

INTERVIEW WITH BID CAMPBELL
Recorded 2 June 2000
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Timecode refers to tapes 05_BC_DV (No Tape 4)
Topics in Bold

So this is tape 4, camera tape 4, this is still DAT tape 2 and it's 35.53 on the counter now as I'm doing this ID. 3600 now. So it's Trish FitzSimons sound recording, Erica Addis camera. We're interviewing Bid Campbell neé McGlinchy, in her home in Mt Isa, and it's 2 June 2000.

(TC from 05_BC_DV)

So we were just talking about education, Bid. When you got to Charters Towers, what was at the boarding school you went to? That must have all been a bit of a shock to your system.

R On the Road

00:01:44:20 It was. A terrible shock. Terrible shock. Because, you know, we weren't used to sitting down, although Mum always tried, it didn't matter where we were, she'd always try to have a hot, you know, dinner. Sunday dinner, with a white tablecloth. But when you were on the road, of course there was no such thing as a tablecloth, and we'd got out of all that and, you know, sitting there with your cup of tea and your spoon in there and, you know. Of course, the first thing we did, we ... they gave us our tea – we wanted tea – and they gave us the tea in the saucer and the cup and I put my spoon in the cup and drank naturally. Well, you can just imagine the old nuns. They were sitting there, you know, glowering at me, and all the children were hanging their heads. Who's this little bushie from the bush? You know. Terrible moment it was. I can still remember that, you know, and of course Carrie was trying to say, 'You should have taken your spoon out Biddie. You shouldn't have your spoon in'. And I learnt. I learnt. But I suppose it was a good experience. 00:02:45:10

I You probably couldn't have gone into classes with other children your same age if you'd had so little formal education?

R 00:02:53:02 Oh, no. That's right, you know. We had no education very much and I think we got, oh, what was it? Oh, it was something to do with the church. Oh, God.

I So this was a Catholic school?

R 00:03:12:06 No, no. Church of England. St. Gabriel's But anyway I know I had to fill in a slip, you know, all the things that One was, I think, was had I ever had, oh it wasn't called sex or something else, and of course I picked everything. Yes, yes, yes, yes. I was absolutely and my older sister got it and she went 'Oh, Biddie,' she said, 'you haven't done these things'. I had no idea what they meant or anything. I just thought I'd say 'yes' to everything.

I Would you describe yourself as an innocent child or only innocent of city ways?

R 00:03:51:15 Oh, no, no. I don't think that. No, innocent of city ways but I don't think I was terribly innocent. I mean, you couldn't live among animals to be innocent, could you? No. No, I wasn't innocent but I think, you know, I was innocent of a lot of written things, but as for actual things that were happening, no. No, I wasn't, no. My mother was too. We thought differently but, you know, she thought, you know, oh the words you use today, she'd be absolutely shocked, you know. And swearing, you never swore and you didn't say naughty words in any way. Of course when my boys went to school, that lad that's in there, Len, he was a bit of a larrikin and he came home one day and, of course, he was in love with this girl, you know, and he was saying, 'Oh, she's like this Mum. Oh, she's lovely'. Mum was living in Charters Towers in that old home there. They'd retired and lived there and she pulled me aside and she said, 'Biddie, you don't want to let Lennie using those words,' she said, 'He shouldn't be using those words'. And it was 'sex'. This girl was very sexy. And now what would she say today? I often read a book and think oh poor old Mum. She burnt *East Lyn* on me but I was about, oh I was about twelve or thirteen, I think I was reading it. She took it off me, *East Lyn*. 00:05:11:12

I *East Lyn.* I don't know *East Lyn.*

R Yes, well in those days she thought it was too ...

I A bit racey?

R 00:05:17:12 Yes, a bit, yeah a bit racey and a bit too far advanced for my tender brain. But I was reading it and, of course, she found it and she burnt it. I wasn't allowed to read those sort of books.

I So how old were you when you went to this boarding school?

R I was about eleven.

I So that's '28. So it must have been very difficult for your family to afford to agist cattle ...

R Oh, it was, yes.

I ... and send you to boarding school.

R **Land/Banks**

00:05:43:00 Yes, well I think wool rose a little bit and there was a bit of a, you know, they got a good wool price. Now and again, see, they'd get a bit of a price, it'd rise, and then of course it went back again afterwards. When they went back to Macsland it went right back down to bedrock almost because Dad went away looking for a job and we were looking after Maxland, Carrie and me and Brian went with Dad, I think. And they came out to take the property off us, you know, to close. Maxland was too far in debt. And, of course, the Agricultural Bank, I think Nicklin brought it in. I'm not too sure. One of the Premiers brought in that Agricultural Bank.

I I'm not sure, I'll have to check about it.

R **Money Troubles**

00:06:29:20 Yes. One of them. And he, the manager of that came out and also the manager of the rural industry, you know, the ... he was something to do with the, oh it was something to do with the ... I just forget what he was.

I know what he was but I can't think of the name of it. And he was all for you know, close, take it off her and sell it and get something, and this rural manager said, 'No,' he said. 'This lady is trying very hard,' he said, 'and the girls are trying very hard'. We'd been crutching sheep when he came along. He said, 'Those kids are crutching sheep'. You know what crutching sheep is, that's when they get flyblown. And he said, 'Anyone that can get out there and do that sort of thing to try and save their land,' he said, 'they deserve another chance'. So he gave her a chance. Well, they kicked on from then, see. Prices rose after the war, went, you know wool went right through the roof.

I So when this happened, this was during the Depression?

R Yes.

I Dad was away looking for work?

R **Depression/On the Road**

00:07:31:10 Yes. And, you know, at that time in those Depression years, they were terrible sad years, you know. I can remember people walking there to Maxland. Maxland was only a mile off the road, a mile in from Maxland, from the Winton road, they used to come in there for handouts and Mum would always try and give them something. She'd try and give them some tea, sugar, flour, meat, always tried to give them something. Some of the people wouldn't give them anything. You know, she couldn't give them work but she'd try and give them a little bit of food and they would be young doctors and everyone, you know, just young people, university degrees and everything, walking in that Depression looking for work.

I Any women walking like that?

R 00:08:13:00 No, mostly men. Mostly men. Young men. And it was really sad. It was an eye-opener. I often tell my kids, you know, and the young ones today, you know, the life they lead, they've got no idea, you know, what Depression can do. I have been guilty of saying it would do us good to

have one to bring us back to, you know, the real world again because we're getting a bit greedy I think, the young ones today. You know, it's all give, give, give, isn't it? The government should do this, the government should give me this, and it would do them the world of good to get out and see the real world for a while.

I So when you got back to Macsland, was it still a bough shelter? What did you find?

R 00:08:55:00 No. Before they went away Mum had, they'd bought an old dwelling from ah Selwyn. The old mine was sort of dwindling down and they were selling homes and Dad brought it down on the wagon and they built it. So that was the home we were reared in after we'd left the bough shed and everything like that. So, no, their home was a two-storey house. Still dirt floor.

I So upstairs would have had a wooden floor and downstairs a dirt floor?

R 00:09:28:10 Yes, wooden floor. Yes, mmmm. Yes, that's how you lived. I mean, you didn't, you had no ... and the outside dunny and things like that. House of Parliament where all the newspapers were.

I And what was the place like when you came back to it? Had anybody been living there?

R **On the Road**

00:09:47:12 No, and everything was taken. Everything was gone. All the china and she had paintings, you know, glass, paintings on glass, she had on the walls. They were taken, everything was taken. Somebody had ransacked it. Even the linen, everything they could lift, they lifted.

I Do you remember that?

R 00:10:09:18 Yes, I remember Mum. You know, she was terribly ... she wasn't so terribly upset about the linen and stuff. She was more upset about her paintings where somebody had given them to her in Winton when she

first came to Australia. Some lady had painted them in Winton and given them to her. She was very upset about that because she said she couldn't replace them. She could replace linen and stuff like that. And how we used to get our linen and material to make clothes – Mum used to make all our clothes – she used to send a bale of wool down to the woollen mills at Ipswich. Well there's no woollen mills there now, is there?

I I don't think so.

R No. And they'd send back, for the value of the wool they'd send back material, see, and the blankets and things like that.

I So you wouldn't be getting your exact wool back, you'd just be getting the equivalent?

R No. Yes, the equivalent in money, you know, in rugs and blankets and things like that. So that's how they did it.

I And did your mother at such times ever talk about going back to England?

R 00:11:15:00 Yes, she went back after the war. She went back. Mmmm. She went back. But she said it was all changed and all different. See, it was only her and her brother, and her brother went to Canada. Her brother Tom went to Canada. Well she lost touch with him in the 1900, I think 1900. She never heard from him after 1900. She don't know whether he died or what happened, so ... and then she came to Australia.

I Did your mother embrace Australia as her home?

R **Class**

00:11:45:00 Oh, yes. Mmmm. Yes. Australia was her home. Mmmm. No, she didn't enjoy ... she went over there and she was over there for twelve months, I think, and she was glad to come back. It was all different. See she'd lost the Welsh way of talking and everything, you know how the Welsh people talk. She said she couldn't understand them, you know, when she'd go to visit some of the relations, because they still talked in the old Welsh way. But she stayed twelve months. Dad hated it. He reckoned it

was too cold. But, yes, she said, you know, she had nothing. They said, 'Why did you leave England?' She said she had nothing and you know, if you were walking along the road and a carriage came along with a lady in it, you'd have to stop and bow to them and everything so, you know, she said the Australian way was the better way than what she had, her life that she would have had. Because it would only have been a life as a servant or something like that.

I Now there would still have been what I would call class distinction functioning?

R Oh, yes. Mmmm.

I How did you relate to, say, the people on the stations, living on Maxland?

R **Class**

00:12:56:20 Well, I think the people who owned their land weren't as big a snobs as a lot of the station managers. I found during life, people who owned their own properties weren't as snobbish as the, you know, station managers and their wives. I don't know if anyone else noticed that but I've always noticed that.

I That's really interesting. Nobody said that to me before but it's interesting. That snobbery, I mean your family owned land but it was to do with people who owned more land feeling better than those who owned less land?

R 00:13:43:00 No, no, I never ever found that, no. No, I've never found that. The only snobbery I've ever encountered is people who were managing somebody's property, and especially their wives, and that was the only snobbery I ever came across. The rest of the people were just normal people.

I But if you're saying they were snobbish towards you, but your family actually was leasing its land, but they might have been snobbish because they were from the bigger holdings?

R 00:14:02:18 Well, I think Mum encountered that a bit when she first came to Maxland, especially with one family who'd ... they were from oh,

from Sydney I think, you know, the Schofields or something. They were a big and they ... her first wool clip, she was so excited about it, and he said, 'That wouldn't even pay my shearers' wages'. Mum never ever forgave him. Never ever forgave him.

I So your Mum was proud of what she was doing with the land?

R Yes, she was very proud.

I And how do you think you were brought up to regard the land? Like the land of Maxland.

R **Women/Land**

00:14:50:00 Oh, it was just a way of life, I think. It was never meant that much. You know, it was just ... it was just home, I suppose, like everyone's home. Wouldn't matter what it was, if it's yours, you know, you think it's great, don't you? No, I don't think there was such a thing as loving the land because we ... no, I don't think so.

I Were your family farmers at all? Was the land ever cultivated?

R **CC Ecosystem**

No, no, no. No, you don't cultivate any land around this area, no. This is just free range. If it rains, well, there's grass in the paddocks. If there's no rain, well there's no grass. Because there's no water, see. You couldn't cultivate. You've got to have water, you know.

I And over your lifetime of knowing Maxland, Bid, has the land changed a lot? Has it degraded or improved or ...?

R I think it's improved. I think there's more kangaroos and that because there's been more water flowing. I think, you just take it now. If you go back many years, when a waterhole dried up, where would the kangaroos have to go? They'd have to go to running water, wouldn't they?

I And is this because of the artesian water?

R Yes, the artesian more waters made and that's like when my daughter's place at Creek, like when they first went out there, there was no water, only the river, and now they've got bores everywhere and there's kangaroos everywhere, so naturally, you know, you've improved it, I think, for the animals. Because they couldn't go out there without water.

I Just fill me in a bit on your later adolescence and your adult life after you ... you had that year at Charters Towers, and what ended that?

R **Romance**

Well we went back to Maxland and I just grew up there then, I suppose. I went back and I just filled in then until I married. I was married when I was 17 and then we went out on our own sort of thing. My husband, he went working on stations and that and I just sort of tagged along, I think.

I Where did you meet your husband?

R At Maxland.

I So he was one of the workers?

R 00:17:09:12 No, no. He just came there one day and then I got to know him in Boulia and race meetings and things like that. No, he was just working around, working around, and then he just ... then we went, after I think I had three, four children, I think, and we went on the road. He got a droving trip and we saved our money and he bought a property. He bought sheep first and he brought them down from Woodside about a hundred mile down the river and he agisted them for about six months on a paddock. Then he went ... his brother drew a block, or bought a and he went onto and then we went on to Werriana.

I Now I don't know these properties. Can you tell me what the town is?

R Boulia. Boulia.

- I Boulia. So you were all starting to be lots of McGlinchys all around Boulia?
- R Mmmm. Yes. And then we went to Werriana and then we saved our money and had a couple of more trips and bought Weetalaba that was the block alongside of Strathalbert and then we bought Strathalbert.
- I And as you were buying this land, you were adding on or you were selling some land and buying new land?
- R No, no. Just agisting.
- I Oh, right.
- R Just agisting.
- I So Strathalbert was the first place you bought?
- R No, Weetalaba.
- I Weetalaba.
- R Mmmm. Weetalaba. It joined, two blocks together. So that's where, how we ended up there.
- I And did you ever have dreams of any life other than living in the country?
- R 00:18:57:05 No, not really. No. I don't think so. We used to go away for holidays but I was always glad to come home. Go down to Brisbane and places like that but I was pleased to come home. No, I can't say that I ever pined for anywhere different.
- I So tell me about your married life then, Bid. You and your husband had Weetalaba and then Strathalbert?
- R Strathalbert.
- I Properties out from Boulia. What was the work of that property and how did you and your husband divide that work?
- R **Gender Relations**

Shared. I ran the house and he ran the property. It was a woman's place with the home and the man was the provider, and that was it.

I It's interesting that your mother, it wouldn't seem like your mother would have had the woman's place is the home ...

R Oh, no. She had to take the reins because Dad was a bit easygoing. He was too easygoing. So Mum took over.

I So you think that your Mum mightn't have minded looking after the house but that she needed to do the other?

R **Mum's Sayings**

Yeah, she had to. When I got married, she told me never to learn ... my sister used to say, 'I don't know who was your mother because she never told me never to chop a sheep down or chop wood or anything'. But she did me. She told me, she said, 'Don't ever learn to chop a sheep down', you know, after they kill it they hang it in the wood shed. But, oh I could chop wood. I never ever did.

I And what did you make of that? What do you think your mother was saying to you then?

R Don't do it because once you start doing it you keep doing it. So that's what she used to. They usually just killed a sheep, put it in the wood shed and Mum would have to chop it all up and chop it down, which she could do. Oh no, she was very capable. Very capable woman.

I And you would have grown up very capable as well?

R 00:21:00:14 Oh yes. Mmmm. No such thing as this running and getting counselled every time something went wrong. We never had time for that. So yeah, if something went wrong you just had to just put up with it.

I So what would be the kind of problems that you remember solving?

R **Accident**

Ahhhh. Well, I suppose one was the tragedy when I lost my little granddaughter, poisoned. Three-year-old. I suppose that was the worst moment that I can remember.

I Unmarked bottle?

R No, it was strychnine. Up in a tree and she climbed up, got it. But we couldn't save her. That's about the only tragedy I'd say that, you know, we had, really, out of all the years we lived in the bush. Because we were always Mum always taught us to be very, very careful of snakes and things like that. Like, I often look back now and think, you know, Mum would yell 'snake' and we'd go for our lives up to the horse rails and up the horse rails and sit up there until the 'all clear' sign came. And I suppose, in a way, she had to do that.

I So would your Mum be down there killing the snake?

R Yes. She'd see the kids, you know, we could get bit, see. Well, you wouldn't be able to get to a doctor because it was too far. You only had horse transport so Boulia was, I suppose it was about 15 mile or 16 mile. By the time you got in there well it was too late so, you know, we always were very careful with things like that.

I So did you become a snake killer?

R No, no, no. I'm always terrified, have been all my life, I've been terrified. And, you know, my daughter always tells me now she's terrified too. She says, 'You did that to me' and I suppose I did too because I am terrified of snakes. Probably, you know, because Mum always was so careful, see.

I And did you actually see snakes a lot?

R Oh, yes. Mmmm. Mmmm yes you'd see snakes all right, yes. But there is deadly snakes around the Boulia district.

I Taipans?

R 00:23:14:12 Well, I don't know whether there are taipans but they are very deadly. They're a black snake and that, they're deadly. So no, we were always very careful. That's the only tragedy that we couldn't overcome. And that was just something that happened so you when you face life, and then as somebody once said, 'What happened to you when you got sick?' and I said, 'You either died or got better'. You know, you had two options, didn't you? There was no such thing as screaming and yelling. Then, of course, in later years, you know, people out in the west they got the Flying Doctor which was the big boom, but before that there wasn't much.

I Could you tell me one of the stories of the worst medical emergency that you dealt with when your kids were little?

R No, I don't think there was any. No.

I So you became a bit of a bush nurse, did you?

R Oh yes, you had to. Yes. Oh yes, if they got sick or anything, like colds or anything like that, yes, I could just put them to bed and looked after them and that was it, see. I mean, in that line, yes. But I think the old castor oil was the biggest cure we had. Now they say you can't use castor oil but I think that was the main thing, you know, if they were sick in the stomach or something you gave them a dose of castor oil.

I That just cleans your system out.

R Yes, yes. And sulphur, and syrup and sulphur. Old syrup and sulphur. You know, we used to take that.

I And Bid, if as a child there wasn't really any difference between what girls could do and what boys could do, how was that for you as a mother? It's interesting that your Mum said, 'Don't learn to chop wood and don't learn to cut a beast down'. Did you bring up your daughters differently in any way than your son?

R Well I suppose you do bring your daughters up differently because they ... I was in the position where I never had much to do with them, really. See,

they'd go away to school and they'd come home at Christmas time and then they'd come home during the year, about July for about a month, and that was all you'd see of them until they were almost grown up. So you sort of didn't ... so you spoilt them a bit, I think, you know, you didn't say, 'Well that's your job, you do this' like we had to. We had to take our week in the kitchen to cook and all that sort of thing. I didn't do that. But they grew up all right, I think.

I So from what age did your children go off to school then?

R 00:36:02:08 Well Terry the youngest, and Lyn, Terry went when he was six and Lyn went when she was six. But Bill and the older ones, they were a bit older.

I And they went off to Brisbane?

R They went off to Charters Towers, to All Souls. Yeah, no, they went fairly young.

I So All Souls, is that a Catholic ...?

R No, Church of England.

I Church of England. Some people have told me, Bid, that there was very great division between Catholic and Protestant.

R Well, I don't think so. They used to all compete against each other at the sports, at the sports thing, you know, every September I think used to be the great sports carnival with all the schools. No, I don't think there was a terrible lot of ...

I So a Catholic marrying an Anglican wasn't ...?

R Oh, that used to be in the older days. Oh yes, I think that was, yes. That was in the olden days, yes. I think there was a bit but I don't think they're like that now. They're more lenient now. See my brother married a Catholic. Ben, that's Nina's husband. So he's a Catholic and I don't think Nina was but she might have changed now. Her children go to the Catholic

No, I don't think so. I think that people have got more broad-minded about it. I'm just reading that *Angela's Ashes* there and it's all hatred of the poor old Methodists, like they ...

I Presbyterians?

R Presbyterians and Methodists. They just hate them, don't they?

I I went to see that film with two Irish Catholic friends and I'm of Presbyterian Irish background so we laughed about it.

R 00:27:46:05 Yes, they laugh about it now, don't they. You know, it's not like it used to ... what was the movie like?

I I loved it. Yeah, I think it ...

R I'm reading the book. I rather like the book because, you know, he's sort of telling it as it really happened eh and how they lived.

I Could you, the kind of poverty, say, in *Angela's Ashes*, could you relate to at all?

R Yes, because I know what it is to have nothing, to have no money, yes.

I Do you know what it is to be hungry?

R **Food**

No, I don't think we were ever hungry. No, I was never hungry. No. No, we always seemed to have plenty of food but, because Mum always grew a good garden. Then we've always had meat, we've always had milk, so you know, there was, the only thing you had to more or less buy was flour and sugar.

I Speaking of gardening, what did you grow at Maxland?

R **Garden**

Well in the winter months she used to grow all the vegetables, see, all the carrots and turnips and all those things, cabbages and lettuce and everything like that, and in the summer months she'd grow the cucumbers and water

melons and pumpkins and things like that, see, and you always seemed to have plenty of food in that line. She always had a good garden and I did the same at Strathalbert. We always had a good garden, though we never had fruit or anything like that.

I Not even an orange tree?

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R No, no. No, there was bad water at Maxland, you couldn't grow orange trees, but I can remember the first pear I ever tasted. I think, oh God, it's manna from heaven. I didn't think anything like this existed. You know, we never ever saw fruit because it had to come such a long way. It'd come out by train and then it had to come on a coach from Winton out and by the time it got out there it'd be fouled.

I So how old do you think you were when you first tasted fruit?

R 00:29:40:08 I was about six year old, I think. Mmmm.

I Maybe when you went into Boulia for that year?

R No, it was at Maxland. It was at Maxland, I can remember this beautiful fruit. I was oh gee.

I It sounds like if you were sending your kids away to boarding school, you had pretty good years for wool in the forties and fifties.

R Oh, yes. Well see, they fixed the price on it, didn't they? They fixed the price and that sort of stayed after the war years. No, it was a different ball game altogether.

I The Korean War, I think, meant that Australian wool was in great demand.

R Yes. Mmmm. Well, it's like the, you know, in Europe and that, you know, Merino was sort of your wool status symbol, wasn't it? It sort of opened up the world a bit, wool. It's not so good now, I don't think. My niece is on a property over there near Winton and she said that wool's not very good.

I In your married life, then, at Strathalbert, where would you run across Aboriginal people, Bid?

R We used to employ them. We employed them. They were very good people.

I Men or women?

R **Race Relations/Female Labour: Lardy and Moonlight**

The women and men, yes. I had an old lady, Dolly, she was a washer, she used to do the washing for me and she lived in a little hut there and she used to do the washing. She never used to do any housework and that. She used to do the washing and she was very good with the children. They were full blood, full blood Aboriginals, they weren't half-castes. And then there was another couple we had there, Lardy and Moonlight, they'd been sent to the island and they didn't want to live in the island.

I This was Palm Island?

R 00:31:28:12 Palm Island. And they wanted to come back and the policeman came out and saw my husband and he said, 'Oh well,' he said, 'if you can let them live out here,' he said, 'I'll get them back'. So we said yes, they could live here, but Lardy used to wash for me now and again and old Moonlight used to, sometimes he'd go riding with them and that, but he was too old.

I You provided food but not wages? Was that how it went?

R **Aboriginal Wages**

Yes. Well, they weren't on wages then, they were sort of retired. They were on a ... I don't know how they got on. They just used to go into the office in Boulia, the police station, they used to get their clothes and their food vouchers, and that's how they lived, like that. And we used to give them food too, and they used to get their clothes.

I So what sort of food would you ...?

R **Aborinal Women/White Kids**

The same as we ate. Yes, exactly. No, they were very good and the kids used to love them. My children used to love them. Used to go walkabout with them and catching grubs and all sorts of things.

I I know in some families it sounds like Aboriginal and white kids played together very closely but in other areas there was taboos about that. Because you hadn't grown up with Aboriginal people ...?

R No, no, no. No, we never found ... I never found that. I thought they were very good people, the old, old Aborigines. Very good. I couldn't say anything against them. Decent people.

I If they were full-blooded Aboriginal people, was this their traditional land?

R Well I don't know what's their traditional land today. I think they ... wherever there's mining found or something seems to be their traditional land.

I But I'm talking about Lardy and Moonlight. Would they have corroborees and ceremonies and things sometimes?

R In Boulia? No, I think old Moonlight came from around Selwyn area so I don't think that was his land and I think Lardy came from up there too, but they'd more or less been down round the Boulia area. I don't know why they went down there. He was King of the Burke. He used to wear a thing around his chest, you know, this thing. 'I'm King of the Burke.' And he used to parade around and say he was the king.

I So their children lived on your property as well?

R 00:33:58:04 No, had no children, no. They were all grown up. They were old.

I The other woman, I've forgotten her name, not Lardy and Moonlight, the other woman that washed with you.

R Dolly.

I Dolly.

R **Aboringal Women/White Kids**

Yeah. No, she stayed there for about two years and then she went. I don't know where Dolly went. She went into Boulia I think, went away somewhere. I've never heard of Dolly after that but I know she didn't like you to touch the children. They didn't like you to smack them or anything. She'd get most upset about that.

I You're saying that if you smacked an Aboriginal child ...

R No, my children.

I Oh, your kids would get very upset if an Aboriginal person smacked them?

R No, they'd get upset, the Aboriginal ladies, if I smacked my kids.

I Oh, I see, if you smacked your kids.

R Yes.

I Right. And how would they let you know that they were upset?

R **Aboringal Women/White Kids**

Oh, the lips would come out here like this. Really angry. Once Terry, the youngest son, was swearing. They were down at the horse yards breaking horses and men and they were swearing, see, and he came up swearing and I'd warned him the day before. I said, 'Don't let me hear you using those words'. Anyway the next day he did the same so I grabbed him and took him upstairs and said, 'I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap' and as I was passing Dolly, she was washing, and she's got a lather of, you know, soap suds . I said, 'Have you got any soap, Dolly?' She said, 'No, no soap'. She wouldn't give me any. 'Poor little boy,' she was saying as I was dragging him upstairs. 'Poor little boy.' It stopped him swearing. He don't even swear today. So I stopped that. No. There was no such

swearing or anything like that in my day. Men swore when they were working but you never, that was nothing to do with me.

I I think that it was around the late sixties when Aboriginal people stopped being employed because that was when the wages had to be paid. How did that work out round your family?

R **Race Relations/Aboriginal Wages**

00:36:04:20 Well, we just paid the wages. I mean, you paid it into the police station if you had one, see. You just paid them. It went into their whatever they had, some scheme they had, and they used to keep them in clothes and things like that. But you must remember, though, a lot of these stations had about three hundred Aboriginals on it and they were employing about fifteen and feeding the rest so I mean they weren't really slave labour, and this is where half the city people have got the idea that they were, you know, it was slave labour. They forgot the fact that they were keeping the rest of them. They were feeding them and they were getting meat and everything like that. No, have you read that book, *Not What I Expected?*

I I don't think I have. What's that one?

R Well get it and read it.

I I'd love, yeah. *Not What I Expected?*

R *Not What I Expected* by Edna Quiltie.

I Edna Quiltie. No, I'll get it.

R Edna Quiltie.

I I'll get a pen and write that down.

R I'll write it down for you so you get it and read it.

I Good on you, Bid. I'd love to do that.

R It'll give you a good insight into ...

I What area is it from?

R It's the Kimberleys.

I Right.

R Out in the Kimberleys. The Kimberleys area, but the same thing applies round here. See all these Aborigines you see here in the towns now, they're all off stations. It's not what I ... *Not What I Expected*, Edna Quiltie.

I And what is it in this book that you think is particularly ...?

R It's very interesting about the Aborigines.

I Right.

R Very interesting. And what happened to them.

I And so, Bid, clearly your family and you are now interested in history. You've written your own history.

R Yes, well who's teaching history today in schools? from a uni. What are they teaching ...?

I Less and less is being taught.

R Yes. Half the children don't even know who Captain Cook is. So all our history's being lost.

I And if you were to describe why it's important to learn history, how would you describe that or define that?

R Well I think it's very important.

I I do too.

R 00:38:51:22 Yes, because I mean, now who's to say how Australia started if we don't learn it, if we're not taught it? Like, you just talk to any average student today and ask them what history is, about history. They know nothing about history. I'm not, I don't say, you know, overseas history or

Europe or something like that, but I do think they should be teaching Australian history.

I And when you were a child and a young woman, what was the history that you knew and who were some of the characters from your local area that you would hear about a lot?

R Mmmm. I can't say that I knew of that many.

I There wasn't lots of talk, because probably the explorers would have gone through your district, or ...?

R Well see, they'd be all, would have been there and gone, wouldn't they, by the time, you know, I could remember. Like ...

I I guess I wondered just how much history ... well, you weren't at school very much but just as people were kind of talking in the area or how much history of the area you grew up with.

R 00:40:04:15 No, there wouldn't be that much. See, they used to, explorers had more or less all been there and gone, hadn't they? Like, they went up that river, they went up the what's-a-name river ...

I Georgina.

R **Explorers**

Up the Georgina, and they also went up the Burke and Wills, see. Burke and Wills went through Strathalbert, both those rivers. And there was, I suppose, just above Kennedy. He's another man that sort of ventured out from round there and he was, took up properties all around above Boulia. He was Kennedy. He was more or less an explorer and he took his family. I think some of his family graves are above Strathalbert, see, where they died. And that was another booklet that's worth reading too.

I Would you have heard much about the early history of settlement in Boulia and the time when white people were settling for the first time? Was there much discussion about that?

R Well, no. Well, it's different. You never saw very many people because nobody moved around very much because the only way they got around, like you saw the mail, and it was a horse and buggy in the early days, and you wouldn't, you know, they'd just more or less give you your mail.

I You wouldn't get a newspaper very often and you didn't have radio and ...?

R 00:41:39:20 Oh no, no, no, no. We didn't have any of those things. I think the only newspaper we had in our day was the old *Bulletin*, the old Townsville *Bulletin*. It more or less covered everything, you know, all the news around, and you got that once a month. But as kids we weren't privileged to look at anything like that, or listen to adults' conversation either, for that matter.

I And books? Did you grow up with books or was that something you developed as an adult? 00:42:03:10