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Full transcript of an interview with

OLIVE POPE

on 15 May 1986

by Beth M. Robertson

Recording available on cassette

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Abbreviations: The interviewee's alterations may be identified by their initials in insertions in the transcript.

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A series of dots, indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

Spelling: Wherever possible the spelling of proper names and unusual terms has been verified. A parenthesised question mark (?) indicates a word that it has not been possible to verify to date.

Typeface: The interviewer's questions are shown in **bold print**.

Discrepancies between transcript and tape: This proofread transcript represents the authoritative version of this oral history interview. Researchers using the original tape recording of this interview are cautioned to check this transcript for corrections, additions or deletions which have been made by the interviewer or the interviewee but which will not occur on the tape. See the Punctuation section above.) Minor discrepancies of grammar and sentence structure made in the interest of readability can be ignored but significant changes such as deletion of information or correction of fact should be, respectively, duplicated or acknowledged when the tape recorded version of this interview is used for broadcast or any other form of audio publication.

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Collateral Material in File 8610 includes:

Photographs P8610A,B; a copy of one of Miss Pope's booklets, Moments of Joy, and a photograph of the more autobiographical Olivia's Story.

Cover Illustration Olive Pope aged about twenty two.

PREFACE

Olive Pope was born in 1891 in Broken Hill. Both her parents were of Cornish mining stock and her father worked as a winding engine driver. Olive's ambition to become a teacher was thwarted by her poor eyesight. She left the Broken Hill High School aged fifteen and although her parents encouraged her music and commercial studies in subsequent years (in case she should ever have to support herself) she was expected to remain at home to help her mother who, like Olive, was never robust. Each summer the Pope women and children would escape the Broken Hill heat by taking holidays and visiting relatives at Glenelg, the South East and the Adelaide Hills. In 1912 Olive, her parents, brother, grandmother and several uncles and aunts, moved to two houses and sixty acres in Rostrevor, South Australia, to embark on poultry farming and market gardening. Olive began work at Cowell Brothers' Norwood office but after eighteen months returned home to help until her mother's death in 1922 and from then to run the home and care for her father. The property was broken up in 1936 and thereafter Olive did have to support herself - by letting rooms at Glenelg and office work in Adelaide and interstate. In recent years she has embarked on a new career as a writer.

Miss Pope was 94 years of age at the time of the interview.

Miss Pope is an eager talker with a lively memory. Record levels of the tape recordings are good and there is little extraneous noise apart from some traffic.

The interview session resulted in two hours and thirty minutes of tape recorded information.

'S.A. Speaks: An Oral History of Life in South Australia before 1930' was a Jubilee 150 project conducted under the auspices of the History Trust of South Australia for two years and two months ending December 1986. The Interviewees are broadly representative of the population of South Australia as it was in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Selection of Interviewees was guided by a Sex and Occupation Sample calculated from the 1921 Census and Interviewees were suggested, in the main, by people who responded to 'S.A. Speaks' publicity. Each interview was preceded by an unrecorded preliminary interview during which details about the Interviewee's family history and life story were sought to help develop a framework for the interview.

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NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPT

Readers of this oral history transcript should bear in mind that it is a record of the spoken word. It was the policy of the Transcriptionist, Chris Gradolf, and the Interviewer, as editor, to produce a transcript that is, so far as possible, a verbatim transcript that preserves the Interviewee's manner of speaking and the informal, conversational style of the interview. Certain conventions of transcription have been applied (i.e. the omission of meaningless noises, redundant false starts and a percentage of the Interviewee's crutch words). Also, each Interviewee was given the opportunity to read the transcript of their interview after it had been proofread by the Interviewer. The Interviewee's suggested alterations have been incorporated in the text (see below). On the whole, however, the document can be regarded as a raw transcript.

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Abbreviations

The Interviewee, Olive Pope, is referred to by the initials OP in all editorial insertions in the transcript.

Punctuation

Square brackets [] indicate material in the transcript that does not occur on the original tape recording.

The Interviewee's initials after a word, phrase or sentence in square brackets, i.e. [word or phrase OP] indicates that the Interviewee made this particular insertion or correction. All uninitialled parentheses were made by the Interviewer.

An series of dots, indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

Spelling

Wherever possible the spelling of proper names and unusual terms has been verified. Where uncertainty remains the word has been marked with a cross in the right hand margin of the Interview Log and Data Sheet which can be consulted in the Interview File.

Typeface

The Interviewer's questions are shown in bold print.

'S.A. Speaks: An Oral History of Life in South Australia Before 1930'

Beth Robertson interviewing Miss Olive Pope [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on 15 May 1986

TAPE 1 SIDE A

If you could just start by telling me your full name.

My full name? Olive Pope.

No middle name?

No.

Were you named for anyone in particular?

Yes. The first in the family that had that name or something like it, was my great grandmother. She was called Olivia. She had a daughter called Olivia who was my grandfather's sister. She married her cousin who was called Pope - she was still Olivia Pope. She had a daughter - she was called Olive. The next family down there was an Olivia, the next one down there was another Olive, and so on until it's down to the fourth generation now and that one lives in Tasmania and she's called Olivia.

That's a lovely tradition.

There are Olivias and Olives all through the family and it's really the - practically the only name - except you might perhaps think of Mary, that's repeated in the women's names in the family tree of Pope.

Have you always been known as Olive or did you have a nickname?

Only - - -. My father used to call me when I was young, Spud, for some unknown reason. I once asked him, 'Why did you call me Spud?' He said, 'Well, you were really a little bit like a little brown potato'. I had brown hair and brown eyes, and that was just - - -. In fact, when he was on his deathbed, he suddenly said - I'd got off in working hours and I didn't know he was dying, he was in hospital - and he suddenly said, 'Hello Spud, what are you doing here?'

Had he not called you that?

Hadn't called me that for many years. I was often called Olivia, to pull me together. Somebody'd say, 'Now Olivia, you just stop that!'. (laughs) And when I started writing, I used Olivia as my pen name.

Can you tell me the date of your birth?

April the sixth, 1891.

Where were you born?

In Broken Hill.

Were you born at home or hospital?

Yes. No hospital births then. A midwife would be present at the birth.

Did you know who the local midwife was?

No, no idea.

Were there any of the women in your family who helped midwives?

No.

Of course you remained in Broken Hill until you were twenty one.

Yes.

So we'll be talking about that time. I'd like to ask you a little bit about your parents. What was your father's name?

My father's name was Joseph Alfred Pope and he was the sixth child but the eldest son. There was a son before him who died and there were four sisters before him, and altogether there were thirteen children but ten lived to maturity - six sisters and four brothers.

What did you know of his background?

Oh well, I knew all about his father's beginning. That he was a Cornish miner - mining manager and contract miner and miner when he was waiting for another mine as it was the way of mines in those days. In Cornwall - and in those days, of course, mines were not worked with machinery, they were hand done. They'd soon be worked out and then they'd have to find another - that was the way of it.

Was your father born in Cornwall?

No. My father is definitely - we call them Cornish descent - but my father happened to be born in Ireland. But it just happened that they were there. That's like in a book I've read and I'm very fond of it - it's a Cornish book - and there was a quaint man in it, and as he would have said, he was born in Ireland because his mother happened to be there at the time. (laughs) His father was managing a mine.

Did the whole family emigrate to Australia?

Down to the - - -. There were six children - my father was six months old - and they came out. He had no reason to leave except the Cornish instinct - they must go after the latest find. And the gold rush was on in Australia, so that was enough to send him out to Australia. He came on a most wonderful ship, The Great Britain, which is a very favourite story of mine.

Yes?

Built in Bristol, the first iron ship - was part steam and part sails - and it had the run from Liverpool or Bristol - Liverpool mostly, I think - to Australia, for twenty years with the same captain. I could tell you the whole story of that but it would take too long. That was a wonderful story.

One of my young second cousins has been to England for a trip and the ship is now returned to the dock in Bristol where it was built, and it is now a museum. So he walked the decks of the Great Britain.

Had there been stories passed down in the family about the trip out?

Oh yes. There was a story about how the captain, who's name was Captain Gray - had taken down a partition to make a big cabin for them. I think in that time of coming out, they'd probably have to prepare their own food in that case in the family. And there were all those children, and he took a partition out to make a big place for them.

For the whole Pope family?

Yes. Six children and the father and the mother. Yes, that's all I know about that trip.

Where did your father grow up?

He grew up in Bendigo and he went to school there. From the ordinary school he did lessons at the technical college. There were always mining things in their lives, and Grandfather of course was doing contract mining or managing mines. And Father went to work - after he left school - he went to work with his father. And he learned sort of engineering subjects in the technical college in Bendigo. But I don't know what sort of work he did when he started.

What sort of work was he doing in your young days?

Who, my father?

Yes.

Oh, he became a certificated winding engine driver. That was his job, but he also studied at home for quite a while - correspondence lessons - and he had certificates for - what do you call it? - mechanical drawing and those sort of things. He was always interested.

What did you know of his mother?

His mother?

Yes.

My father's mother. She was born and brought up in the same village that my grandfather was, and she was - - -. I think she must have been perhaps not so well educated as his family, because I did hear that some of them looked down on her a bit. They had no need to, she was a very wonderful person. But she was very much second and my grandfather was a chauvinistic head of the family and even named every child. She had no say.

I had one small story to explain that when they lived in Bendigo. A man came one day when Grandfather was at work and asked her something - he said he wanted to know. And Grandmother said, 'Well I think that would be all right. I'm sure it will be all right - I think so - I'll tell him'. So she told Grandfather the story when he came home, and Grandfather said, 'You had no right to think'. (laughs) But she said, 'Richard, I thought' - he said, 'You had no right to think'. That was his attitude.

Did that attitude carry over to his relationship with his children?

Oh, he was always the head of them. And I know when Father left - when he first went to work - he was waiting for his first wages, and he asked his father, 'When am I going to get my money?' In the diary of my grandfather there is a date which said, 'I collected Joe's first wages today'. But Father said - my father said - 'When am I going to get my money?' Grandfather said, 'You have no money,' but when he somehow found out that it was for a book - the ruling of our lives - he was allowed the money for the book, which Father had been watching in a shop window for some time. (laughs) He told me that himself, my father.

Were both your father's parents living in Broken Hill during your childhood?

Yes, but my grandfather died when I was eight years old.

Do you remember him?

Yes, just slightly. I only remember a couple of rather different occasions. He was an invalid for a few years before he died. He was aged sixty six when he died in 1900 and I remember him sitting in an armchair, and I must have been sent in to speak to Grandfather - and I don't remember speaking, but he spoke to me, and he was saying something that was supposed to be funny. And I remembered it - I always remembered it - it was just a verse of some sort of a song. I think it was a sort of a folklore song that was funny. It was something about - he said, 'Let the little dears come forth / What is going to pay' and that was out of an old showman's act. Probably a travelling show that they had in those days in England. And I was frightened.

The second time I remember seeing him was not long, I expect, after that. I saw him lying dead in his coffin, which was a thing that they used to do. They took children past their people in coffins, which they wouldn't do today, and it was rather frightening as I was a very nervy child. Those were the only times that I ever remember seeing him.

But after he died my grandmother came into her own. She became a person - absolutely the head of our family, and a very lovely one at that.

Where did she live after his death?

In Broken Hill.

On her own?

Oh no, she had - - -. The youngest in the family - he never married - he was home - Stephen. And there was a widowed sister - daughter, I mean - and two single ones. They all lived together.

Was your father like his father in his behaviour?

Never. Utterly different - excepting in the inheriting the love of literature. That was the main thing. We had a house full of books always. My father and I were deeper readers than Mother. Mother read lighter books, but my father and I - - -. We were in the city library and we always had the current literature. And in those days you read everything that had been written by Dickens and Hardy and the Brontes and all those older ones, and a lot of other authors who seem to me to have been forgotten, who were very good.

Were you able to afford many books yourselves?

Oh yes, we were always buying books. Every present we ever had for birthdays or Christmas would be a book. Even with Grandfather and his ways - he was rather a strange man. In 1895 he went to Cornwall for a holiday and he came back and he remembered everybody - there were six grandchildren by that time. He remembered everybody - their names and everything. He brought back a book for every child with their names written in, so that he was really a difficult man to understand. You'd think he wouldn't even remember who they all were, but he did. And the girls had a doll as well as the book, and the boys had a book. So there were two boys, I think, and four girls in the family then.

Can you tell me a little about your mother? What was her name?

She was called Elizabeth Harvey, but never ever called anything but Bessie, excepting with my father, and he never called her anything but Bess. No one

else did - just Father - Bess. But everyone called her Bessie. And even in a little book I found that she'd been given as a prize at Sunday School - it had Bessie in it.

What was her background?

Well, they lived in Cornwall. She came from another place - Camborne - they came from. But Grandfather and Grandmother were born and brought up to start with in a village called Breage - and I don't know how to pronounce it because you can't tell with the Cornish people. But Mother's family - she was called Harvey, and her father was called Samuel Harvey. He was a mining engineer and he was killed in a mining accident and his wife was called Mary, and she was left with five children.

There was one, twenty one - the eldest son. In those days - in all mining places - the eldest son would pass on to the father's job, but in his case he was too young. The father hadn't lived long enough for his son to do that. So when the mother died too, the eldest son - and the next was a girl, nineteen - the eldest son, he married. And his relations in Australia all wrote and told him to come out - to South Australia - told him to come out here. There was plenty of work and they could help them and everything. So he was called Samuel too - the eldest son - and he married and he and his wife came out. And then following - the next year perhaps, or a few months - the daughter, nineteen, and a brother under her, and my mother, twelve, and my Auntie Katie, eight, they came out together to their relations in South Australia.

Did your mother remember the trip?

Oh yes, she remembers it, because she always had - - -. She suffered from chronic bronchitis all her life - bronchial trouble - and she had a little cough. And they were all lined up on the ship to come out, for the doctor's medical check up, and she happened to give one of her little coughs without knowing, and she was immediately noted and she was particularly looked after. I remember her telling me that.

Where did the family live in South Australia?

The Pope family? ·

Your mother's family.

They lived all over the place, you see, because they lived with - one I think, the little one, must have lived with the married brother. I don't know where the second son lived, I don't know where their daughter lived - but I think mother lived with the cousins in Moonta, but I don't know where the others lived.

When did she come to Broken Hill?

When she was a young woman. She and Katie - was grown up then, eighteen or something - they came to Broken Hill to work in - - -. Tailoring was a great thing for women in those days - tailoresses - and that's where they met up with the Pope family, mostly at the church I think.

Which church did they attend?

It was - first of all, at that time - it was called the Wesleyan Church, but not very long after the Primitive Church and the Bible Christian Church and the Wesleyan Church all joined together and became - called Methodist. And we all went to the Methodist Church - a big church. It was built by 1888 and the place was only really discovered in 1883. The big buildings went up very quickly. And that was the church I was brought up in from babyhood.

Do you know how much of an education had your mother had?

No, but she must have had quite a good one because there was nothing wrong with her when I - - -. She must have had - - -. Well she could have gone to school when she came out - she was twelve - and she was probably quite good at school, and her father was a mining engineer which was a good position. There's nothing wrong with her education. But Father's education was a more higher kind of one. I suppose there was more book reading in the family perhaps.

So you would have had contact with your father's parents and not at all with your mother's.

None at all with them.

Do you think that your father's parents had an influence on your upbringing?

My father's - on my what?

Your upbringing?

Oh, I don't think they had any. Our family was complete itself. Brought ourselves up in our own way. My father was not a bit like his father in anyway excepting that he had inherited the love of literature and reading. No, the older generation didn't mean anything to me.

You said that after your grandfather died your grandmother became something of the head of the family.

Oh yes, but she was just a beloved grandmother.

Did she teach you anything - any household skills?

Oh no, nothing like that. No, we hadn't anything to do with her like that. We had quite a lot of family relations. They were all on my father's side because my aunt - my mother's sister - she married quite soon after my mother and they went to South Australia to live, so that really, it was my father's family of cousins that grew up around me. There were three - two girl cousins older than me, and I was the third grandchild, and then there were others after that. We had a big family of aunts and uncles and cousins and had family parties and picnics.

Were there particular occasions for the family getting together?

Oh yes, Christmas you always had presents and party like that, and you'd always take your presents to see - the family perhaps would gather at Grandma's place. Then we often had family gatherings when we'd go out, perhaps on a Saturday night, and we were a very moral - - -. There was no drinking or anything like that in our family.

We were quite a moral church-going family, but we'd have family parties and music and the men would play cards, perhaps, and then we might have games like - - -. We had a funny joke once. We had a game with a cue, like billiards in a way, but it was just called - I forget what it was now, but it was that played like that on a table. And I always remember this story because Auntie Mattie - she was one of the oldest sisters, but she was a widow then and living at home with my grandmother - she always used to sort of run the parties. She was very - quite a force - - -. Very nice she was, but she seemed to make the arrangements if we were going out anywhere. Bagatelle, that was the name of the game - and it must've been at Grandma's house because my uncle - the youngest one was called Stephen - and I can remember the time. She called out and she said, 'Don't forget the cue Stephen,' and he said - the family were full of jokes - he said, 'What do you mean?' She said, 'Don't forget the cue'. 'Oh,' he said, 'you mean the quee,' and she said, 'Oh dear, the quee! Stephen, I've always called it cue'. And Stephen put it over all the family and the whole of the evening, everybody said, 'Hand me the quee please,' until the very end when we told her the joke. (laughs)

But there were always lots of jokes in the family, and the men were great for story telling. And I never once in my life heard any of our men tell a rude story.

Were the family actually teetotal?

Yes. They belonged to the Rechabite Lodge. I think one of the uncles used to go to the races occasionally, and I think they all used to gather - - -. There were the four brothers. I think they'd have a ticket in what they called a ticket in Tatts occasionally, which was a syndicate in Tasmania, and that's the sort of - - -. I think they were their only real vices. (laughs)

What about smoking?

Oh yes, they'd smoke a pipe.

What was your parents' attitude to dancing?

[queries question]

What was your parents' attitude to dancing?

Oh they didn't mind, but the aunts were rather dubious. Mother and Father didn't mind and a lot of my friends danced. When I was a teenager I'd be out with a lot of friends and there might be a party and I soon learned to dance. And also the school teachers had an organisation that they used to have a monthly gathering - a dance - and I always knew some of the school teachers, and I used to go to the dances. The aunts didn't like it much but Dad - my father and mother didn't mind.

Did your grandmother disapprove?

I don't think so. I don't think she took any notice.

And you just had the one brother in your family.

Yes, two years younger than me.

What was his name?

Harold. He was called Harold Wellesley, and the reason was this. My father named him - Harold was the last of the Saxon kings, Wellesley was the name of the Duke of Wellington, one of his favourite characters. That was the reason.

Was he known as Harold?

Yes, always. Never shortened.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A: TAPE 1 SIDE B

I'd like to ask you about your childhood home in Broken Hill. Did you live in the one home during your childhood?

No. The house I was born in was a small little house made of iron like they were in Broken Hill in those early days, and my father and his brothers

worked on it and built it, and I have a picture of it in this little book [Olivia's Story, 1979]. I was born there, but when I was about four my father and one of my uncles - one of the sister's husband - and Grandfather, they went to South Africa. And we - my mother and my brother and I - went to - - -. They must have sold that house and we went to Adelaide to live near my aunt - my mother's sister, expecting to be sent for, to go to Johannesburg.

Do you yourself have memories of that time?

Yes, I was only - - - [about four OP]. I remember the place where we lived and it was - - - [near my aunt in Parkside OP]. Anyway the mines broke down and they had to come home again. And I'll tell you how they came home. They went in a ship called the Thermopylae and they came back in the same ship at the end of the year, and that ship was all in the newspapers. It was caught in an enormous, terrible storm - only sails then - and it was blown down to the icebergs but it got back to Port Melbourne. So they got in that. They were in the very cheapest part of the boat and they must have been very cold.

So we came back - Father came back. And the little house where we were living at the time, it was a half a house. And there were two - well I called them old ladies - they probably might have been just young women. They lived next door and they had a little school. They taught little children that came to school in there. And I used to go in there, and I learned my alphabet in there - next door. I remember that quite well, going in there.

Were you back in Broken Hill at the time we're talking about?

No, that was still in [Parkside OP] - while Father was away. But as soon as he came back we all went straight back to Broken Hill and we rented a house for a while - because there was plenty of work for him up there - and we rented a house for a while in Chapple Street.

Then further up the street, my father and his brothers helped together, and they all built another house for us. That was the second house that I lived in - he owned that.

And later he bought another, much nicer house, down in Sulphide Street, and that's where we lived till we left in the end of 1912. And that was a big six-roomed house - iron outside - but inside it would look exactly like this. It was what they called lath and plaster. That meant that it looked - it was all plastered inside. And it had a big, wide passage going through it and it was all linoed floors and a carpet in the sitting room.

But long before we went into that house, in the second house, when I was about seven, I used to be always pretending I was playing the piano. My parents were not musical in any particular way, but I was very keen about this piano business so they bought a piano and I started at seven to learn music - piano - and I had one teacher and then another very good teacher and went for exams, and eventually used to help her a bit with her teaching. She had a little private school that I helped her in, and also I got a few pupils of my own. That was later in my teenage years. But music's been a very great [part of my life OP] - very keen I am.

You say that your parents weren't musical?

Yes they liked music, but they didn't have any knowledge - special knowledge of it - but they always liked everything. We had - in that last house, when I was a teenager, we had - it was a sort of open house. In those days you brought your friends home and had people to tea and you had sing songs in the evening and all that kind of thing. Those were the sort of things for pleasure.

Do you know why your father and his father went to South Africa?

Why they went? Yes. On the Rand mines they - - -. I think it must've been when Grandfather went to England for that particular trip that I mentioned before. One of his sisters and her husband, he was managing a mine on the Rand and Grandfather, evidently, with the usual movement of a Cornishman, thought it'd be a good idea. But when they got there they were rather coldly received by the family for some reason or other, and they got their own jobs. But those mines failed that they were on and that's why they had to come home. Because they couldn't afford to be around looking for work, you see.

How did you consider your family's social standing as you were growing up?

Oh I think they were what you'd call a very - very good living, moral, middle class family - morally and churchgoing, I should say. We had plenty of friends.

The homes that you've spoken about, did your father own them?

Yes.

How much land did you have?

Well the last house would be - - -. I wouldn't know by measuring but the house was a house - a six-roomed house - and it had a certain amount one side and on the other side there'd be a big gate and a wider piece to go in, a fairly big back yard.

What did you use the back yard for?

The back yard? Oh, there'd be a line for hanging the washing up, and at the very back of it, the way Broken Hill was laid out, there were lanes in between the streets. At the back of it was the toilet and the Council - as we call it - nightcart used to come round and look after that when the time came for emptying it.

Did you see him?

No, but you'd see a - - -. I remembered coming home from a party or two, they'd pass you and you'd feel a bit embarrassed. Somebody'd say, 'Oh, there's the nightcart'. (laughs) I don't know why you'd be embarrassed but you'd just feel like that.

Did your father have a horse and cart?

No. We had no vehicles.

How did you get about the town?

Oh we just walked. And then eventually Broken Hill had tram cars down the main street and up another one round about. Then they had some buses later on and you'd go for - horsedrawn things, if you wanted to hire any. We had a funny story about one of my aunts. She was walking out, you might say, with a young man, and it was quite the custom to hire a horse and buggy and take your lady-love out for a drive. She was rather a sensitive person and very modest - I don't think I was ever like that - but she took me with them on the drive, which was terribly funny when you look back at it. (laughs) For a kind of a chaperone.

How old were you?

About twelve I suppose. But the aunts were rather - inclined to be rather over-modest I thought.

What sort of occasions would the family hire a vehicle?

We'd sometimes have a big family picnic and personal friends would join in too, and they'd hire a big open wagon with about four horses, and we'd go for picnics out to various picnic grounds. There was a big creek, and it was called the Nine Mile Creek - it was a picnic ground with trees along it. We'd go out there. Also there were picnics out to a place called Stephens Creek and there was a train went there. There'd be big public picnics would go out there, and you'd go in - you'd travel out in open trucks that the mine would send, and that was fun. We'd sometimes have a Sunday School picnic and we'd all go out there like that.

Yes, I'd like to talk about the different activities a little later on. We were talking about the homes that you grew up in. Did you ever have anyone other than your parents and your brother living with you in the house?

No.

Did your mother ever have any help in the home?

Occasionally she had a bit of help, but as soon as I - when I left school, was home - I had to stay home on account of that. Because she could always do the - you know, she wasn't able to do hard work - but, I stayed home. But even then, it was no burden like the work is today. We had no help - things to help us in the house - and the house was always clean and the floors were polished. We had nothing whatever to clean carpets with except a stiff broom and yet you never made any fuss about the work. It was always sort of done up by lunch time and so on.

In your childhood days, did she have someone to help her with the housework regularly?

No, she always did it.

What about with the laundry?

I have heard, I think, that she's had a laundress occasionally when she's needed it, but I did the washing when I stayed home from school. We'd have someone to come and help with that occasionally, even then, because I suffered a lot with back trouble and I had a lot of treatment for that and I couldn't do so much then. My father could always afford that sort of thing.

Yes, washing would be a heavy job.

Yes. It was different, you see, because we had this washhouse outside with tubs and a stand with a tub each side and a wooden handle and a wringer on it, and a board that you'd have to scrub the dirty things by hand, and a copper outside that again to boil the things in. You'd have one tub for washing and one for rinsing I suppose. Then we had a mangle that we'd turn the handle and put the sheets and tablecloths through. And it didn't seem to take up the time that people take now for their work, somehow or other.

What sort of a water supply did you have?

Oh it was very bad in the early days. In fact without my memory - before I could remember about it - they used to have to have water brought by train from down the line somewhere on the edge of South Australia, and you'd have to buy water, but not in my days. We had rainwater tanks and then they eventually had reservoirs built - I couldn't tell you the dates - at two or three places, and then the water was laid on.

In your childhood, did you run short of water?

No. You had to be careful, of course, especially with the rain - when there wasn't much rain.

Were you able to grow anything in the yard?

Well, no, our - - -. We didn't grow anything in the yard. It was rather a rocky sort of a yard. We had plants - a few plants - and I think we had a tree - bush or two - in the front yard, a verandah on the front.

Did the household have any animals?

We had a dog and I can't remember having a cat then, but we had a dog - a brown and white spanielly sort of dog. He was called - what was he called? Oh, I've forgotten now [Rogue]. But he was very cute, that dog, because my Auntie Mattie - the widow one - for some time she had a little shop - a little business - and our house was near the corner of Sulphide Street and Chapple Street. You'd go to the corner to Sulphide Street and you'd go down the street round the corner to Auntie Mattie's shop. But to go to the butcher's shop you'd go across the street and still in Chapple Street. And the dog used to take the basket to the corner for Mother, ahead of her - I've seen that - and stand at the corner, and she'd say, 'Auntie Mattie's,' or 'Butcher,' and he'd turn and go to either way - ahead of her. (laughs) So he was a pet.

Did you have neighbours close on either side?

Yes. Yes, houses built next door to each other. The house next door in Chapple Street, we had a family living there, and there was a boy eighteen months older than me - they were there for quite a while and he went to the same school. But he turned out to be a writer. He's been not taken much notice of, but he was Ion Idriess, and he and I were great pals because we - you know, the nearest in age. We used to play real history stories.

What sort?

Oh well, there was a - - -. We had a tree there with - a pepper tree, we used to climb it. He'd go up on top and he'd call down to me as the servant maid down in the castle and give me orders. Another thing we played - - -. We had boxes and we'd have pieces of round wood that we used for [firewood OP] that were pieces cut short for burning in the fireplaces - we'd have some pieces of wood under the boxes and we got into quite a cute way of sitting in a box and making it move with the wood underneath it. And we'd have chariot races and I know - out of old history, I was Boadicea once. We used to do those - he and I always did those sort of things.

He went away when he was sixteen. His mother died and he left home and he went away, and after that I didn't know anything about him for many years. I met up with him later.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the sorts of things your family did together. What sort of things would the family do on a Saturday?

Oh, the Saturday they'd go to the football and the cricket - the men. And the mothers would probably, perhaps might go out visiting. Mother often had people to afternoon tea and she'd go out too. Or we'd visit Grandma or the aunts.

Did you have particular chores to do on Saturday?

[queries question]

Did you have chores to do?

Oh, I had a few little things to do but they'd be done Saturday mornings. I suppose I used to clean the silver. Of course you didn't have any stainless silver in those days - you had to clean the knives and forks. And we each had a little job. My brother had things - I don't remember what he'd do - and I'd have something to do. This was when we were - you know, just schoolchildren - and we used to get some pocket money.

How much pocket money, do you remember?

Oh, about sixpence I suppose.

What sort of things would you spend that on?

Well we'd always have to save up for our mother's and father's birthday presents, and anything else we might fancy - we wanted, I suppose. But I remember my brother and I going to buy something for Mother's birthday once, so we must have done those sort of things with it.

How was Sunday spent in your youth?

Oh, Sunday was an all day thing. Before, when we were not old enough to go out at night - church - we'd go to the Junior Endeavour to start with. It was in Sulphide Street but nearer the town - not far to walk - and we'd go to Junior Endeavour. Then we'd go into the church - perhaps we'd sit with our mother, or - - -. Then we'd go to Sunday School in the afternoon, and then we'd be home, and when we were too young to go to the church at night, we'd be home in the evening. Mother had a big bible with pictures in it and we'd always have it - on Sundays we always had bible stories told to us and she'd read it and show us the pictures in the big book. Mother wasn't always well enough to go

to church and later on when I would be going to church by myself - the morning church - I'd always have to come home and bring her the text, etc.

Father wasn't a church goer but he went occasionally. But he was always friendly with the ministers because of their libraries and all their love of books. We knew all the ministers.

What would Junior Endeavour involve?

That was a little service that the children had parts in. Then there was an Intermediate Endeavour and Senior Endeavour, but I don't remember much about them. I suppose I went to the Intermediate. But I played the piano in the Endeavour and I played the piano in the Sunday School.

We'd go to our Sunday School and have a teacher to teach us the lessons and hymns and that, and then they'd probably often have a Sunday School concert, and I remember being in some of them. I was put in one once, when I was about seven, and they had a nursery rhyme play, and they chose me as the princess. I was sitting - they had the big chair out of the pulpit, that the minister sat in. They had that in the Sunday School hall for the throne, and I was in it - the princess. In this play - they used to come to me and bow their knee to me. And I always remember somebody said, afterwards, 'We put her in that because she's a Little Miss Consequence'. (laughs) I was dressed in white silk and I had pearls - big pearls - hanging round me, and a little pearl crown all made of pearls sown up - I suppose Mother did all the fixing.

Also Mother was a wonderful sewer. Everybody made their own clothes or had to have a dressmaker in those days - no dresses bought in shops - and I was always noted for my lovely clothes.

Was your mother able to do all the family dressmaking?

Oh yes, everything. And as one of the brothers was a tailor - - -. There were three connected with mining, etc, but the fourth brother was a tailor - his own business - so my Father - - -. The Pope brothers always dressed well. In those days the suits were wonderful. So much of them were hand done by the tailoresses.

Were you taught to sew at an early age?

Yes, I hated it. But when I left school, Mother made me go to dressmaking lessons at the technical college. When you did the lessons you would learn to map out your own pattern for your own size, and after that, forever I made my own clothes, until - - -. Not before the - long past the 1930s I was still making my clothes - my own dresses.

Did you do handy work as well?

Oh yes. All the aunts and Mother did wonderful fancy work. And I learned to do - I could crochet. It seems as if the aunts all got the craze for the same kind of fancy work at the same time. It was always a new - something new coming in - that they were doing, and they could do beautiful handwork.

Were you taught how to do cooking?

Yes. There was a time when Mother had very bad hands. She had an attack of eczema on her hands, and I had to do the cooking then. And then she taught me how to make - - -. She was a wonderful cook. She taught me how to make the pastry. Of course we always had to have pasties and pies and meat pies and all that in our menu.

Cornish pasties?

Yes. (laughs) I knew how to do them.

Were there other parts of your food that were of direct Cornish influence?

I don't know, I don't think so. I think they were just - - -. Everybody did the ordinary, you know, roasting and boiling and soup making and cake making and scones and biscuits and things like that. But it was all done without a fuss.

Of course a lot of families around you would have had a lot more children.

Yes, they'd have a lot more cooking and a lot more work to do with - except only just the two. I suppose they'd have more work to do. I had one family of cousins - there were six children in that family. I suppose their mother would have more to do. But I think the uncles could always afford help if needed. They weren't poor people and they weren't men that went to the pub every night and drank up their money.

Were you taught to be thrifty at any early age?

Oh yes, we were never allowed to be extravagant, but always had nice things and good things. Nice furniture in the house. We somehow or other must have inherited this holiday business from our grandfather, I think, because all our lives, the Popes have always had a holiday every year. (laughs)

Yes, that's one of the things I wanted to especially talk with you about. In particular, of course, your holidays were often spent in South Australia.

[queries question]

Your holidays were often spent in South Australia.

Yes. Well, Broken Hill being such a hot place, nothing whatever to help to keep things cool in those days. No electricity being used, no refrigeration or anything, and it was very hot. They had long school holidays - very, very good schools, run from New South Wales - the schools. Although they were connected with South Australia a great deal by being closer with their holiday making, and we'd always go to the beach or the hills or somewhere. There were no flats or that sort of thing, but there'd be places that would let rooms with the use of the kitchen. Perhaps two aunts with their children would go away and be staying at the same place and they'd sort of cook together, you see.

And we'd be away all the holidays and the menfolk then would be home looking after themselves. Then there'd come a time when they had holidays from work and perhaps Father and the youngest one often went away for holidays together. They always had places to stay.

Would they go away separately to your mother and you?

Yes, they very rarely ever went away at the same time as we did.

Did they also come to South Australia?

Yes. And later on when we came to live in South Australia they used to go to Victoria a lot. Because we had friends. You always had somewhere to stay because you had relations and friends. That's what they used to seem to do in those days - go and stay with your cousins or - - - [friends OP].

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B: TAPE 2 SIDE A

About the holidays, I guess there were perhaps two aspects involved. You were both getting away from Broken Hill, but you also had relatives in South Australia.

Yes.

Where were your relatives mainly living?

Well the one I mentioned first, my mother's brother, they lived at Queenstown, out of Alberton - just near Alberton. We'd go there. When we were very young we always went there because that was a sort of - that was the eldest, my mother's eldest brother.

What would you do on holidays in Queenstown?

Oh, I don't know. (laughs) Can't remember. I suppose we'd go out sometimes and we'd go to church. My uncle had a - that uncle - had a pony and trap. I suppose we went out driving sometimes. I can't remember much that we did.

And what of other relatives in South Australia?

Well, they'd be the only ones then, in the earliest days. But when we got older we had some of the others that moved to South Australia that lived in Broken Hill originally.

The first lot to move away - the first uncle and aunt and children moved away - went to Robe. So soon after they went down there, that'd be the first Christmas - they had a shop there. The big historic house, now called the - it was then, called, in the early days, the Caledonian Hotel - that was empty. It was over the road from the shop and they rented it for eight shillings a week. Of course they only lived in part of it, so there was tons of room. So an aunt and her three little girls and Mother and my brother and myself, we all went down there for that Christmas - that lot of holidays - and we had a marvellous time. It was the end of my school days, but the school in South Australia started a month earlier than the Broken Hill ones - that was on account of the heat in Broken Hill - and so I went to school that time in Robe for a month.

How old were you then?

I suppose I'd be about - oh, fourteen I suppose, thirteen, twelve. No, thirteen perhaps. Well, anyway, I went to school again when I went back because I went to the high school. But I remember being asked by the schoolmaster to stand up and tell the children what it was like in Broken Hill - the weather - because Robe, in those days, was noted as being the coolest spot and Broken Hill was, of course, noted for being the hottest spot. And I had to tell them how hot it would be, and I remember that - he asked me.

Did you have any idea of how the New South Wales system of schools compared to the South Australian?

Well I went to school - at the very beginning, I went to school after - - -. I went to school at Alberton for a little while, but I don't remember the style of the schools or lessons. Because when I got back to Broken Hill to live after my father's African affair, I was just old enough to go to the school properly and I was in the baby's school, as we called it - the infant school - in Broken Hill.

So I don't remember about the schooling in South Australia. But that little bit at Robe, I don't remember it then, but I made friends there with a rather special person. She was just at leaving age then. She was called Kathleen Bermingham and she did a lot of writing and we were both mad on poetry and books. She became a journalist and she went to Sydney, and she went back later on - lived in Mount Gambier. In the end she lives in Robe again. And she

wrote a book called the - oh, something about the, oh, can't remember it now. Anyway, she wrote a book about the South-East - as we call South Australia - and several other small books of stories about them. We were very keen on reading.

But her family - - -. Her mother was an Anglican and her father's family were all Roman Catholics and he didn't mind much about it. We wanted her to come up to Broken Hill for a holiday with us, and the aunts and all rose up in Robe, and said they weren't going to allow Kathleen to go up there to that hotbed of Methodists. (laughs) But it's very different nowadays because nobody troubles what you are and we go to the Roman Catholic things at Magill when they have specials, and they come to ours. So we don't take any notice now but in those days it was very different. But Kathleen drifted out of that sort of life altogether and I don't think she was any particular church. But she was an excellent writer.

What was your parents' attitude to Catholics?

Oh, they didn't mind either. Didn't matter what you were. No, we didn't mind. I had friends in all the different churches up in Broken Hill.

You've mentioned going to Queenstown and Robe. What other places would you come to for holidays?

In South Australia?

Yes.

Well, we'd go to Blackwood. We had some friends up there and they'd let us some rooms in their house. And another time we'd go up there - we'd been up there and had a kind of a flat up in the Blackwood township. We had two lots of relations living up there and at one early-age holiday I went to school down in the Coromandel Valley school for a little while. I don't remember it but I know I did. Because I was about nine, perhaps, and there was a boy that we knew - he lived further down the road - and he used to go up the road and go by train to town to school then. He was quite keen on me and he used to leave a parcel of fruit down in the front for me, and I'd have to go down and find it. One of my early love affairs. (laughs) But I don't remember, you know, the classes, or what they were like or anything.

Were there other places that you'd come for holidays?

No, mostly the beach - Semaphore and Glenelg - and up at Blackwood. That's I think about all the places we'd been, beside the Robe one.* [See p.21]

Do you remember holidays at the beach?

Oh yes, and by that time we had baths - later on at the last. We had water laid on in Broken Hill and we had a city baths and we learned to swim in Broken Hill, so we could swim when we went to the beach.

Did you have relatives down at Glenelg or Semaphore?

No, we went to places where you hired the rooms and use of the kitchen, but there were generally about - mother and another aunt probably at the same place. They'd be company for each other.

Would you find that other Broken Hill families were in the same area?

I don't remember any but I'm sure they all did the same sort of thing. Were we friendly with them did you- -? Oh yes, we had lots of friends in Broken Hill.

Would they be coming to South Australia for holidays?

Oh yes. Yes, they all did that. You see the place was such a hot place then, it was really the right thing to take the children away for the summer.

How would you travel to get to these places?

Oh, we'd go by train. You went by train and you'd change trains at - I think it was Terowie - into another gauge on the line, in those days.

Would you come through Adelaide?

Oh yes, come to Adelaide. You'd get out at Adelaide and then you'd go to your - - -. I don't seem to remember how we got there, but we had to go - - -. Well, we'd go down to Glenelg - we'd go - train then, too, it's not now. But there was a train then to Glenelg and then at the Semaphore there was a train went on the Port Adelaide line. You'd go down there to the Semaphore. So that we all managed all right.

Would the family do shopping on holiday in Adelaide?

[queries question]

Would you do shopping in Adelaide?

I don't remember much about that. I suppose we did.

* We also had friends living on a farm at Sheoak Log - out from Gawler - and my brother and I had some holidays there in the mid-year school holidays. We learnt how to ride etc and my brother never lost his dream to be a farmer.

After we went to South Australia I often went there for a weekend or a few days and was met at Gawler for the drive out to the farm in a buggy with two horses. One daughter was my great friend and I went there for her wedding and played the organ in the little church.

What other things would Broken Hill people look to Adelaide for - or South Australia for? I seem to remember reading that with your ill health - did you come to Adelaide for treatment?

Yes. I stayed with my Auntie Katie for about six months and the special doctor that always looked after Mother when we were on holidays down at Queenstown - he was a well-known doctor, very good doctor. He and the head man in what was called the Adelaide Gymnasium then - which would probably have been a - - -. A lot of it was just gymnasium lessons of all kinds and more like what we'd call the physiotherapy now. He and the doctor - the head man in there, and the doctor - worked out my needs and treated me accordingly.

Of course it was the spinal - - -. I've got a curvature of the spine - that's where my troubles come from now - and besides that I've got a wry neck which was very much going over. They treated that. I remember he used to put his hand right inside that [neck] muscle and pull - it was dreadful. And then there were a lot of massaging they did for me, and I used to go in and out. I was about sixteen then - my aunt was living out at Parkside then - and I used to go in and out myself to the lessons - the treatment.

Then they worked out a series of things for me to keep on doing at home. My father had to build a parallel bars in the back yard and I had a special bed in one of the verandahs - on an angle. It was all written down. He made it - with the head higher than my feet - and cut out in the - - -. A neck place was cut out and my head was in that, so that I was straight, and then I had to lie on the floor for an hour sometimes. That was after I got home to Broken Hill. But the treatment was wonderfully worked out.

Then there were really little psychological things that I had to remember and I've remember them to this day. I had to lie on this side, because if you're lying in bed on that side you're pulling that - you're not letting that close up. I still lie on that side. And another thing, my shoulder was dropping and I had to try and keep my mind to keep it raised. Those things became natural, you know. I also had linen braces made to cross over to keep my shoulders up - they were done. It was a wonderful treatment.

It had good effect?

Oh yes. I've always had a sort of troublesome - - -. Well, the doctor to this day knows where all my troubles come from. He said they all come from the spinal place. I've got arthritis now in both arms.

I know Broken Hill had strong ties with South Australia. Did you have any cause to go eastwards instead - Victoria or Sydney? Did that have any part in your life as you were growing up?

Oh yes. When I came to live in South Australia, we always went to - - -. We had relatives in Melbourne and relatives in Sydney and we'd go for our holidays then - from then on.

So you always had to go out of the State?

Yes, that's right.

But before you came to South Australia, did you have any reason to travel in the easterly direction?

Oh yes. Well we had a wonderful weekend holiday once that I've written about in one of my books [Olivia's Story] - the family and friends - one Easter. We went to the Darling River, seventy miles - of course it's only a day trip now - but we went a weekend trip up to the Darling River up to Menindie and camped. There were six women and twelve men in the party. They were uncles and brother, and Father, and some other friends, and an aunt and a friend of hers, and two cousins and me. We were all different ages, but we all knew each other. That was a very wonderful holiday and I've written about that in one of my books.

So, even though the means of transportation were fairly slow, your family seemed to like moving about quite a lot.

Oh always, yes. (laughs)

How do you account for that?

[queries question]

Do you know why that was?

Well I think it started with my grandfather. He did such a lot of moving. But they did live in Broken Hill - the whole family lived in Broken Hill for quite a number of years really, after Grandfather died. The married families seemed to. Then the first lot went away and there were still a lot of us up there. They went to South Australia - the ones that went to Robe to live. They had to leave Robe because the sea didn't agree with the uncle, and they went up to Angaston to live then - they bought a business up there. But we've been a family that's always kept in touch.

Apart from the curvature of the spine, did you have other ill health in your childhood?

Yes, I was terribly nervous. I had two attacks of St Vitus Dance, which was very bad. The first one - in my remembrance of that, I was seven, and I was completely helpless. I couldn't move. It was almost, you might say, like infantile paralysis. I recovered from that and after that we went for a holiday

down to Blackwood, because I remember some of my cousins were staying down there too in another part, and they came to take me out. I could just barely walk by then - after it - and they let me fall, and they were all upset, because I suppose I couldn't stand up. But that was a bad attack.

Then I had a second lot when I was about eleven. That affected my speech and walking, and I had - - -. Really out of that business I lost twelve months at school which put me back a class one year. But when the high school started - the first high school was in my time - there were four big schools, and they had an examination for it from every school, boys and girls, for the class. Whatever class I was in, I still went in for that, and I passed and went into the high school with all the first ones, and I was going to be a teacher, whatever happened.

But, I think you might have read it in the book - one of my books [Olivia's Story] - the headmaster and the - - -. The teachers had to go to Sydney to be trained and the training class was getting formed and I was passed into it. But the headmaster and the inspector, they called me in one day and they broke the news to me that they thought they'd better tell me that I'd never be able to pass on account of my eyesight. I'd always had short sight.

That must have been a big disappointment.

It was terrible.

When you say that the training class was being formed - - -?

It was to go to Sydney to the training college. The master of that class - they didn't have a building, that was first to the high school - they didn't have a building for it so they had it in the technical college in a big room down there. And they had the big yard at the back for the outdoors playing around, in the recess times and that, there.

We had a wonderful time. It was the most enlightening of all my schooling, because we had this special man sent from Sydney to take charge of it. His name was Leslie Penman, MA, and all the girls, of course, were desperately in love with him immediately. But he put me into the realm of learning and literature in a different way to any of my other teachers.

Was he a high school teacher?

Yes, he had charge of the high school as it started - the whole thing. It was like a co-ed class, you see. First time I'd ever been in - except the baby school. There were boys' school and girls' school. At that time we were all together. He was a wonderful man. He taught us in a way that we'd never had

before. When I was living in Sydney, when he was retired and about seventyish, I found out where he lived and wrote to him. I said, 'I don't suppose you'd remember me,' and I had a letter back by return of post. He said, 'I remember you perfectly,' and also about six - a lot of other names he put in. And he said, 'That class out west,' as they called it, 'was the most interesting class of children I ever had'.

Was he the one who had to break it to you that you couldn't be a teacher?

Yes. Anyway, some friends took me to see him and he knew me. As soon as I started to talk he said, 'Olive Pope,' and it was a lovely - - -. He was living with his daughter and his daughter came out of the house - we were just talking outside - and she said, 'Oh, Dad loves to see his old pupils'. (laughs)

Why do you think you wanted to become a teacher?

I just always did want to be a teacher. Or a writer. We used to have autograph books we'd write things in, and we all had a place in it. We'd have questions - 'What would you like to be when you grow up?' or 'Which place do you like best?' and various things, and I always had 'Writer'.

Did your parents encourage you in your early wish to be a teacher?

Oh yes. Yes, they would have liked me to have been a teacher. When that fell out, of course, that was when I was - when I started to live at home and was getting on with music - and that's when I went to the technical college and I learned bookkeeping and dressmaking. Then, when we came to Adelaide, I immediately went to Remington College - commercial college - and learned shorthand and typing to be equipped with something in case it was ever needed. But I knew that - they all knew that I was needed at home in South Australia. But I had my certificates for those things, which came in handy when the wartime came, because, you see, I could use them.

I wanted to talk with you about your life after you left school.

Yes.

How old were you when you left school?

I can't quite remember. I suppose I was fifteen.

As you say, you couldn't become a teacher.

No.

Do you think that with your mother's circumstances, had your eyesight been alright, would you have been allowed to become a teacher and move away from home?

Oh yes. I was going to Sydney. Oh, that was no obstacle - I would have gone to Sydney to the Teachers' Training College. Quite all right. Because they would have been able to afford help in the house if necessary.

Was there any question of you doing some other kind of work rather than staying at home?

No. Oh no, I was needed at home and I had the music and I had a few music pupils, and I didn't have to really earn my whole living. I used to help my music teacher with her little school - private school - and also she'd get me to give a lesson or two sometimes to the babies. You know, that's how I - - -. I always seemed to be in something.

As a teenager, do you think you would have rather gone out to work?

No, I think I had a more interesting life the way I did it. Most other girls that I knew were either school teachers or working in the shops, or working in offices, as they left school. And there were a lot of dressmakers and tailoresses and all that in those days too.

Did any of those jobs appeal to you at that stage?

No, I hated it - I hated sewing. No.

How did you spend your days from this time when you left school, until the move to South Australia?

How did I spend a day?

Yes.

Well there'd be the ordinary household work and then there seemed to be - I always seemed to be having lessons at something. I had to do a lot of practice - piano practice. Then there'd be the church things. Very often we'd have a - be getting up a concert. A couple of times we got up big concerts, but we had them in the theatre. We had one once called 'The Flower Queen' and they were all flowers in it, and it was beautiful - like what they'd call a cantata, you know - and that was a lovely concert, and I was in that. I sang in a duet with a friend. We were mignonette and violet or something. (laughs)

Did you have singing lessons?

Yes, in South Australia. Oh yes, I had singing lessons from a wonderful teacher. After I'd had my lessons at the business college in South Australia, I went to an office and did ordinary office work for about a year or eighteen months. But Mother was getting that she needed me so I stayed home - gave that up - but then that gave me a bit of experience in ordinary office work. I didn't do what I'd been learning but I learned the ordinary routine.

We might talk about that again in just a few minutes. I'd like to ask you how you managed with money in those teenage years.

Well, you see, when I did anything - - -. Oh, I suppose Mother and Father gave me a certain amount of money. I can't remember what I'd have, but I never seemed to be lacking in anything. Then if I had a music pupil or two of my own I had that money. Then when we lived in South Australia, I could earn a bit of money then too, because I had some music pupils - - -. Have you got out of Broken Hill yet? Still doing Broken Hill?

Well we'll just talk a little bit more about Broken Hill. You've mentioned that you remained involved with the church. Do you think that became more important to you as you got older?

Oh yes, it was always important. I taught - as I got older - I played the piano in the Sunday School and I became - - -. I used to sing without lessons then, because I had singing lessons when I came to South Australia. But I was in the choir - the church choir - and sang a solo now and then in it, and was involved in the church life.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A: TAPE 2 SIDE B

Let's talk about the time that the family moved to South Australia. That was in 1912 when you were twenty one years old by that time.

Yes, the end of 1912 - October.

Can you explain why the family decided to move?

Yes. My father had become very - - -. At his work, he had to work three shifts, which mean that he had to work night shift. That week he'd have to be sleeping by day and his nerves got quite bad and he couldn't sleep by day. He was about fortyish then, so he and Mother decided that we would sell up in Broken Hill and buy a business. They owned the two houses and he had quite a good salary - wages, or whatever they called them - and he went to Adelaide - South Australia - to look up some advertisements they'd found for a small business. They found one - it happened to be down the South Road way a bit, and it just suited them. Mother was very good at business, very good, and Father was very good with people, you see, and they would have got on quite well with it.

When he got back - he decided on this place - got back, found that in the meantime the family had all been talking and Stephen, who was the idol of the older sisters, had said he'd like to go to South Australia for a change too. So he had the idea, what about starting a poultry farm, and Dad going with him, you see - my father going with him. So when Father came back they put

this over, and the eldest sister's husband - who's husband was the manager of one of the biggest mines - and she worshipped Stephen - she was the eldest and he was the youngest. He was the one that lived with Grandmother, you see. And they were all interested, and if Stephen wanted it, all right. So Uncle Jim, he was interested too, and he said, 'Well I'll come in with you and give you a hand,' like a sort of a silent partner.

So when Father came home they put it to him and he thought it was a good idea, and so they gave up the idea of this separate shop of their own and the three men went straight away to Adelaide and they found these two properties near each other, down there in what is now called Rostrevor - the Fourth Creek. The one - the smaller house - faced Montacute Road, full of citrus trees and a creek running through it, and the sheds and that there. The other one faced St Bernards Road and went right back till the backs almost touched. And that all had other land as well - altogether sixty acres of land, which is Rostrevor now. So look at what it would have been worth now.

Yes.

Well, they were all very pleased about it and they decided they'd do it. Well, Uncle Jim, having the entry into the Bank of New South Wales, on account of his own affairs and being a manager of a big mine, of course, they helped immediately, and I suppose it took a big loan as well as all their money, and we got these places. So we went into the house facing Montacute Road, which we called 'Brentwood' and the other place was quite a famous place, and it was called 'Rossmoor' and it had a tower on the top. It's still there but the tower's not there. It was built by Ross Reid, and that was a big house with wonderful rooms in it and it was quite the place for Grandma and Stephen to go. There were two sisters - the widow sister, but she was very sick, and one single sister was left, and she was there. So they went into that big house.

And there, there was a big brick building - stone building - that they could make into what they called the incubator house. That was already standing ready and only had to be gone on with - getting the incubators. They had to build the fowl houses which - they were all handy, our men. They built their houses in Broken Hill, in the beginning, some of them. They soon had the fowl houses up and they started off with that.

Then they had another little cottage on the property and they got a gardener to come and live there, with his family, and he looked after the - helped with the gardening and the two or three horses we had - taking the fruit to market and that sort of thing. And they got on quite well and they

could've got on quite well enough, if circumstances hadn't immediately gone against them.

Well, that was the end of 1912 and they found that, coming from Broken Hill and seeing a lovely creek running and all that, you'd never think anything - that there was ever any shortage of water. The creek dried up of course, and no water was laid on there properly - not on the place we were living in. But anyway, they had to sink a well which took a lot of money - that was the start. But there was no trouble or that with their bank loans, etc. So the next thing that happened was in 1913 a most terrific drought - that was a set-back. Then 1914 the war, which changed everything. Then followed all the years of depression. By the end of the - by 1936, we knew that everything was finished and we left, had to leave. Stephen was quite all right.

Oh, in the meantime, the end - Christmas, 1913 - - -. Oh, the sick aunt had died six months after we came down, and Grandma and the other daughter were there with Stephen, and at Christmas 1913 Aunty Mary, who lived in Broken Hill - she had three little children, nine, seven and four, and her husband died on Christmas Day, suddenly. Well it wasn't very long before they all came down to live at the big house with Stephen and Grandma. And then that single aunt got married at about forty, and so they all lived over there and the children were brought up there and married from there and all.

Do you think that your father and his brothers had the right aptitude for the work?

No, they didn't. They got on all right but of course they were much - - -. They were quite happy when anything went wrong with the well, for instance, and they had some machinery to look after. Oh they got on all right with it - they managed all right with it. I think they would have done all right in the end - got through - if it hadn't been for the circumstances. Then Father was seventy. He wasn't able to go to work anywhere - couldn't possibly go to work.

You were mentioning earlier that your Mother had quite a deal of aptitude for business.

Yes. But Mother had died. Mother died ten years after we went there. But she had a wonderful aptitude for business.

Where do you think she got that from?

I don't know, but she was always good at it.

Was she responsible for the household finances?

Oh yes. Father just simply came home with a pay packet and handed it over. Mother did it all. And they were very different in personality, but they never had any - there were never any differences or anything went wrong in our family. My father and mother were wonderful. They just went on - life was very good in our household.

Do you remember whether your mother was happy with the change from business to poultry farming?

Oh yes, she was happy living there. Yes. She didn't have anything to do with the poultry farm of course. We lived in one - - -. It was just the gardening. The poultry was on the other property, but it was all one as far as we were concerned. The men worked together of course. We had a cow and the men milked and we had a separator and when Aunt Mary came down with the children to live, eventually, we'd take it in turns - a month or two around. I'd do the separating and making the butter, and then she'd have her turn, and we'd have butter - - -.

A lot of our life came from the land. See, we made our own butter - we had butter and cream, and we had - - -. Our gardener always grew some vegetables for himself and us. There was plenty of room - places - for doing that, and then we had all the fruit and market gardening always to get things like that at. So the living was quite simple and my father and uncle drew a certain amount each week from the bank.

I always could earn my own bit, because I had some music pupils. Oh, and in the meantime, when I left the office that I went to for about a year - eighteen months or something - Father and Mother wouldn't take any of the money that I earned and it was in the bank. I went into the Conservatorium and had lessons from a very wonderful piano teacher. It was more in the line of being able to teach them than, not to be an executant - it was to teach. And she was wonderful to me. At that time I too, had singing lessons. I was in a lovely choir in the city - the Bach Society. It was led by a Dr Davies who was the head of the Conservatorium, and my singing teacher was his chief soprano and she taught singing too, and I had lessons for singing from her. So all my life went on like that all right. There was never anything dull about it.

Do you think that the partnership between your father and your uncle worked?

Oh yes, they were always happy together, and they'd always have a holiday. No matter what happened in life, they always went away every year somewhere - they had relations. By that time we had a cousin married in Melbourne and another cousin living in Sydney, and in Victoria a great friend

of Stephen's lived and they used to go over to his place for holidays. So they always had a holiday every year on their own.

Did you sell produce from your own family's property?

[queries question]

Did you have produce to sell?

No, we only had enough from the cow for the two families.

What about the fruit trees? Did you have surplus from the fruit trees?

[queries question]

Did you have surplus fruit?

Oh, that would go - - -. Yes, we had everything we wanted. We'd use everything we want, but that went to market.

Oh, it did?

Yes, that was all - - -. Our gardener looked after that you see. They were members of the Market Gardeners' Association.

Did you go to their picnic?

No. No, we didn't have anything. Only the menfolk had anything to do with their meetings.

They had a big picnic each year. Did you ever go to that?

No, I never went to that. No, we weren't sort of involved in that. But nearby there was this little - - -. There was this little church - a very small hall in Newton Road, just off Montacute Road, near us - the Magill church used to have a service there, Sunday afternoons. My aunt - the one that got married, that was living with Stephen first - she played the organ there until she got married, which was only about a year or so, like, after, that she was married. And I took over playing the organ over there. Till then I'd been going up to the Payneham church for a while, and up to Magill church sometimes. But I went over there then, in the afternoon service, and took over the organ and the Sunday School.

Then we all were talking about building a church and someone belonged to the - - -. An elderly couple that lived there, that came from Montacute, the husband died, and in his will he'd left a block of land just near that little hall in Montacute Road, facing Montacute Road - fifty feet of land to build a church, and that started us going. I was the secretary of all the things they had there then. Oh, I had a terrific cheek, the things I'd ask people. Special concert parties and all, used to come out.

About what time was this?

[queries question]

About what time?

This would be - oh, I suppose this must've been beginning of the wartime.

The First World War?

Yes. It was while I was there in the Newton Sunday School and that, that the war was on. Anyway, we started saving up to build a church, and having concerts and all sorts of things. And dancing was frowned on by the Methodists, but that was like a little country place. There were no buildings round us. They were all just paddocks and market gardens and whatnot. But we used to have a dance after our social evening and the ministers didn't mind. They'd sometimes stay a while and then they'd go home. A man used to play his concertina for the dances and we kept raising a bit of money. Then we'd have a fete and so on.

On the thirteenth of January 1924, I laid the foundation stone of the new little church hall, and it's still there. Since then they've built another big hall which they have their church in, and it still belongs to the same parish you see - belongs to the Magill parish. Well since it's Uniting, there's a little - - -. Down in Arthur Street there was a little gathering of Presbyterians - Finchley Park - and up at Rostrevor there was another gathering of the Congregationals. Well, when it was Uniting Church it became all - Magill, Newton, Rostrevor and Finchley Park are all Uniting, and they're in one parish. We're all one now.

Thinking back to the time when you moved over to South Australia, how did you make the move?

Oh we came by train. I don't know how the - I can't remember how the furniture and all that came.

Did you bring a lot with you?

Oh yes we did. I suppose we must have brought practically everything. I suppose it would come down by train and then come out by - the train people, you know, deliver big things. I suppose that's how it came. I don't remember that part much.

How did you feel about coming to South Australia?

Oh, all right. We were quite interested in it.

Did you yourself have any part in the decision to come here?

No, I was never - - -. I heard all about it, but we just didn't have any say in it.
No.

Were you sorry to leave Broken Hill?

I don't think so. I think I was interested in the move. I had a lot of people - friends - to see me off. Because, you know, I had quite a set then. You know, young men and women - girls - that were in it, up to that age.

Of course during your late teens and early twenties, I suppose quite a lot of your friends would have been getting married?

Oh yes. I wasn't interested. I was more of a platonic in my mind. I had lots of boyfriends and I had two or three that were very keen on me, but I didn't feel like that. Had one who had a terrific crush, and he lived in - his family lived at Kingston in South Australia, and he was in a bank up there. As soon as I was introduced to him, I used to think he was lovely, looking at him. I was introduced to him and he got a bit possessive and I got sick of him - I couldn't stand it. But I've got a lot about that in one of the books [Olivia's Story].
(laughs)

Was there any pressure on you from your family to get married?

No, never. Nothing at all. All the boys I knew - and girls too - were all welcome home. They used to come to tea and we'd have musical evenings, and my father and mother were always interested in everybody I knew. A girl-friend would probably be sitting on an arm of Dad's chair with his arm round her. That was - you know, happy-go-lucky sort of family.

Did you expect to get married eventually?

Oh well, I was - I did. There was one that I was very friendly with, but we were always very platonic - in Broken Hill. He was five years older than me, but he was always in our set - brought up at the church - but he wasn't in much church work with me. He used to go to the parties and dances and things that I went to and we were always friends. He'd bring me home. He'd sometimes take me out to the pictures and that sort of thing.

Then, after I left up there, later he came to see us. His family had moved to Sydney and he was over in Adelaide. He came to see us. It was that time, when we'd decided, that the war had started - and he was an assayer. The chemists were all kept back until they were wanted because they were all called up for munitions in England - they were all made in England, the munitions, in the First World War - and he was to go as soon as he was called. At that time our feelings had changed a bit, and we decided we'd marry when

he came back. We were, really, as good as engaged - well, we were engaged to be married.

He went over to England and my father and mother were quite satisfied - they were quite satisfied for us to think of marriage. We wrote constantly, but of course writing letters in those times, it was - there were no airmail letters, it went by ship. Some of them'd go down and, you know, and it took a long time going and coming. And all of a sudden I had - - -. Oh, I'd had cables from him from everywhere on his way over and a cable to say he'd got there and constantly letters, you know, that he'd been writing every week, and all that sort of thing, and presents sent, and all that. And all of a sudden I had a letter from Sydney, from his family who were very fond of me, to say that he'd married a girl in England. So that was that.

Yes, that happened quite frequently during the war.

Yes, it did in that First World War. But, it's a funny thing - it happened and you sort of forgave them. You sort of knew that they were away over there and made a fuss of, and you sort of got over it. But I'd - completely killed me for any feelings of love for him. I saw him in between. His life wasn't very happy by any means, and the first wife died and he had a little girl of six. They lived in a country town - South Australia by then - and I met up with him lots of times.

And anyway, I won't go into his story, but when he was eighty he had a housekeeper then, and I was very friendly with her, and I used to go there occasionally, just for afternoon tea. This particular time, he was eighty, and it was the last time I ever saw him. He used to drive me to the bus to come up to town again, and he sat and looked at me. He said, 'Do you know, Olive, I've always been in love with you'. And I said - I was surprised, but I said, 'I believe it, but I don't feel the same, like, as you do'. He said, 'I know you don't,' but I was glad he'd said it, because I really knew that in his heart all along, he had felt very deeply for me. But I never regretted it because he wasn't a sure enough minded man for my type. (laughs) I've had quite a lot of proposals of marriage, but there's always been something I didn't like, or - - -.

Well, let's talk a little bit more about your life in South Australia.

Yes.

You've mentioned working the separator. What other sort of outside duties did you have on the property?

Oh I didn't have anything else to do, except just call the men in to afternoon tea - they were all round us. Because Mother died, you see - after the first ten years it was all just me there with Father. See, I was fourteen years there after Mother died.

Yes, well let's talk about the early years in South Australia. You've mentioned that you had aunts and nephews and nieces living round about. Were you ever responsible for looking after your young relatives?

No, never.

How did you like children?

Oh, I always loved children. Because I used to go to this little church and I took over the Sunday School, and I reckon - they all reckon to this day, the ones that are around about the place - they reckon that they all belong to me. And there's some of them up there, you see [indicates photograph].

Yes.

That's when we left. That's not in the story because that's 1936. But that was my choir in the little church, you see, and their lives - well, I was wound up in all their lives and all their doings. They filled my life when Basil married. They filled the gap that was - - -. They filled everything up. Looking after them and I'd - - -. One of them is a retired schoolmaster and just a little while ago I was lunching with some of them, and he said, 'My word,' he said, 'you taught a whole lot of us fifteen year olds the beginning of life, didn't you?' (laughs) They were funny. They used to sort of hang around me, and they all really - - -. I was so mixed up in their lives and their ups and downs, that they did fill my life. That was before we had to leave out there ourselves you see, and they were still in my life - they still are.

Let's talk a little bit more about the work you did do outside the home. You mentioned that just about as soon as you came to South Australia you went and did a commercial course. Where was that?

Remington's College was in Grenfell Street, and then the office I went into was Cowell Brothers, at the corner of the Parade and - what was that other street there? Well, it's not there now, but - - -.

Were they wood people?

Yes. They were the timber people. They had a Port Adelaide place too, but that was their main office there. I used to go there every day, all the way from down at where I lived. Go right up to Magill - I had a bicycle. The aunt that got married - she married a widower with quite a big family that lived in the corner shop - and I'd leave my bicycle there and then get the tramcar

down to the road that went through to Cowell Brothers. it was a trip every day.

Yes. How long was the commercial course?

A year. I was twelve months. I passed the requisite amount of speed in shorthand and typing.

Was it a full-time course?

Yes. Oh, I suppose the classes would be - - -. No, I wouldn't be there all day, you know, but a couple of times a week I'd go. I did all I had to do for the course - to get the certificates. That meant that when the wartime came I could apply - - -. When my whole life broke up at this guesthouse business that I had, well I could apply for clerical work, you see. So I put in some letters to several things, and one I put in to the Clerical Department of the Munitions and I got a letter from that to come up for an interview and I got a job. That's were I - practically the whole war I worked in the Hendon Munitions Office, in the Accounts Section.

This is the Second World War?

Yes, that was the Second World War. The First I wasn't in that. This was when I left Glenelg.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B: TAPE 3 SIDE A

Who's idea was it for you to do the commercial course?

[queries question]

Who's idea was it?

Oh, I suppose I wanted to and I suppose my mother - I can't quite remember - but I suppose my mother and father felt that they wanted - - -. I'd had the bookkeeping for twelve months in Broken Hill before we left, and I suppose they felt they'd like me to have something fixed as I couldn't be a school teacher, and I must have something that I could turn to if it was ever needed. That was their idea. Not that they wanted me to go and work. They didn't, they wanted me home. But it was their idea that I had to be equipped for something, which was a very sensible idea.

How did you get the job at Cowell Brothers?

Look, I don't even remember how I got that. I only know that I went there and I had two friends that came out of that. One girl was there in the office and a friend of hers that she knew, they became quite friends of mine and they used

to go walking on Saturday afternoons. And, oh, people galore used to walk out from the Glynde - from the tram at Glynde, and walk out Montacute Road and turn up at Olive's place for tea on Saturdays. They didn't have to be invited.

How big an office was it?

Oh it was quite a lot. There'd be - the accounts and all were done in it, in the part I was in. There was a forwarding office which was quite a big part. From then on - in the part I was in that's where you got all the stuff to make up the accounts and that, and I was only doing very easy work there. But then it was something I had to learn. It was all about the invoices and sorting them out and filing, and all those sort of things. But that all went in with what I wanted to find out.

How did you enjoy working full-time like that?

I liked it. Twenty five shillings a week I got. (laughs)

That must have been more money than you were used to having.

Oh yes, and of course Mother and Father wouldn't take it, you see. That's why I could save it up in a bank and - oh, I could keep myself on it, and save it up, and then I had the money to go to the Conservatorium music lessons, which I wanted very much.

Oh, and the reason I went there - - -. I was a friendly with a girl that worked the switchboard at Cowell Brothers. She played a violin beautifully, and she used to come - - -. We'd have a meeting sometimes, and I was always good at accompaniments. She had a boyfriend who was a cellist, and he was learning in at the Conserv, and we'd have some meetings together and play trios. We'd have a wonderful time together. He used to say, 'I've never met a better accompanist than you'. He said, 'Why don't you go on a bit further with it?' and he was always talking about me - 'Why don't you go to the Conserv?', you know, 'You've got the touch - you've got the idea'. And it was through him that I went. I've got it all about him in one of my books [Towards Sunset, 1980].

I went down one weekend - they lived at Brighton - and the girl and I went down for a weekend and we played the whole time I think. And soon after that there was a boating accident and he was drowned, that boy. But it was through him, and his admiration of my playing, that I went to the Conserv. I kept on - I didn't think of it ever myself, to start with. It was through him.

Were you at Cowell Brothers for about eighteen months, do you think?

Yes, and it was very good training in the general run of office work.

How did you come to leave there?

Oh well, Mother was wanting me home. It was time - I knew that it was time. Mother needed me home. She wasn't really well enough to do so much. Because there were no - - -. There were kerosene lights and wood fire and water to carry in and out from the outside. Father used to do a lot to help her but needed me home.

Did she ask you to come back?

I don't remember - I don't think so. I think I just knew it.

Were you disappointed?

No. Oh no, I liked being there - home too. See, she wasn't well and it was only - we were only there the ten years when she died.

Did you find living at home, as you got older, during the 1920s, was it restrictive about what you could do?

No. No, I could do what I liked. I had plenty to do over at the little church and Sunday School. My father said all I needed was a bed over there. (laughs) Yes, and I used to get on quite well with all the ministers - all except one, and I never got on with him. One of my birthday parties, there were three ministers at it, and when I had to get up and make - they made me get up and make a speech when I cut the cake. And they said, 'Now, come on, you've got to make a speech. And tell us about - - -, 'all the ministers, you know. And I said, 'Well I like them all except one,' and I told them who it was and they said, 'Well, no wonder' because they didn't either - the rest of them, they knew about him. He was older than them but they'd heard about him. I told them the argument we'd had once and they all thoroughly enjoyed it.

One of the things that I'd like to talk to you about is the period of the Great War during this time. Do you remember the outbreak of war?

Yes. A great surprise.

Was it?

Yes. Nobody expected it, nobody.

Would you have been working at that time, at Cowells?

No, must have been home then - 1914. Oh yes, I must've been home by then. And all the boys that I knew went - went to camp. My brother was away up in the country - he was right up at Marree or somewhere - but he came home and he joined up.

What was he doing up there?

Oh he was - I don't know what he was doing, but he must've been - - -. See, he was a fitter - he was trained as a fitter. He was doing railway work - he was working in the Railways at first, before the war started. He might've been up there with some - in some fitting job, or had something to do with the Railway. But anyway, he came home and said he was joining up. Oh, they all went. Patriotism was up to the top then.

Did you feel the same way?

Yes. We all did. We all knew they had to go. You see, people don't feel like that now. The world's changed.

Did you still think of Britain as home do you think?

Yes. I can't help feeling that Britain is the head of us, but I know that she's only very small now.

Did your family have ties with relatives back in Britain?

No. No, we didn't have anyone. You see, my mother's family, they all came out a young family and they didn't have any. But since then, my generation - or, quite a lot of them - have had trips to England and to and 'fro and met up with the early relations and have known them quite a lot, but I've never had the money to do that, you see. I've always had to work for myself.

Did you expect the war to go on as long as it did?

No, people didn't think so. People thought it'd be over soon. It went on and on.

How did it affect your life?

Well, you see, first of all it took away the man I was going to marry, and then the dear friends that I had - some were killed. And it seems as if so many I knew were killed - it became a dreadful feeling. You never knew who you were going to hear about next.

I had a letter from - - -. Oh, there was one in the first raid, Gallipoli, very first day. There were two brothers and the older brother I didn't know him so well, but the young one was eighteen months older than me - Roy - and he was on the first day and his brother was a Corporal I think, and he was just a Private. And his brother picked him up on the way up the hill, and had to take him back to the Casualty. He was wounded straight away, and then of course the brother had to leave him and go. He was in hospital and sent to France after he got out, and he was in France and he met up with his brother. His brother was over there by then, and they met up - had a wonderful time

meeting up. In fact I think the third brother went over and they all met. And then Roy was taken prisoner and he was - - -.

In the meantime he'd got - in England - he'd got engaged to a girl over there and we'd all written to her and she'd written letters to us, and we thought she was lovely. They lived at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and they wrote and had my brother over from France for his first leave, and oh, they made him have that photograph taken that I showed you there, and sent us back a minute by minute description of what he was like and what he - - -. He did the dishes for Mum and did this and that, and always made sure the forks and things were put in the right - cutlery was always put in its right place, and if it was wrong he'd tell us off. Oh, they were lovely letters - you just felt he was there.

But Roy was two years a prisoner - wounded, and a prisoner in Germany - and then he was to be - - -. He was a Pulteney Grammar boy, and he was all in the paper that he was repatriated and he was to be back in England. Went back to Eva's place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the papers said how he'd soon be home. Instead of that he was taken with septic pneumonia caused from a wound made two years before and unattended. Dreadful, wasn't it?

Yes.

And he died there.

What about your brother's experience?

Brother? We had a cable to say - he was in France - - -. He was in the Howitzer's - rider on a horse, you know, pulling the guns into - - -. He was gassed - badly gassed. We had a cable to say very badly gassed. Of course you felt it was the end. Shortly after that we had another cable, sent to Devon to a nursing home. The Army did those things to you, you see - you kept in touch. He was six months in a - this was nearing to the end of the war, and he was six months there before he was allowed to come home.

And then, he'd always been mad on farming - that's what he wanted. So he went to the farming college at Mount Remarkable, and he was given a farm by the Repat. But against the wishes of the Advisory Committee and the District, they put him on it for wheat so it failed after seven years, but he met - he married the girl that lived next door in the meantime. But he was in love with a girl in England - in Devon - and he used to write about her. She was called Nancy, and he would have married her, but she was the only girl - the daughter - and the family absolutely and utterly refused permission to let

her come to Australia. But Nancy was always the one, we knew, that was in the back of his mind. He never talked about her.

Did you write to a lot of the boys that were away?

Oh yes, I wrote to all of them - and sent parcels. We did all that. Then I had this one that - this soldier that Roy knew, that I called the Romantic Soldier - and the letters that I published in one of my books [Towards Sunset] that he wrote to me. They were lovely. He was fifteen years older than me and I know he - - -. Instead of going back to Penzance where his people lived, he chose to stay in Cairo in the office, and he wrote - used to write from there to me, lovely letters - and he said he was coming back to Australia. He could have wanted to marry me I think. He said near the end, he said, 'There's no fool like an old fool'. (laughs) But he was nice. I think we would have got on all right. He said he'd had an unhappy early love affair he told me. He was in the Boer War and he was a commissioned officer, and he was just an office hand - a Private - in Cairo, until he wrote me a letter. He said, 'I haven't got over the frightful honour yet, but I've been made a Corporal'. (laughs) See, he was a commissioned officer in the Boer war - he said he was nearly overcome. Used to write lovely letters.

But I had lots of experience like that - lovely letters from the boys. And I once had a letter from another one that - I could've married him too, if he came home. He was from a South-East farm they had - they owned - down - - -. More like Tailem Bend way they lived, that side. He wrote me a letter from Salisbury where the big camp was, and he said, 'I'm sick and tired of this place,' he said, 'but we're leaving for France - - -. I'm letting you know, we're leaving for France any day now' - and a fortnight he was dead in France. They were the things that happened to you.

Another one. We had a big church camp group down at Port Noarlunga - Christmas 1915. There was this very much older man than me, but he was very - just a friend - but very nice. We used to talk books and poetry by the yard - we all called him Uncle Reg - and he went off to the war. In 1916 - August - he was killed in France. Well that was going on in my life all the war years. It was a very deep experience I went through in that 1914 war. It was dreadful really. You know, you never knew what you'd hear next.

Did it change your attitude towards the war?

No, you just knew it had to be. You didn't seem to think it was wrong or anything. You know, it just sort of was on and that was that.

What sort of activities were you involved in? War Funds, and --?

No. No, see we lived right out there where we lived. We did things like knitting and things and we'd send them ourselves, and send parcels and help with money as far as we could with the Red Cross things, and did everything we had to do and were asked to do, but I wasn't in any committees of any sort. You see, living out there in those days, right down on Montecute Road, it wasn't like living there now. It's more like a city right through now.

Was there any ill-feeling towards families whose sons didn't go to war?

I don't think so. Oh, I think there must've been because there was a little incident once. When we were on that camp down [at Port Noarlunga] --. Some of the boys were in camp and they'd come down for over the weekend. They were from the church at Magill really - group - and we were all down there. And the boys that night that were down for the night - they had to sleep out on the verandah - and there was a boy down there staying with us that came from up at Kapunda or somewhere, but he hadn't enlisted or hadn't got round to thinking about it but he might have in time, and I remember them telling us this yarn.

One of them said - he said, 'Oh gosh, my feet are cold'. The other one said, 'Mine are not - I'm in camp'. So they didn't like it when the other boys didn't get - the soldiers didn't think much of the others if they weren't enlisting you see. That was just a quiet answer - 'Oh mine aren't cold. I'm in camp'.

What do you think he meant by that?

Well he just meant he wasn't cold footed.

Oh of course, yes.

He didn't mean his actual feet - he meant the other one was hanging off.

Port Noarlunga was a very popular camping site.

Oh yes, it was nothing like - built up - like it is now. We had a lovely time. Three times we went down there. Of course some of them had gone and some of them were killed by the time I went to the last one. Had a lovely time, and I was older than some of them. Some of them were younger - all ages - and there was always a chaperon.

I know, this Uncle Reg - I think I put it in a book [Towards Sunset] - Uncle Reg was a lot older than me, and he was a very serious man - he never had much to do with girls. We had to be back by ten o'clock - we'd be out on the beach all over the place - and we had to be back by ten o'clock to supper, or

else. The boys and the men used to sleep outside in tents and we were in this big camp place - no, I think we were in a house that time. The first time we were in a big barn place, but this time we had - - -. We were out late. We got back after ten, and of course Uncle Reg was never known to take a girl out and we, of course, explained what we'd been doing, and we were greeted with a terrific howl from everybody. Nobody believed us. (laughs) They thought Uncle Reg'd fallen in love or something, which we never either of us thought of. Anyway, poor old Uncle Reg was killed. That was January - Christmas - and he was killed in the August. So it was a dreadful time really.

How would you travel down to Port Noarlunga?

We went down in a big bus thing. We'd get a big bus, and some of them had motorcars and we'd get down there. It'd be about - oh, there'd be quite a big lot of us.

Did your family buy a motorcar?

We never owned - - -. Oh, Stephen had one. He had a small one-seater, but then of course he had a rich sister who used to help with that. Father and Stephen had a motorbike each, and they - - -. I know they cost fifty pounds, and they borrowed the money from their rich sister and Stephen never had to pay her back a penny but Dad paid his fifty pounds back - every penny. (laughs)

Sounds like Stephen was the golden haired boy.

Oh, gosh, was he not? Yes. (laughs)

Do you remember the time of the Armistice?

Oh yes. That was very wonderful. The excitement was terrific. And of course in the Second World War I was right in that because, you know, I could get right in the city there. I remember standing and hearing people talking on the steps of Parliament House, and the excitement was terrific.

Did your life change after your mother died? Did your responsibilities in the home change?

Oh yes. Of course, I had to run the house, and I'd never done - really done - the housekeeping. I could cook, but Mother did all that sort of thing and I sort of did all the cleaning and things like that. But I found it quite hard to learn to keep house and cook and do everything, but I got on all right with it after a bit. That was really quite a lot of work to be done there. But I still managed to go into town to concerts and do all my little church things and get up concerts over there and all that. No, I always had a very full life, wherever I've been. I think that's kept my brain going.

I know that during the 1930s when the family property broke up you took a place at Glenelg and let rooms there.

Yes.

Had you, during the twenties, wanted to get out on your own?

[queries question]

Had you wanted to get out on your own before that?

Oh no, I never wanted to leave my father. When we had to - - -. Then I had to think of something - I was forty five, Father was seventy - I had to think of something. Stephen, twelve years younger, with plenty of influence, went back to Broken Hill and was working straight away - he was all right. And Aunty Mary that lived with him, see, she was all right. By that time she'd had her own little house built up at Rosslyn Park up there, and her children were all married. Her son - married son - was living in her little house that she'd had built. It was understood that she'd go there to live when she was ready, which she did, so that was all fixed up, and Stephen back to Broken Hill, and just Dad.

Well, Dad had to stay out there for a long time. He had to board nearby because he had to keep his eye on various things at the place. Of course the poultry farm was all dismantled long before that, but all the gardening part had to be seen to, until all the business of transaction and changeover to the people that bought it was all fixed, you see. But he eventually came down to me. Oh no, I only did that because I had to think of something to do for the two of us.

And then of course it meant - pensions were in then, but they were very - - -. It was a dreadful feeling to get a pension. People hated it and Father didn't - - -. We talked about it and he couldn't bear to hear it. We had a life-long friend in Parliament, Norman Makin - he was one of my boyfriends from childhood and all his life. In fact I was able to kiss him goodbye when he was dying - the day before he died. He was always my friend - he was wonderful to me. He came out with all the papers and fixed it all up and told Father what he had to do, and it was just the time when they started posting pensions, so Father only ever had it posted. He had about a bit over a pound or something, but when we came down to live - he came down with me - of course he used to hand it all over to me and I'd just give him back some money for his tobacco and things until I could get going a bit.

Was there ever any question of other relatives helping to support you?

No. Nor even professing any interest in what I did. In fact everything I ever did was always the wrong thing. No, it was an unhappy time for me in many ways.

See, that house [at Glenelg], that was sold over my head at Christmas time when it was all booked up. I knew about this big house at the back in Pier Street and I fought tooth and nail and I went round to - the owner of it was back there to see to the business of reletting it you see. She lived on a station out of Broken Hill - they were very wealthy people - and by some means or other she said, 'All right,' and I moved all my people round there and they all helped. And she left a lovely lot of furniture in the house - beautiful antiques. I couldn't possibly have furnished everything properly, but it was all perfect. But I had a lot of very unhappy happenings there which I'm not going to talk about, which caused me to have to leave there.

And I found a third house, and it was the third house I would have been - - -. I had to work very hard but I was getting on all right - you know, getting by - with Father living there with me, and the Second World War started and it knocked the bottom out of everything like that.

Well, we've just about come to the end of another tape and we've - - -.

Do you think you've got all you want?

Well, I think we've done very well indeed.

Have we?

Thank you very much indeed.

As long as I've done it interestingly enough for you.

Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me.