believe that could be right. It could be Lyons. But it certainly was Menzies, then Curtin, and then Menzies come back -
- KH: Later on, in 1949, something like that.
- CP: Yes. But Curtin was the man who said, "Let North Australia go and defend the South"- a line, of course, north of Brisbane and they blame Menzies for it. A lot of people blame Menzies for it. It wasn't. It was Curtin. But he was hard-pressed. The Japs were at our door. They were knocking on our door. They were here. And in desperation he said, "All right, defend southern Australia and let the north go". But that was Menzies and Curtin for the war period.
- KH: How about before that? Do you remember if it was Lyons? Do you remember him featuring at all in your -
- CP: I can remember Lyons perfectly well, but as I say -
- KH: Do you think he was doing the right thing for Australia?
- CP: I don't know. I don't know. He was an amazing man. I realise he was an amazing man, but it boils down to this. Lyons may of been doing good for Australia. He may have thought he was doing good for Australia. Wran thinks, or maintains he is doing good for Australia. And Malcolm Fraser maintains he's doing good for Australia. Now, I wonder do we know - do we know?
- KH: You probably think you're doing the right thing for Australia

CP: Well, I know what I would do for Australia.

KH: What would you do for Australia? Perhaps we shouldn't go into that at this stage?

CP: No, perhaps we'd better forget that.

KH: In New South Wales there was a guy called Stevens who was Premier at that time?

CP: Yes.

KH: Did you talk about him much?

CP: No. We wouldn't have talked about him much. Stevens. Yes, I remember him too.

KH: What about Bruxner and Lang?

CP: Lang - old Lang. I remember him too.

KH: Jack Lang would have featured somewhere.

CP: Yes, he featured well. When Captain de Groot cut the ribbon in front of his eyes in the opening of the Harbour Bridge. Poor old Jack Lang was to open it, and Captain de Groot, a member of the New Guard - he was a member of the New Guard - and he was on his big black horse, and he spurred him forward and he cut the ribbon with his sword in front of poor old Jack Lang. They arrested him on the spot, pulled him off the horse, and pumm<sup>e</sup>led him, and thumped him, and took him away. Jack Lang was an amazing politician and I have the same feeling now as I had when Jack Lang was put out of office, that we are on the verge of the worst Depression, the worst Depression that we ever dreamed of.

KH: Now?

CP: Now.

KH: Do you reckon?

XP: I do. I firmly believe it. Everything indicates the worst Depression that Australia has ever dreamed of - more than anyone has ever dreamed of. And that was when they kicked Jack Lang out - at the beginning of the big Depression. I believe that he was a wonderful politician, and he was at his wit's end, the same as Wran - and Fraser are today - to do something for Australia. Slim Dusty, in one of his latest songs, said "Have a go - have a go - Do a bit for Australia", and we don't know what to do. We got no money to do it.

KH: Can you remember the first time that you went to a doctor?

CP: No. No -

KH: You would have been in Tumut. Or would it have been a doctor on the farm, or -

CP: It would have been in Tumut. The doctor was Doctor Brown, and

CP: (cont.) I had a jarred hand - a jarred hand. I was cutting a tree down on Goob<sup>er</sup>ragandra - my Father and I working together - and it's a common thing amongst axemen is jarred hands. I forget which hand it was now.

KH: I get that in a mild way, but I've never had it seriously.

CP: Yes, it's easy to get. You can get it going through the barn. I could get it now because I've got no flesh left on my hands. I went to Dr Brown and of course, he put me under anaesthetic and opened it up. And the next day he come along and he was looking at me and he said, "How do you feel?", and I said, "Not too bad". And he said, "You had a heap of pea soup", he said, "in there".

KH: Oh, it goes inflamed right inside?

CP: It builds up like a boil - a big boil, and it gets full of matter. He said, "You had a heap of pea soup". You can imagine what pea soup is. . But it was Dr Brown in Tumut, and I would have been very young, long before '25, long before 1925. I think I'm sure that was the first doctor, unless they had me to a doctor when I was an infant. That was Dr Brown. And the next time I would have been to a doctor I had pneumonia. I was home on holidays and I got pneumonia up here at Goob<sup>er</sup>ragandra, and I went to the hospital <sup>with pneumonia</sup>, and that doctor was - I forget now -

KH: Oh, it doesn't matter that much - not the name. But each time you went to a doctor you actually went to Tumut - he didn't come up to the farm? You didn't have a doctor who called on the farm even in '38?

CP: No.

KH: You had to make the journey to the doctor?

CP: You had to journey to town - to town - prior to 1925 it would have been by horse and sulky. In 1928 it was - someone took me. Someone took me to hospital - a friend of mine - in '28.

KH: It was special home remedies the rest of the time I suppose? You had various other concoctions, did you, in the cupboard? Did your Mother have home remedies that were ages old, and did the job?

CP: Honey - honey and

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Side 2

CP: - - - put it in a cup and pour hot water on it and make a brew out of it, and you had to drink it - Senna tea. Castor oil and Senna tea.

KH: They were the two main home remedies, were they?

CP: They were. They used to keep you ticking.

KH: What, mainly to keep the system going?

CP: Keep your system going. Once a week - once a week you had to have Senna tea and once a week you had to have castor oil - or - maybe I'm wrong.

KH: What, one was to block you up and one was to make you go?

CP: No. Senna tea was a physic - it was a thing to keep your system working normally. And the castor oil was to make you go to the toilet.

KH: Oh, I see.

CP: But they were both fearful things.

KH: What about - were there any other patent medicines?

CP: Well, if we had toothache and we got earache - if we'd had Aspro the Father would never have let us take them. If we had had them - we'd never heard of them. And I can remember myself and my brother, both, having earache - I don't know what caused earache - earache 'd drive you mad all night, all night. If we'd have had half an Aspro, half a flamin' Aspro, it would have stopped and we'd have gone to sleep. Never heard of such a thing. And if we'd had them, he would never have let you touch them. He used to fry - put a bag - put a quart of coarse salt in a frying pan - put it on the stove and get it steamy hot, crackling hot, and put it in a rolled oats bag and put it on your ear.

KH: A quart with a lot of salt in it?

CP: Yeah - sorry, a quart of coarse salt, butcher's salt, put it in a pan, get it on the fire and get it roasting hot, crackling hot, and he'd <sup>tip</sup> it into a rolled oats porridge bag - in those days it was calico bags (he used to get his rolled oats in them) and put that on your ear. Then you'd go to sleep. It'd help you, but you'd wake up and you still had the earache. If you'd had Aspro the earache would have been gone - in the stomach.

KH: What was it supposed to do? What was the salt supposed to do?

CP: I reckon the heat -

KH: Oh, the heat -

CP: The heat, like a hot water bag.

KH: Oh, I see. You didn't have a hot water bag?

CP: No. There weren't such things - I don't suppose there was. There might have been in '38 - might have been. There wasn't when I had the earache. It was about '18.

KH: Were there any other special lotions that you had or creams that you put on so that you made a poultice to draw particular things out of your body.

CP: Yes - sugar and soap. A poultice - a poultice of sugar and soap mixed up. Mum or Dad'd put the soap in the palm of their hand and get it warm and squash it up, and then put sugar on it and mix it all up into a paste - and that was a poultice. God knows it couldn't have been any use. You'd get it no matter what you had - a poultice if you had a boil - sugar and soap poultice - no matter what you had -

KH: You'd slap it on there and hope it would draw out the evil spirits or whatever?

CP: Sugar and soap - it was a poultice. Must be a very, very old one, that one.

KH: What about herbal tea or anything like that? Did you -

CP: No, I don't know of anything -

KH: Any natural herbs did you use? Any that you grew in the garden which you used for anything like that?

CP: No, no, that would have been

KH: Did anything have any sort of - healing have any sort of religious overtones or spiritual overtones?

CP: I don't think so - I don't think so. If anyone who mentioned those sort of things in our house, <sup>they'd be</sup> shifted quick.

KH: But, God. I mean, they believed in God. Was there such a thing that if there was something wrong with you, did this mean - was it drawn - was the conclusion drawn that you were not in favour with God, or something like that?

CP: Oh no, I wouldn't think so. No. No, no, no. They wouldn't come at that. No.

KH: No witchdoctor type things?

CP: No. If you had a thing, you had it. Nothing to do with God - not at all.

KH: I see. They were quite practical about that sort of thing.

CP: I think so.

KH: Very realistic. What were the most common problems, medical problems, in that period - in '38? I mean, you would have had colds, I suppose -

CP: Common colds, and - er

KH: 'Flu?

CP: Yeh. Not much difference between common colds and 'flu - and chickenpox -

KH: Chickenpox?

CP: Yes - chickenpox - an awful thing.

KH: What about constipation? I mean, did you really need all that castor oil?

CP: When you grew up you didn't need it. When you were a kid, I suppose you did. They weren't taking any chances. If you didn't need it, you didn't need it. But if you had the oil you didn't need it. That was all about it. You had it. Take the oil. And that was a bloody tablespoonful too, don't forget - no - a dessertspoon -

KH: I had some of it as a child - yes. Or codliver oil -

CP: Kill a brown dog! It was terrible.

KH: Did you have a major crisis in the health situation in the family in the '30s? Did anyone get very seriously - well, your wife died in childbirth, but that was -

CP: No, in '36 - '37.

KH: Yes. I suppose that that was, in a sense, a very serious crisis -

CP: Yes, a very, very major crisis - poor soul.

KH: And she would have had the baby, what, in Tumut -

CP: Yes, at the Gomar Private Hospital, Sister Allen and a Sister Knowles ran the Gomar Private Hospital. The Gomar Private Hospital today is a school for underprivileged children.

KH: And was there a doctor in attendance at that birth?

CP: Yes, Doctor Mason, Doctor Jock Horton Mason, <sup>of</sup> Tumut. He was in attendance. He was their family doctor, and he was our family doctor. And his father before him was our family doctor.

KH: Was it a breach birth or something? Do you remember?

CP: Oh, goodness me - the baby was brought - the birth was hurried up - it was hurried up -

KH: Induced - they call it now -

CP: Yes, and apparently there was a complication - the complication was completely separate to the birth of the child - and she had to be operated on immediately after the child was born, and she just never recovered - never recovered.

KH: You would have had to pay the bills for that, wouldn't you?

CP: Oh yes, oh yes -

KH: Did you have any trouble paying your bills? Was that a problem?

CP: No, there was no problem attached to it. No, we had no problem. Even if I had been in trouble, m'Dad would have come to the rescue. No, there was no problem that way.

KH: Was your wife - was she cremated or was she buried?

CP: She was buried in the Catholic portion, thank God, back in her own, own portion of the cemetery, with the Parish Priest officiating at the graveside. And she also had, before she died, before she passed away, the Priest was in attendance at her bedside before she died and while she died, even though I had the ignorance, absolute ignorance, to be aloof. <sup>Even</sup> at that point at her deathbed I was a Protestant. I never forgave m'self and I never will. I still maintained that I was a Protestant. Anyway, her family had their own way - and a wonderful family, wonderful family people - and we are, the boys and the one girl that's left of that family, are all good friends. No bitterness about it - no one remembers it. But I had the feeling that they were putting something over me - didn't realise - didn't realise until after the whole thing was over. Who was I, at that woman's, that beautiful woman's deathbed, to say that my religion was better than hers?

KH: Your parents <sup>never</sup> look<sup>ed</sup> after their parents? They never had them to live with them?

CP: No -

KH: Your father never had his parents -

CP: No -

KH: Who looked after them in their old age?

CP: I don't know. They both died at their old home at Bombowlee Creek, 'Dotswood'. One died - one died - I wouldn't know -

KH: No. It's more the sort of attitude towards that sort of thing. Like now, you know, some elderly people are asked - or have to go to Old People's Homes, for instance.

CP: Yes, they did, they did, and it was a very, very common thing in those days -

KH: What, for them to go to an Old Person's Home?

CP: No, no, no. To go to their people -

KH: Yes, to go to their people - yeh, to be looked after until the day they died.



- CP: Ah, the old fellow - my Grandfather - he died in 1903 before I was born, so I wouldn't know much about what happened to him. He was 71 years of age, and then my Grandmother died on the 17th of May, 1916 - she was 73 years then. But my Father and Mother never had any trouble or took any care of either of those two old people. But Uncle Sam, the second boy of that family - he was there with them the whole of their lifetime - never left them. So I suppose he bore the brunt of the care-taking. And he died when he was 40 years of age, with a cancer on his face. He was eating a meal and he stuck an old-style pewter fork into his lip - top lip - and the general belief is that that started the growth - and it ate the whole of his face away, like - a young man, 40. No, they never cared for them -
- KH: But someone else in the family did?
- CP: Yes, someone must have, but certainly they never left their home - they both died at home. Oh, they had a daughter - there was a daughter, Dinah - Dinah Piper. Later she was married - Mrs Jim Morton. I suppose - I suppose she helped.
- KH: Did you ever go - or did this boy - did they ever go to Sunday School or anything like that?
- CP: No - no. None of us ever went to Sunday School. No. In later life my children went to Sunday School - for a couple of hours -
- KH: Yes? Not in the '30s?
- CP: No.
- KH: Were you or the children in the '30s, were they allowed to play on a Sunday or was the Sabbath - did you have to have - were there special constraints on your activities?
- CP: No, not towards - not towards that type of thing. No. Not in my experience - not in my experience. But I do believe, I do believe, that in Father's people, in my Father's and my Mother's people, there was very strict religious observance, and what they did on Sunday I don't know, but they were not supposed to work, and they were not allowed to work -
- KH: What about sport? Were they allowed to play sport on a Sunday?
- CP: There was no sport -
- KH: No sport?
- CP: No Sunday sport. They played football on Saturday. Now they have everything on Sunday - rodeo, football, polocrosse, polo -
- KH: Pubs?
- CP: Golf, fights, sex, the whole thing. Sunday - the best day of the lot!

- KH: Can you remember a clergyman, actually a priest or someone, coming out to your property in the '30s, up 'til the '30s?
- CP: No, he didn't come home. I remember the Presbyterian Minister - I remember the catholic priests in those times - but we never had any contact with them.
- KH: Do you think that religion affected the friends that you chose - or I mean, it didn't seem to affect your wife, for instance. I mean, it seemed to be a person was more important than the religion, and you may have discovered the religion later. Would that be true, in most cases?
- CP: Well, well, there were an awful lot of religious people who were the worst hypocrites in the world. And they hid behind religion. They got out of a whole lot of things. A lot of men got out of marrying girls that they'd got into trouble, just because they were a different religion. They got out of it, and they banked on it. But in my opinion, always, always, the person, the being, the human being themselves, they could not be blamed for what their religion was and what their father or mother's religion or anything 2000 years before, and they couldn't be blamed for that. And all persons, all babies, are born into the world equal, in spite of religion. It's only through things that are inherited that each religion is kept going, kept supplied by people, and it is a very great shame.
- KH: Do you remember any jingles that children sang, or that people said, about the differences in religion, especially, say, between Catholics and Protestants. You know, ways that they would get at each other?
- CP: No. No. I never gave it a great deal of credence, except the fact that I knew there was two religions and my Father, he'd almost kill you if you talked about Catholic religion. But still, as I say, my wife was a Catholic -
- KH: And his wife -
- CP: And his wife was a Catholic, and in the end he loved my wife, he loved my little wife, and they got along well - and all the members of my family loved her. And my Mother, of course, being a Catholic, if anyone had - anyone at all, had been sceptical about her faith, or her religion, or her loyalty, my Mother would have backed her up to the hilt. No, I don't know, I don't know about that.
- KH: There would have been - there was quite a White Australia Policy at the time, wasn't there?

- CP: Oh yes. White Australia was very prominent.
- KH: There was a big catch cry. What did you -
- CP: Well, I dunno. I felt - I felt that they were right. I felt that we were white and we stay white. I still have the same idea. But whether we could, or whether it would be wise or possible to still pursue a White Australia Policy - we are a vast uninhabited waterless desert, except for a strip round the coast - and whether we - if we are completely white we depend on English speaking peoples, or people of white skin to populate this great continent, we might be overstepping the mark, and we might not be able to hold it and do it, and we might have to forget about that old White Australia Policy. I think it has been forgotten quite a lot. I don't know whether it's right or wrong -
- KH: Would you have discussed the coming of refugees from Europe and - at that time in the '30s, do you think?
- CP: Oh, I would think so. Yes.
- KH: I mean, you would have already had some -
- CP: We had them. Oh yes, we had them. Yes. Queensland -
- KH: There'd been waves of people coming from elsewhere for a long time - well, in a sense, the English were too -
- CP: Yes, they were too. And they were always in the majority, the English-speaking peoples. But we had many, many, many thousands of Italians and Germans -
- KH: Before the war?
- CP: Before the war. Before this last war - yes. Even the First World War - prior to the First World War - when the First World War broke out all the Germans in Australia were interned - locked up -
- KH: Yes, that's right -
- CP: And this second World War, all the Italians were yarded up. We had Queensland full - Innisfail - Innisfail, a sugar growing town there in Queensland - they can't speak English - they all talk Italian. Cairns is a mixture of Italians and half-bred Italians. Germans are good settlers, good people -
- KH: Lots of Germans in South Australia.
- CP: Um - a lot of Germans, yes, yes. Oh well, wonderful people. A lot of Germans around Tumut now.
- KH: Are there?
- CP: Um.
- KH: So, in the '30s would you have had different feelings about different settlers like that? You're saying that the Germans

- KH: (cont.) were good settlers, and you might have had some misgivings about the Italians, for instance?
- CP: Oh, I had all the misgivings in the world about Italians and I still have. I think we could do with half of them. But Germans were all right. Now we've got coloured races. We've got Polynesians, we've got Indonesians, we've got all the Asian people in the world, we've got the unfortunate wretches from Vietnam, and all that type of thing -
- KH: What about the colours in the '30s - the aborigines, for instance? Now, you worked with a half-caste stockman for a long period -
- CP: Um - I worked with full-blooded blacks.
- KH: Yes, you would've out west there. God, you were right there in the aboriginal community.
- CP: Right in the middle - Afghans - Afghan - he's a different thing altogether. Afghan and full-blooded abos - I've worked with dozens of 'em. But I found, I found that the pure blood aborigine was all right. I couldn't find anything wrong with him at all. He was honest, straightforward, capable stockman, and the half-caste was a different story. He was a bit smart, and thought he was smart. He knew he was bloody smart, too. I think we've gone too far. I don't think we can do anything now for what's left of our aboriginal people. I don't think we can do anything for them, m'self. I think they've gone beyond helping themselves. There's so few of them. For every one white Australian that has sympathy for them, there'd be 10,000 that hasn't any sympathy for them, and in that case, they're up against the wall. If the country knew, and you say, 'Yes, mate, I'll help you - I'll do this and I'll do that for ya' - you go to the next 1,000 people who say, 'Go to buggery, you so-and-so'. I don't know what we can do for them at all. No doubt, no doubt we took the country from them, poor devils, but if they had landrights, they should have pushed old Captain Cook and his crew out into the sea and hurled the dogs on them. They let him come in -
- KH: Yeh - I suppose they didn't have much choice 'cause they had guns -
- CP: They had no choice -
- KH: It's now a very difficult situation.
- CP: Isn't it? And whether they will ever be assimilated, I have m'doubts. I think they'll die *right out*.
- KH: Do you?

- CP: I do, I do. I think so. They're the most backward people in the world, and although you get an aborigine who'll fight like a thrashing machine - and you get a smart stockman - and there's a few scholars coming up. But I think they go up before the Board. I think our Asian immigrants and our coloured other types of people will flood them out - won't get a say - they won't get a footing. Too long. Too late.
- KH: I'm thinking of winding this up fairly soon. We've got half of this tape to go, and the last questions are on images of Australia and the world. I thought I'd just - so it's a few general sort of questions about Australia. Do you remember, for instance, the Sesquicentenary of 1938 - like that was 150 years -
- CP: Yes.
- KH: Do you remember that?
- CP: Yes - '38.
- KH: Yes. Would you have attended - was it a special thing? Would you have attended any celebrations or anything like that?
- CP: Oh yes, it was. It was big. But - whether I became involved or <sup>had</sup> any contact with it at all I do not know. I can remember it perfectly well - but apart from that - no - I can't enlighten anybody on that subject at all.
- KH: Which, at the time, in 1938, which city did you consider the most important in Australia, in 1938 - which city?
- CP: Well, uh - I would have had to - beyond all doubt - regard Sydney as the Capital of Australia - the leading city in Australia. Next, of course, would have to be Melbourne.
- KH: Would you have considered that N.S.W. was also the most important State?
- CP: No. No. I had the feeling that Queensland was the most important State, because Queensland had - N.S.W. was developed, and it had used up all the - all the finance and all the what-have-you in the world. But Queensland was just stumbling along, trying - trying to get a foothold on the great amazing mass of land that they've got. No, I thought Queensland was the most important State. It should have been helped.
- KH: Which was the first city that you visited? Would have been Sydney, I suppose?
- CP: Yes - would have been Sydney.
- KH: And then, which State? Oh, that would have been New South Wales - although you were in New South Wales.
- CP: Yes.

- KH: The next State might have been Queensland, might it?
- CP: It was. It was Queensland, I'm sure, the next one -
- KH: You were up north?
- CP: I was out there. I was up there in 1940-41. See '38, there was nowhere else. I went to Queensland.
- KH: Have you been overseas at all?
- CP: No, no. Never got off the mark. I worked on Thursday Island - on the wharf on Thursday Island for six months in 1944 with the 2nd/3rd Docking Co-operative.
- KH: What about your Father and Mother? Would they have gone overseas at all?
- CP: No, no. Neither of them. None of our family.
- KH: Did you think Australia was a Lucky Country in 1938?
- CP: I thought it was extremely lucky - extremely lucky. And I still think that Australians - not Australia - I don't think Australia's terribly lucky at all now - Australians are the luckiest people in the world. We've never had any bloodshed on our soil - apart from that boom in Darwin during 1942. I think under those conditions we are the luckiest people in the world. Every other country in the world has had bloodshed and strife and civil war and -
- KH: Do you think that it was a freer society than now - to what it is now? Do you think we have more restrictions now on people's activities and so on?
- CP: We've got the restrictions but no one lives up to them. More restriction.
- KH: So in actual fact, it's just as free?
- CP: Yes.
- KH: An open go?
- CP: Yes, it's just the same. We've got the restrictions but no one takes any notice of them.
- KH: Can you remember what your sort of idea of the ideal of the typical Australian male was in the 1930s? Can you describe some of the characteristics?
- CP: Huh - that would be a - I would be presuming to, I would think to attempt to describe the typical Australian, or the one that I would visualise.
- KH: Yeh? What would your's have been? What was your version of a typical Australian male?
- CP: Oh - a cross between a full-blooded aboriginal stockman and a gun footballer. He wouldn't have to be homosexual.

KH: Well, the next question is, were there many men like that?  
Did you know any?

CP: No. There were very few.

KH: Well, what was your idea of a typical Australian female?

CP: Oh dear. Dunno. Goodness me. A little Hollywood star -

KH: A little Hollywood star? Yes. Any other aspects? Shape and looks?

CP: Yes - about 38, 18, 40. 38, 18, 40.

KH: Er - inches? What about -

CP: Didn't matter what height she was.

KH: What about - would she be a cultured person, or relatively - would she be submissive, or would she be independent, or -

CP: A little of everything.

KH: I see.

CP: A little of everything - the three things you mentioned. A little of each.

KH: Some independence, but some submissiveness -

CP: And a little culture.

KH: Uh uh.

CP: Not too much, or she would be hard to get on with.

KH: What were the most attractive aspects of the Australian male at that time?

CP: Attractive?

KH: Yes. What were the sort of outstanding features of the Australian male in the 1930s?

CP: Oh, naturally, naturally, he would have to be - he would, and he was, an upright, honest, clean living man!

KH: What about the Australian female?

CP: Well, she would not have to be submissive. She would not have to be over-intelligent. But she would have to be very, very generous-hearted - and good-looking -

KH: And good-looking? And what were the worst aspects of the male and female of the 1930s.

CP: Ohhhh -

KH: Are you cringing or thinking hard?

CP: Oh - the worst aspect of the male would be the drunken bum - he'd approach you on Sunday morning after drinking all his money on Saturday night -

KH: Yes?

CP: For a handout. There were thousands of them.

KH: Would you consider that about females too?

CP: Oh no. In 1938 I never came in contact with any, I'm sure,

CP: (cont.) any drunken women. I never came in contact with them at all. But the worst aspect of them would have to be some of those that I saw in Kings Cross. Their faded heads looked like a sheaf of hay.

KH: At the time, which country did you think was the most powerful and the most important in the world - on an international basis?

CP: Well, I would think it would have to be America - it would have to be. Great Britain would be next -

KH: Did you have any interest in the Royal family and George VI and all that, and his wife and Princess Elizabeth and so on? Did you -

CP: No - no - no I didn't. No, I didn't to any extent.

KH: Any great interest in the Coronation in 1937, or some of those events?

CP: No.

KH: Dealing with the Royal family -

CP: No. I was and still am loyal to the Royal family. I think they're on the outer. I don't think Prince Charles' son will ever be King of England. I think it'll be finished before he gets there - the Royal family as it stands today.

KH: Do you think Charles might get there?

CP: Yes, I think Charles'll get there and his son will never make it. There'll be a vast alteration. It won't be caused by the English people. But it will be caused by the people that they've imported, similar to a lot of people we've imported to Australia.

KH: How do you feel about - how did you, at the time, feel about the relationship between England and Australia?

CP: I thought that we owed England an enormous debt. It was my opinion - always has been my opinion - an enormous debt. And I still feel, myself, that we should not break our ties with England at all.

KH: You're not so strong on independence than for Australia?

CP: Not so strong. I never was, never was.

KH: Did you at the time feel, and this is in 1938, feel Australia had any reason to fear threats from other countries?

CP: Yes - yes.

KH: Like did you feel a threat from the Japanese at that time?

CP: Oh yes. I've felt all my life through learning and reading, mainly some of our Australian poets' ideas and opinions on foreign threat to Australia - Japanese. Russia, of course, never came into it. But the Yellow Horde - China - Australian bushmen have always had that - that fear - of Australia being inhabited by Chinese.

KH: So it goes way back?

CP: Goes way back - a long way back. The Yellow hordes.

KH: What about Russia? Did that feature strongly at all?

CP: She wasn't coming into the picture so much in 1938 -

KH: No -

CP: Russia - she's come well and truly into the picture now. She could go anywhere - and I - I feel that she has the ability to go anywhere she likes. I doubt if America can stop 'er today anymore than she could have stopped her in 1938. If America can't, no one else can.

KH: Did you discuss the situation with regard to coming conflicts in Europe and so on in 1938 very much? Like, were your parents very concerned about it? Like a coming conflict in Europe, the rise of Hitler, and so on?

CP: My Father was always, always concerned about it, because the First World War showed how powerful a nation Germany was, and how close she was in 1914-18 to gaining a victory. And he, my Father, always, always feared the German influence, through - <sup>on</sup> an invasion of Australia. But he never considered the Japanese at all. But he always talked about the Chinese - Yellow hordes, as he called them.

KH: Did he?

CP: Possibly that's where I got the idea myself. China today, she's got three million soldiers that have been trained since they were 16, and they're 56 now, and they've never fired a shot. I think they must be bursting to fire a shot. I think that is the right figure, three million.

KH: Oh, it's probably around that. Yes.

CP: And she's got more soldiers than that also - besides that, younger men, younger men.

KH: Would your Mother have been concerned very much about it?

CP: No, I wouldn't think so. I wouldn't think so. She had an amazing faith in human nature, and what her views were on the conquest of Australia by a foreign power I don't know.

KH: What did you think was the future for Australia at that time?

CP: I thought that Australia would make it - it would be a powerful big 'little' country. Couldn't see why she wouldn't - couldn't understand why she wouldn't. But I have very <sup>grave</sup> doubts now what she's goin' to do. But then I couldn't visualise anything at all that could stop her. Not being a soldier, not having insight into military information or secrets, I couldn't see what was to stop it. There's a lot of things stopping her now.

KH: Well, I think that might just about end the formal interview.

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CP: **THERE'S ONLY TWO OF US HERE**

I camped one night in an empty hut, up on New Chum Hill. I didn't go much on these empty huts, but the night was awfully chill. So I boiled me billy and had me tea, and seen that the door was shut, And I went to bed in an empty bunk at the side of the old slab hut.

Now it must have been about 12 o'clock, I was feeling cosy and warm, And at the foot of the bunk I seen a horrible ghostly form. It seemed in shape to be half an ape, and a head like a chimpanzee - But what the hell was it doing there, and what does it want with me?

Then it <sup>gave</sup> a moan and a horrible groan that curdled m'blood with fear. 'There's only two of us here', it says, 'There only two of us here'. You may say if you please that I had DTs or call me a bloody liar. But I wish you had seen it as plain as me, with its eyes like coals of fire.

I kept one eye on the old hut door and one on that awful brute. I only wanted to dress m'self and get to the door and scoot. But I couldn't find where I'd left m'boots, so I hadn't a chance to clear. 'There's only two of us here', it says, with a horrible leer.

I hadn't a thing to protect m'self, not even a stick or a stone. 'There's only two of us here', it says again, with a horrible moan. I thought I'd better make some reply, though I reckoned m'end was near. 'By the Holy Ghost', I said, 'when I find my boots, there'll only be one of us here'.

I gets me hands on me 'lastic sides and out through the door I scoot, And I lit the whole of the hillside up with the sparks from m'flying boots.

I haven't camped in a hut since then, and I tremble and shake with fear When I think of that awful form what moaned 'There's only two of us here'.

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CP: That's it.

KH: That was called - did it have a name?

CP: "Only Two of us Here".

KH: And it was written by - you don't know?

CP: No, I don't.

KH: You didn't make it up?

CP: Oh no, no. It's in a poetry book somewhere, and I put <sup>New</sup> *Chum Hill* into it. The rest of it's authentic.

KH: Yeh - very good.

CP: A little beauty.

KH: Do you know any others?

CP: Oh, I know hundreds.

KH: Do you know this one - "His Gippsland Girl"?

